



## **Commission on the Status of Women**

### **Contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**16 May 2016**

At its first session since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development held from 14 to 24 March 2016, the Commission on the Status of Women considered as its priority theme “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development”. The Commission’s ministerial and expert panel discussions and innovative policy recommendations on the priority theme are captured in Chair’s summaries, as well as most importantly, in the Commission’s agreed conclusions<sup>1</sup>. The agreed conclusions included references to existing commitments and areas and issues, as well as actors, of importance in the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As called for in its new methods of work, the consideration of the review theme included presentations, on a voluntary basis, by member States on lessons learned, challenges and best practices, and means for accelerated implementation to eliminate and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls. The Commission agreed to transmit to the Economic and Social Council the text of the agreed conclusions on the priority theme as well as the Chair’s summaries of the four ministerial roundtables, the high-level interactive dialogue among ministers and two expert panel discussions on the priority theme to serve as input to the Council’s work, including the high-level political forum under the Council’s auspices.

A record number of more than 80 ministers attended the first ever ministerial segment of CSW. Around 4,100 non-governmental representatives from more than 540 organizations participated as well, the highest number ever for one of the Commission’s regular annual meetings. A record number of more than 200 side events were hosted at UN premises by Member States and UN entities alongside 450 parallel events organized by civil society in the vicinity of the UN.

#### **1. An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level**

In the Political Declaration adopted on occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Member States have agreed that no country has achieved gender equality and the empowerment of women. Moreover, the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledged that gender inequality remains a key challenge to sustainable development. This means that as Member States proceed with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls must be at the center of all implementation efforts of the Sustainable Development Agenda in its entirety.

In addition, Member States have also most recently during the fifty-ninth and sixtieth sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women recognized that women and girls experience vulnerability and marginalization owing to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination throughout their lifecycle. In order to ensure that no woman and no girl is left behind, specific attention needs to be given to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and to different groups of women and girls, including refugee women and girls, rural women, indigenous women, women and girls

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016/session-outcomes>



with disabilities, among others.

For the Commission on the Status of Women, the focus on Sustainable Development Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and gender specific targets in other Goals are critical. As the 2030 Agenda has recognized and the Commission repeated at its sixtieth session, the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is crucial.

The Commission will continue to exercise its catalytic role for gender mainstreaming so as to ensure that follow-up and review processes benefit all women and girls and contribute to the full realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030.

## **2. The identification of gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges**

The Commission has consistently identified gaps and challenges to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, recognizing the significant levels of inequality that persist between women and men globally. At its sixtieth session, the Commission, while welcoming progress made towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, emphasized that no country has fully achieved gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The Commission reaffirmed that the realization of the right to education contributes to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, human rights, sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The Commission recognized that women's equal economic rights, economic empowerment and independence are essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It underlined the importance of undertaking legislative and other reforms to realize the equal rights of women and men to access economic and productive resources, including land and natural resources, property and inheritance rights, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance, and equal opportunities for women for full and productive employment and decent work, and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value.

The Commission expressed deep concern that discrimination and violence against women and girls, in particular against those who are most vulnerable, continues in all parts of the world and that all forms of violence against women and girls are impediments to the full achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls and the development of their full potential as equal partners with men and boys, as well as the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is therefore critical to address and integrate gender equality and empowerment of women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, the Commission recognized that gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires the acceleration of action on both recent and long-standing commitments to realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.



The Commission reaffirmed the importance of significantly increased investment to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. It also called for the development and enhancement of standards and methodologies at national and international levels to improve collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics to measure progress for women and girls on sustainable development in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **3. Valuable lessons learned on ensuring that no one is left behind**

The Political Declaration adopted by the Commission in 2015 emphasized that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is essential for achieving the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, for tackling the critical remaining challenges through a transformative and comprehensive 2030 Agenda and to ensure that no one is left behind.

The sixtieth session of the Commission acknowledged that women play a vital role as agents of development and acknowledged that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is crucial to progress across all Sustainable Development Goals and targets and stressed that the achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if women and girls continue to be denied the full realization of their human rights and opportunities.

The Commission called for the enhancement of national institutional arrangements tasked with guiding the work towards achieving all the Goals and targets so as to ensure that planning, decision-making, policy action, budgeting and monitoring reflect gender equality considerations and benefit all women and girls. National mechanisms for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls need to be an integral part of such national institutional arrangements and need to be strengthened and supported to influence implementation across all policy areas.

The Commission recognized the importance of having an open, inclusive and transparent engagement with civil society, including women's and community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders and girls' and youth led organizations in the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and welcomed their major contributions in placing the interests, needs and visions of women and girls on local, national, regional and international agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Furthermore, the Commission recognized the importance of fully engaging men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and as allies in the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, as well as in the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in the gender responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **4. Emerging issues likely to affect the realization of this principle**

As per its multi-year programme of work, the Commission will take up as priority themes the following issues: sixty-first session (2017): women's economic empowerment in the changing



world of work; sixty-second session (2018): challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls; sixty-third session (2019): social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

#### **5. Areas where political guidance by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is required**

As the principal intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and for follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Commission in the Agreed Conclusions of its sixtieth session affirmed that it will exercise its catalytic role for gender mainstreaming so as to ensure that follow-up and review processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development benefit all women and girls and contribute to the full realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030.

#### **6. Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress for those at risk of being left behind**

The Commission laid out a detailed roadmap of policy recommendations in its Agreed Conclusions (E/2016/27-E/CN.6/2016/22) on how to implement the 2030 Agenda in a gender-responsive manner through concerted action by Governments and other stakeholders in 5 major areas:

- Strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks
- Fostering enabling environments for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
- Strengthening women's leadership and women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development
- Strengthening gender-responsive data collection, follow-up and review processes
- Enhancing national institutional arrangements.

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