

Concept Note

Side event to Regional Forum on Sustainable Development – Regionalizing CSW67

Title:	Game-changing actions in the digital age for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls: Localizing CSW67 in the Europe and Central Asia Region
Date and time:	29 March, 13:30 – 15:00 CET
Organizers:	UN Women ECA
Format:	Online
Registration:	https://unwomen.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlpc-iprjorHdQsagingHESs_Z8NFZ0o9WF
Language:	English

Introduction

The [67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW\)](#) focused on “**Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls**”. The CSW67 dialogue provided an opportunity to address misconceptions of gendered dimensions of technology and innovation that hinder GEWE progress, to move beyond a binary vision of the gender digital divide and shape inclusive innovation ecosystems and address online and technology-facilitated violence against women. The sub-regional CSW67 sub-regional preparatory meetings for Central Asia (hosted by the Government of Kyrgyzstan), the Western Balkans (hosted by the Government of Albania) and Ukraine and EU/neighbouring countries hosting persons fleeing Ukraine following Russian’s invasion), provided an opportunity to formulate national and sub-regional positions to influence and inform CSW67.

In 2020-2021 partners in ECA region joined the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality (AC TIGE) and made commitments to advance gender equality in STEM. The commitments were expected to translate into tangible actions advancing women and girls participation in technology and innovation, overall aspiring to forge new commitments, including collective commitments, building on the momentum of the GEF. The year 2023 is a midpoint for Generation Equality to assess and report on progress and consider how the commitments made could be further strengthened by the solutions suggested by inter-governmental platforms like CSW.

The rapidly growing access and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has had multiple impacts on gender equality and women’s rights, including the further exacerbation of existing forms of violence against women

(VAW), especially sexual harassment, and the emergence of new forms of VAW, such as non-consensual image sharing.

Objective

The side event of the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development 2023 aims to bring together governments and experts as well as private sector, youth and civil society perspectives from Europe and Central Asia region to follow-up on CSW67 outcomes and to identify game-changing actions in the digital age for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls to further localize CSW67 conclusions and commitments. More specifically, the discussions will focus on two specific CSW67 recommendations including: 1) Fostering inclusive education in the digital age, and promote women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and careers and 2) Implementing economic, labor and social policies that ensure that women are not left behind in the digital age; and 3) Addressing the need for a systematic approach to prevention and response to technology-facilitated violence against women.

Expected Outcomes

1. To raise awareness about the CSW67 agreed conclusions and renewed commitments by UNECE Member States to gender equality;
2. To share good practices and innovative solutions for further upscaling up in the region to bridge the digital divide and advance gender responsiveness;
3. To identify opportunities for regional cooperation and collaboration in advancing implementation of CSW67 agreed conclusions and commitments building on AC on TIGE transformative actions.

Methodology

The side event will be structured as a panel discussion, with experts from ECE region sharing their experiences and commitments related to CSW67 and further suggestions to regionalize and localize the CSW67 conclusions. The moderated panel discussion will be followed by a Q&A session, where attendees can engage with the experts and further explore the themes discussed.

Draft Agenda

Time	Activity
13:30 - 13:40	Opening remarks – Explaining CSW67 and the Agreed Conclusions
	Alia El-Yassir, UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia

Time	Activity
13:40- 14:30	Panel discussion
	Moderator: Sehnaz Kiyamaz Bahceci, Women's Major Group Senior Coordinator, UN Women ECA RCSAG Member
	Milva Ekonomi, Minister of State for Standards and Services, Albania
	Edil Zholdubaevich Baisalov, Vice-Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic
	Kateryna Levchenko, Government Commissioner on Gender Equality Policy, Deputy Head of Ukrainian Delegation to the CSW67, Ukraine
	Sezen Sungur Saral, Founding Partner at Reeder, Türkiye
	Sofia Scarlet, Youth Activist
14:30 – 14:50	Q&A and discussion
14:50 - 15:00	Closing remarks by Moderator

Biography

Alia El-Yassir was appointed as UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia in September 2018 and in this capacity also serves as UN Women Representative to Turkey. She has been working on gender equality and women's empowerment within the United Nations system since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. She has extensive experience of working as UN Women Representative at the country level managing normative, coordination and operational work within complex contexts that span the development, humanitarian and political continuum. She has also served at HQ level supporting UN Women's global programmatic work. In her country, regional and global roles, she has built strong partnerships with and among diverse groups of stakeholders to advance the rights of women and girls. Before joining the UN system, Ms. El-Yassir worked as a teacher and developed educational media for children, in addition to volunteering with a number of women's and human rights non-governmental organizations. Alia El-Yassir holds a BSc degree in Biology (with a specialization in Ecology) from McGill University and a MSc degree in Desert Studies (with a specialization in Gender Studies) from Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

Panel discussion

Milva Ekonomi serves as Minister of State for Services Standards. From December 2020 to September 2021 she served as Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, previously (2016-2017) as Minister of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship. Ms. Ekonomi

served as General Director of the Institute of Statistics from 1994 to 2005. In March 2006, she was elected a member of the panel of experts of the “PARIS 21” project (OECD). She completed her studies in Statistics and Economics and holds a master's in business administration from the University of Tirana.

Baisalov Edil Zholdubaevich, Vice-Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic. Mr. Baisalov Edil – the Deputy Chair of the Cabinet of Ministries of the Kyrgyz Republic (since October 2021). Mr. Baisalov is well-known as a prominent politician and civil society activist. In 1999-2007 Baisalov led the 'Coalition for Civil Society and Democracy', the largest Kyrgyzstan advocacy and election monitoring network. He played prominent role in the Tulip Revolution of 2005 and following the uprising on April 7, 2010 served as a Chief of Staff of the Interim Government led by Roza Otunbayeva. Mr. Baisalov also served as the Acting Minister of Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2012 and as the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to the United Kingdom from 2019 to 2021.

Mr. Baisalov graduated the American University of Central Asia holding the Degree of Master of Business Management, and the Degree in political science from the Kyrgyz National University.

Ms. Kateryna Levchenko, Government Commissioner on Gender Equality Policy, Deputy Head of Ukrainian Delegation to the CSW67

Dr. Kateryna Levchenko, Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy of Ukraine, Member of Gender Equality Commission of Council of Europe. Founder and the first President of the NGO “La Strada-Ukraine” (1997-2018). Member of Ukrainian Parliament (2006-2007). A member of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA, 2013-2018).

Kateryna has more than 30 years of experience in protecting women’s and human rights; was involved as an expert in the work of international and non-governmental organizations (Council of Europe, OSCE, IOM, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, UN Women, ECPAT-international, etc.).

Professor (2007). Doctor of Law (2004). Doctor of Philosophy (1993). The areas of public, scientific and professional activity: gender equality, women’s rights, combating trafficking in people, juvenile justice, child rights protection, prevention of gender-based violence, conflict resolution. An author of more than three hundred scientific articles and books on these topics.

Gender Champion According Apolitical (2018); Awarded by Hillary R. Clinton Award for promoting Women, Peace and Security (2022).

Sezen Sungur Saral, Founding Partner at Reeder, Türkiye. Sezen Sungur Saral worked for 8 years in the largest fair organizer company in Türkiye and followed her passion for enabling people to read more books and ease the way for them to reach "knowledge". She introduced the very first e-book reader device in Turkish market, reeder, which extended its product range to tablets and smartphones in its first 5 years. Partnering up with global and local giants like Intel and Turkcell, reeder gained 25% market share in tablet business in Turkey and one of its smartphone models

has taken place in "Top 25" list. reeder is now the leading local brand in mobile consumer electronics and the largest smart device producer in the Turkiye. Reeder stands out as the only "63% women-owned" mobile technology brand in Turkiye.

Ms. Saral was selected by Endeavor Turkey in 2016 and accepted to EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women Program in 2017. She was also selected as "Turkey's Woman Entrepreneur in 2018" in the contest organized by Garanti Bank & Kagider & Ekonomist and as "Woman Entrepreneur of the Year 2019" by EY, one of the largest consultancy firms in the world. She is a Board Member in Woman Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey (KAGİDER) and a graduate of Harvard Business School Owner President Management.

Sofia Scarlet, Youth Activist. A 20 year-old advocate from Romania, working with a focus on women and youth in peace and security; sustainable development; and gender-based violence prevention. She is the founder of Romania's first and currently only youth-led gender equality organization, Girl Up Romania, where she has coordinated advocacy efforts that have reached millions of young Romanians and that have led to successful, country-wide policy and legislative change. Sofia also has experience organizing, consulting, and researching for UN structures such as UN Women - where she served as one of the youngest members of the Generation Equality Youth Task Force - and for organizations such as Vital Voices Global Partnership, Innovations for Poverty Action and the Clayman Institute for Gender Research. Sofia's work has been recognized internationally, receiving nominations for awards such as the International Children's Peace Prize and the Princess of Girona International Award, and being named a Global Young Leader for Women Deliver, as well as a Women of the World Young Leader two years in a row. Currently, Sofia is a student at Stanford University, majoring in Sociology. There, she serves as the university's Co-Director for Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, organizing to prevent campus sexual violence through advocacy and policy-change efforts. She is currently conducting research on the lives of women in rural Romania, with the support of a Chappell Lougee Grant.

Moderator Sehnaz Kıymaz Bahceci

Şehnaz Kıymaz Bahçeci received her BA in Biology and Sociology from Swarthmore College and her MA in Gender and Women's Studies from METU. Throughout her 19-year civil society experience Şehnaz had the chance to work as a non-formal instructor on women's human rights and human rights, served as board member of several associations and has taken part in national and international advocacy campaigns on gender equality, women's human rights, international conventions on gender equality, and sustainable development. Since April 2020, Şehnaz has been working as the coordinator of Women's Major Group, a global feminist collective, and also is an independent consultant and one of the founders of the international United for Istanbul Convention Platform. Sehnaz also serves as a National Consultant to UN Women Türkiye.