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BEIJING+30 REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING

“Reviewing 30 years of Beijing Commitments to Accelerate Gender Equality in the UNECE Region”

21 October 2024,
Building E, Room XVII, Palais de Nations, Geneva

Monday, 21 October 2024 (15:00 – 16:30, GMT+2)

Item 5. Thematic session: Accelerating women’s economic empowerment: The path to peaceful, just and inclusive societies

CONCEPT NOTE

1. Background and context

Women's ability to participate equally in economic activities remains constrained by multiple barriers, including the disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work, discriminatory norms and stereotypes, exclusion from financial and material resources and inadequate social protection systems. Gender-blind socioeconomic policies, particularly in rural areas, further hinder women's economic empowerment. Despite progress in some areas, persistent gender inequality across the UNECE region continues to limit women's access to economic opportunities.

Unpaid care work remains a major obstacle, with women disproportionately responsible for household tasks and caregiving, limiting their ability to engage

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in paid employment. Insufficient childcare services, long-term care options and parental leave policies perpetuate this imbalance. Moreover, women are often concentrated in lower-paid sectors, such as care work, while men dominate high-paying fields like STEM, resulting in persistent gender pay gaps and unequal career advancement opportunities.

Women's access to financial resources is also limited. Gender disparities in land and property ownership, coupled with restricted access to financial products and services, undermine women's entrepreneurial potential. These gaps are particularly stark in rural areas and among marginalized groups, including refugee and migrant women, who often find themselves in informal, low-paid employment without sufficient social protections.

Recent regional conflicts, including Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, have exacerbated these challenges, displacing millions of women and reducing their access to employment and social protections. Women in conflict-affected areas face heightened economic insecurity, displacement and a reduction in employment opportunities. Many have taken on increased caregiving responsibilities or stepped into informal leadership roles, organizing community-based responses and support networks. However, these contributions often go unrecognized in formal economic structures.

2. Objectives

The thematic session will address progress and challenges over the last five years in achieving women's economic empowerment in the UNECE region. The focus of this panel is to explore and identify transformative policy actions that governments, international organizations and social partners can implement to advance women's economic empowerment. The discussion will focus on strategies such as gender-responsive procurement, reducing the unpaid care burden, promoting gender-equal parental leave policies and strengthening women's access to decent work and social protection. Additionally, it will examine the role of trade unions in closing the gender pay gap and the importance of engaging men as allies in the fight for gender equality.

3. Tentative Guiding Questions:

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What key policy actions are needed to boost women's economic empowerment as a critical catalyst for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

- What have been the critical challenges in boosting women's economic empowerment in the region, and how have these challenges evolved since the Beijing+25 review?
- What are some notable good practices and policies to strengthen women's economic empowerment, including women's full and equal access to decent work and social protection including in times of crisis?
- How can unpaid care and domestic work be recognized, reduced, redistributed and valued to promote gender equality, and what role do sustainable infrastructure and quality social services play in this regard?
- How should economic policies be designed to ensure inclusivity and equity, benefit all individuals within societies and foster sustainable development, considering alternative models for economic development?

4. Agenda

15:00 – 15:45	<p>Moderated panel</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Beate Andrees, ILO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Ekin Deligöz, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany • Ms. Gulnora Rakhimova, Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance, Republic of Uzbekistan • Ms. Roya Garayeva, Chair of the Women's Committee of the Pan European Regional Council of the ITUC • Ms. Asel Kubanychbekova, Founder and Member of the Board of the Women's Entrepreneurship Development Foundation, Kyrgyz Republic
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Open discussion with member States, civil society, experts.

5. Expected outcome

To set out at least three key policy actions to boost women's economic empowerment as a critical catalyst for implementing the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(BfPA\)](#) and achieving the SDGs in the next five years.

6. Background documents

- [Parliamentary document “Investing in women's economic empowerment: The path to inclusive, peaceful, prosperous and sustainable societies in the ECE region”](#)
- [Key trends on gender equality across the Economic Commission for Europe region. Regional review of progress: regional synthesis](#)
- [Guidance Note for Comprehensive National-Level Reviews](#)
- [UN Women CSW69 / Beijing+30 Preparations Web Page](#)
- [UNECE Gender Portal](#)