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## BEIJING+30 REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING

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**“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

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*Monday, 21 October 2024 (16:30 – 18:00, GMT+2)*

### **Item 6. Thematic session: Women in leadership and their full and equal participation in decision-making in the UNECE region**

#### **CONCEPT NOTE**

##### **1. Background and context**

Women's equal participation and leadership in decision-making systems, including in political, public and economic sectors, are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Despite strong normative frameworks, women remain underrepresented at all levels of decision-making in the UNECE region. Women hold just 31.6 per cent of parliamentary seats, 34.1 per cent of locally elected positions and 28.8 per cent of Cabinet Minister roles, while heading just 14 countries in the region. In the economic sector, women hold 34.7 per cent of senior management roles, but these are concentrated at lower levels of the corporate hierarchy, filling many support staff positions but fewer executive roles.

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Over the past five years, progress towards gender parity in leadership and decision-making in the UNECE region has been slow and, in some countries, even regressed. Women remain significantly under-represented in the highest levels of power in political, public and economic life, including the judiciary and security sectors. Patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes, gender-based violence, persistent structural barriers and a lack of political will among male leaders continue to hinder progress. Women who face intersecting forms of discrimination – such as those from marginalized ethnicities, rural areas or with disabilities – are even less likely to achieve leadership roles. Furthermore, regional conflicts have exacerbated these challenges, with displaced women often excluded from formal decision-making despite their critical contributions at community levels.

Addressing these barriers requires effective policy and legal frameworks, including temporary special measures such as gender quotas, and the development and strengthening of gender-sensitive institutions that promote women's full representation and influence in decision-making. While incremental gains have been made through legislative quotas and the establishment of women's caucuses, achieving substantive equality will require systemic cultural changes, increased support for women leaders and proactive measures to eliminate violence against women in politics and public life.

## 2. Objectives

The thematic session will assess progress and challenges over the last five years in achieving women's equal participation and leadership in decision-making systems in the UNECE region, including strategies and approaches related to achieving gender parity in decision-making systems, addressing violence against women in politics, promoting gender-sensitive institutional reforms and special measures, overcoming the impact of crises and conflict on women's participation in decision-making and ensuring representation of women from marginalized groups.

## 3. Tentative Guiding Questions:

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

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- What are the recommendations and good practices towards achieving parity in leadership and decision-making, and what approaches within the regional context can institute the full and equal sharing of power as a permanent and core feature of decision-making in political, social and economic institutions?
- What steps can be taken to remove obstacles to women's equal and inclusive representation in decision-making systems, including entrenched gender stereotypes and ensuing discrimination in the public and private spheres?
- What are the challenges and approaches to ensuring protection and accountability for gender-based violence against women in public life, including technology-facilitated gender-based violence, from the regional perspective?
- What is the impact of multiple crises on women's public participation and leadership, and how can emerging obstacles be addressed?

## 4. Agenda

16:30 – 17:15	<p>Moderated panel</p> <p><b>Moderator: Dr. Nicole Ameline</b>, Vice-Chair, United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)</p> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Aina Calvo Sastre</b>, State Secretary for Equality and for the Eradication of Violence against Women, Spain</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Isabelle Rome</b>, Ambassador at Large for Human Rights, France</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Tea Jaliashvili</b>, ODIHR Director's Alternate/First Deputy Director</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Mary Collins</b>, Secretary General, European Women's Lobby</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Sarah Childs</b>, Personal Chair of Politics and Gender, University of Edinburgh</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Nabeelah Shabbir</b>, Senior Research Associate, International Center for Journalists</li> </ul>
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17:15 – 18:00

Open discussion with member States, civil society, experts.

## 5. Expected outcome

To set out at least three key policy actions to increase women's leadership and their full and equal participation in decision-making in the UNECE region as a critical catalyst for accelerating implementation of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(BfPA\)](#) and the SDGs in the next five years.

## 6. Background documents

- [Parliamentary document “Women in leadership and their full and equal participation in decision-making in the Economic Commission for Europe 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](#)