

BUDGET CHOICES IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC:

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY OR HOLDING IT BACK?

11 MAY 2021

14.30 – 16.00 CET

ONLINE EVENT



NOTE ABOUT THE EVENT:

Expanding on UN Women's report entitled "Budget Choices in a Time of Pandemic: Advancing Gender Equality or Holding It Back?", the regional High-Level Roundtable is co-hosted by UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the IMF's Fiscal Affairs Department. Going beyond the findings of the report, the High-Level Roundtable will house regional and global experiences in coping with the adverse effects of COVID-19 and mainstreaming gender equality in budgeting processes.

BACKGROUND

Governments of Western Balkans (WB) countries are now slowly emerging from a challenging period ensuing advancements in vaccination and entering into an economic recovery with risks and opportunities. The road ahead demands reflecting on experiences and lessons learnt.

Over the past year, public finance management systems have been put to the test with the need

for urgent fiscal responses. At the same time, falling revenues have forced policymakers to make difficult decisions with little time for deliberation. This has posed a challenge for gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly as women and girls have often borne the brunt of the economic and social impacts of the pandemic. Nevertheless, it is possible to progress in closing gender gaps and boost economic growth if post pandemic measures are designed and implemented with a gender lens. In this context, it is important to note that gender responsive budgeting provides for a variety of tools many of which are integral to PFM systems.

6 months into the pandemic, UN Women, with collaborative partnership of the ministries of finance of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia and Serbia conducted an analysis of the initial and differing impact of the crisis on gender equality.

Five countries subject to this study responded to the crises through wage subsidies, liquidity support through sovereign guaranties, income support for individuals and households, and tax deferrals and financial stability measures.

*For UN Women, references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

OBJECTIVE

The High Level Roundtable aims at engaging high level decision makers, international organisations, experts in public finance management and gender equality in an open discussion on the impact of budgetary decisions on the lives of women and men, boys and girls during pandemic.

The event will open the space for reflecting on recent government response in challenging times and its impact on gender equality.

LANGUAGE

During the meeting simultaneous interpretation between English and local languages will be provided.

AGENDA

*Moderator: **Ermira Lubani**, Gender Responsive Budgeting Programme Specialist (GRB),
UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia*

14:30-14:40	Opening Remarks
	<i>Alia El-Yassir, Regional Director Europe & Central Asia Regional Office UN Women</i> <i>Carolina Renteria, Division Chief - Public Financial Management - Fiscal Affairs Department at International Monetary Fund</i>
14:40-14:55	Presentation of the Regional Report
	<i>Azra Becirovic, Lead Author and Financial Expert</i>
14:55-15:55	Panel Discussions
	<i>Moderator: Carolina Renteria, Division Chief - Public Financial Management - Fiscal Affairs Department at International Monetary Fund</i> <i>Prof.Dr. Boris Pasalic, RS Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management</i> <i>Dr. Dimitar Kovachevski, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Finance of North Macedonia</i> <i>Gentian Opre, Director of Budget Analysis and Programming Department, Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania</i> <i>Anjum Sultana, National Director, Public Policy & Strategic Communications, YWCA Canada</i> <i>Ulrika Holmström, Senior Advisor Gender and Conflict Department for Europe and Latin America Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)</i> Questions and Answers
15:55-16:00	Closing Remarks