

Interactive dialogue on the emerging issue

Getting back on track: Achieving gender equality in a context of overlapping emergencies

Thursday, 16 March 2023, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Rationale

Women and girls are facing an unprecedented set of overlapping threats: the COVID-19 pandemic, higher poverty rates, skyrocketing food and commodity prices, coupled with the climate crisis and conflict have dramatically reversed the course of progress on gender equality, including on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Approaching the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. Based on available data, 28 per cent of the SDG 5 indicators and sub indicators are very far or far from target; about one in three are at moderate distance from target, a quarter are close to target and only 12 per cent are at target met or almost met.

Despite decades of progress, extreme poverty is projected to deepen for women and girls globally. By the end of 2022, around 383 million women and girls will live in extreme poverty compared to 368 million men and boys. If current trends continue, by 2030, more women and girls will live in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa than do today.

The convergence of conflicts, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic has led to greater food insecurity. This disproportionately impacts women who are eating last and least. Between 2019 and 2021 the gender gap in moderate to severe food insecurity has more than doubled.

In 2020, school and preschool closures required 672 billion hours of additional unpaid childcare globally. Assuming the gender divide in care work remained the same as before the pandemic, women would have shouldered 512 billion of those hours, affecting their labour force participation which is projected to remain below pre-pandemic levels in 2022 in 169 countries and areas.

In education, where progress had been on a positive trajectory in recent decades, there is similar concern of regression. Over two years into the pandemic, most schools have reopened but sizeable impacts on learning remain, including among marginalized and vulnerable groups of girls. More than half of the nearly 130 million girls not enrolled in formal education worldwide reside in crisis-affected countries.

The emergencies impacting women's and girls' rights and well-being are becoming more frequent and complex. Global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, increasing cost-of-living and food insecurity, conflict and climate change, are further exacerbating gender

disparities. Moving forward, progress on SDG 5 will remain out of reach unless long-term structural barriers to gender equality, including discriminatory norms, laws and practices, are addressed and dismantled. Global cooperation and investments in the gender equality agenda, including through increased national funding as well as ODA, are essential to right the course and place SDG 5 back on track. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is crucial to tackling these overlapping challenges and to making progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

Objective

The interactive dialogue will provide an opportunity to discuss how these overlapping emergencies are affecting the achievement of the SDGs. The dialogue will also focus on select thematic areas on food security, poverty eradication, employment, unpaid care work and gender statistics. The dialogue will draw lessons learnt and good practices from current as well as past crises and will identify areas of further work to build back better, recover and deliver our common objectives by 2030.

The dialogue will bring together stakeholders including government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations, youth and the United Nations system. The interactive dialogue will start with presentations by a small number of invited participants, followed by good practice examples and other contributions from Member States and non-governmental organizations.

Format and participation

Consideration of the emerging issue will be through an interactive dialogue. A CSW Vice-Chair will chair and moderate the meeting. The topics will be introduced by invited speakers. Member States will participate in the dialogue on a voluntary basis. No speakers' list will be kept. UN-Women will facilitate an online application process for representatives of NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC. The list of NGOs proposed for participation in the event will be distributed to Member States through respective Bureau members.

Guiding questions

Participating stakeholders in the interactive dialogue are invited to address the following questions:

- How can crisis recovery efforts and policies be harnessed to build back better, recover and deliver the gender equality objectives of the 2030 Agenda?
- What policy measures have contributed to address the care crisis for both people and planet?
- What examples of recovery efforts have been effective in prioritizing women's access to decent jobs, social protection and sustainable livelihoods?
- What actions have States taken to address the gender dimensions of conflict?
- How can gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data contribute to a stronger and more evidence informed policies to address gender equality?

Outcome

The outcome of the meeting will be in the form of a summary of the Chair of the Commission, prepared in consultation with the regional groups, through the members of the Bureau.