

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-first session
13 – 24 March 2017

Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work
Draft agreed conclusions

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth, fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women. **(CSW 60 AC, para 1)**
2. The Commission reaffirms that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto as well as other relevant conventions and treaties provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls throughout their life cycle. **(Based on CSW60 AC, para 2)** The Commission confirms the importance of relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions for the realization of women’s right to work and rights at work. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 1)**
3. The Commission reaffirms the commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls made at relevant United Nations summits and conferences. **(Based on CSW60 AC, para 4)** The Commission welcomes the contribution of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 4)**
4. The Commission emphasizes that women’s economic empowerment **and independence** is essential for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 2, 46)**

The Commission emphasizes that the international community should aim to “Promote women’s economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources”, according to the [Beijing Platform for Action](#).

5. The Commission emphasizes that women’s economic empowerment including women’s right to decent work and full and productive employment is a critical means of implementation of SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, **and all other SDGs as women and girls are half of the world’s population and as SDGs and human rights are universal and indivisible.** **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 2)** [\(Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development\)](#)

6. The Commission affirms that the achievement of SDG 5 targets, namely: end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate; ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences; undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws; enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women; adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels; are all vital enablers of women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 2, and SDG 5) (Complete list of all targets within SDG 5)**
7. The Commission recognizes that worldwide, gender inequalities in labour markets and the world of work persist. It also recognizes that the pace and scale of transformation towards realizing women's economic empowerment in a changing world of work has been unacceptably slow and has impeded the realization of women's full potential and their human rights. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 9, 46 and 47) It recognizes that violence against women and girls, discrimination and inequalities against women and girls in all spheres of society and along the whole life cycle, play a role in preventing women and girls from enjoying their full human rights and economic empowerment and independence. (BPfA)**
8. The Commission expresses its concern especially about the continuance of significant gender gaps in labour force participation and leadership, wages and income, pensions, as well as occupational segregation, social norms and workplace culture, unequal working conditions and women's burden of unpaid domestic and care work, gaps in social protection, and the growing informality and precarious nature of women's employment **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 6, 9, 15)**
9. The Commission also recognizes that structural barriers to women's economic empowerment can be compounded by multiple and intersecting forms of inequalities and discrimination in the private and public spheres, and that these barriers are exacerbated in conflict and post-conflict, refugee and humanitarian settings, **as well as in terms of disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin and age. (Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 9 and 10)**
10. The Commission also affirms that the acceleration of the transformation of the world of work and significantly enhancing the enabling environment for women's economic empowerment

will help achieve exponential **inclusive** economic growth, end poverty in all its forms everywhere and ensure the wellbeing of all, leaving no woman behind in the changing world of work. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 46 and 47)**

11. The Commission recalls its consideration of “the empowerment of indigenous women” as its focus area at its sixty-first session. It also recalls its Multi-year programme of work for 2016-2019 according to which it will consider “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls” as its priority theme at its sixty-second session. **(Based on E/RES/2016/3)**
12. The Commission, in order to transform the world of work for women, considers it essential to: strengthen normative and legal frameworks for full employment and decent work for all women; implement economic and social policies for women’s economic empowerment; address the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers; manage technological and digital change for women’s economic empowerment; strengthen women’s collective voice, leadership and decision-making; and strengthen private sector role in women’s economic empowerment. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 47, and headers in para 49)**
13. The Commission urges governments, the relevant entities of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, women’s and other civil society organizations, and the private sector, to take the following actions at the national, regional, and global levels:

Strengthening normative and legal frameworks for full employment and decent work for all women

- (a) Achieve universal ratification without reservations and full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and relevant ILO conventions and recommendations; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (a))**

Ensure that gender mainstreaming is applied in all aspects of the implementation of the SDGs. According to BpFA (para 164): “In addressing the economic potential and independence of women, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.”

Strengthen laws that criminalise all forms of violence against women, as violence against women and girls prevent women from accessing the world of work.

- (b) Strengthen laws and regulatory frameworks that prohibit discrimination against women regarding entry into the labour market, **life-long learning opportunities** and terms and conditions of employment, **including protection against discrimination on the basis of**

pregnancy and child birth, and provide means of redress in cases of non-compliance; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (c))**

(c) Strengthen and enforce laws and workplace policies that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, **revise and/or establish systems of job classification to prevent direct and indirect discrimination**, and provide means of redress in cases of non-compliance; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (d))**

(d) Undertake legislative and administrative reforms to ensure women's equal access to and ownership and control over productive resources and assets, such as land and other forms of property, financial resources, inheritance, natural resources, **energy** and information and communications technologies; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (f))**

(e) Eliminate occupational segregation by addressing discriminatory social norms and promoting women's equal participation in labour markets, education and training, and encourage women **and men** to diversify their occupational choices and enter jobs in emerging fields and growing economic sectors; **ensure women's equal access to life-long learning**; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (e))**

(f) Enact and enforce laws and regulations that uphold the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, in compliance with international labour standards, such as ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951, (No. 100), **ensure transparency in the composition of wages and revise/establish job classification systems** and provide means of redress; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (m))**

(g) Ratify and implement ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and enact and enforce laws and regulations that give effect to ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and other relevant ILO Conventions for the realization of women's right to work and women's right at work **and ensure men's take-up of family and care responsibilities**; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 1, 49 (p) and para 49 (t))**

(h) Strengthen and enforce laws and policies to eliminate violence and harassment against women, **including sexual violence and harassment**, in the workplace and support the development of an ILO instrument that provides an international standard to address violence and harassment against women, **including sexual violence and harassment**, in the world of work; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (g))**

Useful information – to support a strong vision to end all forms of violence against sexual violence in the world of work:

ILO is working on a convention on violence against women and men in the world of work.

http://www.ilo.org/gender/Events/WCMS_519760/lang--de/index.htm

*11. The principle of zero tolerance should be the objective. Violence and harassment should not be seen "as part of the job", as is too often the case for teachers, health and transport workers, among others, taking into account that for some occupations, such as police, armed forces and emergency services, dealing with violence is an inherent part of the work. **In addition, workers, in particular women workers, are at risk when they are expected to provide sexual services or endure***

harassment in exchange for getting a job or promotion, in order to keep a job or in order to access their wages.

(i) Take special measures to ensure that women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of inequalities, discrimination and marginalization have equal opportunities for decent, good quality work in the public and private sectors; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (h))**

Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment

(j) **Systematically** implement and monitor the impact of macroeconomic policies and reforms for job creation and the promotion of women's full, equal and productive employment and decent work; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (i))**

(k) Create decent, good quality jobs for women in the care economy in the public and private sectors; **value the care economy in terms of pay and working conditions and ensure that men are recruited into this sector** **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (k))**

(l) Expand and reprioritize fiscal expenditures for social protection and care infrastructure, such as early childhood education, **care throughout the life-cycle** and health care, as a means of addressing the motherhood pay penalty; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (l))**

(m) Establish universal social protection floors, in line with ILO Social Protection Floors recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), as part of national social protection systems to ensure access to social protection for all, **through individualized rights**, including workers outside the formal economy, and progressively achieve higher levels of protection in line with ILO social security standards; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (o))**

(n) Ensure **through legislation** that **women have access to paid maternity leave and are not discriminated against when availing themselves of such benefits**, and that both women and men have **access to paid parental leave** and are not discriminated against when availing themselves of such benefits; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (p)) (BPfA 179)**

(o) Undertake targeted measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work, through flexibility in working arrangements without reductions in labour and social protections **and the right to full quality employment**, and the provision of infrastructure, technology and public services, such as **affordable**, accessible and quality childcare and care facilities for children and other dependents; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (q)) (SDG8, CSW55 para gg)**

Undertake targeted measures towards men to ensure that they take their share of care and domestic work to avoid creating inequalities among different groups of women by redistributing care and domestic work from one group of women to another, namely women of ethnic origin;

(p) Systematically measure and incorporate the value of unpaid care and domestic work in the calculation of GDP; examine current measurements of GDP and to shape the formulation of economic and social policies to ensure that the macroeconomic framework becomes an enabling environment for the realisation of women's rights and equality between women and men; ensure that gender budgeting is used systematically in all public spending (E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (r))

(q) Prioritize the entry into and advancement in labour markets of young women by ensuring access to education and technical and vocational skills training, life-long learning and eliminating the barriers girls and women face in the transition from school to work; (E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (s))

Addressing the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers

(r) Make women's informal employment in domestic work, home-based work and small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as other own-account (self-employed) and part-time work more economically viable by extending social protection and minimum living wages, and promoting the transition to formal employment in line with ILO Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204); ensure that women's informal employment patterns are voluntary and not the result of outsourcing to put the onus on individual workers for the payment of social contributions and tax; (Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (t))

(s) Adopt national migration policies that are gender responsive, ensure the right to work to women seeking asylum and refugee women; protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for women migrant workers, regulate the role of private intermediaries and labour brokers in migration, and enforce laws against trafficking in women and girls and all forms of sexual exploitation; ensure that gender based persecution is recognised in the context of five criteria of the 1951 Geneva Convention; (E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (u)) (UN 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others)

(t) Strengthen synergies between international migration and development by ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration policies that uphold women's human rights in the context of implementation of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1); (E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (v))

(u) Improve collection and analysis of data on the informal economy, disaggregated by sex, income, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other relevant factors, using the ILO definition of informality; (E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (w))

Managing technological and digital change for women's economic empowerment

(v) Support women's, particularly young women's, access to skills and training, in new and emerging fields, especially science, technology, engineering and mathematical

education and digital fluency **and literacy**, by expanding the scope of education, **life-long learning** and training opportunities; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (x))**

(w) Ensure universal access to skills, knowledge, information and communications technologies that are economically, geographically, linguistically and virtually accessible to women workers, as well as increased broadband and mobile phone access for women, **including in rural areas**; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (y))**

(x) Encourage productive technological change in support of decent, good quality public and private sector jobs for women in the green economy, especially in the area of climate change mitigation and adaptation; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (z))**

Strengthening women's collective voice, leadership and decision-making

(y) Enact policies and special measures to ensure equal representation and leadership of women in economic decision-making structures and institutions, as well as in enterprises and on corporate boards; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (n))**

(z) Protect the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining to enable women workers, including informal and migrant workers **and in sectors of the informal economy**, to organize and join unions and participate in economic decision-making and design of policies for the world of work; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (aa))**

(aa) Support tripartite collaboration among Governments, employers and women workers and their organizations to prevent and redress gender inequalities in the world of work; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (bb))**

(bb) Encourage and support women's leadership in trade unions and workers' organizations and urge all trade union leaders to effectively represent the interests of women workers **including those in the small and medium sized enterprises and in the informal economy**; **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (cc))**

Ensure an enabling environment for women's organisations and women's human rights defenders, including resourcing and financing.

Strengthening private sector role in women's economic empowerment

(cc) Establish and strengthen compliance mechanisms that hold the private sector accountable for advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment as articulated in the Women's Empowerment Principles established by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Global Compact; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (dd), CSW60 AC, para (h))**

(dd) Increase the share of trade and procurement from women's enterprises, cooperatives and self-help groups in both the public and private sectors; **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (ee))**

- (ee) Systematically undertake gender-sensitive value chain analyses to inform the design and implementation of policies that promote and protect women's rights and decent work in global value chains. **(E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (ff))**
14. The Commission calls upon Governments to integrate these actions for women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work into national sustainable development, poverty eradication and sectoral strategies, policies and action plans at all levels. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (b), CSW 60 AC, para 25)**
15. The Commission calls upon Governments to strengthen the capacity, resources and the authority of national gender equality mechanisms so that they can support and monitor the implementation of these actions and work effectively with all relevant national and local institutions including labour related institutions in their implementation. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (b), CSW 60 AC, para 24 and 25)**
16. The Commission calls upon Governments and all other stakeholders to significantly increase and maximize targeted financing to accelerate the achievement of women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work at all levels through all sources of funding, public and private, domestic resources and official development assistance **and through the use of gender budgeting tools**. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (j))**
17. The Commission encourages men and boys to take an active part in, and to engage fully as agents and beneficiaries of change in the realization of women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. **(Based on CSW(AC) para 22)**
18. The Commission calls upon the United Nations system, and especially UN-Women and the International Labour Organization within their respective mandates, to support the implementation of the present Agreed Conclusions and of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It calls upon UN-Women to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and in supporting Member States, upon their request, in coordinating the United Nations system and in mobilizing civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda. **(Based on E/CN.6/2017/3, para 48, and CSW60 AC, para 28)**
19. The Commission calls on all stakeholders to make extraordinary, strong and unrelenting efforts and investments, **including the use of gender budgeting tools** and take special measures to accelerate the realization of, and make measurable progress on women's economic empowerment, their right to **quality** work and their rights at work and to full and productive employment by 2020 as a milestone on the way to the gender-responsive realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.