



**Commission on the Status of Women**  
**Contribution to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**  
**“Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world”**  
**April 2017**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development confirms the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to sustainable development and poverty eradication, and for progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. It also confirms that the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.

In 2015, the Commission on the Status of Women confirmed that it will contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

At its sixty-first session in March 2017, the Commission focused on “Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work” as its priority theme. In its Agreed Conclusions, the Commission emphasized the mutually reinforcing relationship among women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work and 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. It acknowledged the important contribution of women and girls to sustainable development and reiterated that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women’s full and equal participation and leadership in the economy are vital for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all. Consideration of this priority theme highlighted, among other aspects, linkages between SDG 5, achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and other SDGs. While none of the SDGs and their targets are referred to explicitly, the links to SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 16 and 17, to mention the most obvious, clearly underpinned the Commission’s assessment and recommendations.

**1. An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level**

The Commission remained concerned that the structural barriers women face in regards to their economic empowerment in the changing world of work can be compounded by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in the private and public spheres. These can be exacerbated during economic, financial and humanitarian crises, armed conflict and post-conflict situations, natural and man-made disasters, and refugee and internal displacement settings. The Commission gave specific attention to the situation of women with disabilities, indigenous, rural and migrant women and girls. The Commission addressed the situation of women of African descent, and of young women, particularly in the transition from education to the world of work.

In highlighting the persistence and impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in the context of the world of work, the Commission also made specific recommendations how those need to be addressed. These efforts contribute to the effective

implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that leaves no one behind and reaches those furthest behind first.

## **2. The identification of gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges**

Building on the Beijing Platform for Action, the Commission has consistently drawn attention to the links between realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and poverty eradication, and that poverty impedes women's empowerment and progress towards gender equality. It has noted that discriminatory norms contribute to women's and girls' greater vulnerability to poverty. It has also noted that current poverty measures do not adequately reflect women's vulnerability to poverty, owing to inadequate data, inter alia, on income distribution within households.

At the sixty-first session, the Commission made it clear that realizing women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work is linked to a range of issues that are covered in the SDGs. In this regard, the Commission reiterated its concern that the feminization of poverty persists, and acknowledged the mutually reinforcing links between the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty, in all its forms and dimensions, and the need to ensure an adequate standard of living for women and girls throughout their life cycle, including through social protection systems. The Commission emphasized the critical importance of social protection policies, and women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work in achieving these and other benefits.

## **3. Valuable lessons learned on eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity**

The Commission provided a detailed assessment of the gaps and challenges to women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, including structural barriers such as gender stereotypes and negative social norms, as well as gaps regarding opportunities to and conditions of work such as gender gaps in labour force participation, occupational segregation, and in pay and benefits. It has underlined that social protection policies play a critical role in reducing poverty and inequality and supporting inclusive growth and gender equality.

It has called for gender-responsive macroeconomic, labour and social policies that promote inclusive growth, women's full and productive employment and decent work, protect women's right to work and rights at work and mitigate the effects of economic recession.

The Commission recognized the important role and contribution of rural women and girls to poverty eradication, sustainable development, and to food security and nutrition, especially in poor and vulnerable households.

The Commission highlighted the importance of significantly increased investment to close resource gaps for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. It called for a gender-responsive approach to public financial management and underlined the necessity for adequate infrastructure and social protection to avoid poverty of women at any age.

National mechanisms for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have a key role in ensuring that national planning, decision-making, policy formulation and implementation, budgeting processes and institutional structures contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women and in mainstreaming a gender perspective across national and local institutions. This also applies to efforts aimed at poverty eradication.

The Commission has welcomed the major contributions of civil society in placing the interests, needs and visions of women and girls on local, national, regional and international agendas, and the need for an open, inclusive and transparent engagement with civil society, in a safe and enabling environment for all civil society actors.

#### **4. Emerging issues likely to affect the realization of poverty eradication and achieving prosperity**

The Commission on the Status of Women has placed the feminization of poverty and the need for its eradication in the broader context of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. It has found that women's poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic and productive resources, quality education and support services, and women's minimal participation in the decision-making process.

#### **5. Areas where political guidance by the High-level Political Forum is required**

The Commission on the Status of Women once again emphasized the critical importance of addressing and integrating gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to ensure synergies between the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

#### **6. Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress on poverty eradication**

In its Agreed Conclusions on women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work the Commission laid out a detailed set of recommendations for action by Governments and other stakeholders which, in their integrated and comprehensive nature, contribute to the eradication of poverty in 7 key policy areas:

- Strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks;
- Strengthening education, training and skills development;
- Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment;
- Addressing the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers;
- Managing technological and digital change for women's economic empowerment;
- Strengthening women's collective voice, leadership and decision-making; and
- Strengthening the role of the private sector in women's economic empowerment.