

## **Economic Empowerment of Women with special emphasis on Gender Responsive Climate Action**

### **Letter From the Executive Board**

Esteemed Members of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women,

In our capacity as the Executive Board of this meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, we hereby issue this letter dated 30th November, 2021 acknowledging the presence of all the member State representatives who shall be present to discuss the agenda in consideration, its implications and what measures can be adhered so as to fulfill the goals entrusted to this Committee via its mandate, while ensuring compliance to the principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations.

History has shown that peace and security can be built only on the basis of respect and mutual acceptance. And therefore taking into consideration the spirit of mutual respect, we request every concerned stakeholder to look at the agenda with a multi-dimensional approach in order to allow the conclusion to be more holistic and substantially fulfilling.

The negotiation on Economic Empowerment of Women with special emphasis on Gender Responsive Climate Action cannot be conceptually or practically decoupled from matters of regional trust and security and it is expected from you as responsible and integral members of the global community to appreciate and apply the said nexus in the forthcoming discussions.

Initiation of a productive and substantive deliberation shall be the first step towards this and we shall acknowledge the significance that it carries so as to bring out the most assuring results in the coming course of time.

We look forward to stimulating debate and a wholesome exchange of ideas during the proceedings in the upcoming meeting of this Committee, with a strong emphasis on decorum and diplomatic etiquette.

We are certain that these proceedings shall prove to be fruitful in determining the path to be taken to solve some issues that prove to be a great challenge to the maintenance of a peaceful global status quo.

Komal Mekala  
(Chairperson)

Anna Golvika  
(Vice Chairperson)

## History

Women's rights have been a concern of the United Nations (UN) since 1945, when the United Nations Charter promised in its preamble "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small." The Commission on the Status of Women enforces multi-year programs, created in 1987, which establishes priority themes driving discussion and action. CSW will often pick a point of societal contention, a topic that affects women's rights and demands immediate action, to serve as the focus for negotiations and discussion. Every year, representatives from 45 Member States gather at UN Headquarters in New York to discuss and review global progress towards gender equality and the advancement of women's rights. The CSW consists of Member States from around the globe: 13 from Africa, 11 from Asia, 9 from Latin America and Caribbean, 8 from Western Europe and other States, and 4 from Eastern Europe. The Commission on the Status of Women works alongside UN Women to Promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

## Mandate of the Committee

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by UN Economic and Social Council [resolution 11\(II\)](#) of 21 June 1946. The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 1996, ECOSOC in [resolution 1996/6](#) expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities.

## Introduction

Climate change affects women, men, boys and girls in different ways. Entrenched and systemic discrimination can lead to gender-differentiated impacts of climate change with respect to health, food security, livelihoods and human mobility, among other things. Intersectional forms of discrimination can make some women and girls more vulnerable to climate change, while excluding women and girls from climate action makes it less effective and further exacerbates climate harms.

The meaningful, informed and effective participation of women and girls with diverse backgrounds in relevant decision-making processes lies at the heart of a rights-based, gender responsive approach to climate action.

This inclusive approach is not only a legal, ethical and moral obligation; it will also contribute to climate action that is more effective.

Climate change has serious ramifications in four dimensions of food security: food availability, food accessibility, food utilization and food systems stability. Women farmers currently account for 45-80 per cent of all food production in developing countries depending on the region. About two-thirds of the female labour force in developing countries, and more than 90 percent in many African countries, are engaged in agricultural work.

In the context of climate change, traditional food sources become more unpredictable and scarce.

Women face loss of income as well as harvests—often their sole sources of food and income. Related increases in food prices make food more inaccessible to poor people, in particular to women and girls whose health has been found to decline more than male health in times of food shortages. Furthermore, women are often excluded from decision-making on access to and the use of land and resources critical to their livelihoods.<sup>5</sup>

For these reasons, it is important that the rights of rural women are ensured in regards to food security, non-discriminatory access to resources, and equitable participation in decision-making processes.

## Agenda Brief

In many of these contexts, women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men—primarily as they constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change.

Furthermore, they face social, economic and political barriers that limit their coping capacity. Women and men in rural areas in developing countries are especially vulnerable when they are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood. Those charged with the responsibility to secure water, food and fuel for cooking and heating face the greatest challenges. Secondly, when coupled with unequal access to resources and to decision making processes, limited mobility

places women in rural areas in a position where they are disproportionately affected by climate change. It is thus important to identify gender-sensitive strategies to respond to the environmental and humanitarian crises caused by climate change.

Current situation

Today, women make up more than 40% of the workforce worldwide. About 70% of women in developed countries and 60% in developing countries have paid employment. Over the past two decades, there has been a trend of accelerated growth in the number of women occupying paid jobs. The zones of gender inequality in the labor market have decreased, and the number of female entrepreneurs is noticeably increasing. The level of education received by women is increasing all over the world. Thanks to new job opportunities, women have become more independent, their status in the family and society has changed.