

CHAIRPERSON'S CONCLUSIONS

At the eve of the 30th anniversary of CEDAW and as part of the Beijing+15 review, UN-ECE member states renew their commitment to the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women and girls that restrict their full participation in development processes. Member states emphasize that the achievement of gender equality is an essential condition for sustainable economic growth, and reaffirm the centrality of gender equality for the universal achievement of all MDGs. In this context, member states welcome the forthcoming UN gender entity and calls for its prompt establishment including at country level.

1. As regards the UN-ECE region, priority fields for action in the past five years have been:
 - legislation to address gender-based violence, including domestic violence and trafficking;
 - women in economy, mainly through narrowing the gap between female and male employment rates and specific measures to combat women's poverty; and
 - the development and strengthening of the national mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. Notable progress was achieved in most countries as regards :
 - women's participation in the labour market;
 - women's political participation at local levels;
 - new and/or strengthened legislation on gender-based violence, including domestic violence;
 - institutional mechanisms on gender equality and women's empowerment.
3. The challenges most frequently mentioned included :
 - the gap between legislation and implementation;
 - decent work for women and measures to counteract labour market segregation;
 - the gender pay gap;
 - the situation of migrant women and women belonging to minority groups, who suffer multiple forms of discrimination;
 - the persistence of gender stereotypes, especially in the media and in education;
 - the lack of sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data
 - the role of men in advancing gender equality, including through better sharing of family responsibilities.

4. The following recommendations were highlighted :

A. address specific vulnerabilities, notably by

enforcing new legislation against gender-based violence, including domestic violence, violence in conflicts and trafficking, and develop prevention, protection and assistance measures for victims as well as sanctions against perpetrators

combating poverty of women in certain rural areas, including through ownership of land and productive assets.

defending the rights of women migrant workers and those working in the informal sector especially in terms of personal safety, working and social rights

B. engender national policies, by

expanding the breadth and depth of gender-responsive budgeting as one of the main tools for implementing effective gender-sensitive policies

fostering a mix of policies combining mandatory measures, incentives and awareness-building to accelerate the pace towards parity in economic and political decision-making positions

engaging a wide range of actors, including NGOs and the private sector, in implementing and monitoring progress on gender equality. This requires the collection of systematic and reliable sex-disaggregated data and statistics and gender indicators

dialogue and multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential to ensure gender equality remains high on the agenda, and ODA is a key element in that respect.

C. strengthen the situation of women at work, by

ensuring that employment and social protection policies and practices take into account women's underemployment and the predominance of women in the informal sector, in precarious jobs, in part-time work, and in lower paid work

developing a policy mix of encouraging, enabling, and obliging measures to advance gender equality in the corporate sector : they include gender equality in corporate social responsibility agendas, capacity building and legal frameworks (e. g. quotas, targets, objectives, sanctions and other measures)

reconciling work with family responsibilities through legal entitlements such as paid leave for both parents, policy measures to encourage men to meet their family responsibilities, available and affordable quality care for children and dependant adults , affordable training schemes to facilitating the reintegration into the labour market

In order to mitigate the impact of the crisis on women, governments should promote gender-sensitive analysis of the impact of the crisis, and develop countercyclical policies. by placing priority on job creation and retention, on social sectors such as education, child care and health, and on protection schemes which benefit the whole population.

The financial crisis can be used as an opportunity to design gender-sensitive stimulus packages and social safety nets that involve affordable, quality child care, parental-leave reform and efforts to close the gender pay gap.