

Virtual multi-stakeholder hearing in preparation of the General Assembly high-level meeting on Beijing + 25 (held on 21st July 2020, online event)

The overall theme was **“Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls “**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had been scheduled for 9-20 March 2020, was held in a scaled down and shortened format with the participation of New York based delegation only.

As the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates pre-existing inequalities, it is more important than ever to accelerate action for the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. We must galvanize multilateral action for the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after its adoption, and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Important gains have been achieved since 1995: for example, more girls are in school than ever before and more countries have reached gender parity in educational enrollment; the global maternal mortality ratio has decreased significantly, and the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel increased over the past decade.

However, in recent years progress has been uneven and even stalled in some areas. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to halt or reverse the gains of decades of collective effort on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection, women and girls are disproportionately affected. We must acknowledge and support the critical role that women play in building resilience and recovery efforts in both the rapid response and the long-term.

The gender gap in labor force participation has stagnated over the past 20 years, and the majority of employed women work in the informal economy. Women and girls are disproportionately responsible for unpaid care and domestic work, and women are more likely than men to live in extreme poverty. Women still hold only a quarter of seats in single or lower houses of parliament around the world, and reports of attacks on women in political and public life are increasing. Violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres remain pervasive. Despite shrinking civic space, stakeholders all over the world have been inspired by women’s movements and energized by youth activists, and are mobilizing to accelerate progress and achieve systemic change.

Objective

It was to take stock of the outcomes and recommendations of the 25-years review processes, including the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. This hearing provided an opportunity to exchange experiences, lessons learned and good practices among different stakeholders, through inter-active dialogues, to advance the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Themes

The theme and sub-themes of the interactive panel discussions took place in the context of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, under the theme **“The future we want, the United Nations we**

need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism”. Conversations also addressed a gender-responsive path to response and recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of the Decade of Action and Delivery to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment:** drivers for sustainable development:
 - Securing the transition from education and training to decent work and economic security and autonomy for women and addressing women’s unemployment and over-representation in the informal sector
 - Harnessing the potential of science, technology, innovation and digitalization for a gender-equal society
 - Financing for gender equality
 - Addressing the climate crisis from a gender perspective
- **Women’s and girls’ voices, participation and leadership:**
 - Women and girls as changemakers and role models
 - The role of leadership in realizing women’s and girls’ rights
 - Women’s and youth activism and mobilization for gender equality
 - Sharing insights and lessons between generations for accelerated progress
- **Achieving gender equality is everyone’s responsibility:**
 - Multi-stakeholder partnership for gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights
 - The role of men and boys in realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

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