

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN)

AGENDA: Gender Inequality in the Economic and Trade Sector

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,

It is an honour and a privilege for us to guide you through this virtual experience of the 10th edition of Vibgyor MUN. To seasonal MUNers, we assure you a committee filled with enriching debate that will strengthen your critical thinking abilities, and to first-time delegates, we are glad to be a part of your maiden voyage and expect you to make the most of this experience.

In light of unforeseen events and our rapidly changing social environments, we find it extremely important for our generation of students to be adaptable for the events that lie ahead of us. The matter at hand is a delicate issue that we are sure will capture your attention and make all of you work hard to resolve it. Since the issue at hand still sits in the shadows we expect you to dig deep to the root of the matter in order to bring the specific truth to everyone's notice. The EB will be looking for delegates that portray an open-minded attitude and an ability to overcome several challenges in committee sessions. For us, extending one's foreign policy to unanimously reach a realistic solution without compromising one's own stance is of greater importance than eloquence and past experience.

The Executive Board comprises of MUNners with experience in similar topics, those with keen interests in economics, gender equality and social issues. Ensuring active and factually accurate, and thought provoking discussions will be quintessential committee sessions. Considering the widespread movement towards gender equality in 2020, we believe that this agenda resonates in a contemporary context of interpretation. We therefore urge each delegate to research thoroughly and express their views passionately in committee.

UNW AND ITS FUNCTIONING

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programs and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide.

It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems

- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy

- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence

- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action

For many years, the United Nations faced serious challenges in its efforts to promote gender equality globally. In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to address such challenges. In doing so, UN Member States took an historic step in accelerating the Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact.

TOPIC BACKGROUND

This guide investigates the role gender plays in economics and trade especially considering liberalised trade in global markets. Equal rights among men and women are enshrined as a fundamental human right in the UN Charter, and numerous global gatherings have reflected this objective. Ideal macroeconomic policies in the 21st century are gender blind, not gender neutral; therefore, this creates the need for introducing a gender perspective for any economic and trade related decisions. Only a handful of causes pertaining to gender equality in the economic sector have recurrently been advocated for in the history of the United Nations.

Multiple conferences have been set up to further the aforementioned goal, and the outcomes have been evident in numerous economic instruments; specifically, the 1995 Beijing Declaration, Platform for Action and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Significant progress has been made in certain fields, since women's participation in the labour force has tremendously increased in multiple countries across the world. Investment in human capital, education and training at primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary levels has also increased. Major indications have suggested the narrowing of the wage gap between women and their male counterparts in various industrialized countries. However, these series of events have not completely eliminated the wage gap and women are still at a disadvantage in economic and political fields. Therefore, it is critical for UNW as a committee to address this topic of Gender inequality in the economic and trade sector.

It is interesting to spotlight and investigate the comparative advantage of labour intensive manufactured goods. Many studies have delineated that gender wage inequality is directly proportional to comparative advantage in labour intensive goods. Nations with larger wage gaps have thriving industries and higher export of these labour intensive manufactured goods.

1) THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality is a universal goal that is enshrined in many international instruments such as the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979.

The root causes of gender inequality lie in social norms, linked to the traditional reproductive functions of women and manifested by male dominance and authority at home and in the workplace. These factors contribute to weakening women's capacity to earn their own income, especially as they render it difficult for women to access resources (such as land and credit) and other basic services (such as education and health care).

Given their inferior role in society, their bargaining power in the workplace is also weak; the more so as they lack experience in organizing themselves as a negotiating or lobbying group. The outcome, in terms of the role and status of women in the economy, is reflected in insufficient participation in the formal labour market, poor conditions of work and quality of employment, job segregation (occupational stereotypes), lack of empowerment, and wage inequality for the same job as men. This situation is summarized in figure 1.

Gender inequality in the economy therefore has many dimensions, involving inequality of opportunities (capacity to earn income) as well as outcomes. These dimensions may be expressed in terms of:

- Employment opportunities – opportunities to participate in the labour market in all sectors (horizontal distribution of activities) and all occupations (vertical distribution of activities in a profession);
- Returns from labour (wage equality);
- Conditions of work and quality of employment;⁴

- Access to basic services (such as health and education);
- Access to resources (such as land, credit and business services);
- Empowerment (participation in decision-making); and • Distribution of income inside and outside the household (or poverty levels).
- Empowerment (participation in decision-making); and
- Distribution of income inside and outside the household (or poverty levels).

Since women as wage earners, entrepreneurs or self-employed (home based) workers are affected by the factors listed above, the contribution of growth and development to gender equality should be assessed against these factors. Because of its multi-dimensional character, gender equality cannot be fully achieved if progress is made in only one or a few areas.

Table 1. Share of women in total economically active population

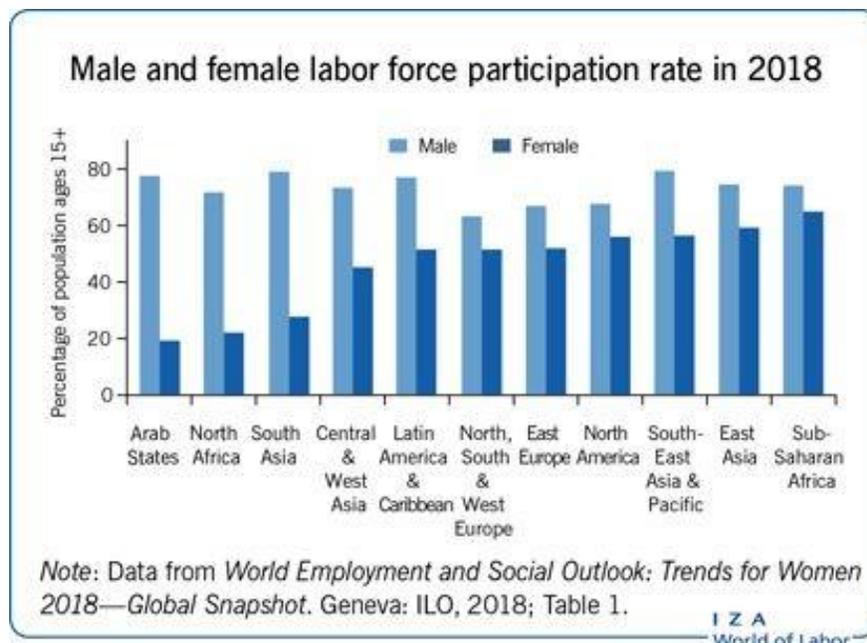
Region	1960	1970	1980	1990	2002
World	36.5	37.8	39.0	40.4	40.7
Developing countries	37.5	38.4	39.1	40.0	40.1
Africa	39.8	40.1	40.2	39.7	40.5
Northern Africa	24.0	26.0	27.4	25.2	25.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	43.4	43.3	43.0	42.8	43.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	20.9	23.5	28.0	33.5	38.9
Central America and the Caribbean	20.4	23.1	28.7	31.8	35.0
South America	21.1	23.8	27.6	34.3	40.6
Asia	37.1	38.0	38.9	39.9	39.5
West Asia	28.8	27.2	26.1	23.9	26.1
Central Asia	42.5	46.9	47.8	46.1	47.0
South, East and South-East Asia	37.4	38.3	39.3	40.5	40.0
Oceania	38.4	38.5	39.3	39.5	42.9
Central and Eastern Europe	46.4	47.8	47.8	47.3	47.8
Developed countries	32.3	35.2	38.7	42.4	44.1
America	31.2	35.9	40.9	45.0	46.0
Europe	31.2	33.5	37.2	41.0	43.5
Others	37.4	38.0	38.1	40.8	41.4

Source: International Labour Organization, database on labour statistics.

A study by the International Labour Organization has discovered that the labor force participation rate is high for women in all regions of the world except the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia.

Nonetheless, the male labor force participation still overwhelms the female participation by a large margin. This is expressed in the following graph.

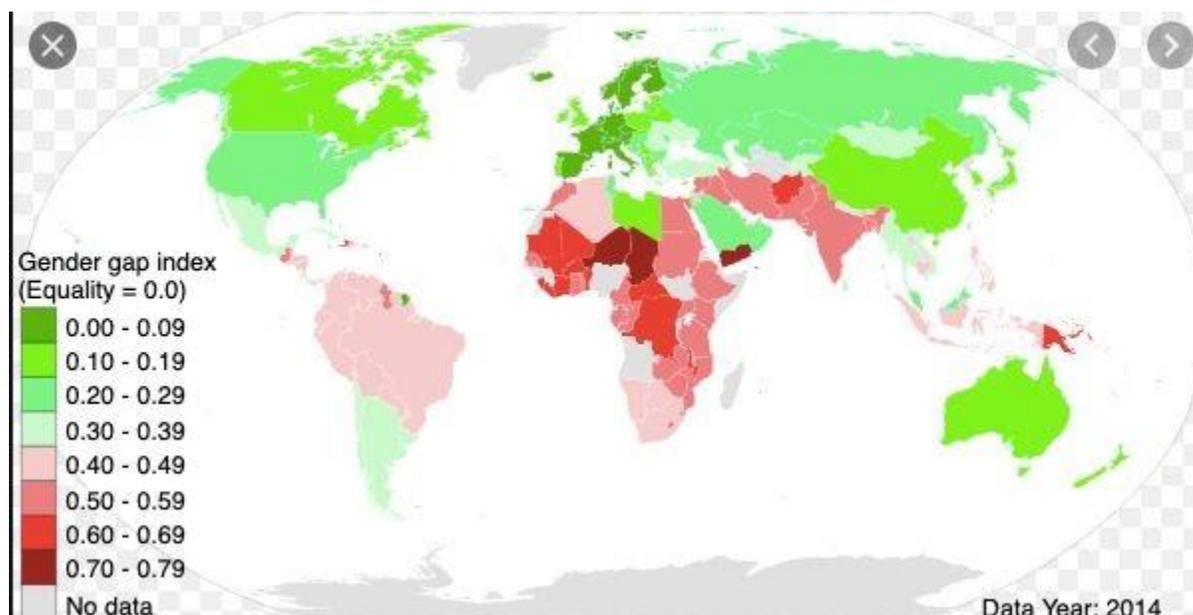
The situation of women has improved in some areas. For example, in education, it was reported that in 2000–2001 the combined enrolment ratio for all levels of education of women exceeded that of men in 77 of the 165 reporting countries, and it was at par in 12 countries (UNDP, 2003: 310– 313). There has been an increase in the proportion of women in the labour force in all, except two, regions of the world (table 1). By the year 2002, women constituted 40 per cent of the total economically active population in the world, while in North Africa and West Asia, the share of women had stagnated at around a quarter of the total labour force since 1960.



2) MEASURING GENDER INEQUALITY

There have been several attempts to measure female inequality across countries. In 1995, the UNDP (1995) introduced two indicators to quantify the degree of gender inequality: The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The GDI is based on three variables, namely life expectancy at birth, educational attainment, which is measured by literacy rate and school enrolment, and access to resources in terms of GDP per capita converted at purchasing power parity exchange rates. These variables are also used to

calculate the Human Development Index (HDI); however, the GDI adjusts the values for gender equality. The GEM combines income shares, professional opportunities and participation in economic decision-making and parliamentary participation as shares of parliamentary seats for both males and female



Countries	HDI	GDI	GEM	IHDI	GII
Sweden	0.963	0.956	0.909	0.824	0.212
France	0.961	0.956	0.779	0.792	0.260
Finland	0.959	0.954	0.902	0.806	0.248
UK	0.947	0.943	0.790	0.766	0.355
Estonia	0.883	0.882	0.665	0.733	0.409
Poland	0.880	0.877	0.631	0.709	0.325
Lithuania	0.870	0.869	0.628	0.693	0.359
Latvia	0.866	0.865	0.648	0.684	0.316

Country	GEM Rank in 2007 (Out Of 109 countries)	GDI Rank in 2007 (Out Of 155 countries)
Bangladesh	108	123
India	na	114
Nepal	83	119
Pakistan	99	124
Cambodia	91	116
Indonesia	96	93
Philippines	59	86
Vietnam	62	94

Source: UNDP

3) TRADE AND GENDER

This leads to an examination of the relationship between trade and gender. In what way can trade affect the different dimensions of gender equality? Does a multilateral system (understood as a set of multilaterally agreed rules governing trade liberalization and trade relations among States) have any impact on gender in terms of opportunities and outcomes (to the extent that outcomes are influenced by regulations and policies)?

Opening the economy to trade is often seen as bringing benefits in terms of broad-based and sustained growth, as trade will entail a more efficient allocation of resources in the world

economy. Trade also allows an exchange of the knowledge which is embodied in the traded goods and services, as well as a spreading of technology and, thereby, a significant increase in the productivity of human and physical capital.

The overall impact of trade on the economy will affect women in the same way as economic growth and development has a gender impact, as seen in the previous section. An economic downturn, on the other hand, might affect more women than men because, in general, women are a more vulnerable group of the population.

Due to trade liberalization, women can gain if the sectors in which they are mainly active expand, or if they have the required skills. However, others, especially those working in the poor rural areas and in the urban informal sector, have fewer assets to weather the shocks of trade liberalization. Moreover, because of their weaker bargaining power, women are often the victims of international cost competition.

In sum, trade can affect gender equality in different ways, through:

- A positive or negative impact on growth and employment opportunities;
- Competitive pressures, which may reduce or encourage gender discrimination, in particular wage differentials;
- Facilitating or raising barriers to access by women to resources and services; and
- Multilateral trading rules, which may facilitate or constrain governments in applying policies or regulations that address gender inequality.

Country Stances:

Saudi Arabia

According to the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report, Saudi Arabia ranks 141 out of 149 countries on the basis on Economic participation and opportunities for women, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment of women. Saudi Arabia has no laws in place for the non- discrimination of hiring women, for the mandate of equal pay, inheritance rights for daughters and government provided childcare and child allowance. The absence of these laws make Saudi one of the lowest ranking countries on the Global Gender Gap report.

Women in Saudi Arabia face formal and informal barriers when attempting to make decisions or take action without the presence or consent of a male relative.

In 2018, Saudi Arabia's discriminatory male guardianship system remained intact despite government pledges to abolish it. Under this system, adult women must obtain permission from a male guardian—usually a husband, father, brother, or son—to travel abroad, obtain a passport, marry, or be discharged from prison. They may be required to provide guardian consent to work or access healthcare.

Saudi authorities opened to women some sectors of work that were previously closed such as air traffic control, passport control, and as investigators in the public prosecution. In June, Saudi Arabia passed a law on sexual harassment with a sentence for offenders of up to two years imprisonment or a fine of up to 100,000 Saudi. However, the law also provides that anyone who falsely reported a crime of harassment or falsely claimed to have been a victim shall be sentenced to the same punishment that they alleged took place. This article as such could be used to punish victims where the authorities do not believe the crime took place and could deter victims from coming forward if they fear that authorities will not believe them. Consequentially, affecting the reporting of sexual harassment cases in the workplace.

United Kingdom

Britain has made zero progress in tackling inequality between the sexes in the past decade and lags behind Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and France in the EU's latest gender equality league table. The gender gap in employment in the EU is "wide and persistent", the index report says, with the full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rate of 40% for women and 56% for men. Income gaps have narrowed, but on average women still earn 20% less than men, and the average masks huge disparities across the EU.

UK ranks 15th in the Gender Gap Report 2018, with the government providing childcare and allowances, maternal and parental leave benefits, and the existence of non-discrimination laws for hiring women and equal pay.

France

France, which ranks 12th of the Global Gender Gap report records some improvements this year

— particularly with regard to Political Empowerment, due to increased gender parity in the composition of the country's parliamentarians and a narrower gender gap in women's estimated earned income. However, France remains in the bottom half of the Economic Participation and Opportunity ranking for the region. There are modest improvements in France's ranking, driven by closing about 78% of the overall gender gap.

Moreover, France is extremely involved in activities of the Commission on the Status of Women, a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, working to improve gender equality and to promote women. Lastly, France supported the creation of UN

Women. It fully shares its priorities and together they are developing several cooperation actions.

France strengthened its partnership with the agency with the signature of a framework cooperation agreement in May 2012.

France actively contributed to the adoption and implementation of the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. These resolutions (1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122) call on States to strengthen women's protection during conflicts and to enhance women's participation in peace negotiations and decision-making processes. In 2010, France adopted a national plan of action to implement these resolutions. A second plan was adopted in March 2015 for the 2015-2018 period.

Furthermore, France has ensured that women's rights are fully considered in negotiations on development funding and the sustainable development goals - gender and gender equality issues are the subject of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5) and across the various goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

United Arab Emirates

UAE ranks 121st in the Global Gender Gap report. The United Arab Emirates (121) sees a reduction of the gap with regard to legislators, senior officials and managers and healthy life expectancy, counterbalanced by a widening gender gap in wage equality.

Discrimination on the basis of sex and gender is not included in the definition of discrimination in the UAE's 2015 anti-discrimination law. Federal Law No. 28 of 2005 regulates personal status matters. Some of its provisions discriminate against women. For a woman to marry, her male guardian must conclude her marriage contract; men have the right to unilaterally divorce their wives, whereas a woman must apply for a court order to obtain a divorce; a woman can lose her right to maintenance if, for example, she refuses to have sexual relations with her husband without a lawful excuse; and women are required to "obey" their husbands. A woman may be considered disobedient, with few exceptions, if she decides to work without her husband's consent.

UAE law permits domestic violence. Article 53 of the penal code allows the imposition of “chastisement by a husband to his wife and the chastisement of minor children” so long as the assault does not exceed the limits of Islamic law. Marital rape is not a crime. In 2010, the Federal Supreme Court issued a ruling, citing the penal code, that sanctions husbands’ beating and infliction of other forms of punishment or coercion on their wives, provided they do not leave physical marks.

Nevertheless, UAE has made some progress on the matter of gender inequality. In 1975, only 1,000 women were employed in the UAE, according to a UN report. By 2015, there were 135,000 working Emirati women in the country. That year, the Gender Balance Council was formed to advocate for women’s rights in the workplace. While UAE labor laws still ban women (with a few exceptions) from working from 10 pm to 7 am and from “hazardous, strenuous, or physically challenging jobs,” it does mandate equal pay.

On 27th January 2019, the United Arab Emirates held an awards ceremony for people credited with advancing the country’s goals toward gender balance.

The optics, as Twitter users around the world were quick to point out, were not great. The three awards—for Best Personality for Supporting Gender Balance, Best Federal Entity for Supporting Gender Balance, and the Best Initiative for Supporting Gender Balance—were all accepted by men. If balance is the goal, women would ideally be represented among the award recipients, one could argue, at more than zero percent.

United States of America

The United States, at its 51st rank moves down two spots compared to last 2017. It records some modest improvements on the Economic Opportunity and Participation index—particularly with regard to wage equality for similar work—but a directional reversal in education and virtually no change on the Political Empowerment sub index, which stands at its lowest level since 2007, due, in particular, to a significant decrease in gender parity in ministerial level positions.

More positively, the United States continues to rank in the global Index top 20 on the Economic

Opportunity and Participation sub index, highlighting the substantial potential of the country's next-generation female workforce. Currently, the United States has closed exactly 72% of its overall gender gap, a decrease of 2% since 2015.

Discrimination against women in the U.S. outpaces that of women across Western Europe, parts of Eastern Europe, Colombia, and Australia according to the Social Institutions and Gender Index, published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The U.S.

comes in 26th out of 120 ranked countries.

This poor showing is attributed to a number of factors, including a lack of paid maternity leave in the U.S., states that permit child marriage, and uneven application of laws protecting women's workplace rights.

The report also points to an ongoing gender pay gap in the U.S, and the persistence of an unconscious gender bias—which is attributed to less female representation in public and political office than male. However, it should be noted the report is drawn from 2017 data.

1979 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention was the culmination of more than thirty years of work by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, a body established in 1946 to monitor the situation of women and to promote women's rights. The Commission's work has been instrumental in bringing to light all the areas in which women are denied equality with men.

Articles 10, 11 and 13, respectively, affirm women's rights to non-discrimination in education, employment and economic and social activities. These demands are given special emphasis with regard to the situation of rural women, whose particular struggles and vital economic Contributions, as noted in article 14, warrant more attention in policy planning.

1995 - Beijing Platform for Action - Fourth World Conference on Women

The Platform for Action is an agenda for women's empowerment. It aims at accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. It has highlighted several main strategic objectives that the UN would like to achieve in women

employment:

- Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.
- Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.
- Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women.
- Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.
- Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.
- Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

Resolution 64/289 of the General Assembly

Resolution 64/289, the General Assembly gave UN Women powers to lead, coordinate and promote the accountability of the UN system in its work on gender equality and the

empowerment of women. Towards that end, UN Women works through system-wide gender mainstreaming to ensure that principles of gender equality are consistently embedded in development, peace and human rights agendas. The creation of UN Women should encourage other UN organizations to redouble their efforts in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

2015 - 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This agenda is a plan with 17 goals and 169 targets. It promises, among other things, to end gender inequality, realizing that *“gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the goals and targets. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels.”*

2017 - 61st session of Commission on the Status of Women

Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work

The 2017 session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women charted a clear path towards women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work;

- It sets out actions needed to strengthen normative and legal frameworks, to ensure equality and prohibit discrimination against women in their participation in and access to labour markets.
- It aims to foster education, training and skills development. Attention is focused on the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, communications and technology education, and the transition from education or unemployment to work.
- It calls for implementing economic and social policies for women’s economic empowerment. Protection of women’s right to work and rights at work is key.
- It addresses the situation of different groups of women and girls, and outlines measures to reduce and redistribute women’s and girls’ disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work.
- It targets the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers. Actions aim at the transition of women employed in the informal economy and in less skilled work to formal employment.

- It aims at managing technological and digital change for women’s economic empowerment.
- It targets women’s collective voice, leadership and decision-making. It includes specific measures to ensure women’s full, equal and effective participation and access to leadership and high-level positions in both the public and private sectors.
- It calls for strengthening the role of the private sector in women’s economic empowerment. This includes actions to promote a socially responsible and accountable private sector and workplace environments and institutional practices that value all workers and offer them equal opportunities to reach their full potential.

2016- 60th session of Commission on the Status of Women, Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development.

The “agreed conclusions” adopted by the Commission on this topic at its sixtieth session (E/2016/27) provide a detailed roadmap on how to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development in a gender-responsive manner, so as to ensure that no one – no woman and no girl - is left behind.

<https://www.unfpa.org/resources/issue-7-women-empowerment>

<https://www.equalmeasures2030.org/products/global-report-2019/>

https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditc_gender_2011d02.pdf

<https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/19801/1/Busse.pdf>

https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/edm20042_en.pdf

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/internati>

<onal-days/international-womens-day-2014/women-ed-facts-and-figure/>

<https://bold.expert/stereotypes-stem-and-a-sense-of-belonging/>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-health/11401344/STEM-Is-there-any-science->

<behind-the-lack-of-women-in-science.html>

http://ilabs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/11Cevencek_Meltzoff_Greenwald_Math-gender_stereotypes_ChildDev.pdf

<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/09/world/asia/infographic-pakistan-education/index.html>

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/commission-on-the-status-of-women-2012/facts-and-figures>

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment>

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/commission-on-the-status-of-women-2012/facts-and-figures>

<https://opentextbc.ca/womenintheworld/chapter/chapter-1-women-and-poverty/>

<https://www.caaws.ca/gender-equity-101/what-is-gender-equity/>

<https://womendeliver.org/2017/rural-women-must-not-be-left-behind/>

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/watersanitation.pdf>

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/gender-equality.html>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405883116300508>

<https://www.sida.se/contentassets/3a820dbd152f4fca98bacde8a8101e15/gender-and-ict.pdf>

<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6070.pdf>