

Realizing the SDGs in Europe and Central Asia: Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls as a Key Accelerator

Side event organized by the United Nations Issue-Based Coalition on Gender Equality for the Europe and Central Asia Region

2 MARCH 2018 – 8:30-10:00 A.M.
International Conference Center Geneva (CICG) Room: 3

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as both a stand-alone SDG goal and a key accelerator for success of all other goals.

The side event will highlight the multiplier effect of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and present regional trends and examples of gender equality as accelerator for sustainable development in the Europe and Central Asia region. It will also demonstrate how different UN agencies in the region are working together in support of national and regional agendas.

Moderators

Ms. Alanna Armitage, Director, UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Issue-Based Coalition co-chair

Mr. Michele Ribotta, Deputy Regional Director a.i., UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central, Issue-Based Coalition co-chair

Opening remarks

Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, Chair of the Regional UNDG team for Europe and Central Asia, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the CIS

Panelists

Ms. Larissa Belskaya, Head of the Central Department of Multilateral Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belarus

Mr. Inge Herman Rydland, Special Envoy Agenda 2030, Department for Economic Relations and Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Professor Maria Concepcion Ovin Ania, member of Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT)

Dialogue with audience

Closing remarks

Morning coffee and snacks for participants will be served in front of Room 3 from 08:00

Background:

The SDGs offer new opportunities for addressing regional challenges in reaching gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls. It envisions equity as a foundation of its core principle, “No one left behind,” and focuses on extending the benefits of sustainable development to groups of the population that are routinely and structurally excluded. The approach overlaps with the key concerns of achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls because, within unequal and gendered power relations, gender equality can be a factor triggering social, political, cultural and economic inclusion.

The regional United Nations system in Europe and Central Asia has been working in a coordinated manner to support Member States in implementing the SDGs. UN regional coordination in the region was recognized as a model in the UN Secretary-General’s Report “Repositioning the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet”, published in December 2017. One good example of this collaboration is the *United Nations Issue-Based Coalition on Gender Equality for the Europe and Central Asia region*, consisting of 13 UN agencies and entities¹ and co-chaired by UNFPA and UN Women. The Issue-Based Coalition supports Member States and the UN system at national and regional levels in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across the region.

The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD), to be held on 1-2 March 2018 in Geneva, follows up on and reviews the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in the UNECE region. The meeting will focus on the sub-set of SDGs to be reviewed at the 2018 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2018): SDG6, SDG7, SDG11, SDG12, SDG 15, and SDG 17.

The SDGs aim at promoting peaceful and inclusive societies in the region, building sustainable cities and communities, and ensuring sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. However, this is impossible without tackling women’s exclusion from political and social leadership, promoting adolescent and youth participation in decision making and addressing the pervasive impact of GBV and harmful practices, exploitation of female migrants and abuse of women’s rights. Issues of climate change and building resilience to disasters can only be addressed through ensuring a gender sensitive approach and increasing women’s access to resources and information and their participation in decision-making processes. Efforts to reduce growing inequality in the region will have to acknowledge the impact of weakened social protection on the limited economic opportunities available to women and girls.

¹ FAO, ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNECE, UN Environment, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNISDR, UN Women, WFP and WHO are currently the member agencies/entities of the IBC-Gender.