Participants:
Adriana Lengyelova – Slovak Office of Standards Metrology and Testing, Slovak Republic
Aisling Duffy - Chief Executive at Certitude (?)
Alessandro Attolico – Executive Director of Territorial Planning and Innovation Development, Provincia di Potenza, Italy
Alexandre Lavassani – Manage, Oracle Investment
Alina Amador – Head of Standards, Fairtrade International
Asja Ciarini – Standardization Office of Italy
Bishop Hauya – Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS)
Britta Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg – WA Health, Government of Western Australia
Caitlin Kraft-Buchman – Executive Director, Women@TheTable & Gender Champions
Charles Gachahi – African Organisation for Standardisation
Claudia Lopes – Research Fellow, United Nations University
Daliya Bogatyreva – Specialist in educational and methodical work, Academy for Standardization, Metrology and Certification, Russian Federation
Deborah Wautier – Project Manager, Policy & Stakeholders Engagement, CEN-CENELEC
Elizabeth O’Ferrall – Standards Officer, National Standards Authority of Ireland
Fiona O’Donovan – National Standards Authority of Ireland
Florence Hombrecher – UN WOMEN
Francis Farrugia – Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority
Giovanna Michelotto – Fairtrade International
Hamid Lavassani – Global Sales and Distribution Director, Caterpillar
Ihsan Ovut – Secretary General, The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC)
Jindra Kafkova – Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing (UNMZ)
Jitka Kolárová – Head of International Cooperation Department, Czech Trade Inspection Authority
Karen Riley-Takos – General Manager, Operations, Standards Australia
Karín Athanas – Executive Officer & Board President, Women in Standards
Kelly Hawrylyshyn – Fairtrade International
Laura Villegas – Global Senior Leader on Communication and Marketing, Responsible Soya Organization (RTRS)
Linnea Carleson – UN WOMEN
Lowri Angharad Rees – Programme Specialist, UN WOMEN
Lucy He – Worksafe New Zealand
Mansha Marwah – Sustainability Analyst, GCL System Integration Technology Co. Ltd
Marialena Vyzaki – W+ Coordinator, Greece
Marijana Antarcrova – Policy & Communications Officer, ANEC
Marion Stoldt – Chair of WG.6, Physikalisch-Technischen Bundesanstalt (PTB), Germany
Marta Orviska – Professor, Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica, Slovak Republic
Melissa Gibson – International Organization for Standardization
Michelle Parkouda – Chair of GRSI Working Group, Manager, Research Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement, Standards Council of Canada
Mika Vepsalainen – Chief, UNECE Market Access Section
Odile Kossiwa Tsipoaka - Water Engineer & Chief Executive Officer, African Rural Water Programme (ARWP)
Oisin Curtis – Consultant, UNECE WP.6
Paola Travaini – Standardization Office of Italy
Pascale Mienville – AFNOR, France
Ray Walshe – Chair of GRSI Working Group, Assistant Professor, Dublin City University, Ireland
Renée B Adams – Professor of Finance at Said Business School, Oxford University, Unite Kingdom
Rikia Birindelli-Fayne – Director, Diversity & Inclusion, Catalyst Europe
Rosie Seville – U.K. Mission in Geneva, Switzerland
Sebastian Pantin Urdaneta – Intern, UNECE
Stephanie Eynon – Chair, Gender Responsive Standards Initiative, WP.6 & BSI Group, United Kingdom
Suli Zheng – Professor, China Jiliang University
1. **Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda**

Ms. Stephanie Eynon, Chair of the initiative, opened the meeting, adopted the agenda and asked all participants alongside the organisations they represent to present themselves.

2. **Presentation 1**

Ms. Karin Athanas presented on “Inclusion in Standards: A Survey of US ANSI-Accredited Standards Developing Organizations (SDOs).” The speaker reviewed the learning points gained through the survey which covered American National Standard Institute (ANSI) accredited American SDOs, with 81 official responses to the survey, covering a wide range of sectors, from emergency services to manufacturing to the public sector. A key result was that 93% of the respondents did not track the demographics of the users of the survey participants’ standards, which in this context was defined as gender, age, or race of the standards users. Furthermore, it was found that less than 5% of all survey respondents reported a level of women standard participants that reached 51-70%.
A key element of the survey was addressing why individuals left the standards industry early, or not did participate at all. Survey respondents answered that it depended on time restraints, interest in value, and that users who worked full-time jobs and helped write standards found it difficult to participate in standards creation, especially if it was on a voluntary level. The speaker suggested that ways to reduce these restrictions and raise the value of participation can be done by: providing training to association members; forming partnerships to develop standards; participating in online Q&As; offering shared resources. It was found that continued outreach with individuals was one of the most successful means to retain individuals in the standards making process. With respect to women, some cases were that they lost support from the organisation providing time and resources to participate and feelings of not being as valued as other members.

Ms. Stephanie Eynon opened the floor to questions. Mr. Lavassani Hamid asked if the ratio of women participation changed from industry to industry. The speaker responded that because of the relatively small sample size, it was not possible to differentiate trends among industries. Next year’s survey it is hoped that a larger sample can be gathered, with more representation of differing industries to look for correlations. Ms. Stephanie Eynon noted that in the UK the British Standard Institutions (BSI) has standard sectors are primarily made up of women, so representation does change per sector.

Mr. Ray Walshe queried if there was any feel from the survey that the barriers to participating was more of a gendered issue or more of an issue relating to the standards sector. The speaker responded that it would be interesting to look specifically if the issue of standards participation is related to gender representation in the standards sector. The speaker noted that recommendations they make to groups are related to addressing balances in standards committees. However, no evidence suggests that the standards sector scares away certain genders, and so the recommendations are focused on highlighting the value of more representative participation in standards setting.

Ms. Caitlin Kraft-Buchman asked what was most surprising from the responses and the biggest opportunities identified. The speaker responded that time was the most surprising restraint as the group conducting the survey assumed it would have been costs, and that biggest opportunity identified was understanding how SDOs can empower women to make their participation more successful and fostering a more inclusive environment.

3. Presentation 2
Ms. Renee B Adams presented “Women on boards: The superheroes of tomorrow?”. The speaker began the conversation by noting how greater representation of women on boards has both micro- and macroeconomic perspectives reflected in terms of individual companies’ performance and in terms of higher, sustainable growth rates. The presentation focused on the argument that women on boards are effectively superheroes because of the tremendous impact they can have on the boards of companies and in fostering greater economic growth.

The speaker argued that superheroes would value benevolence, stimulation, universalism, self-direction, hedonism, and achievement, which are traits found more in female leaders, as opposed to male leaders. A key finding was that women on boards tend to be less risk-averse than men, and that in most characteristics. The speaker presented data on average percent of women on boards for the boards of Fortune 500 firms, the 50 largest members in the EU primary blue-chip index, and the Boardex data on unregulated firms in 24 OECD countries from 2001 to 2016. On average, for the US, representation has risen from roughly 8- to 12-percent according, or 12- to 21-percent, according to Boardex and Catalyst data, respectively. On average, for the EU countries this has risen from roughly 7- to 21-percent, according to Boardex. A key point was that Boardex data always showed less diversity, as it does not look beyond larger firms which tend to have relatively more representation than smaller firms, thereby overrepresenting women’s participation.

Therefore, the speaker argued that it is hard for women to make a large impact now given the underrepresentation of women. However, through statistical regression, the speaker argued that more female directors on boards are not a robust result, such that simply adding women on boards does not magically solve problems. She then drew some mains conclusions: that it is fictitious that a lot of progress is being made when in reality there are fewer women on boards than it commonly said;
women on boards do not necessarily hold ‘superhero’ traits; women on boards do matter however, as they are different from men on boards; and having a business case for women on boards ignores how businesses can still fail regardless.

Ms. Stephanie Eynon noted that questions will be held in the end but asked how greater participation of women in standards development can be encouraged.

4. Presentation 3
Ms. Rikia Birindelli-Fayne presented “Tools to Accelerate and Maintain Women’s Inclusion.” The presentation began by recognising that most companies acknowledge the benefits of inclusivity, where boards look more like the markets they want to serve and decrease the possibility of groupthink. The speaker further noted that STEM industries still have considerable barriers to women. She stated that at Catalyst, inclusion is seen as an ongoing journey and highlighted the changes companies can take to move towards inclusivity: building awareness; defining strategy; mobilising; and implementing.

Building awareness entails identifying gaps and learning to address them. Defining strategy entails a comprehensive focus on understanding how to tackle the identified issues tied with key metrics in business outcomes. Mobilising entails engaging with stakeholders and building a culture of inclusion. Lastly, implementing entails sustaining the mobilisation, keeping track of progress and holding leaders accountable. She highlighted the global reach of the research on inclusive leadership which found that leaders must hold certain behaviour, such as owning mistakes, recognising weaknesses, and a constant effort to improve, to foster an inclusive environment.

She then explained that an inclusive workspace necessitates employees feeling truly valued, being able to trust one another to make meaningful decisions, feeling that they can be authentic and represent themselves truthfully at work, feeling free to hold different views, and feeling secure enough to address tough issues and make mistakes without being penalised. This leads to greater team problem-solving, worker engagement, higher retention rates, and greater innovation. The speaker concluded by presenting the tools Catalyst offers for internal benchmarking so that employers can ask the right questions. These include vital signs which measure representation, hiring, and promotions, and voluntary and involuntary turnover of women.

Ms. Stephanie Eynon noted that questions are to be held at the end but asked if that the speaker could reflect on the fact that simply adding women for the sake of doing so is not enough and that there has to be a focus on improving their experience and retention so that standards can be adequately changed.

5. Presentation 4
Ms. Claudia Abreu Lopes presents “Gender & Digital Health”. She began by outlining how COVID-19 has led to the accelerated use of digital technologies for tracing immediate outbreak responses, from tracing to testing, and the impact of mitigation measures, such as health promotion. She highlighted that such digital technologies can exacerbate already existing gender inequities. This itself is due to key inequity in access to mobile and internet services: 300 million fewer women than men use mobile internet, where women in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) are 20% less likely to use the internet on a mobile. This leads to discriminatory effects such as women being tracked less often than men. This also underlines the general trend where AI algorithms are gender-biased, such that facial recognition systems perform worse on women compared to men.

She then reviewed some possible solutions to these problems: addressing causal structural factors, such as affordability, literal digital skills, and security concerns; creating designs which remove cultural and practical barriers to improve technologies utility for women; involving women in the design, development, roll-out, and management of digital health products and services.

The speaker presented examples of practical barriers, such as financial barriers (which can be removed by lowering unnecessary taxes), supplementing contact tracing apps with non-internet based solutions, and that telemedicine services can be made available to allow access to healthcare which
would otherwise be barred because of cultural norms (for example, ensuring female doctors for female patients).

6. General Q&A
Ms. Stephanie Eynon opened the floor to questions, and then asked Ms. Renee Adams what her research could say on how better engagement with standards can be marketed towards women. Ms. Renee Adams responded that it is first key to understand why women are not represented, and to be careful on how engagement is presented as discussion of leadership and gender can be filled with unproductive stereotypes, and that there should be caution in simply stating that women should participate because standards would improve.

Ms. Stephanie Eynon then asked Ms. Rikia Birindelli-Fayne what might be a measure that could be implemented in the standards environment to aim towards true inclusivity and not token inclusivity. Ms. Rikia Birindelli-Fayne highlighted that it is important to have measurable targets to set expectations and reflect on what has been achieved, and that the measures depend on the desired outcomes, such as inclusion, gender equity, and diversity. In short, there is no catch-all solution and that measures should be catered to the company’s business strategy. Ms. Stephanie Eynon agreed, underscoring that there are more targets than simply asking how many women are in the room.

7. Update on GRSI Working Groups
Mr. Ray Walshe presented an “Update on GRSI Working Groups”, which briefly reviews the work on WG1 (led by Lucy He), WG2, (led by Gabrielle White), and WG3 (led by Ray Walshe).

The speaker reviewed the work of WG1 Knowledge Sharing and Training has prepared, including the adoption of a draft working plan and the start of resource collection from WG1 members. A shared depository has been created of shared documents and materials. Agreement has been reached on establishing a four-part survey to be prepared and sent out to Pledge signatories and other interested parties, and work has begun on preparing the first part of the survey.

The speaker then reviewed the work of WG2 Methodology which has developed and approved a Work Plan, and Roles and Responsibility documents. Work has begun on the first deliverable, a guidance document on developing gender responsive standards, with the second deliverable being guidance on assessing gender responsiveness of existing standards. The working group has discussed broad objectives, scope, and target audience, resulting in the drafting of an online document leading to work on drafting its content.

The speaker lastly reviewed the work of WG3 Network Development which has developed and approved a Work Plan, and Roles and Responsibility documents. Furthermore, the working group has worked on its network to move beyond National Representatives and Signatories to the Declaration and is aiming to have National Standards Bodies nominated as UNECE GRSI Ambassadors. In addition, work is ongoing on to move from Signatories to Gender Action Projects undertaken by those signatures and creating links with other Gender Organisations. The working group has discussed broad objectives, scope, and target audience.

Ms. Stephanie Eynon thanked the speaker and repeated his invitation if any attending participants would like to join in on the work of the working groups.

8. Closing
Ms. Stephanie Eynon reflected on the progress made during the past year and asked the what role standards can play on addressing the challenges faced by women during the pandemic to ensure that when another comparable event occurs that women are not disproportionately affected.

Mr. Mika Vepsäläinen, on behalf of the Secretariat, wanted to congratulate the great presentations and discussions, and extended an invitation to the 30th Session Jubilee of Working Party 6.

Ms. Stephanie Eynon thanked all speakers and participants and closed the meeting.