

April 4 2017: First meeting of the initiative for Gender-responsive standards under the auspices of the “Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies” (WP. 6)

Standards matter for women empowerment

The products that we use in our everyday lives – from sophisticated smartphones to simple door handles - are all designed to standards. So is also the critical infrastructure and equipment on which communities depend, such as dams and wind turbines.

Organizations use standards not just to define “what” an organization produces - i.e. the desired characteristics of the products or services it produces – but also to define the “how” - how operations should be managed to make quality reliable, and to ease the burden on the environmental and the community.

Initiative for gender-responsive standards

The goals of the UNECE initiative are:

- To challenge the perception that standards and technical regulations are “gender neutral”
- To enhance the contribution of standards in reaching SDG Goal 5 on “Empowering Women and Girls”.

Concrete actions under the initiative will include:

- promoting the participation of women in standard-setting and processes related to the development and implementation of technical regulations;
- developing and sharing best practice on how to take into account biological and cultural differences in standards development and implementation;
- developing gender indicators and criteria that can be used in standards development;
- identifying and undertaking actions to ensure that standards contribute to gender equality.

First meeting: 4 April 2017

- ✚ 10:00-11:00 Exchange of views – panel discussion (1 hour)
- ✚ 11:00 -12:30 Gender and standards – training
- ✚ 12:30-13:30 Lunch
- ✚ 13:30 – 15:30 Group exercise: analysis of existing standards through a gender lens
- ✚ 15:30 – 16:30 Conclusions and way forward.

Thousands of standards are developed every year to respond to these concerns. But are standards developed in a way that takes into account women’s needs? Gender is a fundamental tenet of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The empowerment of women and girls is one of the goals, and a pre-requisite for reaching all of the goals. So it is timely to take a look at standards through a gender lens, and ask how standards can hinder or contribute to gender equality.

The Working Party 6 works to:

- To promote the use of standards by policy-makers and business as a tool for reducing technical barriers to trade, promote increased resilience to disasters, foster innovation and good governance
- To promote the use of standards in the implementation of UN-wide goals, including the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the Sendai framework for action

Opportunities for partnerships and donors

Funding is sought to:

- empower the participation of women – specifically women from the poorest countries of the UNECE region – to participate in the work of the initiative;
- to support analytical and policy work to document and develop best practice;
- to support standards bodies in pilot countries to develop gender-responsive strategies for the development of standards and related supporting policies.

Details <https://goo.gl/Erlewl>

