



**UNECE**

## Annual Meeting

### Thematic Working Group on Gender and the Sustainable Development Goals United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia

**Theme: Women's economic empowerment in the green economy**

**Wednesday 9 November 2022**

Session 1: 8:30 – 10:30 (CET Geneva) 14:30 – 16:30 (GMT+7 Bangkok)

Session 2: 10:40-12:40 (CET Geneva) 16:40 – 18:40 (GMT+7 Bangkok)

Convened via the Zoom platform

#### 1. Introduction

The economic empowerment of women and gender equality are fundamental to achieving a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future for all. This is widely acknowledged and reflected in the 2030 Agenda both as a stand-alone goal for gender equality – SDG 5 – and as an accelerator to other SDGs in specific gender-responsive targets. Recent decades of experience in development policy and practice have further reinforced that addressing gender inequality has a strong impact on all three dimensions of sustainable development.

Climate change is the greatest threat facing the world today and advancing gender equality in the context of the climate crisis is one of the greatest global challenges of the 21st century. Climate change has had and will continue to have important and lasting impacts on our lives, development, and environment. The most vulnerable and marginalised population groups are disproportionately affected as they face the most severe impacts of climate change and will continue to do so as the situation worsens. Women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than men, as they constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent on the natural resources that climate change threatens most.

Nevertheless, women are not just victims of climate change. Women and girls, by virtue of their position and roles, are effective and powerful leaders and change-makers for climate adaptation and mitigation. In SPECA countries, many women are involved in sustainability initiatives, and their participation and leadership results in more effective climate action. Utilizing their knowledge, capabilities, and skills is crucial for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Women's engagement in climate change decision-making must be properly acknowledged, valued, and supported. Continuing to examine the opportunities, as well as the constraints, to empower women and girls to have a voice and be equal players in decision-making related to climate change and sustainability is essential for sustainable development and greater gender equality. Without gender equality today, a sustainable future, and an equal future, remains beyond our reach.

This annual meeting of the SPECA Working Group on Gender and SDGs will focus on policy initiatives and good practices taken towards achieving women's full, equal and meaningful participation and decision-making in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

ESCAP and UNECE will convene the annual meeting of the SPECA Working Group on Gender and SDGs on 9 November 2022 in the margins of the SPECA Economic Forum taking place from 16 to 17 November 2022 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The 2022 annual meeting of the SPECA Thematic Working Group and SDGs will be convened via Zoom.

## 2. Objectives

The annual meeting of the SPECA Working Group on Gender and SDGs is held annually in advance of the SPECA Economic Forum and serves as a forum for policy dialogue, capacity building and networking for government stakeholders from relevant key ministries and agencies in SPECA countries in partnership with UN agencies to discuss critical and key emerging issues for gender-transformative economic policies to empower women's decision-making and participation in the context of climate change. The meeting will contribute to efforts toward women's economic empowerment and gender equality, poverty reduction and economic growth in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Participants will share experiences in implementing various measures and initiatives and how these measures have affected gender equality in their countries. Strategies and actions will be further discussed to identify the way forward towards advancing gender equality in the context of climate change, including women's full economic and political empowerment in support of the 2030 Agenda.

Specific objectives of the Working Group for this Annual Meeting include:

- Increase awareness of the importance of participatory gender-transformative approaches to the design, implementation and monitoring of measures that tackle the structural barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;
- Share experiences and lessons learned on policy response including policy initiatives and measures implemented to achieve women's full, equal and meaningful participation and decision-making in the context of climate change and discuss further policy initiatives in response to challenges and national priorities for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;
- Identify the necessary actions and best practices to improve the enabling environment for women and girls in SPECA countries, including cross-sectoral measures and institutional coordination, public-private partnerships and active engagement of women's associations and women beneficiary groups into consultative and decision-making processes; and
- Identify opportunities for further sub-regional cooperation on the implementation of the SDG 5 on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls.

## 3. Outcomes

The outcome of the meeting of the SPECA Working Group on Gender and SDGs will inform the work of ESCAP and UNECE towards the Beijing+30 review process within the context of sub-regional collaboration with SPECA countries, including in the context of COVID-19. It is expected that one or more joint initiatives will be identified for potential future sub-regional collaboration. The key recommendations are expected to identify, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, both opportunities and challenges to achieving the ambitions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Sustainable Development Goal 5.

#### 4. Participants

The meeting of the SPECA Working Group on Gender Equality and SDGs will bring together government representatives working towards the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in SPECA countries. In addition to government representatives from national women's machineries, the participation of government representatives from other relevant ministries is also highly encouraged (ministries of finance, the economy, and climate change in particular). Participants may further include representatives of relevant UN agencies, funds and programmes; representatives of international financial institutions (IFIs); representatives of civil society organizations; and other relevant stakeholders across the ESCAP and UNECE regions.

#### 5. Modality/structure of event

The meeting of the SPECA Working Group on Gender and SDGs will be convened virtually on the Zoom platform. Simultaneous interpretation English/Russian will be available, and it will be conducted using an interactive format in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, good practices and lessons learnt by representatives from SPECA countries.

The meeting will be opened by high-level representatives from ESCAP and UNECE.

The annual meeting of the *SPECA Working Group on Gender and SDGs* will consist of two substantive sessions:

- (a) Country presentations by participants (ten minutes each), sharing of best practices and lessons learned on the thematic priority areas for the Working Group including policy initiatives and measures implemented to achieve women's full, equal and meaningful participation and decision-making in the context of climate change in SPECA countries. Interventions are invited for 10 minutes each. Full versions of statements, if longer, may be submitted in advance of the meeting - these will be annexed to the meeting report.
- (b) A group discussion to identify strategies and actions for further response to women's economic empowerment in the context of climate change based on gender-transformative policies and opportunities for sub-regional cooperation and partnership. Guiding questions include:
  - ✚ How can governments and other stakeholders accelerate the integration of gender equality considerations in national and subnational climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, plans and programmes?
  - ✚ What are the most efficient measures to make national climate change plans and strategies more gender-responsive and inclusive? And what are the key challenges and lessons learned in this regard?
  - ✚ What are some existing practices/lessons learned to increase the participation and leadership of women in climate change and environmental decision-making processes?

Representatives of international organizations, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and international financial institutions will also be invited to make interventions.

## 6. Tentative Programme

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Online meeting via Zoom

Time slots below are listed in CET (Geneva)

8:00-8:30	Registration for in-person participants and log-in for virtual participants
	<b>Opening of the meeting</b>
8:30-08:50	<p><b>Welcome remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)</li> <li>• Mr. Dmitry Maryasin, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)</li> <li>• Ms. Sadagat Gahramanova, Deputy Chairperson, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, Azerbaijan and Chair of the SPECA Working Group on Gender Equality and SDGs</li> </ul> <p><b>Keynote addresses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Alia Al-Yassir, UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia</li> <li>• Dr. Anke Stock, Senior Gender Expert and Programmes Coordinator, Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)</li> </ul> <p><b>Overview of the meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan, Social Affairs Officer, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP</li> </ul>
	<b>Policy initiatives and best practices implemented to achieve women’s full, equal and meaningful participation and decision-making in the context of climate change</b>
08:50-10:30	<p><b>Overview presentation:</b> Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Country presentations</b> (10 minutes each) <i>Country’s representatives are invited for interventions of up to 10 minutes. Full versions of statements, if longer, may be submitted in advance of the meeting and will be annexed to the meeting report</i></li> <li>- Azerbaijan</li> <li>- Kazakhstan (tbc)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kyrgyzstan</li> <li>- Tajikistan (tbc)</li> <li>- Turkmenistan</li> <li>- Uzbekistan</li> </ul> <p>Peer learning and sharing of best practices and lessons learned on the thematic priority areas for the Working Group, including policy initiatives and measures implemented to achieve women’s full, equal and meaningful participation and decision-making in the context of climate change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion moderated by ESCAP</li> </ul>
10:30-10:40	<b>Coffee break</b>
	<b>Group Discussion: Women’s economic empowerment in the context of climate change based on gender-transformative policies and opportunities for sub-regional cooperation and partnership</b>
10:40-12:30	<p><b>Overview presentation:</b> Ms. Shreya Kumra, Programme Management Officer, Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating gender equality and inclusivity in environmental policies and championing participation and leadership of women and girls in shaping climate solutions in the SPECA region in view of the ongoing COP27. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ms. Dono Abdurazakova, Regional gender adviser, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)</li> <li>- Ms. Nargis Azizova, Programme Specialist, UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia</li> <li>- Dr. Margherita Calderone, Principal Economist, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)</li> <li>- Ms. Tiffany Sprague, UNDP-UNICEF STEM4ALL coordinator, UNDP Regional Hub</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discussion moderated by UNECE</li> </ul>
	<b>Closing of the meeting</b>
12:30-12:40	<p><b>Concluding remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Sadagat Gahramanova, Deputy Chairperson, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, Azerbaijan and Chair of the SPECA Working Group on Gender Equality and SDGs</li> <li>• Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP</li> </ul>

## 7. Contacts

### **Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan**

Social Affairs Officer

Social Development Division, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Email: [lindstromoguzhan@un.org](mailto:lindstromoguzhan@un.org)

Tel: +41 76 378 16 08

### **Ms. Shreya Kumra**

Programme Management Officer

Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Email: [shreya.kumra@un.org](mailto:shreya.kumra@un.org)

Tel: +41 22 917 30 59