

**Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)**  
**Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards teleconference discussion notes and actions**  
**5 July 2023, 16:00 CET**

| Item | Subject               | Discussion / Action   |
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|      | Invited guest speaker | <p>Ms. Yanchun Zhang, UNDP, Human Development Report Office presented the <i>UNDP's 2023 Gender Social Norms Index Report</i> entitled “<i>Breaking Down Gender Biases: Shifting social norms towards gender equality</i>”</p> <p>The UNDP develops several index reports, the most famous of which is the <i>Human Development Index</i>. Besides the <i>Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI)</i>, there are two other gender indexes: <i>Gender Inequality Index (GII)</i> and <i>Gender Development Index (GDI)</i>. These latter two are based on achievement-based objective measures of gender equality like rights, health, education and standards of living. The <i>GSNI</i> is looking at social norms to see how these influence beliefs, prejudices, biases and affect people’s behaviour. It is more about perception of gender norms. The <i>GSNI</i> was first introduced within the 2019 <i>Human Development Report</i> and covers four key dimensions – political, educational, economic and physical integrity – to highlight areas where women and girls face systematic disadvantages and discrimination.</p> <p>These key dimensions are characterized by one or two indicators of biases against women. For example in the educational dimension, one indicator measures whether people think “universities are more important for men than for woman.” Respondents can choose answers ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or neither. The index defines individuals who answer strongly agree or agree as having a bias. For some indicators where there may be cultural or social implications (e.g. reproductive rights), only the strongly disagree is measured as having a bias.</p> <p>The index considers eighty countries and results show that nearly 90% of all surveyed have at least one bias against women. The study further shows that it is both men and women that hold similar levels of bias.</p> <p>Importantly, the study reveals that there has been a decade of stagnation where there has been barely any reduction in bias against women in the last decade.</p> <p>The educational dimension also reveals that there is a de-linkage between women’s economic empowerment and gaps in education. It would have been expected that a decrease in the gap in education result in improved women’s economic empowerment, but this has not been the case.</p> <p>Political participation has also remained consistent since 1995 at around a 10% rate of participation of women in high-level positions.</p> <p>The report concludes on a positive note, that it is up to all of us to shift social norms. We need to work on policy interventions / institutional reforms (investment, innovation and insurance/social protection) and a new social context (recognition, education, representation – pushing more women to the political and economic arena).</p> <p>At the UN Women Deliver 2023 Conference organized by UN Women in Kigali, 17-20 July 2023, UNDP will launch a report done in partnership with UN Women on women’s/men’s achievements.</p> <p>It was underlined that many of the guidance provided in the <i>GSNI</i>, such as increasing women’s participation; engaging more women in leadership roles; ensuring that gender mainstreaming is not only a women’s issue, but an issue of everyone; avoiding harmful stereotypes ... are all priorities that the <i>GSNI</i> share with the <i>Guidelines</i> of the GRS.</p> <p>Moving forward, it was suggested that UNDP will share further information on similar topics to allow GRS experts to also engage.</p> |
| 1a   | Roll call             | <p><u>Leadership</u>: <u>Michelle Parkouda</u> (Chair), <u>Lucy He</u> (Vice-Chair)<br/> <u>Secretariat</u>: Lance Thompson, Tauno Kangur<br/> <u>Experts</u>: <u>Aleandra Aguirre</u>, <u>Alejandra Torrelío</u>, <u>Anna Chebotareva</u>, <u>Asja Ciarini</u>, Ciobanu Mihail, <u>Fiona ODonovan</u>, <u>Florence Uwatwembi</u>, Heghea Ecaternia, Hugh Pratt, <u>Ingvild Naess Stub</u>, <u>Irma Camos Garvizu</u>, <u>Ivonne Casas</u>, <u>Julia Alandia</u>, <u>Karla Suazo</u>, <u>Katie</u></p>  |

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|    |  | <p><u>Kermaani</u>, <u>Larau Villegas</u>, <u>Lorraine Gruber</u>, Mansha Marwah, <u>Maria Renee Gallardo</u>, <u>Marianna Kramarikova</u>, Marvin Krause, <u>Michurina Daria</u>, Monideep Dey, <u>Mona Kadhem Alalawi</u>, Peter Morfee, <u>Reyna Roque</u>, Rodrigo Juan Pablo Sanchez, <u>Sari Winasis Basuki</u>, <u>Silvina Suzuki</u>, Yanchun Zhang<br/>34 participants (23 were women)</p>   |
| 1b | Approval of the Agenda                                 | Agenda agreed with no modifications   |
| 2  | Approval of the GRS annual Report                      | <p>The draft GRS annual report to the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of Working Party 6 was presented. The reports from all of the WP.6 subgroups are using the same template which includes the following sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction (one paragraph about the work, one paragraph about elections and meeting information)</li> <li>2. Report on progress of activities for the period 2022-2023 (linking back to the PoW for 2023 and explaining progress on each point)</li> <li>3. Impact and implementation (including return on experiences, implementation of the standards/recommendations, relation with other organization’s work)</li> <li>4. Pertinence of the topic today (a more global vision on the topic)</li> <li>5. Future directions</li> </ol> <p>For the GRS report, the impact section with return on experiences includes examples that were provided during the May annual meeting. Each of the speakers will be asked to double-check the summary of their interventions, so there may be some minor adjustments. There was a comment raised in the “Pertinence” section on an example provided through WTO’s intervention at the 24 May event, stating that the unpaid work of housekeeping or childcare in Japan is perhaps not very good. There was consensus that while the example may not be ideal to counter gender stereotypes, it is still a significant issue throughout the world and a profound barriers to women’s full economic participation. It was therefore decided to maintain it but contextualize the example by adding a phrase stating that this is still an issue worldwide where women work more on unpaid care work.</p> |
| 3  | Elements for the GRS contribution to the WP.6 PoW 2024 | <p>The draft elements for the GRS contribution into the <i>WP.6 Programme of Work 2024</i> was presented. This was largely based on the <i>2023 PoW</i> with some small modifications. The development of materials reflects the discussions of the April GRS meeting. The reference to the two informal action areas were removed, but the related activities are still present. It was reminded that all work that will be done in the coming period needs to be covered in the relevant working party programme of work. There was a question on “resources on how to implement the <i>Guidelines</i>”. This is more on return on experience on how they are being used.</p>   |
| 4  | Update from Secretariat                                | <p>The secretariat announced that there is further interest in the <u><i>Declaration on Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development</i></u> from the UL Standards and Engagement body in the United States (they actually “signed” the declaration unilaterally and are now normalizing this) and maybe Czech Republic (thank you Michelle), and maybe El Salvador.</p> <p>The secretariat also asked experts’ if they felt strongly about having the UNECE Executive Secretary on all <i>Declaration</i> as the clearance process for this does add some additional administrative steps and there is no real engagement on the side of the UNECE. Experts did not have strong feeling about this.</p> <p>Experts are encouraged to suggest to other standards bodies to consider becoming signatories.</p> <p>It was suggested that there are many standards bodies in the African region that have not yet signed the declaration but who are beginning to consider gender seriously. The secretariat suggested that if a list of contacts in the countries could be provided with emails, then it could do the necessary to approach them.</p> <p>The secretariat also reported that the “Why Gender-Responsive Standards Are Better for Everyone” publication is currently with the UN Document Management being finalized. It should be published before the GRS next meeting.</p> <p>Experts were also encouraged to take advantage of the summer months to respond to the template survey on gender action plan implementation.</p>   |

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| 5 | Preparation of a 27 Sept webinar | <p>It was suggested that the GRS regular meeting of 27 September be converted to a webinar on “The intersection of Gender, Standards and Sustainable Development.”</p> <p>Trade is a major element of sustainable development. Generating income can be a major vector to the empowerment of women. More opportunities for women in trade leads to a better trading environment for the economy. US statistics underline that up to 93% of the global trade involves technical regulations and standards. If these are not gender responsive, then it may further exacerbate the gender gap.</p> <p>Education is also a strong vector for inclusion and gender-mainstreaming.</p> <p>There was a question on our target audience and if we plan to try to attract a wider audience or is this for solely for the GRS experts. In order to attract a wider audience, perhaps piggy-back on the topic of standards and sustainable development and then demonstrate the gender aspect (as a secondary angle).</p> <p>The secretariat suggested that this topic be brought to the wider work on sustainable development and circular economy within the UNECE Trade Division to tap in on their audience and help to formulate the topic/synopsis more precisely.</p> <p>On potential speakers: there were suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to invite Gülser Corat, former Director of Gender Equality at UNESCO who has recently authored reports on gender and artificial intelligence.</li> <li>• to approach the WTO on the linkage between trade and sustainable development.</li> <li>• to approach the ISO/IEC JSAG on their gender guidance and the survey that they have been conducting on the topic (results of which should be released shortly).</li> <li>• to have a speaker on education and the international standards for education.</li> <li>• to have a sharing of experiences/best practices on the topic, like that done at the annual meeting on 24 May.</li> </ul> <p>Timing of the meeting: 13:00-15:00 CET</p> |
| 6 | Other business                   | <p>The meeting after September had initially been planned as a face-to-face meeting just before the WP.6 Annual Session. The experts on the call decided that it would be best to convert this to a virtual meeting. The secretariat requested that another date be chosen. It was decided that it would be replaced by a regular working call of the GRS on 15 November 2023, from 20:00 Geneva-time.</p>   |
|   |                                  | <p>Next GRS call: 27 September webinar on “The intersection of Gender, Standards and Sustainable Development” will start from 13:00 CET (Geneva-time).</p>   |