OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this round table are:

- to provide a mutual learning space where participants may interact with their peers and other stakeholders to identify common challenges, exchange best practice and propose solution;
- to learn from case studies and identify lessons learnt and agree a set of key messages which can be shared with a wider audience to accelerate and provide policy support for the national and regional implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue to facilitate the uptake of international standards by policymakers at national and local level and encourage women's full and effective participation in decision-making (SDG 5.5).

Context

Standards set out the specifications of the products and services we use in everyday lives and of the equipment we use at our workplace. They are a mainstay of infrastructure, underpin enterprise management and are extensively used in policies and regulations.

Standards support the uptake of resource-saving products and technologies, assist organizations in reporting on their commitments, and integrate an inclusive decision-making process, which empowers all stakeholders. They help scale-up technological innovation and are at the very basis of increased competitiveness and economic progress. However, the potential of standardization for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals is neither fully understood nor exploited.
GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How do Standards Support Sustainable Development?

What examples can communities, national governments and other stakeholders share of successful contextualization and uptake of standards in the economic, social and environmental spheres? What are the specific challenges in the use of voluntary standards for policy-making and regulatory practices? How do standards facilitate the scaling up of solutions and harness the potential of new technologies and innovation? What do gender-responsive standards for SDGs 5, 10, 12 and 13 look like?

2. Gender Responsive Standards for Inclusive Growth

How to encourage gender responsive standards in fields that are critical for sustainable development? How can standards contribute to and have greater influence in building income security, decent work and economic autonomy for all? How to harness the potential of gender responsive standards, especially in areas of advanced technologies and innovation, to achieve sustained and inclusive growth? What is the role of international standards developing organizations in promoting gender-responsive policies and practices? What role can UNECE play in fostering collaboration on gender responsive standards? What are examples of innovative partnerships between organizations to develop standards, which empower women and girls? How can UNECE work to position gender responsive standards as a fundamental tool for a more inclusive world? What policies and programmes better ensure that standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide?

3. Women's Empowerment as an Engine of Growth

What steps have been effective in standardization in bringing women into processes that affect them? What are good practice examples that ensure women's agency, participation and leadership in decision-making? How have standards been able to enable integrated approaches to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level?
## CO-MODERATORS, RAPPORTEUR AND SPEAKERS

This round table will be moderated by Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (TBC). Distinguished speakers for this event include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPEAKER</th>
<th>TENTATIVE TOPICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H.E. Ambassador Michael Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg, Permanent</td>
<td><strong>Standards as a tool for better and</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative, Mission of Germany to the WTO (TBC)</td>
<td><strong>agile regulation (Joint Initiative on Standardization)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.E. Ambassador Stephen de Boer, Permanent</td>
<td><strong>Canada's Gender Responsive Standards Action Plan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative, Mission of Canada to the WTO (TBC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary,</td>
<td><strong>Gender Responsive Standards</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNECE (TBC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Alia El-Yassir, Regional Director of UN Women Europe and Central</td>
<td><strong>Gender Mainstreaming in Policymaking</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia (TBC)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Isabel Durant, Deputy Secretary General,</td>
<td><strong>Inclusive Supply Chains</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCTAD (TBC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Bilel Jamoussi, Chief of the Study Groups</td>
<td><strong>Mitigating Gender Bias in AI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of ITU Standardization Bureau (TBC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Hein Bollens, Deputy Head of Unit,</td>
<td><strong>Inclusive Education on Standards Issues</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for Growth, European Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairtrade International (TBC)</td>
<td><strong>Women's Leadership</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Schools/Fairtrade Towns</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Tentative topics:

- Standards as a tool for better and agile regulation (Joint Initiative on Standardization)
- Canada’s Gender Responsive Standards Action Plan
- Gender Responsive Standards
- Gender Mainstreaming in Policymaking
- Inclusive Supply Chains
- Mitigating Gender Bias in AI
- Inclusive Education on Standards Issues
- Women’s Leadership
- Schools/Fairtrade Towns
PARTICIPANTS

This round table is of particular relevance for Policymakers (Ministries of Economic Development/Social Affairs/Trade/Finance/Environment/Labour), Business associations, Standards Developing Organizations, Civil Society, NGOs, Gender Equality and Academia with an interest on sustainable development, including by achieving women's empowerment and gender equality. The round table will be an interactive event: participants are encouraged to share stories of how they have successfully used standards for policy-making in different sectors and contexts.

ORGANIZERS

This round table is organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in cooperation with UN Women, Fairtrade International and the Responsible Jewellery Council.

BACKGROUND

Multi-stakeholder dialogues and concerted actions on markets, in supply chains and within public institutions are of vital importance for the realization of the gender dimension of Agenda 2030 and the empowerment of women and girls. Voluntary standards provide an inclusive language that can be used by all actors and are a powerful tool that can sustain and further this broad cooperation effort. A practical way forward for standards bodies wishing to take a step towards making the standards they develop and the standards development process they follow gender responsive is to engage in dialogues with partners to identify challenges and devise common solutions.

The Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards

The Declaration invites all standards bodies, whatever their business model and operations (national, regional, international, consortia based, etc) to pledge to make the standards they develop and the standards development process they use gender responsive. The initiative brings together a diverse working group composed of representatives from standardization bodies as well as experts on gender issues and women's empowerment, representative of regulatory bodies and policymakers, as well as NGOs, UN Organizations and members of the academic community.
**UNECE’s Gender Responsive Standards Initiative**

In 2016, UNECE and its Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) launched the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative. The initiative aims to strengthen the use of standards and technical regulations as powerful tools to attain SDG 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls), integrate a gender lens in the development of both standards and technical regulations, as well as elaborate gender indicators and criteria that could be used in standards development.

**SDG LINKAGES**

Gender responsive standards contribute to the implementation of several Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, including:

- **5 GENDER EQUALITY**
  - By promoting the empowerment of women and girls at all levels

- **8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**
  - By promoting development-oriented policies that support inclusion & the protection of economic rights

- **9 INDUSTRIES, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
  - By fostering innovation which promotes inclusive and sustainable industrialization

- **11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**
  - By facilitating the emergence of tools which accelerate access to reliable, sustainable & modern energy for all

- **12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**
  - By harnessing innovations which make cities & human settlements safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable

- **13 CLIMATE ACTION**
  - By strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards, impact reduction and warning