

Draft Concept Note

Beijing+25 UNECE Regional Review Meeting

“From commitments in Beijing to transformative results by 2030 – Gender equality in the ECE region”

Geneva, 29–30 October 2019

Title of the session: Smart investments: Financing for Gender Equality (Item 8 of the Agenda)

Date and time: 29 October 2019, 16:30-18:00, Room XXVII

Lead organizer: UN Women

Objective of the session

Investing in gender equality is one of the surest paths to achieving gender equality as it translates commitments into meaningful action and implementation. Without proper financing by states' national budgets and an increase in aid targeting gender equality, international and national commitments cannot be achieved. This session will cover several aspects of financing for gender equality including; government allocations and expenditures from national budgets through gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) initiatives, and gender sensitive financing by international organizations and/or foundations and private sector. It will highlight novel strategies that impact women's lives, such as the use of Austria's experience and best practice.

The session will also explore the issue of investing in women's organisations as a critical mechanism for driving change to support gender equality in the context of restricted space for civil society tied to the rise of right-wing and conservative movements. Additional discussions will include: the limited availability of international funding for civil society organizations (CSOs) working on gender equality and the support of government-organized NGOs (GONGOs) in lieu of civil society organizations. Perspectives will include the ways in which the full and equal participation of women in civil society can keep governments accountable and bring about transformative change.

Thematic focus:

This session will draw on diverse case studies related to financing for gender equality: gender responsive budgeting, private sector financing, international aid in support of gender equality and women's rights and support from foundations. The approach will also be to explore cross-cutting themes, such as financing gender equality in the context of restricted space for civil society and the rise of right-wing movements.

Guiding questions:

- How to re-think fiscal space to ensure financial commitments to implement gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) priorities?
- What are successful models for public-private partnerships for implementing the GEWE agenda?
- What are considered to be best practices in GRB? What have been the pitfalls in developing good practice? How GRB supported meeting gender equality targets?
- How have States used gender-responsive macro-economic and tax policies to foster equality in diverse sectors, such as employment, social protection, childcare and others?
- What has been the approach taken to address restricted civil society space, restrictions on financing and the rise of conservative movements against "gender ideologies"?
- How has the engagement of women in the policy and budgetary making process changed perceptions on how the budget is composed and its impact on women's lives?

Composition of the panel: key participants

Moderator:

Mr. Helmut Berger, Head of the Parliamentary Budget Office, **Austria**

Panellists:

- Ms. Eglantina Gjermeni, Chair of Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Gender Equality, **Albania**
- Ms. Anna Björnermark, Associate Director for Gender Mainstreaming and Access to Services, **European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**
- Ms. Janet Veitch, **Civil Society Representative** (*Chair, UK Women's Budget Group, United Kingdom*)
- Ms. Dana Haidan Georgakarakou, **Private Sector Representative**, Regional Head of Social Impact, **VISA**