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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Gender-responsive standards initiative

Revised Recommendation U on “Gender-Responsive Standards”*

Enhancing the contribution of standards in reaching Sustainable Development Goal 5 on “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”

Submitted by the secretariat

Summary

The text of the Recommendation is presented to the Working Party for discussion and adoption.

Mandate

The Working Party agreed at its twenty-fifth session to continue discussion on how it could further contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2015/2, para. 11).

Proposed decision

Member States approve the new Recommendation U on “Gender-Responsive Standards”. They mandate the secretariat to report on its implementation. They encourage the donor community to make available resources for capacity-building projects to assist member States in its implementation.

* The Working Party approved the Recommendation U on its twenty-eighth session in November 2018 (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2018/2, para. 57 [Decision 10]).



I. Introduction

1. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies,
2. Taking special note of how the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development now represents a cornerstone for the United Nations in all sectors of its activity,
3. Wishing to enhance the contribution of standards and technical regulations in the implementation of Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda,
4. Aiming at improving gender balance in standards development and
5. Ensuring that the content and impact of standards when implemented are gender responsive,

Affirms that:

6. Member States consult with national standardization bodies operating within their respective jurisdictions and encourage these bodies to sign the “Declaration for Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development” that has been prepared by the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies.
7. The above-mentioned recommendation and its Annex are contained, respectively, in Section II and III of this document.

II. Declaration for Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development

We, as a national / regional / international standards body / standards development organization:

- Acknowledge Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- Acknowledge the pervasive and influential role of standards in society;
- Acknowledge that representation of women in standards development is almost always below parity and that the outcomes for men and women are not explicitly addressed during the standards development process;
- Recognize that the content of standards and engaging in the standards development process are opportunities for women’s empowerment;
- Recognize that different national / regional / international standards bodies / standards development organizations operate in different ways and within different infrastructures;
- Express our resolve to work towards:
 - gender inclusive standards development organizations;
 - gender responsive standards;
 - gender balance at all levels within our wider infrastructure (including in governing bodies);
 - enhanced expertise to create and deliver gender inclusivity;

And therefore, we hereby pledge to make standards and the standards development process gender responsive by:

1. Affirming this Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development Declaration;
2. Creating and proactively implementing a gender action plan for our organization;
3. Tracking progress, collecting and sharing data, success stories and good practices.

III. Annex to the “Declaration for Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development”

The Annex, maintained on the ECE website, supports the Declaration for Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development. The Annex outlines actions that national / regional / international standards bodies / standards development organizations can include in their gender action plan for gender responsive standards and standards development.

It is for each organization to decide what they can / should include in their gender action plan. The list of actions is not exhaustive; it is intended simply to provide ideas and inspiration for gender action plans for standards development organizations of any type.

1. *Group of actions 1: Working towards gender balanced / representative and inclusive standards development environments*
 - 1.1. Strive for a representative number of women in all phases of standards development:
 - i. assess the gender balance of our committees and determine if there is an opportunity to improve;
 - ii. connect with organizations and informal networks within industries and professions to improve the gender balance of our technical committees;
 - iii. collect sex-disaggregated data on participants in standards development (overall and by industry) and compare this with employment statistics (e.g. develop a graph indicating the gender balance on committees and update it annually, and if possible, aggregate it by industry sectors).
 - 1.2. Strive to create a standards development environment which enables gender inclusivity and equality:
 - i. ensure the leadership supports striving for a gender inclusive environment and for gender responsive standards;
 - ii. conduct yearly research with committee members to learn about any differences in experiences in standards development based on gender;
 - iii. develop and implement policies, procedures and activities which support gender inclusivity (e.g. raising awareness; training for committee chairs, programme managers, members; distributing this declaration to all those involved in standards development, etc.);
 - iv. review the gender balance of the chairs / senior roles within standards making and seek to improve it where it is imbalanced.
 - 1.3. Support individuals who want to be gender advocates by encouraging and enabling them to act within their areas of standards development:
 - i. encourage programme/project managers and chairs to promote gender inclusivity on their standards development committees and provide them with tools and resources to do so;

- ii. share (within and between organizations) information / data / experiences about internal or external gender inclusivity projects to identify and share best practice.
 - 1.4. Strive for gender representative participation in other phases of the standards development process including making proposals, commenting on proposals and commenting on drafts.
 - 1.5. Ensure organizational and individual gender actions plans include relevant objectives so that progress can be monitored and measured.
2. *Group of actions 2: Creating gender responsive standards*
- 2.1. Strive to develop a network of gender experts to provide a resource to support standards development committees in their work:
 - 2.2. Contribute to the development of a tool(s) suitable for conducting gender-based analysis of all standards in any form of active development (new or revision) to ensure standards are gender responsive in their content and implementation. This tool could be based on Gender-Based Analysis Plus developed by Status of Women Canada, or other methods.
 - 2.3. Provide training for any new tools which may be developed and ensure you are measuring the participation in and impact of this training.
 - 2.4. Use existing frameworks (e.g. the International Organization for Standardization, European Committee for Standardization, European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization, regional standards organizations etc.) to work collaboratively and share resources/expertise.
 - 2.5. Ensure committees have relevant expertise, tools and resources to strive to develop gender responsive standards:
 - i. provide committees with any necessary training to develop their gender expertise;
 - ii. ensure committees include a gender expert or have access to gender expertise (e.g. via a network of gender experts).
 - 2.6. Strive to institutionalize successful and effective practices, procedures and policies to ensure the future / sustainability of gender responsive standards development
3. *Group of actions 3: Creating gender responsive standards bodies*
- 3.1. Assess existing and develop / obtain as required the skills and expertise needed to create and implement a gender action plan.
 - 3.2. Collect data on the gender ratio of employees at all different levels.
 - 3.3. Develop training tools to enhance the gender awareness of employees.
 - 3.4. Monitor and record the participation in and impact of any training provided.
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