



“Session on Gender equality and empowerment of women’s rights”

22 March 2017 - From 15h00 to 17h00 (London time)

Organised by Dialogue Café Serbia

DC Participants: Belgrade, Cidade de Praia, Cleveland, Lisbon, Novi Pazar, Rio de Janeiro

CONCEPT NOTE

0. BACKGROUND

Dialogue Café Serbia is coordinating a session on **“Gender Equality and the empowerment of women’s rights”** with the aim of supporting Gender equality and parity as both are key pillars to ensure a sustainable future for the world. The session will address some of major challenges faces globally by women by promoting experiences and knowledge sharing between the countries and cities involved in the session. The event will take place in the framework of the Cycle organised by Dialogue Café on [“Women’s Empowerment: sharing challenges and good practices”](#).

In order to conduct the discussion and provide to participants with detailed information about the purpose of the debate and the issues we would like to raise during the discussion.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Why is the topic important and why we discuss it today?

Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth. Gender equality and parity is key to ensuring a sustainable future for the world.

For many years, the UN has faced serious challenges in its efforts to promote gender equality globally, including inadequate funding and no single recognized driver to direct UN activities on gender equality issues. Over many decades, the UN has made significant progress in advancing gender equality, including through landmark agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Moreover, Gender equality is listed the 5th Sustainable Development Goal, and was the 3rd listed goal in the agenda of Millennium Development Goals.

We discuss it today, since **8th of March** is declared the International Women’s Day.

2. What is the difference between gender equality, gender equity, and women's empowerment?

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality. Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Where gender inequality exists, it is generally women who are excluded or disadvantaged in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources. Therefore a critical aspect of promoting gender equality is **the empowerment of women**, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy *to manage their own lives*. **Gender equality does not mean that men and women** become the same; only that access to opportunities and life changes is neither dependent on, nor constrained by, their sex.

Achieving gender equality requires women's empowerment to ensure that decision-making at private and public levels, and access to resources are no longer weighted in men's favour, so that both women and men can fully participate as equal partners in productive and reproductive life.

II Theory vs. Practice

3. What are the aspects of inequality and common problems women face globally?

Yet gender inequalities remain deeply entrenched in every society.

Women lack access to decent work and face occupational segregation and gender wage gaps. They are too often denied access to basic education and health care. Women in all parts of the world suffer violence and discrimination. They are under-represented in political and economic decision-making processes.

4. Which of these aspects are embedded in our societies?

E.g. Gender equality in Serbia has not yet been reached and women continue to face a number of problems in attempting to exercise their guaranteed rights. Men and women in Serbia enjoy equal rights, research shows that the overall socio-economic status of women is in a much worse position in relation to men, and that there is a deep gap between declared principles and specific practices in the implementation of policies.

5. How is gender inequality symbolized and reproduced in everyday life in your countries?

Why and when do women and men act differently? Why and when do people respond differently to women than men?

6. To what extent the cultural norms reinforce gender inequality?

Examples > A member of the Cambodian government uses a vivid image when describing the need to question the cultural norms that reinforce gender inequality. She says the aim is not to overturn the cultural identity of the nation, but to focus on the elements within it that oppress women: "There is a Cambodian saying that men are a piece of gold, and women are a piece of cloth. The piece of gold, when it is dropped in mud, is still a piece of gold. But a piece of cloth, once it's stained, it's stained forever.

- *In some parts of Serbia we still face extremely patriarchal culture, which means men should be the heads of households and hold executive working positions, while women's business is to raise children, cook and do the housework.*

7. What are the other roots of the problem of gender inequality?

III Empowering women rights

8. How to encourage leadership and political participation of women? Please share specific examples of your country.

The percentage of women in parliament has nearly doubled in the last 20 years. But this only translates into 22% of women in parliament today. Wide variations remain in the average percentages of women parliamentarians in each region. As of June 2016, these were (single, lower and upper houses): Nordic countries, 41.1 per cent; Americas, 27.7 per cent; Europe excluding Nordic countries, 24.3 per cent; sub-Saharan Africa, 23.1 per cent; Asia, 19.2 per cent; Arab States, 18.4 per cent; and the Pacific, 13.5 per cent.

9. How can we promote economic empowerment in the light of the upcoming sixty-first session of the Commission on the status of Women? Please share specific examples of your country.

When more women work, economies grow. An increase in female labour force participation—or a reduction in the gap between women’s and men’s labour force participation—results in faster economic growth.

10. Measures to address violence against women at the national and global level?

In 1993, the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women provided a framework for action on the pandemic. But more than 20 years later, 1 in 3 women still experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner.

11. How can we encourage women’s participation in peace processes? Please share the experiences of your country.

In 2000, the pioneering UN Security Council resolution 1325 recognized that war impacts women differently and stressed the need to increase women’s participation in peace talks. But from 1992 to 2011 only 9% of negotiators at peace tables were women.

12. How important is the role of civil society organizations and the commissioner for the Protection of Equality? Please share specific examples.

13. Is gender equality a concern for men?

14. How can governments, civil society, and other organizations encourage young men to support gender equality? Please share specific examples of policies, programs, and initiatives...

For more information

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