



High-level interactive dialogue among Ministers on the priority theme

Building alliances for social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

Tuesday, 12 March 2019, 3.00pm – 6.00pm, United Nations Headquarters

Overview

In accordance with its methods of work, the Commission on the Status of Women holds a ministerial segment that may include ministerial round tables or other high-level interactive dialogues (see [here](#)). At its sixty-third session, the Commission’s ministerial segment will include a three-hour high-level interactive dialogue among Ministers on “Building alliances to promote social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.” The report of the Secretary-General is available [here](#).

The interactive dialogue will provide Ministers with an opportunity to engage with each other on opportunities, good practices, challenges and lessons learned with regards to their experiences, as well as with stakeholders on building alliances and how such alliances can help to promote social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Among relevant stakeholders may be representatives of trade unions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) especially women’s organizations, international and regional finance institutions that are working on one or all of the three areas of the priority theme. A limited number will be invited to present established processes, planned initiatives and other efforts to strengthen alliances among gender equality leaders, advocates and other partners in order to promote social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure that are gender-sensitive and are responsive to the needs of and empower women and girls.

This dialogue will also contribute to strengthening opportunities for NGOs and other stakeholders to contribute to the work of the Commission, as called for in the Commission’s methods of work.

Format and participation

The event will be a moderated dialogue among Ministers. In order to set the scene, the event will commence with a 15-minute question-and-answer session among 3-4 stakeholders who have

worked with governments in ensuring that social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure are gender-responsive.

Following this opening, Ministerial-level participants will be invited to comment on leading questions (see below). The moderator will support the dialogue and its interactive nature through follow-up questions. Ministers will participate in the dialogue on a voluntary basis. No speakers' list will be kept. However, Ministers wishing to participate in the dialogue will be invited to communicate this intention in advance through the United Nations *e-delegates portal*. Initial comments will be strictly limited to three minutes, and any follow-up comments to one minute.

UN-Women will facilitate an online application process for representatives of NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC and recommend 3-4 stakeholders (who have worked with governments in ensuring that social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure are gender-responsive) in a manner that reflects regional balance, diversity of voices and expertise at national level.

Leading questions

Greater policy coherence across the three areas of the priority theme can produce powerful synergies. Institutionalized coordination across sectors and levels of government, as well as with private for-profit and not-for-profit providers, is crucial to ensure that social protection, public services and infrastructure policies complement one another in their objectives, functions and financing. Such an integrated and systemic approach is particularly important from a gender perspective. The participation of women and women's organizations in policy development and service delivery contributes to greater gender responsiveness. Alliances and collaboration within and between government, civil society and other stakeholders can make a critical contribution to ensuring enhanced access, better quality and availability of services, and better results for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Participants are invited to address the following questions during the dialogue:

- How have gender equality mechanisms effectively collaborated across Government, including with ministries of planning, finance, health, education, infrastructure, energy and other sectors to ensure a gender-responsive approach to the design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection, public service and sustainable infrastructure? What results have been achieved?
- How can gender equality mechanisms effectively leverage collaboration with women's and other civil society organizations towards ensuring availability, accessibility, adequacy, acceptability and quality of gender-responsive social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure?
- How can gaps in coverage and gender-responsive service delivery be addressed more effectively through alliances and partnerships?

Outcome

The outcome of the dialogue will be in the form of a summary by the Chair of the Commission, prepared in consultation with the regional groups, through the members of the Bureau. The summary will highlight concrete ways of alliance building for promoting social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.