



Interactive dialogue

Participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions

Tuesday, 18 March 2025, 11.30 – 1.00 p.m.

Concept note

Overview

To fulfil the vision of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, States have, among other measures, implemented temporary special measures, legal and policy reforms to address discrimination in political institutions, strengthened national gender equality mechanisms, adopted measures to implement gender-responsive budgeting, enhanced gender statistics, and integrated gender perspectives into laws and policies but major gaps remain.

Despite progress in increasing women's political participation and making state institutions more gender-responsive, the pace remains slow. Without deliberate and ambitious action, parity will not be reached in this generation. Persistent structural barriers and deeply rooted biases against women continue to hold back progress. Attacks on women in political and public life, both online and offline, undermine accountability for gender equality and hinder women's political involvement. Gender machineries are crucial for promoting gender equality but often lack the necessary authority, capacity, and resources. Additionally, creating safe environments for women's rights organizations and human rights defenders and eradicating violence against women in political and public life remain urgent priorities in this area.

The dialogue will bring together stakeholders including current and former women political leaders, government officials representing national women's machineries, representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC and the United Nations system. The interactive dialogue will seek to discuss progress achieved and immediate steps that can be undertaken to improve women's participation in public life and ensure transparent, accountable and gender-responsive institutions.

Format and participation

The interactive dialogue will be chaired by H.E. Ms. Maritza Chan Valverde (Costa Rica), Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women. A moderator will support the Chair.

The interactive dialogue will start with presentations by invited panelists to share experiences and advances in equal participation, accountability and gender responsive institutions at national, regional and global levels. The discussion will also identify the steps needed to address the existing gaps. Innovative practices that have improved political participation, accountability and gender responsive institutions over the last five years across various geographical regions will also be discussed.

The floor will then be open for comments and questions from Member States and other stakeholders in an interactive dialogue. Panelists would respond to any questions posed and make short concluding comments, time permitting. The Chair will wrap up and close the meeting.

Member States will participate in the dialogue on a voluntary basis. No speakers' list will be kept. UN-Women will facilitate an online application process for representatives of NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC. The list of NGOs proposed for participation in the event will be distributed to Member States through respective Bureau members.

Leading questions

Participating stakeholders in the interactive dialogue are invited to address the following questions:

1. What steps are countries taking to promote women's participation in political and public life? How are major obstacles to women's participation, such as violence against women in politics and stereotyping social norms being addressed?
2. What progress is being made to strengthen national human rights institutions' focus on gender equality or discrimination based on sex/gender? What are key challenges and how can those be addressed?
3. How can national institutions, including women's machineries, be adequately resourced to fulfill their mandates?
4. How can gender-responsive budgeting lead to gender-responsive and accountable institutions? What are the key achievements and remaining challenges?
1. How has multistakeholder collaboration shaped women's participation in public life and advocacy for transparent, accountable and gender-responsive institutions over the last five years? How are emergent policy practices being utilized in this regard?

Outcome

The outcome of the discussion 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.



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Speaker bios

Moderator: Ms. Nicole Ameline is a French politician, lawyer, diplomat and women's rights advocate. She served as a member of the National Assembly of France for several terms between 1991 and 2017, and held various roles in the Government of France, including serving as a Minister of the Sea and Minister of Gender Equality. Until 2024, Nicole was a member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Ms. Karolina Gilas is a Professor at the Autonomous National University of Mexico, with a PhD in Political and Social Sciences, specializing in political representation, democracy, and the study of gender in the electoral field. Her academic career focuses on the in-depth analysis of democracy, electoral systems, and the political representation of women. She has published extensively in the field.

Ms. Natalia Karbowska is the Co-Founder and Director of Strategic Development of the Ukrainian Women's Fund. Natalia has more than 20 years of experience, working on the intersection of civil society, development and women's rights. She is convinced that the voices of women and girls should play a key role in the processes of social transformation, and that women's foundations play an important role in this.

Ms. Memory Kachambwa is the Executive Director of African Women's Communication and Development Network (FEMNET). She is a pan-African feminist, gender, and women's rights activist whose work is grounded on feminist principles. She is a dynamic leader in movement-building, feminist organizing, policy advocacy, and networking, with over 18 years of experience.

Ms. Foteini Papagioti is the Deputy Director of Policy and Advocacy at the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). She is responsible for conducting research and analysis and providing evidence-based strategic guidance to governments, international organizations, and ICRW's policy and advocacy team, with a focus on feminist foreign policy and global gender architecture/institutions.