



**Commission on the Status of Women  
Sixtieth Session**

**Women's empowerment and its link to  
sustainable development**

**INTERACTIVE EXPERT PANEL**

**Key strategies for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030  
Agenda**

**Gender-sensitive implementation of the 2030  
Agenda in Australia**

By

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Wednesday 16 March 2016

3.00 – 6.00 p.m.

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\* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations

## **Gender-sensitive implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

2015 was a momentous year. For the first time we have an international sustainability agenda that mainstreams gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We now have an ambitious agenda that requires us to consider the structures that perpetuate inequality and to implement policies and programmes to redress the imbalance. Gender-sensitive policies and programs are required to lay the foundations for the full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Governments need strong national machineries and institutional arrangements if we are to implement the 2030 Agenda with gender equality at its heart. In Australia, the Minister for Women works with other Government Ministers to ensure women's issues and gender equality are taken into consideration in policy and program development and implementation.

The Australian Government Office for Women moved in 2013 into the Prime Minister's Department giving it considerable authority. The Office co-ordinates across Australian Government agencies, to deliver stronger economic and social outcomes for women.

Australia is considering the domestic implications of the 2030 Agenda and how we can measure implementation of, and report against, the Agenda. Australia prioritises gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment; existing policies and programs to address pervasive barriers to gender equality in Australia will assist us to meet our international commitments.

For example, in Australia we face unacceptable levels of violence against women. We know that eliminating all forms of violence against women is a prerequisite to full and equal participation in all aspects of social, economic and political life. In September 2015 the Australian Government announced a \$100 million Women's Safety Package, building upon programs and services already in place. This included practical and immediate measures to keep women safe, through primary prevention measures and essential services for women who experience violence.

Australia is also focused on reducing the gender pay gap and increasing women's workforce participation. Women's workforce participation is an economic and social imperative, and is essential to building the workforce required to support economic growth and Australia's future prosperity.

In 2014, under Australia's presidency, G20 Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to women's economic security by agreeing to reduce the gender workforce participation gap by 25 per cent by 2025. Boosting women's workforce participation will help to achieve important social equality objectives, such as strengthening women's economic security and reducing their vulnerability to poverty, homelessness and family violence.

The Government is taking action to boost women's workforce participation, including by:

- Delivering the Jobs for Families Child Care Package, with more than \$3 billion in additional funding, to ensure the child care system is more affordable, accessible and flexible;
- Supporting business to do its part in creating more diverse workplaces, by developing resources to assist employers to manage and support working parents;
- Implementing the Jobs and Small Business package — to help small businesses to grow as women make up just under a third of Australian business operators;
- Ensuring women have the skills and support they need to work in growth industries (as part of the National Innovation and Science Agenda announced 7 December 2015); and

- Examining the tax and transfer systems and their impacts on women and their families (through the tax and welfare reform processes).

Australia recognises that many women including Indigenous women suffer multiple disadvantage. Australia's Indigenous Advancement Strategy includes provision for the Safety and Well-being Program to support Indigenous women.

Importantly, our Australian Bureau of Statistics is working to effectively report against the Agenda, recognising that for the first time we have a universal global agenda.

Clearly the 2030 agenda came into effect only a couple of months ago and we have a long way to go to embed the agenda into our domestic, regional and global agendas and to build effective follow up and review processes.

We recognise we need to align the 2030 Agenda with existing frameworks and obligations so this agenda does not cut across, but supports, existing commitments.

This imperative applies across the international, as well as domestic agenda. If we miss opportunities, we will not only delay the work but we may also be risking the take-off of this agenda.

One such opportunity that is facing us now is the Commission on the Status of Women.

It is clear that if the Sustainable Development Goals are to become a new tool for accelerating progress towards gender equality, the Goals need to align with and support the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

At this Commission we have the opportunity to take forward the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in new ways. This is the opportunity for the Commission to play an active role in ensuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda delivers real gains for gender equality.