Letter from the Director, UN System Coordination Division, UN Women

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We bring to you the 3rd edition of the Network newsletter for 2020 amid the continuing presence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet, the resilience of so many ensured that the last quarter of 2020 continued to be marked by multiple landmark events that showcased and supported gender equality and the empowerment of women.

This issue covers the 75th UN General Assembly session which commemorated UN Women’s tenth anniversary which coincides with twenty-five years since the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing+25). As UN Women shone a light on the rising scourge of violence against women and girls (VAWG), the UN General Assembly issued a call to action to FUND-RESPOND-PREVENT-COLLECT to urgently address what under the COVID-19 crisis has effectively become the shadow pandemic. In addition, the General Assembly adopted the QCPR resoultion which for the first time specifically mentioned both VAWG and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse as areas warranting urgent and intensive attention. Also, November witnessed the commemoration of the international day for elimination of VAW, the 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence and very importantly, the 20th anniversary of the passage of the UN Security Council landmark resolution 1325 for Women, Peace and Security.

Also featured here are the celebrations of the First International Pay Day. It draws attention to the particular need to prioritize pay equity in the context of the COVID-19 economic recovery and, the launch of the first report on 2020’s Women CEOs in America: Changing the Face of Business Leadership.

Finally, and as always, this issue contains suggestions for recommended reading, such as the report on “The World’s Women”and women in the workplace 2020 by McKenzie.
We take the opportunity to wish you peace and joy in the upcoming holidays, with the fervent hope that 2021 will compensate and counter all the challenges and woes that 2020 represented to humanity everywhere.

In solidarity,

Aparna Mehrotra  
Director, UN system Coordination Division  
UN Women

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Khalida Bouzar of Algeria on her appointment on November 3rd by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres as Assistant Secretary-General, and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States, United Nations Development Programme.

Ms. Bouzar has served since 2012 as Regional Director for the Near East, North Africa and Europe at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). She brings more than 35 years of leadership experience at the international and national levels, including 25 years in the United Nations system. She holds a PhD in science from the University of Sciences, Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris.

Gender at the United Nations

UN Women marks its 10th anniversary

Within the United Nations family, UN Women has established itself as a strong voice for women’s rights, advancing, educating and pushing all parts of the system to mainstream gender in all its work, said Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed speaking at the event to celebrate ten years of UN Women in New York in September, 2020.

UN Women has made many achievements at the global, national, and local level she said, including supporting legal reforms, strengthening access to essential services, women’s participation in peace processes, and building the relationships and platform for women’s civil society to engage in the work of the Organization.


UN Women Executive Board convenes second regular session of 2020

The UN Women Executive board held its second regular session on September 15, 2020 in New York, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, delivered opening remarks. The agenda of the meeting included presentation of the Report on the Structured Dialogue on Financing; the joint comprehensive proposal on the cost recovery policy in response to respective Board decisions (UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF and UN Women); a road map for consultations planned in the preparation of the next Strategic Plan, 2022–2025; and an update on the implementation of the Common Chapter of the strategic plans.
In recognition of the 10-year anniversary of UN Women and the role of Member States and key partners in its work, a special commemorative informal side event took place immediately ahead of the opening of the session.

The detailed agenda of this session and all official documents can be accessed on the Executive Board webpage or the PaperSmart-portal of the United Nations.


**General Assembly adopts Quadrennial comprehensive policy review – QCPR Resolution**

The 2021 Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) resolution, was adopted on 8 December 2020 by the General Assembly at its 75th session. The QCPR is the means through which the General Assembly establishes key system-wide strategic policy orientations and operational modalities for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations development system.

This is the first QCPR to directly mention reference on the need to strengthen the social, economic and political empowerment of women and girls and to end violence against women and girls. This language presents a groundbreaking opportunity to elevate UN Women’s mandate at the inter-agency level. The adoption of the QCPR resolution offers a positive indication in support of several of UN-Women corporate priorities aligned with Member State requests.

Access at: GEWE references for 2020 QCPR.docx

Access complete QCPR resolution: A_C.2_75_L.61_E QCPR final.pdf

**UN Women at the UN General Assembly 2020**

**Progress and promises on advancing women’s empowerment**

*At UN high-level meeting, world leaders reignite the vision of the Beijing Platform for Action*

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to hold the world hostage, global leaders gathered for the first time ever in a virtual session of the General Assembly. With COVID-19 putting at risk the hard-won advances achieved on women’s rights in past decades, gender equality was one of the top items on the agenda of decision makers.
More than 100 countries committed to concrete actions that would advance gender equality for women and girls everywhere at this virtual high-level meeting during the UN General Assembly. This gathering – under the theme “Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls” – marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

However, 25 years after its adoption, global leaders recognized that the progress made falls far short of what States committed themselves to in 1995. While the current COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges, leaders committed to seizing the opportunity for transformative change. With the overall theme of “Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”, the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Beijing+25 called upon to present concrete actions and commitments to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030, including in support of the role of civil society organizations and youth. In the opening segment of the High-Level meeting, Secretary-General António Guterres called for a strong push to meet the unfulfilled promise of the Beijing Platform for Action. UN Women called for actions to change the course of history for women and girls, through bold leadership, unwavering political will and urgent investment, especially in women’s organizations, women’s ministries and agencies and with young feminists leading change. “This is the time for disrupters, young and old”, said UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China, called for protections of women’s rights and interests to become a national commitment and announced a USD 10 million contribution to UN Women in the next five years.

COVID-19 is only making matters worse. Across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection, women and girls are disproportionately affected.

A set of side events supported by UN Women in the lead-up to the High-Level Meeting also put a spotlight on the need to place women front and centre of the response against COVID-19.


IANWGE launches report on 25 years after Beijing: A review of the UN system’s support for the implementation of the Platform for Action, 2014–2019

The publication of this report, coordinated and produced by UN Women as Secretariat of IANWGE coincides with the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Beijing+25, which was held to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference
on Women, This report launched on September 30, 2020 is a first-of-its-kind initiative of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE),

The single largest network of gender focal points in the UN system. for the first time, conducted a review of the UN system’s support for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It presents a critical stocktaking of 51 UN entities’ support to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2014–2019, identifies entities’ priority areas for the next five years, and provides recommendations for the way forward. This is timely for coordinated action, as gains made for women and girls are now threatened by the negative impact of COVID-19.

Among its findings, the report reveals that the UN system’s highest levels of engagement during the reporting period were in the elimination of violence against women and girls, the transformation of discriminatory norms, the improvement of access to quality education, and the expansion of women’s political participation and women’s entrepreneurship. The report also reveals that greater attention and investment in areas such as gender-responsive budgeting, financial and digital inclusion of women, gender-responsive disaster risk reduction, and basic services and infrastructure are still greatly needed.

UN system support for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls remains critical. As this report makes clear, urgent, sustained, and coordinated action by the UN system is needed to safeguard gender equality gains and advance women’s rights and the well-being of women and girls everywhere.

View report online/download

- Publication (PDF, 4MB)


As COVID-19 exposes the fault lines of gender equality, a strong focus on violence against women at the UN General Assembly

*Call to action to FUND-RESPOND-PREVENT-COLLECT to world leaders to urgently address violence against women and girls*

With alarming rise of domestic violence reports during the pandemic lockdowns from millions of women worldwide, UN Women convened on September 28th a high-level meeting with the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Member States, UN agencies, activists, the private sector and philanthropies. The spotlight was on the urgent need for
targeted investments, commitments and innovative new ways of tackling the exponential increase in gender-based violence around the world since the onset of COVID-19.

With COVID-19, an increased reporting of domestic violence has surfaced, with a staggering 40 per cent rise in some countries. To address the gaps, there is a need to mobilise all actors to address gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19, and to FUND women’s organisations and services, RESPOND by strengthening services to survivors, PREVENT by addressing harmful social norms that normalise violence against women and COLLECT data to inform policies and programmes.


**United Nations releases USD 25 million for women-led projects battling gender-based violence**

The United Nations humanitarian chief released $25 million from the UN’s emergency fund to support women-led organizations that prevent and respond to gender-based violence in humanitarian settings.

The funding has gone to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women who have been asked to channel at least 30 percent of it to organizations run by women that prevent violence against women and girls, and help victims and survivors with access to medical care, family planning, legal advice, safe spaces, mental health services and counselling.


**In Focus: 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence**

The UN Secretary-General’s UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign marked the International Day for Elimination of VAW and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, from 25 November to 10 December, under the theme, “Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!”

As impact of COVID-19 intensifies, UN Women called for concrete actions to respond to the concurrent shadow pandemic of VAW. It has galvanized partners to fund organizations, respond to survivors’ needs, prevent violence and collect data to build a post-pandemic “new normal” as the 16 days of Activism campaign kicks off.
This year’s theme, “Orange the World: Fund, Prevent, Respond, Collect!” announced by the UNiTE campaign, bolsters the UN Secretary-General’s appeal and UN system-wide rapid response to the alarming surge in violence against women and girls seen this year.

The UN official commemoration of the International Day took place for the first time in a virtual format and was an opportunity for Member States to strengthen and advance their commitments to end violence against women and girls.

UN Women’s Generation Equality campaign is amplifying the call for global action to bridge funding gaps, ensure essential services for survivors of violence during the COVID-19 crisis, focus on prevention, and collection of data that can improve life-saving services for women and girls.

For the 16 Days of Activism, UN Women handed over the mic to survivors, activists, and UN partners on the ground, to tell the story of what happened after COVID-19 hit.

See more at:

**UN Security Council marks 20 years of Women, Peace and Security**

As Security Council resolution 1325 celebrates women’s successful contributions to human security, sustainable peace, and justice, the promise of inclusive and women-led peace processes remains unfulfilled.

On 29 October 2020, the UN Security Council marked 20 years
since the historic vote that recognized, for the first time, the unique impact conflict has on women and the critical role they play in conflict prevention and resolution. The unanimously adopted Security Council resolution 1325 set a new basis for women’s leadership, gender equality, justice and accountability in all aspects of peace.

As 2 billion people across the world struggle to survive in areas afflicted by armed conflict in the midst of a global pandemic, women – who are disproportionately affected by such strife and play a key role as mediators and peacebuilders – remain largely excluded from formal peace processes and post-conflict power structures, a new UN Women report on Women Peace and Security documents UN Women’s work to accelerate the implementation of the women, peace, and security agenda throughout 2019. It highlights how to shape the global agenda; some of the organization’s numbers and solutions; how to finance the women, peace, and security agenda; and the priorities for 2020 and beyond.

The report, presented to the UN Security Council during the annual Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security that commemorated the 20th anniversary of its landmark resolution 1325, outlines five goals to realize inclusive and sustainable peace in the next decade. These range from women’s full inclusion in all peace efforts and unconditional defense of women’s rights to meeting minimum levels of financial assistance and launching a data revolution that sheds light and propels rapid action.

See more at:


COVID-19 widens poverty gap between women and men, new UN Women and UNDP data shows

The pandemic is estimated to push 47 million more women and girls below the poverty line, reversing decades of progress to eradicate extreme poverty.

The COVID-19 crisis is estimated to dramatically increase the poverty rate for women and widen the gap between men and women who live in poverty, according to new data released today by UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in September, 2020. The data, summarized in a UN Women report From Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the wake of COVID-19, also show that the pandemic will push 96 million people into extreme poverty by 2021, 47 million of whom are women and girls. This will increase the total number of women and girls living in extreme poverty to 435
10 million, with projections showing that this number will not revert to pre-pandemic levels until 2030.


**Celebrating the First International Pay Day**

*Equal Pay International Coalition calls to prioritize pay equity in COVID-19 recovery*

To mark the first International Equal Pay Day, the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) called all leaders to take necessary steps to ensure pay equity is at the heart of COVID-19 recovery efforts worldwide. Led by the OECD, ILO and UN Women, EPIC brings together a diverse set of actors and expertise to support governments, employers, workers, and their organisations to make concrete and co-ordinated progress to achieve equal pay for women and men everywhere. COVID-19 has made visible that our economies and societies are built upon the essential, and often undervalued or unpaid labour of women and girls.


**COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker**

The COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker monitors policy measures enacted by governments worldwide to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, and highlights responses that have integrated a gender lens. It includes national measures that are directly addressing women’s economic and social security, including unpaid care work, the labour market and violence against women. The tracker is coordinated by UNDP with substantive leadership and technical contributions from UN Women. Co-created by both entities, it includes over 2,500 measures across 206 countries and territories.

These fact sheets, including a global and regionals ones, examine trends and provide analysis from the tracker, highlighting what governments are doing to respond to and prevent violence against women, support unpaid care work, and protect women’s economic security. They feature country examples, best practices and gaps in the global COVID-19 policy response.


**Around the World**
C200, Catalyst and Women Business Collaborative (WBC) released on December 3rd the 2020 Women CEOs in America Report: Changing the Face of Business Leadership. This first of its kind report tells a comprehensive story of women CEO leadership today in not only Fortune 500, S&P 500, and Russell 3000 companies, but in private companies including media and finance. This report shares both the data and the profiles of model women CEOs, as well as providing economic perspectives and analysis of how to address the scarcity of diversity within the pipeline. The report profiles women CEOs and analyzes the pipeline across the public and private sectors, and with its companion monitoring tool offers critical insights to understanding women’s leadership in corporate America.


In Your Interest

UN Women Calls for nominations for the 2021 UN Public Service Awards

UN Women joined the United Nations in announcing the call for nominations for the 2021 United Nations Public Service Awards. The Awards, supported by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in collaboration with UN Women, are an international recognition of excellence in public service. They recognize the innovation, creative achievements and contributions of public sector institutions, including towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This year, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the innovation and contributions of public servants are even more relevant. Recognizing the leadership of women in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and recovery efforts worldwide, and the disproportional negative impacts of the pandemic on women’s lives and livelihoods, UN Women encourages nominations with a special emphasis on gender equality.

The four categories for nominations for the UN Public Service Awards 2021 include:
1. Fostering innovation to deliver inclusive and equitable services for all including through digital transformation.
2. Enhancing the effectiveness of public institutions to reach the SDGs.
3. Promoting gender-responsive public services to achieve the SDGs.


Recommended Reading


This report provides a summary of the 2020 global annual meeting of over 300 gender focal points in the UN system, key conclusions and best practices from these sessions. The Global Annual Meeting of Gender Focal Points and Focal Points for Women in the United Nations brings the network together in person and supports the gender focal points in their ongoing work to enhance gender parity and an enabling environment in their respective entities. The latest Global Annual Gender Focal Point Meeting conducted online from 5-7 October 2020 under the theme: “Reflect. Realize. Respond. Rising to New Challenges: Accelerating Gender Parity in Times of Crisis and Beyond”. The Gender focal points discussed and exchanged on the upcoming challenges and changes regarding gender parity during and post COVID-19 and its implications on the work of gender focal points.

“Keep the Promise, Accelerate the Change: Taking stock of gender equality in Europe and Central Asia 25 years after Beijing

New regional report launched by UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia tracks incremental progress in gender equality and women’s rights, shows rampant inequalities.

UN Women’s Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia launched in October 2020 a report tracking the regional state gender equality. It finds progress, but affirms rampant inequalities, especially in the workforce. Change has been incremental and short of the transformation required.
The report offers a concise, data-driven look at the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Agreed globally in 1995. The report issues a clarion call for stepping up progress to realize the promises of Beijing. It specifically looks at six dimensions: inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work; poverty eradication, social protection and social services; freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes; participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions; peaceful and inclusive societies; and environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation.


The World’s Women 2020: Trends and Statistics

Less than 50% of working-age women are in the labour market, a figure that has barely changed over the last quarter of a century, according to a new UN report launched today. Unpaid domestic and care work falls disproportionately on women, restraining their economic potential as the COVID-19 pandemic additionally affects women’s jobs and livelihoods, the report warns.

The World’s Women 2020: Trends and Statistics compiles 100 data stories that provide a snapshot of the state of gender equality worldwide. Presented on an interactive portal, the report analyses gender equality in six critical areas: population and families; health; education; economic empowerment and asset ownership; power and decision-making; and violence against women and the girl child as well as the impact of COVID-19.

Women in the Workplace 2020
This is the sixth year of the Women in the Workplace study—in a year unlike any other. This effort, conducted in partnership with LeanIn.Org, tracks the progress of women in corporate America. The data set this year reflects contributions from 317 companies that participated in the study and more than 40,000 people surveyed on their workplace experiences; more than 45 in-depth interviews were also conducted to dive deeper on the issues. These efforts were in the field from June to August of 2020, although the pipeline data represents employer-provided information from calendar year 2019.


25 Years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: A Youth Report

On 1 October, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, the Generation Equality Youth Task Force also launched “25 Years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: A Youth Report”, which reflects on the progress and challenges in the 12 Critical Areas of Concern enshrined in the Beijing Platform for Action as they relate to youth inclusion and participation. The report takes a closer look at the gaps and new challenges that have emerged since 1995, including climate justice, technology, intersectional inequalities, menstrual poverty and stigma, trafficking in women and girls, and resourcing feminist movements.

Gender and COVID-19: A guidance note for parliaments

Placing gender equality at the core of the parliamentary response to COVID-19

As parliaments reorganize their means of functioning and adapt their work to the new realities imposed by COVID-19, it is crucial that their decisions and actions be gender responsive. Below are some key issues and questions that – if considered and addressed – could transform gender-neutral or gender-blind parliamentary adaptation strategies into gender-responsive ones.

Websites

The World Economic Forum COVID Action Platform


The Sex, Gender and Covid-10 Project

The Covid-19 Sex disaggregated Data Tracker

Understanding the role sex and gender are playing in the covid-19 outbreak is essential to building an effective, equitable response to the pandemic. This tracker presents the sex-disaggregated data being reported by governments. Despite clear gender differences in COVID-19 health outcomes, not all governments are reporting data separately by women and men.

The Sex, Gender and Covid-19 Project is a partnership of Global Health 50/50 (housed at University College London), the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). The project is building the world's largest database of sex-disaggregated data on COVID-19, investigating the roles sex and gender are playing in the outbreak, building the evidence base of what works to tackle gender disparities in COVID-19 health outcomes, and advocating for effective gender-responsive approaches to pandemic.

Learn more about sex, gender and COVID-19 and explore the Sex-Disaggregated Data Tracker here” https://globalhealth5050.org/the-sex-gender-and-covid-19-project/

UN Women Info

Employment opportunities

You can find a monthly list of vacancy announcements at: http://www.unwomen.org/about-us/employment

You can read Network online at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fpnetworks.htm

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