

PRESIDIUM MODEL UN CONFERENCE 2017

“Addressing Systematic Gender Inequalities with special emphasis on

A) Gender Sensitive Infrastructure and Right to Property B) Right to Decent Work and Economic Growth C) Right to Reproductive Health”



UNITED NATIONS WOMEN

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Right to Decent Work and Economic Growth

Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Decent Work Agenda

Productive employment and decent work are key elements to achieving a fair globalization and poverty reduction. The ILO has developed an agenda for the community of work looking at job creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue, with gender equality as a crosscutting objective.

There has been an increased urgency among international policy-makers, particularly in the wake of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008, to deliver quality jobs along with social protection and respect for rights at work to achieve sustainable, inclusive economic growth, and eliminate poverty.

<https://youtu.be/mZpyIwevPqc>

Decent work and the Sustainable Development Goals

During the UN General Assembly in September 2015, decent work and the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda – employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue – became integral elements of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda calls for the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work, and will be a key area of engagement for the ILO and its constituents. Furthermore, key aspects of

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decent work are widely embedded in the targets of many of the other 16 goals of the UN's new development vision.

Why is Decent Work Important?

- Crucial element in making globalization more inclusive and fair
- Key to progressive and lasting poverty reduction
- Enables women and men to share in the gains brought by increased international economic integration
- Must be at the heart of development policies

More women are participating in labour markets throughout the world today than ever before. However, increases in labour force participation have not resulted in a substantial narrowing of gender gaps in the world of work. For instance, women are still less likely than men to hold regular wage and salaried positions. They also continue to be over-represented in occupations with low pay, and low productivity with little protection. The progress to date is not sufficient to ensure decent and productive work for all as long as women continue to face unequal access to employment, unequal pay, and limited access to social protection and positions of leadership. To this end, the ILO marks International Women's Day in 2008 by focusing on the importance of investing in Decent Work for women.

Women within the Decent Work Agenda

Decent work embodies the integration of social and economic goals including the promotion of rights, employment, security and social dialogue within a framework that supports both investment and economic growth. Embracing this concept, the ILO and its constituents – governments, and employers' and workers' organizations, formulated the Decent Work Agenda to effect positive change within the world of work. Central to this Agenda is the recognition of gender equality as a prerequisite to progress. It is incorporated as a crosscutting objective within ILO's goals.

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Women and decent work in the agricultural sector

On average, women make up 40 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America to 50 percent or more in parts of Africa and Asia. They generally work as subsistence farmers, paid or unpaid workers on family farms or as entrepreneurs running on- or off-farm enterprises. In addition, women provide the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work in rural areas, thereby supporting current and future generations of rural workers within their households and communities.

Despite their significant contribution to the agriculture sector, rural women typically find themselves in disadvantaged positions. Compared to their male counterparts, they tend to face more restricted access to productive resources and assets, financial services and social protection. Gender-biased social norms, laws and practices also limit women’s involvement in gainful work and their participation in workers’ and producers’ organizations, especially in organized labour institutions such as trade unions. Addressing this bias is a key component of sustainable development strategies. Increasing rural women’s access to decent employment opportunities is key to improving their productivity and earning power, which in turn raises family incomes and food security.

Women and Economic Growth

Women make up a little over half the world’s population, but their contribution to measured economic activity, growth, and well-being is far below its potential, with serious macroeconomic consequences.

Despite significant progress in recent decades, labour markets across the world remain divided along gender lines, and progress toward gender equality seems to have stalled. Female labour force participation (FLFP) has remained lower than male participation, women account for most unpaid work, and when women are employed in paid work, they

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are overrepresented in the informal sector and among the poor. They also face significant wage differentials vis-à-vis their male colleagues. In many countries, distortions and discrimination in the labour market restrict women’s options for paid work, and female representation in senior positions and entrepreneurship remains low.

The challenges of growth, job creation, and inclusion are closely intertwined. While growth and stability are necessary to give women the opportunities they need, women’s participation in the labour market is also a part of the growth and stability equation. In particular, in rapidly aging economies, higher female labour force participation can boost growth by mitigating the impact of a shrinking workforce. Better opportunities for women can also contribute to broader economic development in developing economies, for instance through higher levels of school enrollment for girls.

Macroeconomic Implications of the Labour Market Divide: Does Gender Matter?

- There is ample evidence that when women are able to develop their full labour market potential, there can be significant macroeconomic gains. (Loko and Diouf, 2009; Dollar and Gatti, 1999). GDP per capita losses attributable to gender gaps in the labour market have been estimated at up to 27 percent in certain regions (Cuberes and Teignier, 2012). Aguirre and others (2012) suggest that raising the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) to country-specific male levels would, for instance, raise GDP in the United States by 5 percent, in Japan by 9 percent, in the United Arab Emirates by 12 percent, and in Egypt by 34 percent. Based on International Labour Organization (ILO) data, Aguirre and others (2012) estimate that of the 865 million women worldwide who have the potential to contribute more fully to their national economies, 812 million live in emerging and developing nations.
- In rapidly aging economies, higher FLFP can boost growth by mitigating the impact of a shrinking workforce. For example, in Japan, the annual potential growth rate could rise by about ¼ percentage point if the female labour participation rate were to reach

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the average for the G7 countries, resulting in a permanent rise in per capita GDP of 4 percent, compared to the baseline scenario (IMF, 2012c). Higher female work force participation would also result in a more skilled labour force, in view of women’s higher education levels (Steinberg and Nakane, 2012).

- Better opportunities for women to earn and control income could contribute to broader economic development in developing economies, for instance through higher levels of school enrollment for girls. Women are more likely than men to invest a large proportion of their household income in the education of their children. According to the ILO, women’s work, both paid and unpaid, may be the single most important poverty-reducing factor in developing economies (Heintz, 2006). Accordingly, higher FLFP and greater earnings by women could result in higher expenditure on school enrollment for children, including girls, potentially triggering a virtuous cycle, when educated women become female role models (Aguirre and others 2012; Miller 2008). Stotsky (2006b) posits that women’s relative lack of opportunities in developing countries inhibits economic growth, while at the same time, economic growth leads to improvements in their disadvantaged conditions.
- Equal access to inputs would raise the productivity of female-owned companies (Do, Levchenko, and Raddatz, 2011). Productivity differentials among companies owned by men and by women have been found to be mainly the result of differences in access to productive inputs (Blackden and Hallward-Driemeier 2013). A reduction of this productivity gap through equal access to productive resources could yield considerable output gains (World Bank, 2011).
- The employment of women on an equal basis would allow companies to make better use of the available talent pool, with potential growth implications (Barsh and Yee, 2012; CAHRS 2011). While not uncontroversial, there is evidence of a positive impact of women’s presence on boards and in senior management on companies’ performance.¹ Companies employing female managers could be better positioned to serve consumer markets dominated by women (CED 2012; CAHRS 2011) and more

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gender-diverse boards could enhance corporate governance by offering a wider range of perspectives (OECD, 2012; Lord Davies, 2013). Moreover, a larger share of women in decision-taking positions could reduce the share of high-risk financial transactions that are normally conducted by male traders (Coates and Herbert, 2008).

Benefits of Economic Empowerment

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.

Evidence from a range of countries shows that increasing the share of household income controlled by women, either through their own earnings or cash transfers, changes spending in ways that benefit children.

Increasing women and girls’ education contributes to higher economic growth. Increased educational attainment accounts for about 50 per cent of the economic growth in OECD countries over the past 50 years, of which over half is due to girls having had access to higher levels of education and achieving greater equality in the number of years spent in education between men and women. But, for the majority of women, significant gains in education have not translated into better labour market outcomes.

A study using data from 219 countries from 1970 to 2009 found that, for every one additional year of education for women of reproductive age, child mortality decreased by 9.5 per cent.

Women tend to have less access to formal financial institutions and saving mechanisms. While 55 per cent of men report having an account at a formal financial institution, only 47 per cent of women do worldwide. This gap is largest among lower middle-income economies as well as in South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa.

Source for further research

<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2013/sdn1310.pdf>

Questions to Consider

1. Has the condition of women deteriorated or alleviated in the globalization era?
2. In light of differing standards and measures of demarcating backwardness, inequality and so on; which common ground should be chosen as the measure of demarcating poverty, inequality and etc. and why?
3. Is the policy of positive discrimination (reservations) a justified way to promote women interest?
4. What is the role of environment, culture and social norms in perpetuating gender inequality?
5. What are your views on men being at disadvantage to women?

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