



# Network

The UN Women's Newsletter  
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## *Letter from the Director, UN System Coordination Division*




Dear Friends,

Warm greetings to our readers worldwide! We are here again with the first quarter edition of NETWORK Newsletter for 2018.

We begin by extending a warm welcome to Asa Regner of Sweden on her taking over as the Deputy Executive Director – Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships, UN Women. We then move on to giving you an update on the UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP)- this being the final year of reporting for the first phase of UN-SWAP implementation (2012-2017) Results show that since its introduction in 2012, the System-wide Action Plan has facilitated significant and sustained improvement in the Organization's performance with regard to mainstreaming gender equality.

Next we bring to you highlights from around the United Nations which this quarter look at two key events which take place in March each year - the Commission on the Status of Women 62<sup>nd</sup> session addressing the theme of empowering rural women; and the International Women's day which was led by the #Mee Too Movement and pushed for progress on addressing this form of violence worldwide. Focus on reviewing progress on achieving gender parity at the UN on the sidelines of the CSW is also featured.



Our 'Around the World' segment carries stories on UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka's participation at the first in-person meeting of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council in Ottawa, Canada, in the lead up to the G7 Leaders' Summit, and the launch of the Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action to improve humanitarian response worldwide.

The section on Violence against women highlights a new law passed in Paraguay to end VAW and the joining of Madrid in the UN Women's Safe Cities Global Programme to prevent and respond to forms of sexual violence.

Other innovative research on women's representation sheds light on Why the influence of women on boards still lags and a 2018 McKinsey report on Delivering on Diversity reaffirms global relevance of link between diversity and company financial performance.

This issue also puts spotlight on Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative - We-Fi announced at the G20 Leaders' Summit in July 2017 and launched at the World Bank-Fund Annual Meetings in October, being a collaborative partnership among 14 governments, eight multilateral development banks (MDBs), and other public and private sector stakeholders to unlock billions of dollars in financing for women-owned/led small and medium enterprises in developing countries

Finally, as always, the newsletter in its last few pages includes information on publications.

We hope the array of news and features we bring via this newsletter invigorates you as thought leaders, practitioners and activists of gender equality and empowerment of women to continue to break away from the sticky floors to remove glass ceilings to make gender equality a lived reality by 2030. *Let's Step It UP for Gender Equality!*

We look towards your continued support as we move on in the year 2018!

In solidarity,



Aparna Mehrotra  
Director, UN system Coordination Division and  
Focal Point for Women in the UN System,  
UN Women

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## Congratulations!



**Asa Regnér** of Sweden on her appointment in March by the UN Secretary General António Guterres as Deputy Executive Director – Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships, UN Women. She succeeds Lakshmi Puri of India who served in this role during the past eight years, and to whom the Secretary-General and the Executive Director for UN Women are grateful for her commitment and dedicated service.

Ms. Regnér has served since 2014 as Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality of Sweden, where her focus has been on concrete results in the implementation of Swedish gender equality policies as well as a shift towards prevention of violence against women and the involvement of men and boys in gender equality work.

**Purna Sen**, UN Women’s Director of Policy Division on her appointment in April by UN Women as Executive Coordinator and Spokesperson on Addressing Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Discrimination, a newly created special assignment. The role will focus on placing women’s experiences at the heart of work on sexual harassment and bring survivor-focused approaches to the fore. UN Women’s leadership will coordinate efforts towards decisive action on this pressing issue, which at its core tackles the gendered nature of power and the need to ensure justice and dignity for women at work.

Ms. Sen brings extensive expertise and experience to this assignment with almost three decades of work as an activist, violence against women and human rights expert, academic and politician.



**Jaha Dukureh**, renowned activist of The Gambia on her appointment in February as Regional Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women. Ms. Dukureh will dedicate her efforts to support UN Women’s advocacy to end female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage in Africa, with focus on mobilizing youth.

Herself a survivor of FGM, and forced into child marriage at age 15, Ms. Dukureh is the CEO and Founder of the NGO “Safe Hands for Girls” that provides support to African women and girls who are survivors of FGM and addresses its lifelong, harmful physical and psychological consequences. In April 2016, aged 25, she was named to the Time 100 list of the most influential people in the world in the “leaders’ list”. In March 2017, the feature documentary about her life and work to end FGM “Jaha’s Promise” was released. In December 2017, New African magazine named her as one of the 100 most influential Africans of 2017.

## Condolences

### *Passing of Asma Jahangir of Pakistan*



UN Women is deeply saddened by the loss of Asma Jahangir, courageous feminist and inspirational human rights leader. Asma's was a resonant voice in the world, advocating tirelessly for justice, equality and the human rights of all. We will miss her leadership and courage at this moment in time when strong voices are so needed to preserve all that we hold dear in humanity, plurality and peace. UN Women pays tribute to this fearless icon. We stand in solidarity with women everywhere and with all those working for a better world, for whom Asma will remain an inspiration.

## UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: UN-SWAP -- An Update

Since its introduction in 2012, the System-wide Action Plan has facilitated significant and sustained improvement in the Organization's performance with regard to mainstreaming gender equality. These findings were echoed in the aggregate UN system-wide results for final year of reporting for the first phase of UN-SWAP implementation (2012-2017) released in April as part of the 2018 Report of the Secretary General on Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2018/53). Participation and reporting on the System-wide Action Plan has steadily increased from a baseline of 55 entities in 2012, reflecting the acceptance of the System-wide Action Plan as an effective system-wide accountability mechanism. Sixty-six entities (94 per cent of United Nations entities, corresponding to over 99 per cent of the United Nations budget) reported under the System-wide Action Plan in 2017, including the Secretariat and its departments and offices. The percentage of ratings meeting or exceeding requirements more than doubled from 2012 to 2017, from 31 to 65 per cent. Gains can be attributed to system-wide ownership of the System-wide Action Plan, the leadership of senior management, coordination, networking, capacity development and facilitation by United Nations networks.

However, the United Nations system fell short of meeting all requirements by 36 percentage points. Persistent structural areas of weakness, related in particular to gender architecture and parity, resource allocation and capacity assessment, prevented the United Nations system from advancing sufficiently, and requires increased attention from senior leadership. Consistently low performance on these indicators between 2012-2017 suggests the need for strengthened senior management leadership and more importantly, additional resources, and dedicated attention to addressing structural barriers to progress.

# Around the United Nations

## UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62)



*UN Commission on the Status of Women delivers a blueprint to ensure the rights and development of rural women and girls*

*Food security and nutrition, land, water, food, work, and a life free of violence and without poverty highlighted as main issues to tackle*

Against the backdrop of unprecedented global efforts for women’s rights and gender equality, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held its 62<sup>nd</sup> session at the UN Headquarters in New York where more than 4,300 civil society representatives from 130 countries participated. This year’s session of the Commission from 12- 23 March focused on the priority theme of “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”.



Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks at the opening of the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

The outcome of the two-week meeting, known as the Agreed Conclusions adopted by Member States, puts forth concrete measures to lift rural women and girls out of poverty and to ensure their rights, well-being and resilience. These include ensuring their adequate living standards with equal access to land and productive assets, ending poverty, enhancing their food security and nutrition, decent work, infrastructure and technology, education and health, including their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and ending all forms of violence and harmful practices. Member States recognize in the conclusions rural women’s important role in addressing hunger and food insecurity.

This strong outcome provides a roadmap on next steps that governments, civil society and women's groups can undertake to support the realization of rural women's rights and address their needs



Member States expressed deep concern about the increasing challenges that are exacerbating the disadvantages and inequalities that rural women and girls face – from humanitarian emergencies and armed conflicts to the adverse impacts of climate change. In its final agreement, the Commission emphasized that rural women and girls are essential to sustainable development, and their rights and empowerment needs to be prioritized.

Read more [here](#).

See more at: [www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/3/press-release-csw62-conclusion](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/3/press-release-csw62-conclusion)

## CSW 62 Side Event System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity: How to walk the talk?

At a side event during the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, senior UN officials, along with Member States and civil society partners, discussed the latest measures to reach gender parity within the UN System.

Eighteen years past the original target date, the goal of gender parity in the UN has yet to be realized, with men dominating higher level appointments. Peacekeeping, which is the most visible face of the UN, has only 3 per cent of female peacekeepers and 10 per cent of female police.

Secretary-General António Guterres launched the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity in September 2017, with the goal of reaching parity across the board by 2028. The strategy provides recommended actions and targets for senior appointments, for significantly increasing the number of women peacekeepers and police, and for building an enabling environment through measures such as family-friendly policies, flexible working arrangements, as well as standards of conduct. It also provides for shadow reporting by civil society organizations, with support from UN Women.

This is not the first time that the UN has tried to reach gender parity. But what's different now, said Ana Maria Menendez, Senior Policy Adviser to the Secretary-General, "this time we have a roadmap, we have recommendations, we have targets. We have a monitoring mechanism and there will be accountability for managers if they do not reach the targets that they set. The first deadline will be 2021 for senior management."

By the year 2028, the strategy expects all UN agencies to establish gender parity at every level of appointments, in the Headquarters and in countries.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, a self-proclaimed feminist, has proven that leadership and political will can accelerate progress in this area. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, gender parity was reached at the most senior management level last month, with 23 women against 21 men.

Read more [here](#).

Entire list of official events available at: [www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw62-2018/official-meetings](http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw62-2018/official-meetings)

Entire list of all official side events during CSW62: [www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw62-2018/side-events/calendar-of-side-events](http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw62-2018/side-events/calendar-of-side-events)

NGO-organized parallel events: [www.ngocsw.org/ngo-csw-forum/ngo-parallel-events](http://www.ngocsw.org/ngo-csw-forum/ngo-parallel-events)

## International Women's Day 2018

### Theme: "Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives".

This year, International Women's Day comes on the heels of unprecedented global movement for women's rights, equality and justice. Sexual harassment, violence and discrimination against women has captured headlines and public discourse, propelled by a rising determination for change.

People around the world mobilized for a future that is more equal. This took the form of global marches and campaigns, including #MeToo in the United States of America and its counterparts in other countries, protesting against sexual harassment and violence, such as #YoTambien in Mexico, Spain, South America and beyond, #QuellaVoltaChe in Italy, #BalanceTonPorc in France and #Ana\_kaman in the Arab States; "Ni Una Menos" ('not one less'), a campaign against femicide that originated in Argentina; and many others, on issues ranging from equal pay to women's political representation.

International Women's Day 2018 saw an opportunity to transform this momentum into action, to empower women in all settings, rural and urban, and celebrate the activists who are working relentlessly to claim women's rights and realize their full potential.



Organizers of International Women’s Day 2018 also rode the wave of activism with: #PressforProgress — a push for gender parity worldwide.

International Women's Day (IWD) is an annual call to action designed to leave you feeling empowered and inspired. The celebratory day acknowledges the achievements of girls and women around the world and challenges people to join the global fight for gender equality.

## **UN International Women’s Day commemoration with UN officials, activists, and celebrities**

The key UN event to commemorate IWD 2018 was held on March 8<sup>th</sup> with UN leadership in attendance including UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, President of the UN General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák, and UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka amongst many other celebrities and supporters.

The event provided a platform to amplify the voices of rural and urban women and activists, as well as identify ways in which the UN system and its partners could support innovative solutions to advance gender equality and transform women’s lives.

Read more [here](#).

For more information on International Women’s Day: [www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/international-womens-day](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/international-womens-day).

## **UN Women Announced Champions for Innovation**

UN Women announced the appointment of six Champions for Innovation at International Women’s Day commemoration event on 8 March, co-organized by Innovation Norway, SAP and UN Women. The Champions include fashion designer Rachel Roy, actors Sarah Michelle Gellar, and Zoe Saldana, former NFL player Wade Davis, inventor Joy Mangano and historian Nina Ansary.

Using their platforms and networks, the Champions would support the flagship innovation programmes of the Global Innovation Coalition for Change (GICC) throughout 2018 and 2019.

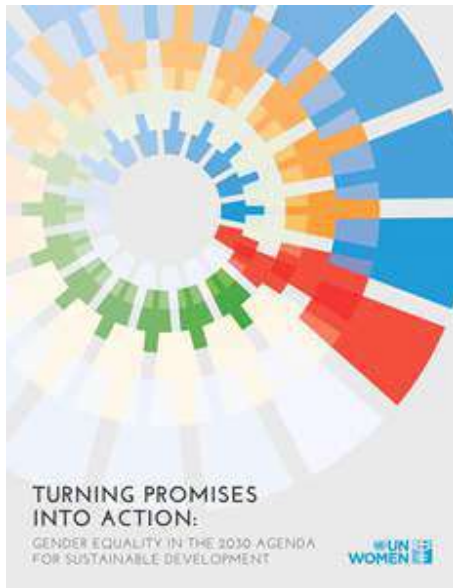
The GICC is a dynamic partnership between UN Women and key representatives from the private sector, academic and non-profit institutions focused on ensuring that women and girls fully benefit from technological innovation in our increasingly digitally-driven world.

Read more [here](#).



## UN Women SDG report uncovers significant gaps for women's empowerment and puts forth robust agenda to shift gears to attain 2030 goals

*Spotlights inequalities and challenges faced by women; identifies gaps and opportunities for gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*



The report highlights how, in the lives of women and girls, different dimensions of well-being and deprivation are deeply intertwined: a girl who is born into a poor household and forced into early marriage, for example, is more likely to drop out of school, give birth at an early age, suffer complications during childbirth, and experience violence—all SDGs targets—than a girl from a higher-income household who marries at a later age.

The report and executive summary are available [here](#).

## UN Women Executive Board convenes First Regular Session 2018

UN Women Executive Board convenes for the First Regular Session 2018. Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

The UN Women Executive Board convened for this year's First Regular Session on 13 February at United Nations headquarters in New York.

The President of the Executive Board, Ambassador H.E. Ivana Pajević from the Mission of Montenegro to the United Nations, made her first remarks as the newly elected President for 2018, and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka delivered opening remarks.



The Executive Board was briefed on UN Women’s follow-up to recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board and on the innovation strategy for accelerating efforts towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. Presentation on the UN Women operational response in Haiti was also made..

The detailed agenda as well as all official documents of the First Regular Session 2018 can be accessed on the [Executive Board webpage](#) or the [PaperSmart-portal of the United Nations](#).

Read more [here](#).

## Around the World

### UN Women Executive Director in Canada’s G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council meeting

UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka participated at the first in-person meeting of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council from 25 – 26 April in Ottawa, Canada, in the lead up to the G7 Leaders’ Summit, which is to be hosted by Canada in June this year.

Established by the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, the Gender Equality Advisory Council advises him on Canada’s priorities for the G7 presidency. The Council is co-chaired by Isabelle Hudon, Ambassador of Canada to France, and Melinda Gates, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and includes a diverse mix of gender activists and experts from around the world.

The Council had a series of consultations to develop a set of concrete and actionable recommendations for the five themes of the G7 under Canada’s presidency: jobs and innovation; inclusive growth; climate and environment; peace and security; and gender equality and women’s empowerment

Read more [here](#).



## **Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action launched to improve humanitarian response worldwide**

On 17 April, in Geneva, the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), an inter-agency forum on humanitarian action, the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and UN Women co-hosted the launch of the “Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action”, a practical tool that provides guidance to frontline humanitarian workers on how to integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout the humanitarian action cycle.

With 128 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, 65 million people displaced and the average length of displacement being 17-25 years, crises have become the ‘new normal’. Crises affect women and men, boys and girls differently, and women and girls are disproportionately affected in terms of reduced access to livelihoods, education and health and the threat of sexual and gender-based violence. Yet, when crisis strikes, humanitarian response has not always factored in these differential impacts. Without specific guidance, tools and know-how, humanitarian action run the risk of being gender-blind.

The Gender Handbook is the culmination of three years of collaborative and consultative work, complemented by a suite of e-learning and training materials, and is being translated into Arabic, French and Spanish. This handy compendium is crucial for accountability, shining a light on the roles and responsibilities of people at every level of humanitarian action. The Handbook also paves the way forward to ensure that collective commitments made by humanitarian actors to the Sendai Framework, the Grand Bargain, the World Humanitarian Summit, the New Way of Working and the IASC Gender Age marker, lead to tangible changes on the ground.


Read more [here](#).

## **Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative We-Fi launched by World Bank Group**

We-Fi is a collaborative partnership among 14 governments, eight multilateral development banks (MDBs), and other public and private sector stakeholders, hosted by the World Bank Group. It seeks to address financial and non-financial constraints faced by women-owned/led small and medium enterprises in developing countries.

It plans to unlock billions of dollars in financing for women-owned/led small and medium enterprises in developing countries to address financial and non-financial barriers and create a better ecosystem for women entrepreneurs.

The Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) – announced at the G20 Leaders’ Summit in July 2017 and launched at the Bank-Fund Annual Meetings in October – creates an unprecedented opportunity to harness the public and private sectors to open new doors for women entrepreneurs across the developing world. With funding of over \$340 million from fourteen governments, this collaborative partnership among governments,



multilateral development banks (MDBs), and other stakeholders has been designed to unlock financing for women-led/owned businesses in developing countries, including in the most challenging environments. We-Fi will support women entrepreneurs by scaling up access to financial products and services, building capacity, expanding networks, offering mentors, and providing opportunities to link with domestic and global markets. It will also assist governments in creating enabling environments for women in business.

We-Fi opened for business on October 12, 2017 and the first round of funding allocations were announced on April 19, 2018, with \$120 million slated for three programs designed to knock down the unique barriers facing women entrepreneurs in developing countries. This first round of allocated funding is expected to mobilize over \$1.6 billion in additional funds from the private sector, donors, governments and other development partners: that's twice the amount originally targeted for We-Fi over its lifetime.

The first round includes funding for proposals from the Islamic Development Bank to complement and expand successful initiatives in Yemen, Mali and Nigeria; the Asian Development Bank to improve the business environment for women in Sri Lanka; and the World Bank Group for global, regional and country specific activities to increase public and private sector support for women in business, with a focus on the poorest and most fragile environments.

Read more [here](#).

## **The second UN-EU conference on Supporting the future of Syria and the region held in Brussels**

The European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) co-chaired the second conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region', which took place in Brussels from 24 to 25 April. The conference will brought together participants from more than 85 countries and organizations at ministerial level and the first day focused on a dialogue with NGOs from Syria and the region.

In its eighth year, the Syrian crisis has deepened, with an estimated 13.1 million people currently in need of humanitarian assistance, of whom 5.6 million people have fled the country and registered as refugees, mainly in neighbouring countries, and 6.6 million people are internally displaced. The first three months of 2018 witnessed some of the highest levels of displacement since the beginning of the crisis, according to the latest figures from OCHA.

The escalating humanitarian crisis in Syria has devastating and specific consequences for women and girls. From food insecurity to loss of education opportunities, lack of safe water supply or health services, and high rates of gender-based violence, women and girls are at the frontlines of the crisis. In 69 per cent of the communities assessed, early marriage was reported as a concern.

At the sidelines of the conference, UN Women, together with the European Union, UNFPA, Kvinna till Kvinna, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, CARE

International and Oxfam, organized a side event on 24 April. The side event featured a discussion between policy makers and ten Syrian women who presented their distinct perspectives on the conflict.

Read more [here](#).

## National Council for Women in Egypt approves new law regulating the council

In line with the national efforts to advance the status of Egyptian women, UN Women in Egypt congratulated the President of the National Council for Women on the approval of the law passed by the Egyptian Parliament on 15 April concerning regulating the work of the council.

Together with the National Women's Strategy 2030, this law is another major achievement towards ensuring that Egyptian women are granted the rights stipulated in the 2014 constitution and that remarkable efforts are implemented to empower women in all spheres; political, social and economic, which reconfirms that women's empowerment is among the central priorities for the sustainable development of Egypt.

This law is also critical in positioning the women's empowerment agenda at the center of Egypt's inclusive and sustainable development efforts while equipping the National Council for Women with the right mandate and authority to ensure effective implementation and monitoring so that accountability mechanisms towards gender equality and women's empowerment are put in place.

Read more [here](#).

## Violence Against Women


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### Paraguay passes new law to end violence against women, including femicide

*Paraguay now has a new law to protect women against gender-based violence. The law criminalizes femicide, as well as other forms of violence, and will provide much-needed services to survivors, such as shelter and legal assistance.*

With this new law, Paraguay becomes the 18th country in Latin America and the Caribbean region to criminalize femicide—gender-based killings of women.

According to the Ministry of Women, there were 49 femicides and 13,491 reported cases of domestic violence in 2017, the highest on record for the country.



The new law recognizes femicide and obstetric violence (violence perpetrated against pregnant women or during childbirth) as criminal offences, and also outlaws online abuse against women and girls. It provides for comprehensive measures, such as free legal assistance, access to shelter and skills training for survivors. Furthermore, it calls for a unified standardized system to collect data on gender-based violence. Read more [here](#).

## **Madrid joins UN Women Safe Cities Global Programme**

The City of Madrid, in Spain, joined UN Women’s “Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Programme Initiative”, which aims to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces, including public transport. With Madrid, 28 cities around the world, from Kigali to New Delhi, are already participating in the programme, of which Spain is the major donor.

Envisaged as a long-term partnership, and in line with the city’s Strategic Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2020, Madrid’s initial contribution of USD 50,000 will help UN Women provide technical advice in the development of a number of concrete actions in the city. These include conducting a scoping study to understand the nature of sexual harassment in public spaces in the city, such as where, when and how it occurs, and specific groups of women targeted. The data gathered will be used to inform future interventions and policies to end sexual harassment Madrid, and globally.

Other activities that will be carried out include the promotion of gender-equal social norms and respectful gender relationships through educational activities in schools, communities and other settings in the city, as well as strengthening of the local authorities’ capacities to respond and help survivors of violence in the city, including extending its services to survivors of sexual violence.

Read more [here](#).

## **UN Women and Justice Rapid Response animated web feature on sexual and gender-based violence wins the prestigious Webby Award**

For the second year in a row, a UN Women web feature has won the Webby Award, a prestigious international award honoring excellence on the internet. UN Women’s animated web feature Justice now: Ending impunity for sexual and gender-based violence as international crimes, has been nominated under the Law category for Websites. The animated feature, produced in partnership with Justice Rapid Response, showcases the various paths to justice for women and girls disproportionately impacted by sexual and gender-based violence as international crimes, gives voice to survivors’ stories and looks at the critical role investigators play in ending impunity for sexual and gender-based violence crimes.

UN Women’s animated web infographic, Violence against women: Facts everyone should know, was also named as an honoree under the Activism category for websites. Dubbed as the Oscars for the Web, the Webby Awards honour the best of the internet every year.

Read more [here](#).

# Women's Representation

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## Why the Influence of Women on Boards Still Lags?

The MIT Sloan Management Review Magazine, Spring 2018 issue looks at why women on boards are still lagging. It notes that despite the rise in representation of women on corporate boards over the past decade, evidence shows that the growth rate is slowing. Meanwhile women's power on the boards on which they sit is often limited.

The research has found that the reason women aren't making more rapid inroads is that few have reached the most influential board leadership positions. Although more women are on boards now than 10 years ago, very few have been promoted to a post that would give them influence beyond their seat at the table.

"There are three layers of progress for women," explains former Xerox Corp. CEO Anne Mulcahy, who currently sits on several Fortune 1000 boards. "There's the breaking in part of getting onto boards. Then there is the critical mass part of getting more than one woman on each board. And then there is the influence part of getting women into leadership positions where the real power resides."

By leadership positions, Mulcahy is referring not just to the board chair and lead independent director roles. The real work of boards gets done in committees, she says, and not all committees are created equal. There is "an unwritten, unstated hierarchy of power," Mulcahy notes. Leaders of committees set the agenda for decision-making and therefore wield more power than other directors. In the committees generally acknowledged to involve heavier lifting — especially audit, nominating/governance, and compensation — their power can meaningfully change the course of events. They have built-in influence over important board decisions such as who the next CEO will be, who comprises the slate of future board members, how executive compensation is structured, and more.

The story of women on boards is, thus, a mixed one. Yes, the raw numbers have changed substantially over the past decade. But the lack of ascension to key leadership board positions once women have taken a seat on the board is limiting their influence and impact. This, in turn, can have a negative effect on the prospects for continued growth in female board participation.

The analysis of the 2016 Fortune 500 companies affirms that women are still underrepresented in power roles. Just 6% of board chair positions at these companies are occupied by women. Where are the rest of the women chairs

### When Women Are in Power Roles

The correlation between women holding powerful board roles and overall board representation is clear. Similarly, when women lead a board, there tend to be more women in other powerful board roles. In companies where women occupy the board chair role, the percentage of women who chair at least one committee is higher, the percentage of women leading the compensation and audit committees is higher, and the average percentage of women on the board increases from 20% to 28% overall.



Some of the increase in female representation that coincides with having women in power roles occurs because experience and exposure to women in different board roles increases their male colleagues' comfort.

Read more [here](#).

## McKinsey Report on Delivering through Diversity

The latest report on diversity in the workplace *Delivering on Diversity* released in January 2018 by McKinsey reaffirms the global relevance of the link between diversity—defined as a greater proportion of women and a more mixed ethnic and cultural composition in the leadership of large companies—and company financial outperformance.

It suggests how organizations can craft better inclusion strategies for a competitive edge. It sheds light on how companies can use inclusion and diversity as an enabler of business impact

Awareness of the business case for inclusion and diversity is on the rise. While social justice typically is the initial impetus behind these efforts, companies have increasingly begun to regard inclusion and diversity as a source of competitive advantage, and specifically as a key enabler of growth. Yet progress on diversification initiatives has been slow. And companies are still uncertain about how they can most effectively use diversity and inclusion to support their growth and value-creation goals.

The new analysis expands on the 2015 report, *Why diversity matters*, by drawing on an enlarged data set of more than 1,000 companies covering 12 countries, measuring not only profitability (in terms of earnings before interest and taxes, or EBIT) but also longer-term value creation (or economic profit), exploring diversity at different levels of the organization, considering a broader understanding of diversity (beyond gender and ethnicity), and providing insight into best practices.

Read more [here](#).



## In your Interest

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### 1918 vs 2018 | Things women were prevented from doing by law a century ago

- Applying for a credit card or loan in their own name
- Working in the legal profession and civil service
- Inheriting and bequeathing property on the same terms as men
- Claiming equal pay for doing the same work as men
- Prosecuting a spouse for rape

### Gender equality initiatives at the World Forum for Democracy 2018

The World Forum for Democracy (WFD) is a platform for dialogue and democratic innovation which brings new ideas into the work of the Council of Europe and promotes its principles across the world. The 2018 World Forum for Democracy will take place in Strasbourg on 19-21 November 2018. This year, the Forum will focus on gender equality and women's rights, in particular on women's public and political participation and on combating violence against women in the wake of the #MeToo campaigns. Organisations / institutions worldwide are invited to express their interest in presenting their initiatives in the Labs that will take place at the Forum. The labs are workshops where specific issues are addressed through the critical analysis of tested initiatives



## Recommended Reading

### This 2018 Report on equality between women and men in the EU



This 2018 Report on equality between women and men in the EU released on International Women's Day 2018 in March shows that progress has stalled in certain areas: women still take on the majority of caring responsibilities in families, the gender pay gap has stagnated at 16% for years and violence against women remains a problem. The report shows that women still face challenges in different areas:

While European women are better educated than men (44 % women aged 30-34 vs 34 % men got university degree in 2016), they remain largely under-represented in decision-making positions in companies and still earn 16 % less than men on average across the EU. Women are also under-represented in politics. In six countries (Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, and Malta) women represent less than 20 % of parliament members. The gender gap in employment has stagnated for the last few years at around 11 percentage points. There has been no noteworthy catch-up between low and high performing Member States. 44 % of Europeans in average think that women should take care of their homes and families. In one third of EU Member States, it is no less than 70 % of Europeans who think so.

Violence is still too wide-spread: One in three women in Europe has experienced either physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15. Also 55 % of women in the EU has experienced sexual harassment. This takes stock of the main initiatives launched or accomplished in 2017 in the five thematic areas of the Strategic engagement:

- (1) equal economic independence of women and men;
- (2) equal pay for work of equal value;
- (3) equality in decision-making;
- (4) ending gender-based violence; and
- (5) promoting gender equality beyond the EU.

This survey reaffirms that a lot of work still needs to be done in all Member States. Read more [here](#).

## Syria Commission of Inquiry report on sexual and gender-based violence

UN Women and Justice Rapid Response (JRR) welcome the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, “[I Lost My Dignity: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the Syrian Arab Republic](#).” The report—the first of its kind from the Commission—documents the horrific sexual and gender-based violence committed by all parties to the conflict. It is an important step toward truth and justice for victims, survivors and the people of Syria. UN Women and JRR are proud to have supported this effort through the deployment of experts to the Commission’s investigation team from the Justice Rapid Response-UN Women Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Justice Experts Roster.

Read more [here](#).

## New Research by PEW Reveals Society’s Attitude About Gender Differences

Pew research Center’s recent study released in December 2017 documents how gender, age, political affiliation, race and level of education dictates what we think about these differences. The attitude Americans have about gender differences shape how women are viewed in the workplace and whether or not women’s ambition to reach leadership positions is supported.

This data reveals our society’s fixation with women’s physical appearance as well as a lack of support for women’s ambition. In fact, 28% of respondents volunteered that ambition, leadership and assertiveness are traits that women should not have.

Read more [here](#).

## Greater Gender Equality Countries face lesser women entering STEM studies

Countries with greater gender equality see a smaller proportion of women taking degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), a new study launched by Leeds Beckett University in the UK and the University of Missouri in the USA, has found. Policymakers could use the findings to reconsider initiatives to increase women’s participation in STEM, say the researchers.

Dubbed the 'gender equality paradox', the research found that countries such as Albania and Algeria have a greater percentage of women amongst their STEM graduates than countries lauded for their high levels of gender equality, such as Finland, Norway or Sweden.

The researchers, from Leeds Beckett University in the UK and the University of Missouri in the USA, believe this might be because countries with less gender equality often have little welfare support, making the choice of a relatively highly-paid STEM career more attractive.



The study, published in [Psychological Science](#), also looked at what might motivate girls and boys to choose to study STEM subjects, including overall ability, interest or enjoyment in the subject and whether science subjects were a personal academic strength.

Read more [here](#).

### ❖ Recommended website

The Best Gender Equality blogs from thousands of top Gender Equality blogs in the index using search and social metrics. Data will be refreshed once a week.  
[Check this out.](#)

### ❖ Employment opportunities in UN Women

You can find a monthly list of vacancy announcements on this [link](#).

## *Network – The UN Women Newsletter*

Read Network online [here](#).

Editor-in-Chief: Ms. Aparna Mehrotra, Director, Division for UN system Coordination, UN Women

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United Nations, 220 East 42nd Street, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10017, USA

Telephone: 1 646 781 4510; Fax: 1 646 781 4495

E-mail: [network-newsletter@unwomen.org](mailto:network-newsletter@unwomen.org)