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UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women:

Accelerating the attainment of SDGs with a gender lens in the UNECE region (2021-2025)



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UNITED NATIONS

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Accronyms

CEB	United Nations System's Chief Executive Board for Coordination
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DGFP	Divisional Gender Focal Point
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (UN)
ECA RWGG	Europe and Central Asia Regional Working Group on Gender
GAP	Gender Action Plan
IANWGE	Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN-SWAP	United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNECE GFP	UNECE Gender Focal Point
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations

Foreword

Women's full participation in all spheres of life at all levels of decision-making, as well as reaping the benefits of development for all – women and girls, men and boys – are more crucial than ever. We cannot deliver the 2030 Agenda by the end of this decade without accelerating progress towards achieving gender equality; we cannot properly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic without gender-transformative measures and tools that take into account the different socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic on women and men.

UNECE is firmly committed to making gender equality a reality both in supporting our member States with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with a gender lens as well as internally in our organization's working environment. In the regional review meeting on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action in October 2019, I called for an acceleration of efforts by all stakeholders and UNECE member States to close the existing and emerging gender gaps. Today, as COVID-19 threatens to roll back even the hard-won gains that women have achieved so far, this call is even more imperative if we want to build back better.

The UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for 2021-2025, an update of the initial Policy covering the years 2016-2020, is our

response to the compelling challenges to gender equality in our region. Together with its tool for implementation – the UNECE Gender Action Plan (GAP) – the Policy has been a key driver of accountability and improved results on gender equality and the empowerment of women in UNECE. The updated Policy continues to provide the directions of the organization for gender-related work in line with the framework of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). It aims at further strengthening the reflection of gender issues in the substantive work of UNECE's subprogrammes, improving accountability, monitoring and reporting, building capacity, changing the organizational culture and achieving gender parity of staff.



Olga Algayerova

Under-Secretary-General
of the United Nations and
UNECE Executive Secretary



UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Accelerating the attainment of SDGs with a gender lens in the UNECE region (2021-2025)



“For the first time, the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action can be linked to a time-bound framework – that of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Let’s work together to turn the goal of gender equality into a reality by 2030.”



Olga Algayerova

Under-Secretary General of the UN and
UNECE Executive Secretary

Opening statement at the Beijing+25
Regional Review meeting
29 October 2019
Palais des Nations, Geneva

I.

Introduction



UNECE is committed to making gender equality a reality because it is a basic human right for every woman and girl, and a necessity for building sustainable economies and inclusive societies. Women's empowerment and gender equality are vital to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; they are embedded in SDG 5 - the goal for gender equality – and are a pre-condition and catalyst for the attainment of the other SDGs. Together with its member States and UN partners, UNECE shares the vision of a world “of universal respect for human rights and human dignity” in which “every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed.”¹

The present UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for 2021-2025 (hereafter referred as ‘the Policy’) is an update of the UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for 2016-2020, which together with its tool for implementation – the UNECE Gender Action Plan (GAP) – has been a key driver of accountability and improved results on gender equality and the empowerment of women in UNECE.

The Policy update gives further guidance for achieving gender equality and empowerment of women both in the substantive work of UNECE and in staffing, reflecting, inter alia, the modifications resulting from the second generation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP)² and the Guidance Note³. To ensure its alignment with the common UN-wide framework, the Policy aims at enhancing the gender-responsive attainment of the SDGs, including measures to strengthen and make visible the linkages between gender analysis, results definitions and results reporting through a focus on the three new performance indicators of UN-SWAP 2.0: programmatic linking to the SDGs, reporting on gender-related results and catalysing leadership.

The Policy builds upon the progress achieved in gender equality and the empowerment of women in the UNECE areas of work following the implementation of the UNECE biennial Gender Action Plans (GAPs) since 2012 and the most recent GAP for 2020. It reflects lessons learned and advice for further development from the annual reporting on the implementation of UN-SWAP as well as from the recommendations of an external evaluation on gender mainstreaming in UNECE in 2019.

¹ UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1 “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, p.4, paragraph 8.

² For more information, see www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability.

³ Guidance on the development of gender equality and the empowerment of women policies, UN Women Coordination Unit, May 2014 – <http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/unsystemcoordination/guidance-development-gender-policies.pdf>.

The Policy develops further its overarching and forward-looking framework to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women as part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and considering the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the socio-economic development in the UNECE region through a gender lens. To provide better results, UNECE will further strengthen the substantive work on gender mainstreaming in its subprogrammes, improve accountability, monitoring and reporting, organizational culture, and gender parity of staff⁴ and build capacity.

The implementation of the Policy is detailed by cross-sectoral activities in UNECE subprogrammes in a separate document – UNECE Gender Action Plan (GAP) – which is updated biennially.

The GAP is monitored and discussed at a Directors' meeting every year. The GAP is the vehicle for UNECE's implementation of the UN SWAP.

The UNECE Strategy for Gender Parity with its implementation plan addresses women's representation in staffing as the means of implementation of the Policy in the area of achieving gender parity in the Organization and is detailed in a separate document.

The UNECE Policy was prepared in consultation with senior management and includes substantive inputs from the UNECE subprogrammes. It was endorsed by the UNECE Senior management at the Directors' meeting on 23 February 2021.

⁴ A separate document, UNECE Strategy for Gender Parity, addresses the equal representation of women in the organization and complements the current Policy.

Reaffirming UNECE commitments to gender equality, diversity and integrity

The United Nations is committed to achieving gender equality as an end in itself and as a requirement for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. In addition to the fundamental principles of non-discrimination as to race, sex, language, or religion, enshrined in the UN founding Charter of 1945 and the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, several intergovernmental frameworks are key to gender equality and the advancement of women in all UN entities and member States. These include but are not limited to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the UN Millennium Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other important global mandates⁵.

UNECE emphasizes the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women as a human right and as a crucial condition for sustainable development, and reaffirms its commitments to the global mandates providing the framework for the Organization's strategy for gender mainstreaming and its further actions for the advancement of women and girls in all areas of life.



The substantive work of UNECE on gender equality and women's empowerment is based on gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for realizing gender equality following the strong mandates provided by the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly to follow up the Platform for Action (2000), and several resolutions that followed after the Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 of the UN Economic and Social Council on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (most recently in E/RES/2019/2 of 6 June 2019).

The strategy to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women in the UNECE has followed a step-by-step approach starting with the regional review of the progress made and challenges faced by its 56 member States on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after the Fourth World Conference on Women Conference in Beijing (1995) and proceeding with a comprehensive policy framework in the context of the advanced UN-wide agenda, planning and reporting processes with the UN-SWAP (Box 1).

⁵ Key global mandates pertaining to gender equality and women's empowerment are included in Annex I.

Box 1

Gender mainstreaming in UNECE: key historical steps

Since the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Beijing Conference organized by UNECE (Vienna, 1994), the Commission has gradually incorporated a gender perspective in its activities. Gender issues have been included in the plan of action arising from the reform of the Commission in 1997 (Declaration on Strengthening Economic Cooperation in Europe and Plan of Action – ECOSOC 1997/224), followed by an Agreed Framework for gender mainstreaming adopted in 2001. This framework reflected actions at cross-sectoral and divisional levels which were discussed by an Informal Group on Gender and Economy at its ad hoc meetings without envisaging a mechanism for accounting, monitoring and reporting at the level of the Organization.

Following the recommendations of the OIOS on the implementation of the gender mainstreaming mandate in 2009 to (a) develop and disseminate a programme-level gender mainstreaming action plan and to (b) build an evidence-base by actively collecting and analysing outcomes, best practices and lessons learned in gender mainstreaming, UNECE developed its first Gender Action Plan for 2012-2013.

After the adoption of the UN-SWAP by the UN system Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB, April 2012), and based on the lessons learned from the two GAPs for 2012-2013 and 2014-2015, the first comprehensive Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was developed (2016-2020) aligning the cross-sectoral and sectoral activities in UNECE with the UN-SWAP overarching framework as part of ensuring UN system coherence and as required by the CEB. Since then, UNECE has been regularly updating the GAPs to reflect actions undertaken and respective outcomes achieved by the UNECE Subprogrammes.

UNECE Policy and GAPs for the last five years included actions and respective outcomes in the six areas of the UN-SWAP, namely (a) accountability, (b) results-based management, (c) oversight, (d) human and financial resources, (e) capacity, and (f) knowledge exchange and networking. In each of these areas activities were developed within the relevant mandates of UNECE Sub-programmes.

UNECE aims at facilitating the economic development of the region and promoting closer integration of its economies. The ultimate goal of improving the lives of citizens in our member States cannot be achieved without equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities between women and men. Excluding women from any sector of life means creating barriers to efficiency, productivity, and growth, slowing down progress and introducing disadvantages for society as half of the world's population mind, skills, and talent remain untapped. Empowering women is crucial for reaching sustainable development, because it entails women gaining more influence in determining consumption and production patterns and in controlling the distribution of resources between and within generations.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encapsulates gender equality and the empowerment of women in all 17 SDGs. Gender equality is included in 45 targets and 54 gender-specific indicators of SDGs, thus creating a multiplier effect and accelerating the attainment of all SDGs.

UNECE helps countries deliver on the SDGs through an integrated approach to sustainable development supported by the results-oriented work of its eight subprogrammes, namely, environment; transport; statistics; economic cooperation and integration; sustainable energy;

trade; forests and the forest industry; and housing, land management and population. Removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment in each of these fields requires systematic actions across broad areas, such as investments in education and training, in building gender-responsive infrastructure, developing and implementing policies that support equal access to assets, land and housing, innovating enterprises and setting up gender-responsive standards, policies and measures for equal pay for work of equal value and equal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work.

UNECE will continue to address existing and emerging gender gaps in the area of gender and economy in the region and together with its member States will continue to collaborate in realising the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and strengthening its linkages with the 2030 Agenda (Box 2). In particular, UNECE will further focus on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls and the policy responses for sustainable recovery for all.

The Beijing+25 Regional Review meeting disclosed continuing gender inequalities, calling upon governments, civil society, national and regional institutions in the UNECE region to step up and accelerate efforts and actions to put an end to gender disparities. Many of these inequalities are caused by discriminatory stereotypes that

limit educational choices of women, burden them with unpaid care, create barriers for women at the workplace, both for initial access to employment adequate for their education levels, and promotion to decision-making

levels. In addition, on-going political tensions and conflicts in Europe have exacerbated the situation of women, including vulnerable groups like refugees, deepening existing inequalities.

Box 2

Beijing+25 Regional Review meeting: reaffirming commitments and calling for actions now

UNECE in cooperation with UN Women, undertook a regional review of the progress made and challenges faced by UNECE member States in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action from 2014 to 2019, based on the national reports. For the first time the advancement in the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, from women's labour force participation, education and women's poverty to women in environment, reflects progress in achieving SDG 5 and cuts across other SDGs with gender-specific targets. At the meeting, the alignment of the two frameworks was discussed across six overarching thematic areas: inclusive development, prosperity and decent work, tackling poverty and social protection, freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes, participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions, peaceful and inclusive societies, and environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation. Overall, there has been progress in these areas, however, it is insufficient. The co-chairs conclusions include recommendations to invest in gender-responsive public services and care and promote the reconciliation of work and family; prioritize the social inclusion of women in legislation and practice; mainstream gender into policies on environmental protection and rehabilitation and climate change, and improve regional and international cooperation and exchange of best practices in all areas, among other urgent actions related to the Beijing commitments.

Report of the Beijing+25 Regional review Meeting, ECE/AC/.28/2019/2



The UNECE Executive Secretary reaffirms her commitments to take leadership for the efficient and effective implementation of this UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

As a member of the International Gender Champions, the UNECE's leadership pledges to make gender parity a reality.

UNECE reaffirms its commitment to align itself with the UN SWAP 2.0 for the implementation of the CEB Policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

UNECE will continue to advocate for gender equality and the empowerment of women in its work within the UN system, as well as with its member States and partners at national, regional and international levels.

UNECE will continue to regularly monitor and report on the implementation of the UN-SWAP, following the requirements for ranking its activities according to the 17 Performance Indicators that are common for the UN system. All UNECE Divisions participate in the preparation of the UNECE strategic actions and GAP, its implementation and annual reporting.

Policy Objectives and Principles



A. Policy Objectives

UNECE reaffirms the overall objectives of the Policy as stipulated in its previous policy document, namely:

- To strengthen **women's equal participation** with men as decision makers in the Organization and in all its areas of work
- To **mainstream a gender perspective** in the substantive work of the Sectoral Committees
- To contribute to **reducing gender inequalities** in its member States, including in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development in the pertinent areas of UNECE's work.

To achieve these overall objectives, UNECE will substantively contribute to **gender-related SDG results** by ensuring gender-responsive programming of its work in line with the UN-SWAP 2.0 framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While the focus will be on women's economic empowerment, attention will also be paid to other socially constructed gender inequalities that could be addressed through gender-responsive economic policies.

Special efforts will be made to turn gender-responsive SDG results into **gender-transformative SDG results**, i.e. results achieving transformative change internally in the organization and externally through its work, thus addressing 'social norms, cultural values, power structures and the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination'⁶.

B. Principles

UNECE Policy emphasizes the crucial role of both women and men in shaping gender relations – the relations between women and men. Therefore, it recognizes men's as well as women's efforts and actions as key drivers for achieving and maintaining equality between them in all areas of UNECE's work.

Consistent with the overarching objective of the UNECE programme of work – the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – and in line with its mandate to mainstream gender perspectives in all of its subprogrammes, the UNECE policy will contribute to the achievement of the stand-alone goal on gender equality, SDG 5, and of the gender-related targets in other SDGs where relevant.

UNECE Policy will comprise a transparent accountability and institutional mechanism (see section 4.5) and will strengthen the organizational culture to support the efforts of all staff.

UNECE will continue to promote women's economic empowerment through capacity building, policy dialogue and exchange of best practices of women entrepreneurship development in its member States in cooperation with all stakeholders. Special attention will be given to the countries in the SPECA region within the SPECA Working Group on Gender and SDGs.

The structural causes of gender inequality will be addressed through results-based management to support the efficient and effective decision-making, resource allocation, programming and functions that are needed to achieve and maintain gender equality in the organization and its work.

⁶ UN Women, UN-SWAP 2.0, Framework and Technical Guidance, December 2019, Performance Indicator 1, p. 39.

IV.

PRIORITY AREAS AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The key priority areas for the effective and coherent implementation of the UNECE Policy include: substantive strengthening of gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, including planning, resource allocation and implementation, evaluation and reporting; tailoring the targeted actions in the area of gender and economy towards the attainment of SDGs in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic and social consequences; improving the strategic focus on gender at divisional level; strengthening accountability, organizational culture and gender parity and building capacity for better attainment of gender equality in related SDG results.



4.1 Strengthening gender mainstreaming in substantive work

UNECE will continue the implementation of gender mainstreaming as a key tool for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. Within the mandate of UNECE, activities supporting gender mainstreaming include: providing leadership to member States by bringing the gender perspective to the forefront through policy analysis and advice, expert group meetings, documentation for intergovernmental bodies, workshops and conferences, development of norms and regulations, and monitoring of their implementation, collection, use and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data. This strategic approach of gender mainstreaming as defined by the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 (Box 3) has been key to successful reflection of gender in UNECE normative work, publications, and projects. It will be further developed to strengthen UNECE's contribution to the achievement of the gender-related SDGs results in its 8 subprogrammes where relevant, and as a specific targeted activity on promoting women's economic empowerment and women's entrepreneurship development in the UNECE region.

Box 3

Gender mainstreaming: definition

Gender mainstreaming is mandated by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action as a strategic approach for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels of development. The Platform commits all stakeholders in development policies and programmes, including United Nations entities, member States, the international development community and civil society actors, to take action. The 1997 agreed conclusions of ECOSOC defined gender mainstreaming as: "The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."

Actions over the past years to address the gender dimension in UNECE's work have varied depending on the specific features of its subprogrammes. This takes many different forms, for example: collection of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics; reflection of gender aspects in water and sanitation, in environmental policies, in legal and business environments, innovation, or discussion on how to involve women entrepreneurs in public private partnerships. In 2019, a Declaration for Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development was launched calling on all standards bodies to mainstream gender in the standards they develop and the development process itself. Independent from these specifics, UNECE has identified the common understanding of concepts related to gender, senior management leadership and accountability, gender mainstreaming in strategic planning, normative and analytical work, and allocating human and financial funds as important drivers to promote gender equality.

While mainstreaming gender in the domain of economic policies, UNECE will make efforts to make a shift from gender-responsive policies to transformative policies: This approach will encourage critical reflection and challenges of gender norms and equal use of resources, focus on the root causes of gender inequalities and foster economic policies that create change in the power relations between women and men.

Our approach encourages critical reflection, questioning and challenging of gender norms. It also challenges the distribution of resources and roles based on a person's gender. It aims to foster an enabling policy, budgetary and institutional framework for gender equality, that adequately protects girls' and women's rights, tackles the barriers they face and meets their particular needs. Achieving gender equality requires working at all levels (as individual, within family and relationships, as communities, institutions, and societies) and across a person's life course.

Gender mainstreaming requires both integrating a gender perspective into the content of the different policies, norms and standards, and addressing the issue of representation of women and men in the various processes leading towards equitable outcomes. Therefore, mainstreaming gender in the work of UNECE will go hand in hand with a strategy to ensure gender parity in the UNECE staff. In section 4.4. key issues of equal representation of women and men in UNECE are addressed. The UNECE strategy for achieving gender parity in the Organization with an implementation plan is detailed in a separate document.

To provide a common basis for all UNECE Divisions, the Policy identifies strategic actions for all subprogrammes. These actions are applied at cross-sectoral level and include methodological support to reflect gender in the substantive work of the Sectoral Committees, encouraging governments to send gender-balanced delegations and facilitating gender balance among the candidates for the bureaux of Sectoral Committees and subsidiary bodies.

The implementation of the UNECE Policy is supported by regular reviews of progress made in gender mainstreaming. A discussion on progress in gender mainstreaming in UNECE could also be part of the biennial sessions of the Commission.

UNECE will strengthen the application of various methods and tools to put the principles of gender mainstreaming into practice, including gender analysis and impact assessment. The effective functioning of these methods will be ensured by further developing comprehensive sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics by the UNECE Statistical Division as well as by further improving the skills of UNECE's staff to implement relevant methods.

To ensure that a gender perspective is taken into account through the whole cycle of work, the Policy will further strengthen the use of gender analysis in the strategic planning process by including gender-responsive SDG

results in the programme budget at the level of subprogrammes through qualitative and quantitative indicators.

At the level of operational activities, the Policy commits to further integrating the gender dimension in technical cooperation. Expanding both the scope of and the number of projects which explicitly adopt a gender lens in technical cooperation is another priority area that goes across all subprogrammes. The assessment of gender mainstreaming in the project proposals of all extra-budgetary funded projects will be further strengthened.

From an organizational perspective, UNECE mainstreams gender in internal policies and processes, including financial and human resources; capacity development; communication; knowledge and information management; and evaluation. The reflection of gender issues in all these areas will continue.

To track financial allocation of resources for the attainment of gender equality, the Gender Marker will be implemented as part of UMOJA. UNECE will follow the process of rolling out the Gender Marker in the Secretariat. The results of the Gender Marker will be reported and analysed annually through the UN SWAP reporting and will be used as a basis for setting up a benchmark of resource allocation.

The UNECE Evaluation policy, adopted by the Executive Committee in October 2014, facilitates the reflection of a gender dimension in projects. It takes into account UNEG norms and standards and the UNEG Guidance for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation. In May 2014, UNECE also issued a 'Support Guide for Conducting Evaluation', which provides clear guidance on how to integrate Gender and Human Rights considerations in every phase of the evaluation process.

4.2 Specific objectives targeting women only and linkages to gender-related SDG results

In conjunction with gender mainstreaming as a key strategy to achieve and maintain gender equality, the UNECE Policy recognizes the important role that activities tailored towards women's needs only play in promoting women's economic independence in the UNECE region. Strategic actions will continue to empower women through building up women's skills and knowledge, expanding networks and facilitating networks for women entrepreneurs and by that increase their potential in contributing to sustainable growth and inclusive societies.

UNECE has a long-standing commitment to the promotion of women's entrepreneurship in South-East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. In addition to capacity-building workshops for women entrepreneurs, activities will include assessing the economic and business environment, discussing and sharing experience to tackle gender

inequalities and their root causes, such as the unpaid work of women. The UNECE Policy to promote women's economic empowerment will be supported by the Working Group on Gender and SDGs within the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA).

Engendering sub-regional initiatives in the work of the SPECA will continue with a focus on implementing SDG 5 and mainstreaming gender equality in relevant SDGs through specific activities, including expert group meetings and exchange of best practices in this area.

The UNECE Policy commits to further monitor and report on the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the UNECE region as part of the Beijing review process and its linkages with the 2030 Agenda. This may include support for the preparation of the Beijing +30 review at national level in 2023 and a possible regional review meeting in 2024.

4.3. Strategic focus at divisional level

The strategic objectives for gender mainstreaming at divisional level are identified below and are in line with the mandates of the UNECE subprogrammes.

a. Environment Division



- Promoting and raising awareness of the importance of taking into account the gender perspective in different activities and events under the Committee on Environmental Policy and the UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements, as appropriate.
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the relevant activities of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, with a particular focus on capacity building activities in different sub-regions, especially in Caucasus and Central Asia, and the development of soft law instruments.

- Under the activities of the Protocol on Water and Health, integrating a gender approach by means of promoting equitable access to water and sanitation through activities on supporting realization of the human rights to water and sanitation and on public participation and small-scale water supply, as well as by promoting the gender dimension in the process of target-setting and reporting.
- Promoting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in relevant activities within the “Environment for Europe” process and events related to the promotion of sustainable development, including providing assistance on how to address gender in the context of existing national Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) action plans and strategies under the UNECE Strategy for ESD.
- Promoting the incorporation of the gender dimension in relevant chapters of the Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs), as appropriate.
- Promoting the rights of every person with regard to access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters without any gender-related discrimination through activities under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.
- Promoting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the activities and forums organized under the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme.
- Supporting UNECE member States in their efforts to achieve gender related targets in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, particularly targets 5.1, 5.5, 5.c under Goal 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, within the activities of the subprogramme.

b. Sustainable Transport Division



- Gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women is addressed in the Inland Transport Committee’s Strategy and will be embedded in actions aimed at implementation of the Strategy. Female representatives from the member States chair and lead the technical Working Parties and Group of Experts under the Committee. Gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women is given the necessary attention in handbooks and guidance on sustainable transformation of transport sector.
- Extending sex-disaggregated data collection by the Working Party on statistics, especially in relation to road accidents.
- Making NGOs working in transport more gender sensitive, especially in data collection.
- Continuing to raise awareness on the link between gender and transport in the UNECE region through the organization of events.

c. Statistical Division



- Working towards mainstreaming gender in national statistical systems, including organization of expert meetings on gender statistics, preparation of methodological and training materials, and capacity development.
- Improving, updating, and maintaining the UNECE Gender Statistics Database and using it for statistical description of gender issues in reports and the media.
- Communicating the gender dimension of relevant SDG indicators through the UNECE Dashboard and Database on SDGs and in related reports and publications.
- Promoting the use of appropriate statistical data in measuring and explaining gender issues.

Population Unit

- Providing gender-sensitive outputs in the context of the programme of work of the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing in order to assist member States in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (in particular Commitment 8 on mainstreaming a gender approach in ageing societies). Outputs may include capacity development activities, publications, meetings, and contributions to indicator development.
- Serving as a clearing house for the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), a programme to collect micro-data on relationships between generations and gender: promoting data use, disseminating research results, and contributing to the sustainability of the programme.

d. Sustainable Energy Division



- Promoting and raising awareness of the importance of taking into account the gender perspective in different activities and events under the Committee on Sustainable Energy and Groups of Experts, as appropriate.
- Creating a supportive environment for expert participation, policies, regulations, innovative development, and knowledge-based economies in the area of Sustainable Energy tailored towards the needs of both women and men.

e. Economic Cooperation and Trade Division



- Introducing a gender dimension in the Division's country- or region-specific analytical and policy support work. This includes the Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews and the Sub-Regional Innovation Policy Outlook as well as other studies (e.g. studies on regulatory barriers to trade, including their impact on SMEs and MSMEs). Among others, this can be done by covering aspects related to women entrepreneurship, including gender-specific barriers.

- Paying attention to the gender perspective, where relevant, in the topics addressed in seminars and conferences. This includes seminars and conferences on new and emerging topics, such as a transition to a more circular economy.
- Introducing or strengthening the gender perspective in the agenda of inter-governmental bodies (e.g. the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards).
- Ensuring that capacity building helps improve the skills base of women (e.g. related to the implementation of agricultural quality standards, on standardization policies and regulatory cooperation).
- Supporting the roll-out and implementation of gender-specific initiatives, such as UNECE's Gender-sensitive Standards Initiative and identifying strategic partnerships and entry points in other relevant processes (e.g. the recently established informal Working Group on Trade and Gender in the World Trade Organization (WTO)).

f. Forests, Land and Housing Division



- Implementing a gender perspective in the analysis of housing policies in the countries of the UNECE region and in supporting the respective government institutions to implement those policies.
- Including gender aspects in forest sector reporting and increasing the visibility of the topic by incorporating gender aspects into the Integrated Programme of Work of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission.



4.4 Supporting organizational culture and gender parity

UNECE will continue to promote the institutional and cultural environment for gender equality and the empowerment of women in the workplace through systematic implementation of its Strategy for Gender Parity as part of the UN System-wide Strategy for Gender Parity.

The key driver for improved organizational culture aiming at supporting a gender-responsive work environment tailored towards the needs of its staff, both women and men, will continue to be the implementation of facilitative policies, such as maternal, paternal, adoption, family, emergency leave, breast feeding, child care and flexible working arrangements.

The Policy will further promote the equal representation of women and men, in particular at those levels where gender gaps persist in the Organisation⁷ through encouraging hiring managers to achieve a gender-balanced recruitment across all positions.

4.5 Strengthening accountability, monitoring, and reporting

While the accountability framework for gender equality will continue to follow the principles of transparency, information disclosure and motivation in line with the UNECE Accountability Framework⁸, further strengthening is envisaged to drive the efficient implementation of the Policy in the Organization through committed leadership, enhanced engagement of senior management, a stronger network of Divisional Gender Focal Points and improved capacity for gender mainstreaming. UNECE staff at all levels will continue to be accountable for the implementation of the Policy, its supporting strategies by subprogrammes and the Gender Action Plan.

⁷ Gender parity in UNECE staff (2015-2020) is presented in Annex II.

⁸ <http://www.unece.org/info/open-unece/accountability.html>

The UNECE Executive Secretary commits herself to taking leadership on, and being accountable for the implementation of this Policy, its objectives and priority areas and actions. Improving gender equality and empowering women and increasing efforts to attain gender parity in the organization, are part of the Executive Secretary's commitments and are reflected in her Senior Manager's Compact for 2020.

Responsibility for the application of the Policy in the UNECE subprogrammes is delegated to the senior management. This includes UNECE Directors and Heads of Units who are leading the development, updating and implementation of specific strategies, objectives, and actions in the biennial Gender Action Plans. This Directors' role is explicitly included with a specific goal in the e-performance system.

The network of the Divisional Gender Focal Points (DGFPs) facilitates the process starting from the design of strategies to the specific tasks needed for their implementation. The functions of the DGFPs related to gender mainstreaming, monitoring and reporting at subprogramme levels are assigned explicitly and reported in the e-performance system.

As part of the UNECE's commitment to gender equality, all staff is accountable for the application of the Policy and is expected to implement the GAP in accordance with their respective functions, thus making their specific contribution to the achievement of gender equality in their work. The update, monitoring and reporting of the Policy at the UNECE level is coordinated by the UNECE Gender Focal Point in the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit (SDGU).

To enhance accountability of UNECE's staff, an award for the best practice on gender mainstreaming in the Organization has been established in 2020. This award will be presented biennially.

UNECE will continue to monitor and report on the implementation of this Policy in line with the Secretariat monitoring and reporting principles, and the 17 performance indicators in UN-SWAP 2.0.

Accounting for the need of results-based management within the UN-SWAP 2.0, UNECE will develop both qualitative and quantitative indicators for its subprogrammes to reflect the progress in the implementation of this Policy.

The monitoring and reporting of the Policy and its GAP are done on annual basis as part of the UN-SWAP reporting to the Executive Secretary.

The Policy will be updated every five years according to the requirements of the UN-SWAP 2.0.

4.6 Building capacity

The successful implementation of the Policy and the strategies as identified by the UNECE subprogrammes in section 4.3 depend on the capacity of, and cooperation between UNECE member States as well as staff's capacity to mainstream gender in their work. The enhanced competencies of UNECE staff will provide the basis for integrating gender in the analytical and normative work, through gender analysis, using and compiling sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics.

As part of the formal training, the online course "I Know Gender: An Introduction to Gender Equality for UN staff" (UN Women) will continue to be mandatory for all UNECE staff. In addition, trainings will be organized to meet the needs of DGFPs, senior managers and project managers. Extra-budgetary resources will be explored for funding.

UNECE will reinforce synergies among divisions and projects through sharing experience and common challenges in gender mainstreaming by teams. To this end, information about forthcoming events as well as publications and other materials produced by subprogrammes for enhancing skills for gender mainstreaming will be widely disseminated across the organization.

Member States will be supported in gender mainstreaming through various activities, such as workshops, projects and publications.

In a financially constrained environment, funding for gender-related activities, such as training and projects will continue to rely heavily on extrabudgetary resources.

4.7 Working in partnership



The Policy will continue to address existing and emerging issues in the domain of gender equality and the empowerment of women, including new requirements within the UN system. The Policy envisages the continuation of the cooperation with UN Women as a lead entity on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the UN system as well as with other UN agencies. At global level, UNECE follows up on the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and contributes to the main themes of discussions joining the efforts of all UN Regional Commissions. UNECE is a member of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) where policies, programmes and measures are shared, and joint strategies and actions discussed.

At regional level, UNECE is part of the Issue-based Coalition (IBC) on Gender in Europe and Central Asia together with 14 regional UN entities. UNECE will further strengthen the work in partnership with the IBC members through joint advocacy, workshops, and conferences in the area of SDG 5 and the gender-related SDGs within the Organization's mandate.

The Policy will continue to benefit from cooperation with all stakeholders working in this area and region, including civil society.



KEY GLOBAL MANDATES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN RELEVANT FOR THE UNECE POLICY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁹
- the Charter of the United Nations¹⁰
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women¹¹
- the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹²
- UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1 on “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”
- UN Security Council Resolutions 1325¹³ and 1889¹⁴
- the UN Millennium Declaration A/RES/55/2¹⁵
- the 2005 World Summit Outcome A/RES/60/1¹⁶
- ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective¹⁷
- ECOSOC Resolutions 2004/4¹⁸, 2010/29¹⁹, 2013/16²⁰, 2018/8 and 2019/2
- the 2010 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 65/247²¹ on “human resources management”, paragraph 69 with reference to “the goal of gender parity in the UN Secretariat”
- Administrative Instructions of the UN Secretariat on “Temporary Special Measures for the Achievement of Gender Parity” (ST/AI/2020/5)

⁹ <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

¹⁰ <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>

¹¹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

¹² <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

¹³ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁴ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/542/55/PDF/N0954255.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁵ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/559/51/PDF/N0055951.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁶ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/487/60/PDF/N0548760.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁷ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No.3 (A/52/3/Rev1)

¹⁸ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/453/39/PDF/N0445339.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁹ <http://www.refworld.org/category,POLICY,ECOSOC,,,4d92e5a42,0.html>

²⁰ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/434/26/PDF/N1343426.pdf?OpenElement>

²¹ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/527/36/PDF/N1052736.pdf?OpenElement>

TABLE 1: UNECE GENDER PARITY, 2015-2020, PROFESSIONAL SERVICE STAFF

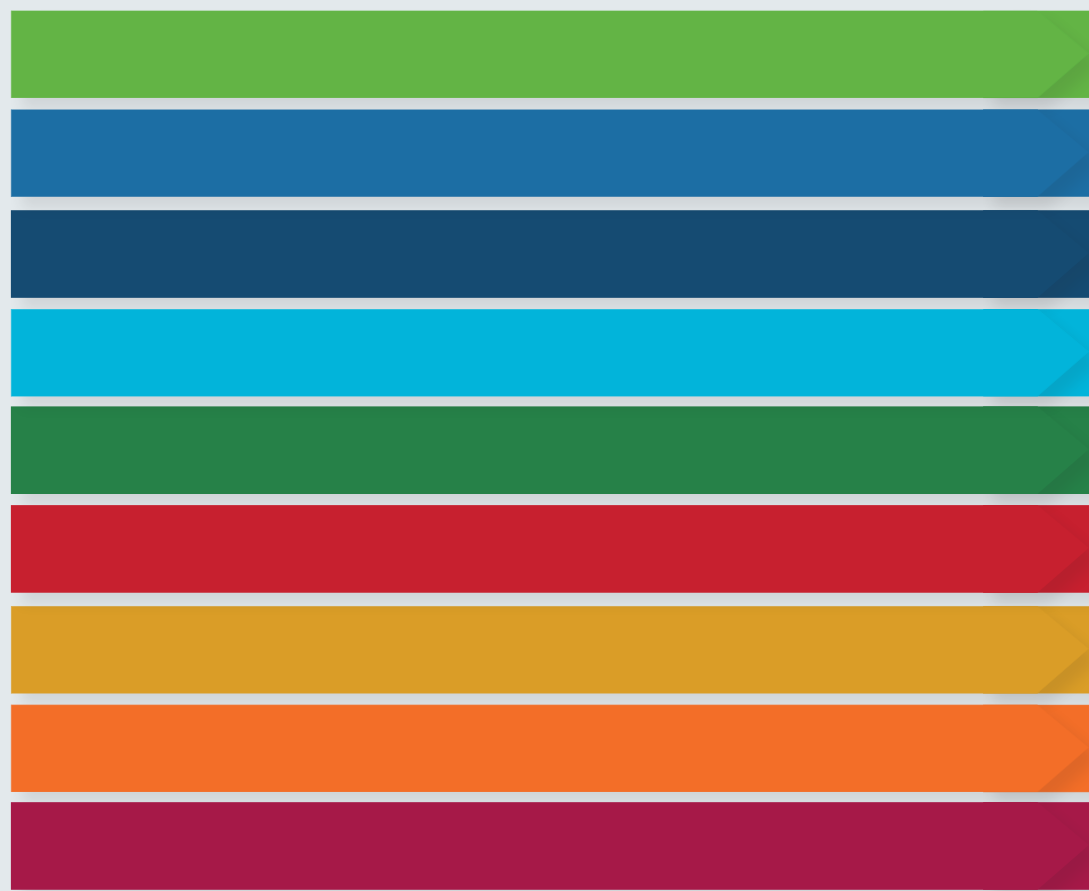
Professional Level Staff																
	USG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		Total	
	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020
Female	0	1	0	0	6	5	7	7	12	13	22	30	7	8	54	64
Male	1	0	1	0	3	3	19	19	27	27	21	20	8	9	80	78
Representation of Women (percentage of total staff)	0.0	100.0	0.0	N/A	66.7	62.5	26.9	26.9	30.8	32.5	51.2	60.0	46.7	47.1	40.3	45.1

TABLE 2: UNECE GENDER PARITY, 2015-2020, GENERAL SERVICE STAFF

General Service Level Staff													
	G-7		G-6		G-5		G-4		G-3		Total		
	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	
Female	2	2	29	25	18	22	10	5	1	0	60	54	
Male	4	3	5	7	3	2	2	2	0	0	14	14	
Representation of Women (percentage of total staff)	33.3	40.0	85.3	78.1	85.7	91.7	83.3	71.4	100.0	N/A	81.1	79.4	

(As of 30 November 2020)

UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: **Accelerating the attainment of SDGs with a gender lens in the UNECE region (2021-2025)**



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