



Thematic Dialogue
The Economy. The crisis of economic and global development models and impact of women and girls in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

Concept Note
March 29th, 2021
10:00 – 11:20 (GMT-6 Mexico City Time)
19:00 – 20:20 (GMT-6 Mexico City Time)

Background

The Generation Equality Forum (GEF) is a major global inflexion point for gender equality and women's and girls' Human Rights, which, at its core, should aim to be transformative, and disruptive. The feminist and women's movement has continuously stressed that we must fulfil the commitments agreed in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA). The Thematic Dialogue aims to take one step further to focus boldly on finding systemic solutions collectively in this interconnected world. This dialogue is an opportunity to effectively reboot development towards the people-centric, inclusive, rights-based, participatory development envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The crisis of inequality is a structural problem on the rise since the beginning of the 21st century, clearly linked to the neo-liberal economic model. Feminists and women's movements have for long stressed that the economic, social, and political systems have, for decades, prioritized profits over people, extraction over wellbeing, corporate capture over the strengthening of the public sector, hyper-capitalism over historical reparations. These systemic dynamics rely on the global subsidy of women, in all their diversity, through:

- The unbalanced unpaid care and domestic work due to the gender division of labour which props up the global economy, and,
- Women's undervaluation as paid workers, their exclusion in the labour market and precarious labour conditions.

Globally, the burden of unpaid care and domestic work performed by women is 2.6 times greater than that undertaken by men.^[1] Globally, women's labour force participation rate is 55%, while that of men is 78%.^[2] It is necessary to rethink the economic and development models that keep women and their livelihoods at a disadvantage, propose new economic and development models, beyond mere economic elements, focus on the



participation of women on equal basis as men, and meaningfully aim to eradicate poverty and inequality.

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), in the section on Women and the Economy, highlights macro-economic solutions that constitute a systemic condition to achieving gender equality. Yet, more than 25 years after its adoption, women's economic empowerment is one of the unmet asks of the BPA. A narrow notion of women's economic empowerment continues to deny women real power and agency to determine and shape the economic system - whether at local, national, or international level, or to end the exploitation of women's labour - paid or unpaid. As we recognize women's power and agency over the way our economic system is shaped, there is a unique opportunity to review the mandate of macro-economic measures, considering their differentiated effects on the communities most impacted by environmental degradation and including the special needs of indigenous women and girls, and those in conflict and humanitarian settings.

The challenges that women and girls face in terms of access to land, resources, or decent work are enhanced by this drive to reshape the economic system, since the land and resources are more constantly divested into agribusiness and the fossil fuel industry, with governments aiding and abetting through trade deals that undermine labour conditions or environmental integrity. Thus, those mandated to eradicate poverty have fed their dreams of growth and "development" with the exploitation of millions of people and the depletion of the planet. Labour rights, decent work and a just transition for people and the planet with feminist lenses must come at centre of our efforts. It is key to advancing the implementation of fiscal policies and proper budget allocations that contribute simultaneously and in a coordinated manner to the objectives of economic reactivation and the closing of the gender gaps in the labour market.

Redistribution of wealth and resources is key to eradicating gender-based violence and violence against women that have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure the wellbeing of women and girls in all their diversity, as well as their access to basic rights, such as quality housing, quality education and adequate health services, including sexual and reproductive health.

Redistribution must address the differentiated needs and interests of those population groups that have been most impacted by social and economic inequality. Human rights independent actors need to engage in the dialogue and promote structural and systemic recommendations, addressing global challenges, extraterritorial impacts, and systemic issues. More concretely, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination

Against Women (CEDAW) has a task that is expected by all women and girls in the world to deliver in terms of their interconnected experiences.

In addition to the countercyclical fiscal policies that some countries have implemented to sustain demand, allocate resources to investments, and create jobs to improve women's access to economic opportunities, mitigation policies are required to soften and counter the negative effects of the crisis on employment, income security and the domestic and care workload of women resulting in the deterioration of their well-being. Reactivation policies must reincorporate gender perspective in the strategic selection of fiscal sectors, mechanisms, and instruments as well as the reorientation of incentives, considering the differential distributional effects of stimulus packages and other fiscal measures on men and women. In addition, it is necessary to promote a fiscal and gender pact that is explicitly oriented to avoid the deepening of the gender gap in access to financing and to safeguard resources for gender equality policies and women's rights.

The crisis of the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has produced a generalized economic contraction, increasing poverty and inequality. It is expected that the economic and social effects of the pandemic will have a significant impact on the autonomy of women. Women are overrepresented in informal, more vulnerable, and low-paying jobs, making even harder their economic participation. Moreover, gender-based domestic violence has increased over the lockdown period. The crisis risks halting and even reversing progress on gender equality.

The COVID-19 has been a game changer in social policies, macroeconomic policies, in financing public debts and private investments, even accommodating social norms to facilitate physical distancing. Now, it is time to match the severity of the crisis on women's progress with commensurate policies with a focus on women. The response should be bold and transformational, making efforts to prevent the multiple crises unleashed in the economic and social sphere that are deepening gender inequality in the short-, medium- and long-terms. The response must go beyond special measures to address the disproportionate impact of the crisis on women and girls, to also include strategic investments in care, which is a widespread demand that should stem from our current dialogues. This investment promotes employment, reduces the gender gap in employment and would be a first step in building a resilient, sustainable, and more equal economy. A truly comprehensive approach requires the inclusion of women in key decision-making positions.

General Objective

The thematic dialogue on “The crisis of the economic model and development in the life of women and girls in the context of the of COVID-19 pandemic and Beyond” seeks to be a decisive space to promote a much-needed dialogue on the role of economic growth and the distribution of wealth and its impact on women and the way in which solutions and actions can be undertaken to ensure gender equality and women’s and girls’ human rights.

Specific Objectives

1. Stimulate dialogue on new, feminist development models based on the participation of women, girls and young people that aim to contribute to eradicating poverty and inequality at the local, national, and international levels.
2. Discuss the reformulation of economic models that oppress and disfavour women and their livelihoods and propose new economic models from a gender and development perspective.
3. Reflect on how the pandemic is an opportunity to assess economic justice from a gender perspective, their priorities, and challenges to respond to poverty and inequality.

Participants

- Civil society organisations
- UN System Agencies
- Governments
- Academia
- Feminist movements

Format

This virtual dialogue will be held on March 29 from 10:00 – 11:30 am (MEX time). The discussion will be moderated by an experienced feminist who will direct the conversation between nine different stakeholders and the audience to ensure a diversity of views. The audience will be able to interact by using the chat on the platform. Simultaneous interpretation will be available.

Suggested time	Proposed activity
10:00 – 10:05 19:00 – 19:05	Welcome and panelist presentation.
10:05 – 10:45 19:05- 19:45	<p>Moderated discussion around 4 guiding questions. Participants have between 3-4 minutes to answer each question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main challenges and opportunities that the current economic model and globalization of the world’s economy has had on women’s economic status? • How has the COVID 19 pandemic impacted women’s economic autonomy? • What specific actions should the governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector prioritize to facilitate women’s access to employment, finance, and resources to promote economic autonomy and to transform society? • What would be your recommendations to comply with what was established in the Beijing Platform in the GEF and with the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights?
10:45 – 11:15 19:55 – 20:15	Q&A session. The Moderator reads selected questions from the chat.
11:15 – 11:20 20:15 – 20:20	Closing: The moderator summarizes the discussion, thanks panelists and audience, and closes the session.

^[1] ONU Mujeres (2018). Hacer las promesas realidad. Disponible en <https://www.unwomen.org/es/digital-library/publications/2018/2/gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018>

^[2] World Economic Forum, 2020. The Global Gender Gap Report. Disponible en: <https://es.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality>