

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT – FIRST AUSTRALIAN CONSULTATION

ABOUT UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced (at the 2016 World Economic Forum in Davos) the creation of the first-ever High-Level Panel (HLP) on Women's Economic Empowerment. The objective of which is to provide thought leadership and recommendations in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to improve economic outcomes for women and promote women's leadership in driving sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the consultation will be to identify best practices in overcoming constraints to women's economic empowerment and advocate investment in tackling these issues to foster decent work, entrepreneurship, and equal access to resources, services, education, information, communications technology, energy, infrastructure, and productive assets.

ABOUT AUSTRALIAN CONSULTATION

The aim of the meeting will be to provide recommendations for key actions that can be taken by governments, the private sector, the UN system and other stakeholders. We would like to hear the following from you on the day:

1. How do you address the issue of gender diversity?
2. What challenges does your organisation face?
3. What are the benefits of economic empowerment?

THE REPORT

The High-Level Panel (HLP) will report its findings to the UN Secretary General in September 2016 and March 2017. The target audience extends to decision-makers around the world, in the public and private sectors, as well as to civil society and the media.

The HLP report will be informed and inspired by action that is addressing constraints to women's economic empowerment and if you have any examples or best practices that you would like to share with us (and used in the report), please send these ahead of time to Ros Kane on email at rkane@tennis.com.au. We want to capture as many specific examples of actions – policies, innovative programs, scaling up of existing initiatives or human stories of impact – in our official report for the Secretariat.

The HLP's first report with action-oriented recommendations and examples of best practices. While the second report will focus on engagement and how to put in place specific actions



AREAS OF FOCUS

The HLP has agreed that the following six areas and their inter-relation should be the focus of the report:

1. Eliminating legal barriers to women's economic empowerment
2. Addressing the care economy
3. Reducing gender pay gaps
4. Expanding opportunities for women who work informally
5. Promoting financial and digital inclusion for women
6. Fostering female entrepreneurship and enhancing the productivity of women-owned enterprises

A central theme of the report is expected to be around changing discriminatory norms and stereotypes that constrain the choices and opportunities of women and girls. While recognising that changing norms takes time, the report will seek to include concrete ways to address adverse norms and discrimination as part of the action agenda, as for example through legal reform.

ABOUT THE HLP

The United Kingdom, the World Bank Group and UN Women back the HLP. The Co-Chairs of the Panel are the President of Costa Rica (Luis Guillermo Solís) and CEO of IKEA Switzerland (Simona Scarpaleggia) and they are joined by the leaders of the International Monetary Fund (Christine Lagarde), World Bank Group (Jim Yong Kim) and a diverse range of eminent gender and equality actors, economics experts, academics, trade union leaders, business and government representatives from all regions. The Panel is supported by an independent Secretariat, hosted by UN Women with backing from the UK Government. More information here: <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/who-we-are/initiatives/sg-high-level-panel-on-womens-economic-empowerment>

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- Women earn less, have fewer assets, bear the burden of unpaid work and care, and are largely concentrated in vulnerable and low-paying activities
- According to the World Bank in 17 nations, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working, in 29 nations women are prohibited from working at night and in 34 nations women do not have the same inheritance rights as men
- The gap between women's and men's labor force participation is 26%
- Women spend 2.5 times more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men
- Globally, women on average are paid 24% less than men
- 75% of women's employment in developing regions is informal and unprotected
- McKinsey estimate that achieving gender parity would be worth around \$28 trillion to the global economy, an increase of 26%

