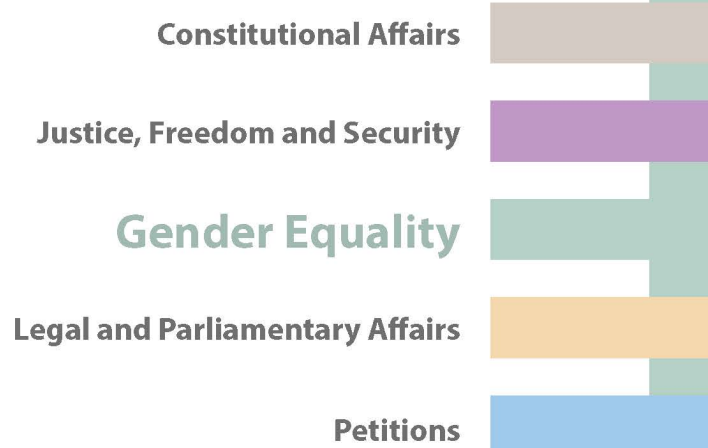


DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

**POLICY DEPARTMENT** **C**  
CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS



**Women's Economic  
Empowerment at  
International Level**

In-depth analysis for the FEMM committee





**DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES**  
**POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND**  
**CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY**

# **Women's Economic Empowerment at International Level**

## **IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS**

### **Abstract**

Upon request by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) of the European Parliament, this note provides background information for the FEMM Committee mission to the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women which will be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 13 to 24 March 2017. The note focuses on the key priority theme of the 61st Session: "Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work".

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BPfA** Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
- CEO** Chief Executive Officer
- CSW** Commission on the Status of Women
- CEDAW** Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- DG DEVCO** Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
- DG ECHO** Directorate for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
- DG NEAR** Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
- EEAS** European Union External Action Service
- EIB** European Investment Bank
- EU** European Union
- FEMM** Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
- GAP II** Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020
- GDP** Gross Domestic Product
- HLPF** UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
- ILO** International Labour Organisation
- IMF** International Monetary Fund
- MDGs** Millennium Development Goals
- OECD-DAC** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
- SDGs** Sustainable Development Goals

**UN** United Nations

**UNGPs** UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

**WEE** Women's economic empowerment

**WEP** UN Women's Empowerment Principles



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

The 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 61) of the United Nations (UN) will take place at the UN Headquarters in New York from 13 to 24 March 2017. It will be attended by representatives of UN Member States, UN entities, women's rights organisations, gender experts and other interested organisations. The priority theme will be 'Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work'. In addition, the Commission will undertake a review of the challenges and achievements for women and girls in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (agreed conclusions of the fifty-eighth session).

### **Aim**

The aim of this briefing note is to provide background information for the Members of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) of the European Parliament, including those attending CSW 61. It provides an overview of women's economic empowerment and outlines relevant key international policy and legal instruments as well as European Union (EU) initiatives to further women's economic empowerment. Finally, critical next steps to secure progress on this agenda are identified.

# 1. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: AN OVERVIEW

## KEY FINDINGS

- Women's economic empowerment is a transformational process, in which women gain increased access to and power over economic assets and economic decisions. Taking into account inequalities and discrimination, and the way they are experienced by different women, is critical to secure progress.
- Much of women's paid work remains informal and highly precarious, and on average women carry out at least two and a half times more unpaid household and care work than men.
- Women's economic empowerment cannot be achieved whilst significant gender gaps in women's paid and unpaid work exist globally.

### 1.1. What is women's economic empowerment?

Although it has gained increased attention amongst policy and development communities in recent years, there is no universally agreed definition of women's economic empowerment (WEE). Women's individual and collective increased economic advancement, agency and power to access and control economic assets and make economic decisions is core to many understandings.<sup>1</sup> Others highlight that any consideration of WEE should examine the terms of women's entry into the labour market, notably poor women, which requires recognising women's contributions, respecting their dignity, and enabling them to negotiate a fair distribution of the returns to economic growth.<sup>2</sup>

Making progress requires change in individuals, communities, institutions, markets and value chains, and in the wider political and legal environment.<sup>3</sup> Yet this process is not linear and straightforward, and no single intervention or approach can address all of these aspects and be effective for all women.<sup>4</sup>

Sustained effort which recognises that women are not a homogenous group is essential. WEE cannot be achieved unless the most marginalised women in society experience transformation in their lives. This means focusing on the intersecting inequalities experienced by women in addition to their gender, for example on the basis of their class, caste, race, ethnicity, age or disability status, and taking action to ensure that nobody is left behind.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.2. What difference will it make?

Achieving women's economic empowerment will have far-reaching benefits across multiple spheres. As recently recognised by the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment:

<sup>1</sup> Golla et al. (2011); Taylor and Perezniето (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Eyben et al. (2011).

<sup>3</sup> Golla et al. (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Cornwall and Edwards (2016).

<sup>5</sup> Hunt and Samman (2016). See this report for further discussion of women's economic empowerment definitions, and the enablers of and constraints to progress.

*'Empowering women economically is not only the "right thing" to do to honour the world's commitments to human rights. It is also the "smart thing" to do for development, economic growth and business'.<sup>6</sup>*

### 1.2.1. The equality and human rights case

Women's economic empowerment is critical to gender equality and women's human rights. Therefore, eliminating persistent gender gaps and ensuring equal economic outcomes for women and men is essential for the fulfilment of international standards for women's human rights, as well as globally agreed international policy frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.2.2. The development case

The benefits for human development of individuals, families and societies are significant and well-established across multiple countries. Ensuring men's sustained and equal contribution to family welfare and other essential expenditure is critically important to ensure progress across the core dimensions of human development, including education, health and life expectancy.<sup>8</sup> Yet raising the women's share of household income, through earnings or cash transfers, has been shown to benefit children through increased investments in education and health. Increasing the level and stability of women's income, including in female-headed households, also reduces household poverty, and reduces family vulnerability to economic shocks.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.2.3. The economic case

Gender equality has significant positive effects on per capita income, economic growth and national competitiveness.<sup>10</sup> For example, recent estimates suggest that gender parity could increase the global gross domestic product (GDP) by between \$12 trillion and \$28 trillion by 2025.<sup>11</sup> Closing gender gaps in education and the world of work also positively affects economic growth, which relies on labour market expansion and skills development.

Unpaid care and domestic work disproportionately carried out by women is also critical to the social well-being and maintenance of the labour force. Despite holding intrinsic economic value, this work is not always considered productive and remains unmeasured in many national account systems and therefore in official GDP calculations. Yet estimates in countries already measuring unpaid care place its value at between 20 to 60 per cent of GDP.<sup>12</sup> Efforts underway to improve measurement of unpaid care work are gathering momentum following the inclusion of Target 5.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Such measures are likely to further increase recognition of the economic value of women's unpaid work in the years to come.

### 1.2.4. The business case

Women's economic advancement within company workforce, management and boards, as well as across the value chain, brings a range of positive effects. For example, companies with greater gender equality demonstrate increased ability innovate as well as to attract,

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<sup>6</sup> Klugman and Tyson (2016).

<sup>7</sup> UN General Assembly (2015).

<sup>8</sup> For further discussion, see the UN Human Development Report series: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

<sup>9</sup> World Bank (2012); World Bank (2013).

<sup>10</sup> Klugman and Tyson (2016); EIGE (2017, forthcoming).

<sup>11</sup> Woetzel et al. (2015).

<sup>12</sup> See Antonopoulos (2009) and further discussion in Folbre (2015).

retain and motivate female workers and are better able to respond to female customers.<sup>13</sup> Women's leadership in management and board positions has also been shown to boost organisational effectiveness and financial performance.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.2.5. A 'win-win' situation?

The relationship between gender equality, growth and development outcomes is complex, and there is no automatic 'win-win' between them.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, establishing priorities to further women's economic empowerment is often a politically contested process, which can lead to uneven progress. For example, whilst gender equality is positively associated with higher economic growth, the gains of economic growth are not automatically gender-equitable, and growth does not necessarily lead to gains in women's well-being.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, specific, targeted efforts are needed to ensure that outcomes are secured across all of the spheres related to women's economic empowerment.

## 1.3. Stocktake: An overview of the global context

Women's economic empowerment cannot be achieved whilst significant gender gaps in women's paid and unpaid work exist globally. Table 1 provides an overview of key global and regional trends.

**Table 1: An overview of global and regional trends in women and work**

<p><b><i>Gender gaps in labour force participation are significant</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 1995 and 2015, the global female labour force participation rate decreased from 52.4 to 49.6 per cent. The corresponding figures for men were 79.9 and 76.1 per cent, respectively.</li> <li>• Across the world, the chances of joining the labour market for all women are almost 27 per cent lower than men's.</li> <li>• The gender wage gap is estimated to be 23 per cent, meaning women earn 77 per cent of what men earn. At current trends it will take more than 70 years to close gender wage gaps.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>The quality of women's work remains a challenge everywhere</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal employment was a greater source of non-agricultural employment for more women than for men in South Asia (83 per cent of women workers and 82 per cent of men workers); Sub-Saharan Africa (74 per cent and 61 per cent); Latin America and the Caribbean (54 per cent and 48 per cent); and urban China (36 per cent and 30 per cent).<sup>17</sup></li> <li>• In Northern, Southern and Western Europe, the majority of women work in services (86.2 per cent). In high-income countries, the major source of employment for women is the health and education sector, which employs almost one third of all women in the labour market (30.6 per cent).</li> <li>• In the EU Member States, 40–50 per cent of women have experienced unwanted sexual advances, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at work.</li> </ul> <p>18</p>

<sup>13</sup> Klugman and Tyson (2016).

<sup>14</sup> McKinsey & Company (2014); Noland et al. (2016); Kim and Starks (2016).

<sup>15</sup> Kabeer and Natali (2013).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Graham and Chattopadhyay (2012).

<sup>17</sup> Vanek et al (2014).

<sup>18</sup> Vanek et al (2014).

**Women are more likely to work shorter hours for pay or profit and more in unpaid and household care**

- On average, women carry out at least two and a half times more unpaid household and care work than men in countries where the relevant data are available. For example, the Nordic countries average only around 0.9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) on such programmes, and spending in southern Europe averages a mere 0.2 per cent of GDP.
- Overall, the gender gap for part-time employment between women and men in employment is 11 percentage points, with more women working less than 35 hours per week compared to men.

**Women are more likely to work excessive hours**

- Across 100 surveyed countries, women are more likely to work excessive hours than men. More than one third of men in employment (35.5 per cent) and more than one fourth of women in employment (25.7 per cent) work more than 48 hours a week.

**Gender inequalities at work and at home translate into gender gaps in access to social protection**

- Globally, the percentage of women in employment who are affiliated to a pension scheme is 1.7 and 2.9 percentage points lower than that of men for wage and salaried workers and self-employed respectively.
- Worldwide, close to 60 per cent of women workers (nearly 750 million women) do not benefit from a statutory right to maternity leave.

Source: Table compiled from: ILO (2016a) (except where otherwise stated)

## 1.4. Women's economic empowerment and the changing world of work

This section briefly highlights key issues relating to women's economic empowerment and the changing world of work. Further reading is suggested in the attached Annex.

### 1.4.1. Securing decent work

Women's labour force participation is a critical element of economic empowerment, yet many women are unemployed or underemployed globally (working fewer hours than they would wish). Survey data from 2015 suggests that about 25 per cent of working-age women were underemployed, compared with 19 per cent of men. This challenge is particularly acute for young women and men – the average underemployment figures are 42 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively.<sup>19</sup> According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), decent work 'involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men'.<sup>20</sup> Having a 'good' or 'decent' job, which provides a fair and stable income as well as work-related protections, is critical to women's economic empowerment. Formal work is more likely to be 'decent'.<sup>21</sup>

Yet much of women's paid work remains informal and highly precarious. Furthermore, woman's labour force participation is not alone a guarantor of either economic empowerment or gender equality in the labour market. For example, Sub-Saharan Africa has some of the

<sup>19</sup> Hunt and Samman (2016).

<sup>20</sup> For further discussion, see: <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>21</sup> Kabeer (2012); Hunt and Samman (2016).

world's highest female labour force participation rates alongside the highest rates of gender inequality and poverty.<sup>22</sup>

Ensuring women's paid work is 'decent' requires structural, transformative change. This includes bringing together labour, macroeconomic and social policy to ensure that economic development creates quality economic opportunities which are accessible to women.<sup>23</sup> ILO calculations suggest that more than 600 million new jobs are needed globally for both women and men in the next decade.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, persistent and growing youth underemployment and unemployment, coupled with ageing societies which will lengthen older people's active labour market participation, will provide further challenges to ensuring decent work for all in the years to come.

#### 1.4.2. Increasing informality and non-standard employment

Informal and non-standard forms of employment – including contract, contingent and 'gig economy' labour - are an increasingly common feature of labour markets globally. In developed countries this often entails a regression in established working conditions as less workers enjoy the stability, rights, benefits and protections afforded by traditional employment relationships.<sup>25</sup>

In developing countries, a large and growing share of the workforce remains outside the formal economy. In the Middle East and Northern Africa region and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia there are more men employed in the non-agricultural informal sector than women; while in sub-Saharan Africa, in Latin America and the Caribbean, in China and in Southern Asia the percentage of women engaged in non-agricultural informal employment is greater than the percentage of men in the same.<sup>26</sup> In particular, a large proportion of women in developing countries are classified as 'own account workers' particularly in SSA (42.5%) and South Asia (47.7%).<sup>27</sup> Many of these workers can be classed as 'self-employed', and are often referred to as 'entrepreneurs'. Yet this terminology hides the reality of the economic activity involved, and notably the poor outcomes associated with it; many women are engaged, through necessity not active choice, in survival-orientated income-generation activities with limited opportunities to increase profitability.<sup>28</sup> An important strategy to address these challenges focused on the formalisation of informal work, often incrementally, and involves concerted effort by governments, international institutions and private sector employers, among others.<sup>29</sup>

#### 1.4.3. Technology and digital labour

Technology has disrupted established practices in the world of work for many years. Most recently this has involved the rapid global emergence of the 'gig economy', in which technology-focused companies develop platforms to link service purchasers (clients) and service providers (workers) who are invariably classed by companies attempting to avoid an employment relationship with workers as 'independent contractors'. Perhaps the best-known example globally is Uber, although companies of this kind are emerging in female-dominated sectors such as care and domestic work.<sup>30</sup> Although vaunted by companies as providing flexible, *ad hoc* work opportunities, gig economy work often involves low and insecure incomes and discrimination, notably for less-skilled workers.

<sup>22</sup> Dieterich et al. (2016).

<sup>23</sup> UN Women (2015).

<sup>24</sup> ILO (2012).

<sup>25</sup> ILO (2016b).

<sup>26</sup> Vanek et al. (2014).

<sup>27</sup> ILO (2016a).

<sup>28</sup> Kabeer (2012: 24).

<sup>29</sup> For an example of sector-level strategies, see the recent ILO proposals focused on the formalization of domestic work: [http://ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_536996/lang--en/index.htm](http://ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_536996/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>30</sup> Hunt and Machingura (2016).

Technology is having wider effects in the world of work, including for example, automation, artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing, which increasingly carries out tasks previously fulfilled by workers. The implications of this trend for work and employment are still unravelling, yet ensuring that women whose jobs are removed or displaced as a result of technological change are able to access decent work opportunities is essential for the achievement of women's economic empowerment.

#### 1.4.4. Unpaid care and domestic work

The unpaid care and domestic work disproportionately carried out by women is a critical barrier to women's economic empowerment, as it limits their ability to enter the labour market – as well as their ability to access full, productive and decent work once in the paid labour force. Effective policies aimed at supporting care can be summarised in the 'quadruple R framework', which aims at the recognition, reduction and redistribution of care and domestic work, as well as the representation of carers in policymaking fora.<sup>31</sup>

This involves responses across public and private care services and the labour market, including improved maternity, paternity and parental leave and breastfeeding policies, and improved legal protection and working conditions for care and domestic workers. Key policy challenges involve the expansion of benefits to the informal economy, and ensuring that government programmes, such as social protection and early childhood care and education initiatives, are gender-responsive and aimed at the alleviation of women's unpaid care loads.

#### 1.4.5. Social protection and services

Social protection can help alleviate gender gaps in poverty rates, reduce vulnerability to economic shocks, and support women to overcome barriers to labour market participation, including through the redistribution of unpaid care loads onto public care services. Yet women's overrepresentation in informal and non-standard forms of work means their access to social security or protection is disproportionately limited – by definition, informal work is that which offers no access to social protection.<sup>32</sup>

Social protection instruments which support women's economic empowerment may emphasise legal protections for maternity, paternity and parental leave, unemployment benefits, childcare support, employment guarantee schemes, including public works programmes, and social pension and micro-pension schemes.<sup>33</sup> Developing a robust strategy to ensure adequate fiscal space to scale up social protection and services is critical to the achievement of women's economic empowerment. Although this remains highly challenging in a global context of fiscal contraction and structural adjustment, a number of countries have taken steps to scale up enabling initiatives. For example, Mexico's Estancias childcare programme has received continued funding to ensure its growth, providing increased childcare facilities to support women's entry into the labour market.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, recent analysis supported by the International Trade Union Confederation demonstrates the wider returns on investments in social infrastructure of education, health and social care services; an investment of 2% of GDP could increase overall employment by between 2.4% and 6.1%, with many of these jobs taken up by women, boosting economic growth and providing solutions to critical care challenges, including those faced by an ageing population.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Elson (2000); IDS et al. (2015).

<sup>32</sup> Hussmans (2004); Ulrichs (2016).

<sup>33</sup> Hunt and Samman (2016).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> ITUC (2016); ITUC (2017).



EU commitment to improving social protection floors as a route to women's economic empowerment is confirmed in the current 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020' Plan (GAP II), discussed further below.

#### 1.4.6. Women's voice, leadership and decision-making

Women's voice and leadership in decision-making are closely associated with economic empowerment. Women's ability to take on leadership positions, organise with others and have a voice in decision-making is critical to ensure that the diverse needs and preferences of women are made central to efforts to further women's economic empowerment, including economic decision-making. Both leadership and collective action take myriad forms, and are strongly associated with improved productivity and working conditions, as well as changes to workers' rights and protections and women's increased skills, confidence and self-belief, as well as wider changes in restrictive social norms.<sup>36</sup> Collectives may include workers' unions, cooperatives or women's rights organisations.

In turn, women's economic participation can strengthen women's voice, leadership and collective bargaining power. However, the extent to which economic participation is empowering and transformative in women's lives depends on a range of factors, including the type and quality of work, the extent to which economic participation is coupled with additional opportunities to strengthen women's capabilities and shift constricting social norms, the social acceptability of their work, and women's experiences of class/caste and socio-cultural discrimination.<sup>37</sup>

The provision of flexible and sustainable funding to women's collectives is an important means of supporting women's increased voice, leadership and economic decision-making. Equally critical is ensuring that their participation is meaningful and that the institutions they operate within both recognise their legitimacy and are responsive to their demands. For example, without responsive, democratic governance (in both public and private institutions) the effectiveness of women's advocacy will remain limited.

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<sup>36</sup> Domingo et al. (2015)

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

## 2. INTERNATIONAL NORMATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

### KEY FINDINGS

- The 20-year review of the Beijing Platform and Declaration for Action (BPfA) carried out in 2015 highlighted slow and uneven progress across UN Member States in removing barriers to women's economic progress.
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) includes a number of Articles related to women's economic empowerment. To date, 189 countries have ratified or acceded to CEDAW, which is legally binding in those countries.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development entails 17 Sustainable Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets which apply to all countries. There are targets on women's economic empowerment across the 17 Goals.
- A range of International Labour Organization Conventions and Recommendations relevant to women's economic empowerment have been adopted, but ratification and implementation across EU Member States, and globally, remains inconsistent.
- Other UN-led initiatives include the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Women's Empowerment Principles, both of which have a core focus on the private sector.

### 2.1. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The Beijing Platform and Declaration for Action (BPfA) was agreed at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. The BPfA – also known as the most 'progressive blueprint' for women's rights<sup>38</sup> – established a wide-ranging women's rights framework, and outlines specific commitments to be implemented by governments, international institutions (including UN entities and financial institutions), civil society, the private sector and media.

One of the BPfA's twelve critical areas of concern, 'Women and the economy', provides a stocktake of women's economic inequality and overrepresentation in low-paid jobs with poor working conditions. It also recognises that economic structures and policies at all levels directly impact the economic resources, power and equality enjoyed by women and men, and that insufficient gender analysis has resulted in women's contributions and concerns being ignored or undervalued. In the BPfA these economic structures include '*financial markets and institutions, labour markets, economics as an academic discipline, economic and social infrastructure, taxation and social security systems*'.<sup>39</sup>

Many of these challenges hold true today, demonstrating the continued relevance of the BPfA as a critical agenda for gender justice. This was confirmed during the global 20-year review of the BPfA, which culminated at the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2015. UN Member States jointly expressed concern at slow and uneven progress, highlighted remaining gaps and structural barriers to progress, and reaffirmed political will to take concrete action for the realisation of the BPfA. Given its implementation remains a priority for women's rights organisations and movements, gender experts and international

<sup>38</sup> See: <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about>

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

institutions, the BPfA is likely to continue to hold its place as an important benchmark for progress on women's rights and empowerment for many years to come.

## 2.2. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, provides a wide-ranging bill of rights for women based on the elimination of discrimination on various grounds. CEDAW includes a number of Articles directly relevant to women's economic empowerment. These include *inter alia* Article 10 on equal rights to education; Article 11 affording women equal employment, remuneration and protection opportunities regardless of pregnancy, maternity and marital statuses; Article 13 stipulating women's equal rights to family benefits and financial services; and Article 15 guaranteeing men and women's equality before the law.

At the time of writing 189 states have ratified or acceded to CEDAW, meaning its provisions are legally binding in those countries.<sup>40</sup> Implementation is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a body of independent experts. State parties to CEDAW report regularly to the Committee, who consider each report and provide concerns and recommendations in the form of 'Concluding Observations'.<sup>41</sup>

## 2.3. 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

On 25 September 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution entitled 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'. The 2030 Agenda came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2016 and entails 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets which are to be achieved by 2030. The SDGs are based on the preceding Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a crucial difference: while the MDGs were in force in developing countries alone, the SDGs call for action in all countries.

Gender is relevant across all 17 SDGs, and there are a number of targets across the framework which relate directly to women's economic empowerment, as outlined in Table 2.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 2: SDGs targets relating to women's economic empowerment**

<p><b><i>SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social protection systems for all, including floors.</li> <li>• Equal rights to economic resources, basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, new technology and financial services.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal access for all women and men to technical, vocational and tertiary education.</li> <li>• Access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education.</li> </ul>

<sup>40</sup> For further information on ratifying and signatory countries, see: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/CEDAWIndex.aspx>

<sup>41</sup> For full details of reports submitted, CEDAW Committee membership and Concluding Observations, see: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

<sup>42</sup> UN General Assembly (2015).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work.</li> <li>• Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership including in economic life.</li> <li>• Give women equal rights to economic resources, including land, property, financial services, inheritance.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>SDG 8: Economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, and equal pay for work of equal value.</li> <li>• Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>SDG10: Reduce inequality within and among countries</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiscal, wage and social protection policies that progressively achieve greater equality.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>SDG11: Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations including women.</li> </ul>

Source: Table adapted from OECD DAC Network On Gender Equality (GENDERNET) (2016)

Separately, SDG 5 that commits all governments to actions that 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' is known as the stand-alone gender goal. The Goal lays down 9 targets of which at least four directly address women's economic empowerment through recognising the value of unpaid care work, ensuring women's participation in all levels of leadership and decision-making, giving and protecting women's rights to economic resources and promoting the use of technology to empower women.<sup>43</sup>

Both developed and developing countries are responsible for adopting these targets in their context, for example by incorporating them into national development plans and/or sectoral policies. The universality of the goals and their applicability to high income countries has been reiterated in the European Commission Communication, 'A proposal for a new European Consensus on Development',<sup>44</sup> however the document is weak on detailing how EU Member States need to work on achieving SDGs within their own context. Cognizant of the danger of perceiving SDGs as a developing country issue, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) of the European Parliament in its recommendation to the Council on the EU priorities for the 61st session of the CSW has emphasised that the EU needs to 'Ensure coherence between EU internal and external policies and the Sustainable Development Goals'.<sup>45</sup>

At the global level, the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) has a central role in overseeing follow-up and review processes across all SDGs at global level. SDG Watch Europe, a cross-sectoral civil society alliance from development, environment, social, human rights and other sectors, has been established to hold governments accountable for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In November 2016, the European Commission published a 'Communication on the next steps for a sustainable European future

<sup>43</sup> UN Women (2016).

<sup>44</sup> European Commission (2016).

<sup>45</sup> Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (2017).

- European action for sustainability<sup>46</sup> which was criticized heavily by SDG Watch for providing 'little new information about how the EU intends to make Agenda 2030 a reality in Europe or around the world. It is a justification of business-as-usual, which will not deliver on the ambitious commitments of the new global agenda'.<sup>47</sup>

## 2.4. ILO Conventions and Recommendations

A range of Conventions and Recommendations have been drawn up by the tripartite constituents of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which include governments, employers and workers. These international labour standards are either Conventions, which are legally binding to ratifying Member States, or Recommendations, which are non-binding guidelines.<sup>48</sup> Those particularly relevant to WEE have not, to date, been universally ratified and implemented. They include:<sup>49</sup>

- ILO fundamental Conventions, including Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). The ILO fundamental Conventions have been ratified by all 28 EU Member States.
- C102 - Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). With the exception of Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta, all EU Member States have partially accepted and ratified this Convention.<sup>50</sup>
- C177 - Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177). Only five EU Member States have ratified this Convention: Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands.
- C183 - Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and Recommendation (No. 191). Thirteen EU Member States have ratified this Convention: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania.
- R198 - Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198). With the exception of Croatia, all EU Member States have submitted this recommendation to competent domestic authorities.<sup>51</sup>
- C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and accompanying Recommendation 201 on decent work for domestic workers. Six EU Member States have ratified this Convention: Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Portugal.
- R202 - Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). With the exception of Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Malta all EU Member States have submitted this recommendation to competent domestic authorities.

<sup>46</sup> European Commission (2016c).

<sup>47</sup> SDG Watch (2016).

<sup>48</sup> For more information, see: <http://ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/lang-en/index.htm>

<sup>49</sup> For a full list of ILO Conventions and Recommendations, and information about ratifying parties, see: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12020::NO::>

<sup>50</sup> For more information, see:

[http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312247:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312247:NO)

<sup>51</sup> For more information on submission to competent authorities see:

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_norm/@normes/documents/questionnaire/wcms\\_087324.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@normes/documents/questionnaire/wcms_087324.pdf)

- R204 - Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). Fourteen EU Member States have submitted this recommendation to competent domestic authorities: Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Romania.

## 2.5. UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)<sup>52</sup> are the first global set of guidelines on business and human rights, and were unambiguously endorsed by all UN Member States on the Human Rights Council in 2011. The UNGPs lay down three pillars outlining the duties of the state and the private sector to protect and advance the rights of all within the business context. The principles observe that it is: *'1) the State's duty to protect human rights and regulate corporations, 2) private actors and companies' responsibility to respect or not violate rights, and 3) the duty of both parties to be involved in providing remedy when rights are violated'*.

The Principles operate within the larger obligation that States have towards non-discrimination, however their recognition of the challenges women face in the business environment is limited. The UNGP document makes brief mention of women as a group that may encounter 'specific challenges' and 'different risks' to men in the business world. However, it does not further elaborate on or draw out the implications of the different risks faced by women, and how they are likely to act as a barrier to their economic empowerment. Elaboration is therefore needed on how the UNGPs can be specifically applied to women's rights as economic actors.

The UNGPs were featured in the European Commission's 2011 Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility and in 2015, a Staff Working Document issued by the European Commission presented a stocktake of the EU's activities in implementing the UNGPs and promoting progress in business and human rights.<sup>53</sup> The report declared that the EU had made significant progress in terms of implementing the UNGPs on business and human rights, within the remit of EU competencies. The report also noted existing regulations that mentioned women as a vulnerable group in the world of work but did not discuss the implications of the UNGP for women in business in Europe.

The European Commission (EC)'s Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) encouraged countries in the EU to adapt the UNGPs to their national context.<sup>54</sup> Up to December 2016 ten European countries had produced National Action Plans implementing the guiding principles: United Kingdom (UK) (2013, 2016), Netherlands (2013), Denmark (2014), Finland (2014), Lithuania (2015), Sweden (2015), Norway (2015), Switzerland (2016), Germany (2016) and Italy (2016).<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, in 2016, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation CM/Rec (2016)3 on human rights and business.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> United Nations (2011).

<sup>53</sup> Council of the European Union (2015b).

<sup>54</sup> European Commission (2011).

<sup>55</sup> Council of the European Union (2015b).

<sup>56</sup> Council of Europe (2016).

## 2.6. UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

The Women's Empowerment Principles,<sup>57</sup> launched in 2010, are the result of a collaboration between the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact. These are adapted from the Calvert Women's Principles which provide guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community by emphasising the business case for the promotion of gender equality by corporate actors.

**Table 3: UN Women's Empowerment Principles**

Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
Treat all women and men fairly at work - respect and support human rights and non-discrimination
Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
Promote education, training and professional development for women
Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy
Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

**Source: UN Women (2017).**

Since the launch of the Principles in 2010, over 1,000 Chief Executives (CEOs) worldwide have signed the CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs,<sup>58</sup> and 529 of the signatory companies are European. In 2012, the European Union signed a partnership agreement with UN Women<sup>59</sup> for increasing collaboration on gender equality and women's empowerment globally, however support from this partnership (reaffirmed in 2016) has been for women's economic programmes in largely non-European countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo and Liberia.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> UN Women (2017).

<sup>58</sup> UN Women (2017).

<sup>59</sup> UN Women (2016b).

<sup>60</sup> See further details at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/donor-countries/top-donors/european-union-partnership>

### 3. NEW AND UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

#### KEY FINDINGS

- The 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2017 is a significant opportunity to further consensus on critical actions needed to progress women's economic empowerment globally.
- The UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment is mandated with galvanising progress on women's economic empowerment within the framework of the SDGs.
- The topic of 'violence against women and men in the world of work' will be discussed at the International Labour Conference in June 2018, with a view to considering (a) new international instrument(s) on this issue. Broadly supportive statements have been issued by the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Union.

#### 3.1. 61<sup>st</sup> Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established as a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1946. Representatives of UN Member States, UN entities, women's rights organisations, gender experts and other interested organisations meet annually at the UN Headquarters in New York to discuss progress and the gaps in implementation of the BPfA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDGs. Session outcomes and recommendations are referred to ECOSOC for follow-up.

The 61<sup>st</sup> CSW session (CSW 61) will take place from 13 to 24 March 2017, with the priority theme of 'Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work'. It will therefore be an important opportunity to further develop consensus on the critical actions needed to further progress on WEE. Agreed Conclusions will be developed, and a range of sessions focusing on sub-topics including gender pay gaps, technology and work, informal and non-standard work, the care economy and the economic empowerment of indigenous women will form part of the official agenda.

#### 3.2. UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment

In January 2016 the UN Secretary-General appointed a High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, aimed at galvanising progress on WEE under the broader 2030 Agenda and SDGs. Membership includes the heads of UN Women, World Bank, IMF, ILO and other private sector, academic, civil society leaders and government leaders, including the Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, United Kingdom. Following evidence collection and global consultation, the Panel published its first report<sup>61</sup> in September 2016. The report identifies challenges to achieving WEE, and presents an Agenda for Action.

The Panel plans to launch a new series of briefings at CSW 61, and be engaged in extensive outreach and advocacy with diverse groups, including governments and governance institutions, private sector, international organisations and until the Panel's formal mandate ends in mid-2017.

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<sup>61</sup> Klugman and Tyson (2016).



### 3.3. ILO Convention on Gender-Based Violence at Work

In 2015 the governing body of the ILO agreed to place a standard-setting item on 'violence against women and men in the world of work' on the agenda of the International Labour Conference for June 2018, with a view to considering (a) new international instrument(s) on this issue. This process will include extensive consultation with the ILO's tripartite constituency.

At the 320th and 323rd sessions of the ILO Governing Body (in 2014 and 2015 respectively), a number of governments expressed their support for the proposal for an international standard, including Germany, Canada, Cuba, France, India, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Uruguay and the United States. Discussion is ongoing within and between governments globally about their priorities for the instrument, with most still to declare their official position. Discussion is also ongoing about the scope of a possible instrument as well as its content, including how it might address intimate partner violence, other forms of domestic violence and support for survivors, as well as violence in locations and places of work where women are often overrepresented. This includes, for example, public spaces where informal workers such as street vendors and waste pickers are active, and the home where homeworkers, domestic workers, and sometimes teleworkers, are located.<sup>62</sup>

In September 2015 the European Economic and Social Committee developed an own-initiative opinion supporting the development of a new future standard, calling on EU Member States which '*already have instruments in place for tackling inequalities between men and women and sexual harassment in the workplace*' to '*speak with one voice at the ILO*'.<sup>63</sup> In late 2016 a statement was made on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the 328th session of the ILO Governing Body, welcoming the process towards a new instrument, reaffirming commitments to strengthen efforts to '*to make violence against women and men in the world of work a problem of the past*', and calling on lessons to be learnt from the implementation of the EU Social Partners Framework agreement on harassment and violence at work.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> ILO (2016c).

<sup>63</sup> European Economic and Social Committee (2016).

<sup>64</sup> European Union (2016). For more information on the Framework agreement on harassment and violence at work see: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/legislation/guidelines/framework-agreement-on-harassment-and-violence-at-work>

## 4. EU INITIATIVES

### KEY FINDINGS

- In late 2015 the European Commission released the Gender Action Plan 2016–2020 (GAP II), with women's economic rights and empowerment as one of four 'pivotal areas' for action.
- Official development assistance targeting women's economic empowerment remains low. The share of aid by EU institutions that targeted gender equality in economic and productive sectors was lower than 20 per cent, and the share of aid that targeted gender equality to all sectors was near 30 per cent.

### 4.1. Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020 (GAP II)

In 2015, the EU released the new EU Gender Action Plan (GAP II) for 2016-2020 entitled 'Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020'.<sup>65</sup> The GAP II succeeded the 2010-2015 GAP and responded to critiques of the previous version, namely the lack of strong institutional leadership, accountability and capacity to promote and evaluate goals on gender equality.

GAP II, a joint Staff Working Document, aims at enhancing the EU's institutional capacity to delivery on the commitments made to gender equality, including in the core area of women's economic rights. It lays out action to be taken to transform lives in 'four pivotal areas', three of which are thematic and one institutional:

- *Ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity*
- *Promoting the economic and social rights / empowerment of girls and women*
- *Strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation*
- *Shifting the Commission services' and the European Union External Action Service's (EEAS) institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments.*

Under the second pillar relating to women's economic empowerment, the GAP II explains that:

- *Commission services and the EEAS will continue investing in efforts to make women's economic and social empowerment central to the EU's external relations, and will seek to ensure that work to promote inclusive growth gives due consideration to gender dimensions.*
- *Commission services and the EEAS will continue to contribute in a measurable manner to girls' and women's economic and social empowerment, to their active participation in the economy and to the prevention of economic exploitation.*

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<sup>65</sup> European Commission (2015).

In particular, this will be achieved by contributing to:

- *An increase in the number of girls and women receiving quality education at primary, secondary and tertiary level, including in science, technology and engineering, and receiving vocational, professional and/or entrepreneurial training;*
- *Improving access by women of all ages to decent work and to the national social protection floors;*
- *Women's equal access to financial services, and to the use of, and control over, land and other productive resources, as well as support to women entrepreneurs;*
- *Girls' and women's access to, use of, and control over, clean water, energy, information and communication technology and transport infrastructure.*

The main units responsible for implementing GAP 2016-2020 are the EEAS, Delegations and Commission services, working with Member States and DG DEVCO and DG ECHO and DG NEAR.<sup>66</sup> In October 2015 the Council of the European Union issued conclusions welcoming the GAP II and reaffirming commitment to the implementation of its four pivotal areas of focus, also calling for all parties to secure sufficient financial and human resources in order to fully deliver on the EU's commitments to gender equality, empowerment and women and girls' human rights.<sup>67</sup>

Cross-cutting implementation mechanisms include commitment to systematic gender analysis for all new external actions including Commission services and EEAS' activities in all partner countries. In an evolution of the voluntary reporting mechanism of the 2010-2015 GAP, under the GAP II the EEAS and Commission services are mandated to report annually on results accomplished in at minimum one thematic area and on changes in institutional culture.

A mid-term review of financing instruments and of programming documents is scheduled for late-2017. Based on the weaknesses identified in the previous Plan, it is clear that high-level political and management leadership is needed to implement the new framework. At the same time, there needs to be financial investment in both personnel and programmes to ensure the EU's capacity to deliver on the established goals. The status of the Plan as a Staff Working Document has been viewed to undermine the implementation of the Plan. Commentators have also noted that the EU needs to urgently review the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 in order to put gender equality at the centre of external relations.<sup>68</sup> GAP 2016-2020 would benefit greatly from developing and sharing expertise on gender analysis across delegations and Member States and supporting the core work of women's rights organisations.<sup>69</sup>

## **4.2. Other EU support to women's economic empowerment**

- In 2016, the European Investment Bank approved the EIB Group Gender Strategy<sup>70</sup> entitled 'Protect, Impact, Invest: The EIB Group Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment'. The strategy aims to mainstream gender equality and women's economic empowerment throughout the Group's activities both inside and outside the EU. In particular, the Strategy focuses on

<sup>66</sup> The Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), Directorate for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR).

<sup>67</sup> Council of the European Union (2015a).

<sup>68</sup> O'Connell (2015).

<sup>69</sup> For further discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the GAP II, see O'Connell (2015).

<sup>70</sup> European Investment Bank Group (2016).

*'i) the protection of women's rights in the Bank's due diligence framework and in the requirements for our clients and promoters; ii) increasing our operations' positive impact on gender equality, while pursuing the Bank's Public Policy Goals and Operational Plan objectives, and iii) the targeted promotion of women's economic empowerment, including women's increased access to employment and to credit/financial services, as well as support for female entrepreneurship'. The Strategy has been in place since January 2017, and the EIB has pledged to develop an implementation plan to accompany the Strategy later in 2017.*

- In 2016, the OECD-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) published a report on allocations of official development assistance to women's economic empowerment,<sup>71</sup> concluding that, *'Aid targeting women's economic empowerment as the principal objective remains especially low, at USD 861 million in 2013–14. This is just 2 per cent of the aid going to the economic and productive sectors – a mere drop in the ocean'*. The report observed that the share of aid<sup>72</sup> by EU institutions that was directed at gender equality in economic and productive sectors was less than 20 per cent and the share of aid that targeted gender equality to all sectors was near 30 per cent in comparison. Overall, the report acknowledged that while aid by DAC members to women's economic empowerment had increased since 2007, the proportion of aid spent on gender quality in economic and productive sectors (other than agriculture) remains very small.

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<sup>71</sup> OECD-DAC (2016).

<sup>72</sup> % of total bilateral aid commitments, 2013–14, constant 2014 prices.

## 5. NEXT STEPS TO SECURE PROGRESS ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

In order to further women's economic empowerment the FEMM Committee should consider the following actions ahead of and during CSW 61:

- Progress the actions outlined in the European Parliament recommendation to the Council on the EU priorities for the 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2017/2001(INI)).
- Meet before and after CSW with leaders of the Maltese presidency of the Council of the EU and relevant DG Units, such as DG DEVCO and DG ECHO, to further shared understanding on EU priorities for CSW 61 and to ensure learning and outcomes from CSW 61 are fully integrated into a coherent EU strategy to further progress on women's economic empowerment.
- Consult with women's rights organisations prior to, during and after CSW 61 to gather evidence, develop priorities for the CSW Agreed Conclusions and wider discussions, and inform follow-up strategies.
- Participate to the fullest extent possible in official meetings of CSW 61, as well as associated side and parallel events, ensuring that EU commitments to a rights-based approach to women's economic empowerment, notably those within the GAP II, are fully reflected in the CSW Agreed Conclusions and associated discussions.

More widely, the FEMM Committee should consider working to:

- Locate its analysis and subsequent action within a strong understanding of the structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, and transformative, sustained change required to overcome them. This includes *inter alia* addressing critical decent work deficits and exploring means to ensure the necessary fiscal and political space for the provision of social protection and services essential to alleviate women's unpaid care and domestic workloads, support women's entry into quality roles in the labour market and protect against economic shocks.
- Increase coherence between international legal and policy frameworks on women's economic empowerment and EU policies and programmes. This includes:
  - Reaffirming that women's rights in the EU are firmly rooted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW and the Lisbon Treaty as key instruments for the full achievement of women's human rights.
  - Analysing EU initiatives to ensure compliance with women's economic empowerment provisions within the BPfA, CEDAW, ILO standards and the SDGs, and ensuring that monitoring and follow-up of GAP II takes into account gaps and progress against these international frameworks.
  - Inviting the leaders of relevant DGs to the FEMM Committee to communicate their plans to further progress women's economic empowerment, with a view to increasing coherence across the EU institutions.
- Ensure the development of a fully costed, funded and comprehensive strategy for the achievement of women's rights and gender equality within the EU.

- Ensure the monitoring and follow-up of resolutions and other Parliamentary agreements with potential to advance women's economic empowerment, notably those focused on the gender pay gap, pensions and the forthcoming work-life balance package.
- Introduce gender-responsive budgeting in the next Multiannual Financial Framework and engage in increasingly rigorous scrutiny of EU budget-setting processes and expenditure, including taking steps to improve transparency and reporting around how funds are spent. Improving the tracking of EU structural and external aid funds to ensure that they are allocated to women's rights organisations and institutions, as well as projects primarily focused on the achievement of gender equality objectives, is critical.

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## **ANNEX-FURTHER READING**

### **List of further reading on women's economic empowerment (adapted from Klugman and Tyson, 2016)**

- 2011: Food and Agriculture Organization, The State of Food and Agriculture 2010–11: Women in Agriculture
- 2011: World Bank, World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development
- 2012: UN Foundation and ExxonMobil Foundation, A Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment
- 2012: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Closing the Gap
- 2012: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Women's Economic Empowerment
- 2014: International Labour Organization (ILO), Global Wage Report
- 2014: World Bank, Gender at Work
- 2015: McKinsey Global Institute, The Power of Parity
- 2015: UN Women, Progress of the World's Women, Transforming Economies: Realising Rights
- 2015: ILO, Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum
- 2015: World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report
- 2016: International Center for Research on Women and Business for Social Responsibility, Building Effective Women's Economic Empowerment Strategies
- 2016: ILO, Women at Work
- 2016: Rutgers Center for Women's Global Leadership & AFL-CIO Solidarity Centre. Transforming Women's Work: Policies for an Inclusive Economic Agenda.
- 2016: OECD-DAC Network On Gender Equality, Tracking the money for women's economic empowerment: still a drop in the ocean
- 2016: Overseas Development Institute, Women's Economic Empowerment: Navigating enablers and constraints
- 2016: UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, Leave No One Behind: A call to action for gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment
- 2017: Gender and Development Network. Stepping Up: How Governments can contribute to women's economic empowerment

## DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

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