

**Commission on Science and Technology for Development**

**Twentieth session**

**8 – 12 May 2017**

**Geneva**

**New innovation approaches to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**

Issues discussed at the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) related to science, technology and innovation and gender, as well as on opportunities for collaboration between CSW and CSTD

Ms. Christine Brautigam  
Director, Intergovernmental Support Division, UN-Women  
Speaking notes, 10 May 2017

I thank the Commission, and my colleagues in UNCTAD, for the invitation to contribute to this panel discussion. My comments will focus, in particular, on the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, a sister functional commission of CSTD.

As the primary global norm-setting body for gender equality and the empowerment of women, CSW focuses on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. CSW also contributes to the follow up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. In addition, CSW exercises a catalytic role for gender mainstreaming vis-a-vis other intergovernmental bodies, to strengthen the integration of gender issues, including in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Commission's working methods encourage it to expand its cooperation with other functional commissions through the exchange of information and transmission of the outcomes of its work, joint informal interactive events and participation of its Chair and Bureau members.

Today's discussion is a very welcome opportunity to increase attention to gender perspectives in the critical realms of science, technology and innovation. It is worth recalling that gender mainstreaming is a key strategy for reflecting women's as well as men's concerns and experiences in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social sphere. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

Such attention is especially pertinent in the light of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Agenda positions gender equality and women's empowerment at the centre of sustainable development, both as the dedicated Sustainable Development Goal 5 and as critical to the achievement of all SDGs. The Agenda confirms that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets. It emphasizes that the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.

The 2030 Agenda is universal and emphasizes interlinkages and interactions among the SDGs, and the importance of implementing it as an indivisible whole. SDG 5, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, interacts in multiple ways with all the goals, enabling and reinforcing progress. This is also the case in regards to scientific and technological innovation for human progress, including of

information and communications technology. Target 5.b, Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women, explicitly establishes this link. It is linked also to target 9.c. Let me also highlight linkages between SDG 4 and 5 and targets 9.5 in terms of enhancing scientific research and technological capabilities.

CSW has referred to the important role of science and technology in the realization of gender equality, in the context of particular priority themes. Most recently, on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2015, it committed to six key strategies for accelerated implementation, one of which included enhanced access to and use of information and communications technologies.

In 2016, the Commission adopted a comprehensive roadmap for the gender responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, where it reiterated the link between women's equal economic rights, economic empowerment and independence and their access to economic and productive resources, including new technology.

At its most recent session in March of this year, CSW considered as its priority theme women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. One of the Commission's key areas of emphasis in this regard was on how to manage technological and digital change for women's economic empowerment.

As new technologies are changing the structure of labour markets and provide new and different employment opportunities, women and girls need the skills that will enable them to fully take advantage of the best opportunities the labour market will provide. At the same time, there is a need to better understand the impact of technology on the labour market, especially also in regards to threats to decent work opportunities.

The following key action areas emerged:

- Women's (and girls') **participation as users, content creators, employees, entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders** in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, information and communications technology must be strengthened.
- The scope of education and training opportunities for women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, information and communications technology and digital fluency needs to be expanded.
- Structural barriers, gender stereotypes and negative social norms that perpetuate occupational segregation need to be eliminated, and women should be encouraged to diversify their educational and occupational choices in emerging fields and growing economic sectors, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology.
- At the same time, there is a need to strengthen science, technology, engineering and mathematics education policies and curricula so that they are relevant to the needs of, and benefit women and girls.
- Workplace environments and institutional practices must change so that they value all workers and offer them equal opportunities to reach their full potential. Barriers to women's employment, retention and promotion in scientific and technological organizations and institutions in both the public and private sectors must be dismantled.

- Investment and research in sustainable technology is called for, particularly to strengthen the capacities of developing countries. Such investment is needed so that women can leverage science and technology for entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in the changing world of work.
- Technology, including information and communications technology, as well as public services, such as water and sanitation, renewable energy, transport etc, can and need to contribute to reducing and redistributing women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work.
- (as we heard also yesterday) Agricultural technologies and innovation must be accessible and available for rural women and women farmers so that they can fully contribute to the agricultural sector, food security and nutrition and the economic well-being of their families and communities, and to enhancing agricultural and rural development, including small-scale farming.

Three more elements raised by the Commission for action that apply across the board should be mentioned: the consistent call for strong institutional mechanisms for gender equality within in government, at all levels, with sufficient funding. Such mechanisms are essential for ensuring that all national planning, decision-making, policy formulation and implementation and budgeting processes, including those for implementation of the SDGs and around STI, contribute to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Second, stakeholder participation, and especially the involvement and contributions made by civil society, such as women's organizations, have a key role in placing the interests, needs and visions of women and girls on local, national, regional and international agendas. Their contribution to advancing a gender-responsive science and technology agenda also needs to be stressed.

And third, the urgency of improving the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics and data that are disaggregated by sex and age, wherever possible. This is a recurrent concern of the Commission, also at a time when the SDGs require comprehensive data sets for monitoring progress. Innovation is needed to close the gaps.

These efforts of CSW in regards to STI may also give further impetus to the work of this Commission in addressing gender perspectives of its mandate, and thus contribute to the accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 2018, CSW will evaluate progress made in the implementation of its agreed conclusions from 2003, on participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women. This will give member states an opportunity, through voluntary presentations, to exchange experiences and lessons learned.

Let me close with a few words about the work of UN Women. As a composite Entity, UN Women provides normative support to intergovernmental bodies and in that capacity, serves as the substantive Secretariat of CSW. UN Women has a coordination role vis-a-vis the UN system and undertakes operational activities, with a field presence of six regional offices and some 50 country offices.

Innovation and technology are drivers of change in our Strategic Plan. Achieving gender equality, and leaving no one behind, demands transformative shifts and innovative solutions to removing structural barriers to sustainable development. Innovation and technology provide unprecedented opportunities.

UN-Women works to ensure that future innovations take a gender-responsive approach and promote women as innovators.