

Towards a Gender Equal World

The new EU Gender Action Plan and the EU's contribution to Beijing +25

Panel 1: Promoting Economic and Social Rights and the Empowerment of Girls and Women

Thematic focus:

The COVID-19 pandemic and its health and socio-economic consequences are deepening and compounding inequalities and are disproportionately affecting women and girls. Women are disproportionately represented in sectors negatively affected by the crisis, as well as in precarious and informal employment. The businesses operated by women are often smaller, informal and in less profitable sectors and women entrepreneurs have limited access to finance. At the same time, women earn less and consequently have less savings to fall back on. They are also carrying the increasing burden of unpaid care work. Digital gender divide further limits for instance the adoption of digital solutions such as digital commerce and finance to continue economic activities.

The current crises has increased the urgency of working together globally and at country level to tackle the structural gender discrimination undermining women's entrepreneurial activities and to adopt non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection schemes, formal employment, and to extend labour rights and entitlements to informal and precarious workers.

With GAP III, the EU reconfirms its commitment to working together with all stakeholders to "build back better", promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as an essential aspect of equitable, sustainable and inclusive recovery processes.

The panel aims at encouraging a multi-stakeholder discussion, focussing on the key challenges to women's economic empowerment and the access of women to decent work, equal pay and labour rights. It will reflect upon the key elements of a transformative approach to promoting women's social and economic rights, taking into account intersecting forms of discrimination and the needs of women with disabilities, including the need of challenging harmful social norms and stereotypes, alongside legal and policy reforms for universal social protection, access to productive resources, redistribution of unpaid care and household work, etc.. The panel will provide insights into the main areas of action put forward in the EU gender action plan, as well as the priorities set by the Generation Equality Forum and the Action Coalition "Economic Justice and Rights" (AC EJR) in this context.

Panelists:

Ana PELEAZ, Vice-President of the European Disability Forum

Antti Pekka KARHUNEN, Principal Adviser for Trade and Development, European Commission, Directorate for International Development and Cooperation

Christelle KWIZERA, Social entrepreneur, Water Access Ruanda

Caren GROWN, Global Director Gender, The World Bank

Lieve VERBOVEN, Director of the ILO Office to the EU and the Benelux countries, International Labour Organisation

Sofia SPRECHMANN SINEIRO, Secretary General Care International, AC EJR co-leader

Moderated by: Hafsat ABIOLA, Founder – Women in Africa