

# GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

## Introduction

At the CBSS, gender equality and equal opportunity are fundamental goals. The overall objective guiding the Secretariat's gender equality policy is that women and men have the same rights to shape their work and work environment without discrimination. The Secretariat is committed to gender equality outcomes with respect to employee representation, value, safety, and recognition. This policy applies to the CBSS, the Secretariat and to all its activities.

## Purpose and Objective

This Policy aims to ensure equal opportunities for women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from CBSS' activities.

## Guiding Principles

The following principles guide efforts to promote gender equality in the Secretariat governance and operations:

- The Secretariat proactively addresses identified gender-based inequalities;
- Stakeholder engagement and analysis are conducted in an inclusive and gender responsive manner, so as to identify and address the different interests and needs of women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity.
- The Secretariat operates in an inclusive manner so that the participation and voice of women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, is reflected in decision-making.

In particular the Secretariat shall:

- Undertake an active, dynamic, systematic, and preventive approach against gender discrimination, including discrimination targeting sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics.
- Have a gender-neutral salary and compensation package;
- Employ recruitment processes and career paths that are free from discrimination and are gender balanced;
- Consistently follow relevant national and international laws and guidelines to protect and promote work-life balance and equal opportunities for its staff members;
- Manage and prevent victimisation and harassment of any form.

Gender discriminative behaviour shall be reported to the closest supervisor and/or HR services. In case an individual does not feel comfortable doing so, s/he may (anonymously) report to either the work environment representatives, HR Services, the Deputy Director General, or Director General for follow-on investigation and resolution.

## Definitions

**Gender:** Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.

Gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities. Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic location, gender identity and sexual orientation, among others. This is referred to as intersectionality.

Gender interacts with but is different from sex, which refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. Gender and sex are related to but different from gender identity. Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth<sup>i</sup>.

**Gender Equality<sup>ii</sup>:** Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

**Discrimination<sup>iii</sup>:** Any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on a person's race, sex, gender expression, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other status. Discrimination may be an isolated event affecting one person or a group of persons similarly situated or may manifest itself through harassment or abuse of authority.

## Global and regional conventions for Gender Equality

- [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)  
New York, 18 December 1979 | OHCHR
- [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) | OHCHR
- [Convention C190 - Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 \(No. 190\)](#)  
(ilo.org)
- [Inter-American Convention on the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women "Convention of Belem Do Para \(oas.org\)](#)
- [Home - Istanbul Convention Action against violence against women and domestic violence \(coe.int\)](#)

## Other instruments

- [European Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#)
- [Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy \(2024-2029\)](#)
- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights | United Nations](#)
- [International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action \(unfpa.org\)](#)
- [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women | OHCHR](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [Resolution 1325 \(unscr.com\)](#)

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<sup>i</sup> [https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://swedishgenderequalityagency.se/gender-equality-in-sweden/what-is-gender-equality/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.do.se/choose-language/english/what-is-discrimination#h-Thelegaldefinitionofdiscrimination>