**53rd session of the Human Rights Council**

**Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women**

**Panel 2: Social protection: women’s participation and leadership**

*Concept note (as of 27 June 2023)*

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| **Date and venue:** | **Friday, 30 June 2023, 4 to 6 p.m. (UTC+2) Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, and online platform (Zoom)** *(will be broadcast live and archived on* [*https://media.un.org/en/webtv*](https://media.un.org/en/webtv)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | To discuss how participation in decision-making may address current gaps in social security for women, with a focus on the intersectionality of discrimination. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Ms. Maira Mariela Macdonal Alvarez**, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statement:** | **Mr. Mahamane Cisse-Gouro**, Director of the Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **Moderator:** | **Mr. Olivier De Schutter**,Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Michele LeVoy**,Director of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants *(video message)* * **Yamikani**,girl activist from Malawi *(video message)* * **Ms. Monica Ferro**, Director of the Geneva Office of the United Nations Population Fund |
| **Outcome:** | A summary report on the discussion will be prepared by OHCHR. |
| **Mandate:** | In its [resolution 6/30](https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A_HRC_RES_6_30.pdf), the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the principle of gender equality and the need for the full implementation of the human rights of women and decided to hold an annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women. The second panel of the 2023 annual discussion will focus on how the transformation of social security should address gender discrimination faced by women and girls in the context of social security, and how active participation in decision-making may address such discrimination in line with international human rights standards. |
| **Format:** | The total duration of the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women will be four hours, divided into two panels of two hours each. In this panel, the opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by a two-part interactive discussion and conclusions from the panellists. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, which will cover the opening statement, panellists’ presentations and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 12 States or observers, 1 national human rights institution and 2 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions.  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Delegates who have not been able to take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. |
| **Accessibility:** | In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, the panel discussion will be made accessible. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided and webcast during the debate. During the event itself, participants can access live English captioning on the StreamText web page (<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG>). Hearing loops are available for collection from the Secretariat desk. Oral statements may be embossed in Braille from any of the six official languages of the United Nations, upon request and following the procedure described in *The accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities* (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/accessibility>). |
| **Background:** | The right to social security is firmly embedded in the human rights law – notably in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Convention on the Rights of the Child. Social security is also included in SDG targets 1.3 and 1.a on poverty, target 5.4 on gender equality, and target 10.4 on inequality. [Our Common Agenda](https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf) stresses the need for a new social contract, including universal social security, and underlines that the renewal of this social contract must include the active and equal participation of women and girls.  And yet, crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate emergencies and related emerging conflicts, and increasing inequality have revealed and exacerbated gender inequality in social security.  Girls may have their education interrupted due to early pregnancy, child, early and forced marriage, or heavy share of domestic work, leading to less access to formal employment. Globally women remain concentrated in the lowest paid jobs, in non-standard forms of employment, including in the informal economy. Their reproductive and care roles often force them to opt out from or interrupt their access to formal employment. Older women often face gender pension gap, caused by issues and circumstances such as no access to or interruption of formal employment, the gender pay gap and earlier retirement age. Such accumulation of gender discrimination in the life-course obstructs women’s access to contributory social security.  Intersecting forms of discrimination have particularly negative impacts on women and girls’ enjoyment of the right to social security. Only some 22 per cent of international migrant workers are covered by social security. In particular, [migrant women often struggle to access social security](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Policy%20Brief%2014_Migration%20and%20social%20protection_RND3_WEB_011320.pdf) due to their irregular migration status and/or their employment in the informal economy. Further, the lack of inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities within the design and implementation of social policies on social security has a [multiplier effect on their support and care needs](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F52%2F52&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False) (for example because of disability-related extra costs). And [indigenous women](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/publication/wcms_626564.pdf) often engage in various traditional occupations and informal economic activities in rural and urban areas for which social security schemes are not available or accessible.  Active and equal participation of women and girls in the decision-making is crucial for their full enjoyment of the right to social security. Such participation enables laws, policies and programmes relevant to social security to identify barriers faced by women and girls in benefitting from various social security schemes, make services responsive to their needs and rights, and eliminate discrimination they face.  The panel aims to discuss how the transformation of social security should address gender discrimination faced by women and girls in all their diversity in the context of social security, and the ways in which active participation in decision-making may address this discrimination in line with international human rights standards. |
| **Background documents:** | * [Human Rights Council resolution 6/30](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/6/30) of 14 December 2007 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system * Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General comment No. 19 (2008) on the right to social security (art. 9), [E/C.12/GC/19](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=E%2FC.12%2FGC%2F19&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False) * Report of the Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty ([A/HRC/14/31](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F14%2F31&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False)), 2010 * Report of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls on women’s human rights in the changing world of work ([A/HRC/44/51](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F44%2F51&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False)), 2020 |