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Update for the Commission on the Status of Women

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

Over the course of the past months, preparations continued for the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that will be held from 13-24 March 2017 at United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York.¹ In anticipation of the debate on the priority theme of “Women’s economic empowerment in a changing world of work,” UN-Women held an Expert Group Meeting in Geneva from 26-28 September 2016 in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO).² The discussion was informed by a number of expert papers on issues including the realization of women’s labor rights, macro-economic trends and policies, and female entrepreneurship as a route to women’s economic empowerment.³ Furthermore, the expert group meeting was informed by the work of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, in particular its first report that was published on 22 September.⁴ The report identifies seven driving forces for women’s economic empowerment and financial independence, including the redistribution of unpaid care work, changing corporate culture, and the reform of legal frameworks to ensure protection and non-discrimination of women.⁵ Facilitated by UN-Women, the High-Level Panel will continue to explore the potential for women’s economic empowerment in connection with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.⁶ The Panel’s work will also inform the debate at CSW 61 as well as the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will review the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a focus on “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world” during its next session in July 2017.⁷

From 17-20 October 2016, UN-Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri was present at the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) that was held in Quito, Ecuador.⁸ The conference brought together more than 30,000 attendants from national and local governments, academia, and civil society to define the cornerstones of sustainable urban development for the coming two decades through the New Urban Agenda.⁹ In her address to the Women’s and Youth Assembly, she welcomed the gender-responsive language of the New Urban Agenda and called upon all actors to ensure that the Agenda realize the needs of women and girls in urban areas.¹⁰ Puri equally underlined the importance of women’s participation in decision-making, including in local governments, and their safety from violence and intimidation as key transformative elements of the New Urban Agenda.¹¹ The Agenda furthermore makes a strong call for women’s equal right to decent employment and other economic opportunities.¹² UN-Women continues to actively support UN-Habitat in the implementation of gender-sensitive urban development in the context of the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11, which envisions inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities.¹³ A key initiative in this regard is UN-Women’s Global Flagship Programme Initiative on “Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces.”¹⁴ Moreover, UN-Women conducts a number of initiatives to strengthen women’s participation in the economic and political spheres in urban areas, including by promoting gender-responsive budgeting at national and local levels.¹⁵

¹ UN-Women, *CSW 61 (2017)*, 2016.

² UN-Women, *Expert Group Meeting: Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work*, 2016.

³ Ibid.

⁴ UN-Women, *Press release: First report by High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment outlines drivers to advance gender equality*, 2016.

⁵ 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*, 2016.

⁶ UN-Women, *Press release: First report by High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment outlines drivers to advance gender equality*, 2016.

⁷ UN-Women, *Expert Group Meeting: Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work*, 2016.

⁸ UN-Women, *Coverage: UN Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri at Habitat III*, 2016.

⁹ Citiscope, *What is Habitat III?*, 2016.

¹⁰ UN-Women, “*Cities of the world, step it up for gender equality*” – Lakshmi Puri, 2016.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² UN-Women, *Coverage: UN Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri at Habitat III*, 2016.

¹³ UN-Women, *SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, 2017.

¹⁴ UN-Women, *Gender equality and the New Urban Agenda*, 2016, p. 2.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri furthermore attended the XIII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held on 25-26 October 2016 in Montevideo, Uruguay.¹⁶ Convened by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) with support by the regional office of UN-Women, the conference presented the first multilateral forum to discuss the advancement of women in the region since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.¹⁷ Consequently, the thematic focus was on mainstreaming gender equality in the implementation of sustainable development policies.¹⁸ UN Women contributed the Latin America and Caribbean Report on *Women's Economic Empowerment in Challenging Times*, assessing the progress made on gender equality in the region over the past two decades.¹⁹ Delegates from the ECLAC Member States adopted the *Montevideo Strategy*, which envisions the implementation of gender equality in the region until 2030 through the sustainable development framework.²⁰ The provisions contained in the ten pillars of the regional strategy will come to bear on the national priorities and planning frameworks of Member States in the region over the next years.²¹ The implementation of the strategy will be under regular review at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) and other regional conferences, including the next Conference on Women that will be held in Santiago, Chile, in 2019.²²

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The High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment was established by the Secretary-General to provide leadership, identify focus areas, and provide action-oriented recommendations regarding gender equality in the economic sphere in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The first report of the Panel highlights persistent structural inequalities and outlines an agenda for action across seven thematic areas. It can therefore provide valuable guidance in developing policy responses to the challenge of enhancing women's economic status at all levels.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2016). *Gender equality and the New Urban Agenda* [Thematic brief]. Retrieved 8 January 2017 from: <http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/unwhabitat3brief-en.pdf?v=1&d=20161014T171812>

In close connection with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda that was adopted at the Habitat III conference in 2016 will be one of the decisive international frameworks for the coming two decades. With about half of the world's population living in cities, mainstreaming a gender equality focus into urban development policies is a task of utmost importance. Delegates can draw on this resource to learn about the specific challenges of women's empowerment in an urban context, as well as ongoing activities supported by UN-Women in this regard.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2016). *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the CSW 61 Priority Theme: Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work*. Retrieved 8 January 2017 from: <http://www2.unwomen.org/->

¹⁶ UN-Women, *Coverage: Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri at the XIII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2016.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ UN-Women, *UN Women is actively involved in the preparation and celebration of the XIII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2016.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ UN ECLAC, *Latin American and Caribbean Countries Approved the Montevideo Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality in the Region by 2030*, 2016.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

[/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/61/egm/csw61%20egm%20report%20-%20final.pdf?v=1&d=20161116T010439](#)

This report summarizes the discussion of the Expert Group that met in September 2016 to prepare for discussions of the priority theme at the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women. It identifies the most significant problem areas and trends in relation to the work of CSW and provides a wealth of recommendations and examples of good practice from Member States. The report is a useful resource to gain an understanding of how women's economic empowerment will be discussed in the context of CSW.

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United Nations, Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. (2016). *Leave no one behind: A call to action for gender equality and women's economic empowerment* [Report]. Retrieved 8 January 2017 from: <http://www.womenseconomicempowerment.org/assets/reports/UNWomen%20Full%20Report.pdf>

I. Enhancing Women’s Role in Peace Processes and Political Transitions

Recent Developments

In recent months, the United Nations (UN) has discussed and taken action to enhance women’s role in peace processes and political transitions. The UN Security Council met on 25 October 2016 to discuss the annual report of former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) (S/2016/822).²³ The report found that in 2015, 7 out of 10 peace agreements signed included gender-specific provisions.²⁴ It also showed that by 2016, women made up 22 percent of parliamentarians in conflict and post-conflict states that have legislated electoral quotas, whereas women comprised only 11.2 percent of parliamentarians in states without such provisions.²⁵ Within the United Nations, women made up 3 percent of the UN military peacekeeping units.²⁶ The report made recommendations across 5 main areas: prioritizing women’s participation and leadership in conflict resolution and peace building; protecting the human rights of women and girls during and after conflict; ensuring gender-responsive planning and accountability for results; strengthening gender mainstreaming and improving capacity-building; and financing the women and peace and security agenda.²⁷ UN bodies including UN-Women and the members of the Security Council use the report to inform their discourse and action on the topic.²⁸

The Russian presidency of the Security Council voiced the concerns of multiple Member States about terrorist groups specifically targeting women, as well as the continued importance of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015) on the topic of women, peace and security.²⁹ The president also underlined advances in the implementation of resolution 1325 specifically, such as training for preventing and reacting to sexual and other violence against women, strengthening women’s involvement in peace talks, and an increase in the number of peace agreements that include provisions on women’s specific needs and human rights.³⁰ During the meeting, Member States presented their views on the topic of WPS, as well as updates concerning women’s involvement in peace and security within their own states.³¹ Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reaffirmed the importance of the topic and recognized the progress already made, such as the progression from 4 to 65 national action plans on WPS during his term in office.³² Despite these advances, he also acknowledged that the role of women in peace and security was still far from equitable, urging the council to hold peace operations accountable for greater gender equality within their work, to make funds available for collaboration with civil society, and to consider ways to make peace negotiations more diverse and representative.³³

In connection with the annual UN Security Council debate on Women, Peace and Security, UN-Women, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) “brought together 29 UN volunteers working across the world on gender-responsive peacebuilding.”³⁴ The partnership between the three entities was established to accelerate implementation of the Secretary-General’s 7-Point Action Plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding.³⁵ During the four-day workshop, participants worked towards this goal and created a platform to develop skills and knowledge on the topic of gender-responsive peacekeeping, analysis, monitoring and evaluation.³⁶

²³ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822)*, 2016.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁵ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822)*, 2016, para. 52.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.

²⁸ UN-Women, “Commitments must not be simply plans on paper”—*Executive Director*, 2016.

²⁹ UN Security Council, *Letter dated 14 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/871)*, 2016.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ UN Security Council, *Women and peace and security (S/PV.7793)*, 2016.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ UN-Women, *UN Volunteers supporting gender-responsive peacebuilding on the ground*, 2016.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

UN-Women also worked together with the International Peace Support Training Center (IPSTC) to organize the fifth edition of the Female Military Officers Course in Nairobi, Kenya, from 28 November to 9 December 2016.³⁷ The two-week course aims to support troop-contributing countries in increasing the number of female officers in UN peacekeeping missions.³⁸ The course was led by female officers equipped with technical competencies demanded in the field, specifically in regard to the protection of civilians, as well as training concepts which can be used in all UN Peace Operations training internationally.³⁹ The course provides leadership opportunities for talented female officers and encourages the training and deployment of women for protection-related tasks.⁴⁰ To date, over 200 female officers have participated in the course that is supported by the governments of the Netherlands, Finland, Australia, and Norway.⁴¹

On 14 December 2016, UN-Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri launched the “Women’s Leadership Initiative for Stability in Africa” along with representatives of Germany and the African Union.⁴² Starting in 2017, the two-year initiative will strengthen the capacity of Africa’s women leaders’ to build sustainable peace on the continent; the initiative will establish a network to strengthen women’s role in the electoral process, and international and regional events.⁴³ The initiative builds upon ongoing efforts in the process of implementing international agreements on Women, Peace and Security in the region, including the national action plans of 19 African States towards an increase of the role of women in peace and security, as well as national/regional legislation such as the Maputo Protocol and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.⁴⁴

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The women’s leadership initiative is an example of UN-Women’s collaboration with Member States to create an enhanced role for women in peace and security. It builds on a number of ongoing regional processes, such as national action plans towards implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325. This source gives delegates an example of the structure and importance of multilateral initiatives and highlights the importance of supporting local leadership in all sectors in order to build sustainable peace.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2016). *Training in Kenya boosts deployment of female military officers for peacekeeping* [Website]. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/12/training-in-kenya-boosts-deployment-of-female-military-officers-for-peacekeeping>

The participation of women in the military represents an important avenue in enhancing women’s role in peace processes and political transitions; encouraging the deployment of women for protection related tasks is one such step. This source is an example for delegates to see how UN-Women, together with the International Peace Support Training Center (IPSTC), is involved in training, developing skills and knowledge on the topic of Enhancing Women’s Role in Peace Processes and Political Transitions. This program highlights current success stories and

³⁷ UN-Women, *Training in Kenya boosts deployment of female military officers for peacekeeping*, 2016.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Brazilian Peace Operations Joint Training Center, *CCOPAB participates in the 5th Female Military Officers Course in Kenya*, 2016.

⁴⁰ UN-Women, *Training in Kenya boosts deployment of female military officers for peacekeeping*, 2016.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² UN-Women, *Launch of Women’s leadership initiative for peace and stability in Africa*, 2016.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ UN-Women, *Launch of Women’s leadership initiative for peace and stability in Africa*, 2016; African Union, *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*, 2003; African Union, *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*, 2004; UN Security Council, *Women and peace and security (S/RES/1325)*, 2000.



underscores the importance of international cooperation and multilateral information sharing in making continued progress on this topic.

United Nations, Security Council, 7793rd meeting. (2016, October 25). 7793rd meeting (S/PV.7793) [Meeting Record]. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/S/PV.7793>

The Meeting Record of the open debate on the topic of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) provides delegates with an insight into the topic from different points of view. Security Council Members spoke about their involvement with WPS, current initiatives, and their future concerns. States expressed concerns about matters such as terrorist groups targeting women specifically, the situation in Syria, specific situations endangering gender equality in peace and security, as well as national action plans. This document gives delegates insight into the discourse on this topic and highlights current priorities that should be considered in addressing this topic.

United Nations, Security Council. (2016). *Letter dated 14 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/871)*. Retrieved 6 January from: <http://undocs.org/S/2016/871>

This letter was the concept note, sent by the current presidency of the United Nations Security Council, for the open debate on the topic of Women, Peace and Security. It provides delegates with an understanding of the scope of the open debate, and gives an oversight of the ongoing discussion on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Delegates will find this useful in understanding key progress being made on this issue, as well as identifying current shortfalls and areas in need of more support.

United Nations, Security Council. (2016). *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822)*. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/S/2016/822>

This report contains updates on the implementation of resolution 1325 and the Secretary-General's follow-up on recommendations made during the 2015 high-level review. Among various elements of the WPS, peacekeeping, prevention, and initiatives, delegates will gain an understanding of the gap between normative progress on this subject and actual implementation. Delegates may find the brief case studies on specific Member States, including successes and challenges, to be especially insightful in organizing overarching yet tailored responses to this topic.

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United Nations, Security Council, 7793rd meeting. (2016, October 25). *7793rd meeting (S/PV.7793)* [Meeting Record]. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/S/PV.7793>

United Nations, Security Council. (2016). *Letter dated 14 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/871)*. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/S/2016/871>

United Nations, Security Council. (2016). *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822)*. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/S/2016/822>

II. Realizing the Rights of Indigenous Women

Recent Developments

In the past few months, the international community has continued important work on advancing the rights of indigenous women, as the rights laid out in instruments of international law continue to be left unfulfilled.⁴⁵ Violence against indigenous women can be considered the most pervasive form of human rights violations, since it “precludes the realization of all other human rights.”⁴⁶ During the last decade, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has dedicated its work to the realization of the rights of indigenous women, taking joint action with other United Nations (UN) agencies and international groups, like the International Indigenous Women’s Forum (FIMI-IIWF).⁴⁷

By the end of 2016, following its 33rd session from 13 to 30 September 2016, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) held its annual meeting on the rights of women.⁴⁸ The HRC focused its 2016 panel discussion on the theme of “causes and consequences of violence against indigenous women and girls,” with a special focus on persons with disabilities.⁴⁹ During the meeting, the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kate Gilmore, focused her opening remarks on the causes of violence against indigenous women, highlighting the connection to “broader violations of indigenous peoples’ rights.”⁵⁰ The Deputy High Commissioner also drew attention to other issues affecting indigenous women’s human rights, such as human trafficking and domestic violence.⁵¹ The Council decided to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women in order to accelerate efforts for the protection of the rights of indigenous women.⁵²

In April 2017, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) will convene in its sixteenth session, which includes the theme of “empowerment of indigenous women” as a follow-up to its previous session.⁵³ During its fifteenth session, held in May 2016, UNPFII recommended Member States to adopt effective measures to address specific human rights violations indigenous women experience, such as the improvement of the policies for their access to justice and for the protection from domestic violence.⁵⁴ The results of the sixty-first session of CSW in 2017, on the topic of empowerment of indigenous women, will be welcomed by UNPFII.⁵⁵ During its 2016 session, UNPFII also urged the international community, as well as the UN system, to take action to improve the maternal health of indigenous women.⁵⁶

Beyond the UN, a number of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been active in the realization of the rights of indigenous women during the past few months. A strong commitment towards the issue of indigenous women’s rights is being demonstrated by Amnesty International Canada.⁵⁷ In 2016, the NGO started focusing its work on Canadian indigenous women, conducting research on the impact that large-scale natural

⁴⁵ UN HRC, *Joint Written Statement submitted by Ewiitapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, National Congress of American Indians, Native American Rights Fund, Non-governmental Organizations in Special Consultative Status, Indian Law Resource Centre, Non-governmental Organizations on the Roster (A/HRC/33/NGO/X)*, 2016.

⁴⁶ OHCHR, *Violence Against Women – Joint Press Release by UN and IACHR Rapporteurs*, 2015.

⁴⁷ UN Division for Social Policy and Development, *Indigenous Women and the Commission on the Status of Women*.

⁴⁸ OHCHR, *33rd Session of the Human Rights Council (13 to 30 September 2016)*, 2016.

⁴⁹ UN Web TV, *Panel Discussion on Rights of Indigenous Peoples – 16th Meeting, 33rd Regular Session Human Rights Council*, 2016.

⁵⁰ UN HRC, *Summary Report of the Annual Full Day of Discussion on Women’s Human Rights*, 2016.

⁵¹ OHCHR, *Address by Ms. Kate Gilmore, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the 33rd session of the Human Rights Council*, 2016.

⁵² OHCHR, *Human Rights Council Suspends Thirty-Second Session After Adopting 33 Resolutions and One Decision*, 2016.

⁵³ UN Division for Social Policy and Development, *UNPFII Sixteenth Session 24 April to May 2017; UNPFII, Report of the 15th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: Recommendations addressed to UN agencies, funds and programmes and other intergovernmental organizations*, 2016.

⁵⁴ UNPFII, *Recommendations to Member States: 15th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*, 2016.

⁵⁵ UNPFII, *Report of the 15th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: Recommendations addressed to UN agencies, funds and programmes and other intergovernmental organizations*, 2016.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Amnesty International Canada, *Indigenous Women and Resource Development*, 2016.

resource development is having on the human rights of indigenous women in northeastern British Columbia.⁵⁸ The research is part of a campaign called “No More Stolen Sisters,” which aims to raise awareness on violence and human rights violations experienced by Canadian indigenous women, and to drive the government’s attention to the issue.⁵⁹ Amnesty International calls for a national response that includes the participation of indigenous women and girls themselves, indicating a national action plan, a national public inquiry, and a regular collection of data as measures to end violence.⁶⁰ Furthermore, fundamental efforts have been made by movements of the civil society, such as the Moose Hide Campaign, which is a movement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men who are working to raise awareness in order to eradicate violence against indigenous women and children.⁶¹ On February 2017, the Moose Hide Campaign will hold its sixth annual gathering in Canada.⁶² Civil society will continue to be an important actor in actions to realize the human rights of indigenous women.

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Amnesty International Canada. (2016). *Indigenous Women and Resource Development* [Website]. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <https://www.amnesty.ca/our-work/campaigns/no-more-stolen-sisters/indigenous-women-and-resource-development>

This source from Amnesty International Canada introduces a research project on how large-scale natural resource development can have an impact on human rights, in particular those of indigenous women and girls. This is a useful example of how many different issues, even collateral ones, can affect and influence indigenous women’s rights. Furthermore, it is a useful example of the importance of the role played by NGOs. Delegates should use this example to develop their research on the issue at hand, considering the different factors that can affect the rights of indigenous women.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2016). *Address by Ms. Kate Gilmore, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the 33rd session of the Human Rights Council*. Retrieved 4 January 2017 from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20538&LangID=E>

This is the address by the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights at the 33rd session of the HRC held in 2016. The Deputy High Commissioner focused her speech on the causes of violence against indigenous women, highlighting its connection to broader violations of indigenous peoples’ rights. It will provide delegates with a brief but useful overview on the issues related to indigenous women’s human rights violations.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Thirty-third session. (2016). *Summary Report of the Annual Full Day of Discussion on Women’s Human Rights (A/HRC/33/68)*. Retrieved 7 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/33/68>

This is the report of the discussion held in June 2016, which was divided into two panels, the first one regarding “Violence against indigenous women and girls, and its root causes.” The report presents an overview on several issues pertaining to indigenous women’s human rights. It also shows how the HRC has been mainstreaming indigenous women’s rights into its most recent work. Furthermore, it reports on several solutions indicated by Member States to address the issue, such as building capacity through education and improving indigenous women’s access to resources.

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. (2016). *Recommendations to Member States: 15th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*. Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/Docs-updates/Recs-for-States-English.pdf>

This document presents the recommendations made by UNPFII to Member States during its 15th session. Some of the recommendations include advising states to adopt national policies to address discrimination against indigenous women and to work to reduce maternal mortality among indigenous women. Although the recommendations are not only related to the realizing of

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Amnesty International Canada, *Human Rights Crisis*, 2016.

⁶⁰ Amnesty International Canada, *Solutions*, 2016.

⁶¹ Moose Hide Campaign, *About Us*, 2016.

⁶² Ibid.



the rights of indigenous women, it can be a useful example for delegates to understand how they can directly include Member States in the work of the Committee.

United Nations Web TV. (2016). *Panel Discussion on Rights of Indigenous Peoples – 16th Meeting, 33rd Regular Session Human Rights Council* [Video]. Retrieved 30 December 2016 from: <http://webtv.un.org/search/panel-discussion-on-rights-of-indigenous-peoples-16th-meeting-33rd-regular-session-human-rights-council/5131061149001?term=indigenous%20women#full-text>

This video reports on the 16th meeting of the 33rd session of the HRC. The Council focused the discussion on the rights of indigenous women, in particular, on the causes and consequences of violence against indigenous women and girls, with a special focus on those with disabilities. By listening to the speeches of the representatives of numerous Member States, delegates can gain an overview of the various aspects of the realization of indigenous women's rights.

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United Nations Web TV. (2016). *Panel Discussion on Rights of Indigenous Peoples – 16th Meeting, 33rd Regular Session Human Rights Council* [Video]. Retrieved 30 December 2016 from: <http://webtv.un.org/search/panel-discussion-on-rights-of-indigenous-peoples-16th-meeting-33rd-regular-session-human-rights-council/5131061149001?term=indigenous%20women#full-text>

III. Women's Economic Empowerment in a Changing World of Work

Recent Developments

Recently, the international community has continued to discuss gender in the workplace in preparation for the priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)'s 61st session in March 2017, "Women's Economic Empowerment in a Changing World of Work."⁶³ CSW has planned a series of roundtable discussions for CSW61 on topics such as wage gaps, the use of technology to empower women, support for women in the informal economy, and ensuring that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8's targets for economic growth and decent work for all apply to both men and women.⁶⁴ Ahead of CSW61, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) hosted a key stakeholders' meeting on these roundtable topics on 30 January 2017.⁶⁵ Opening the meeting, the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women, Lakshmi Puri highlighted the importance of ensuring that "young women and girls are supported and the value chain from education to skills and capacity development" and the opportunity for CSW to make "concrete, practical and action-oriented recommendations" that cover topics from structural barriers to gender discrimination in the workplace.⁶⁶ The four expert panel discussions focused on various themes, including the legal framework of the issue and how women can be included in the changing world of work in the informal sector and technological advancements.⁶⁷

In November 2016, in partnership with the UN-Women's Empower Women initiative, an online advocacy platform dedicated to help women achieve their economic potential, the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment released a report that emphasizes the benefits of inclusion and empowerment of women in the workforce for both the overall economy and individual businesses.⁶⁸ The report also offers policy recommendations for businesses, such as internal women's mentorship and training opportunities to promote women's empowerment in all parts of the business chain, thus recognizing women as valuable employees, innovators, distributors, business leaders, and consumers.⁶⁹ Relatedly, UN-Women, in partnership with Georgia, produced a training manual on gender equality and women's empowerment for businesses, on topics such as gender stereotypes, discrimination, health, and violence.⁷⁰

UN-Women and Eastern Africa's Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) hosted the 2016 Regional Sharefair on Gender and Resilience in November in Nairobi, Kenya.⁷¹ This event brought together local and regional partners to discuss ways to empower women to rebuild post-conflict and underdeveloped areas in order to make communities more economically sustainable.⁷² In preparation for the Sharefair, UN-Women and IGAD compiled program innovations from women across East Africa, such as the Buy from Women Platform in Rwanda, wherein UN-Women and the World Food Programme (WFP) help provide quality agricultural supplies to women and connect small-scale women farmers to larger agricultural supply chains via an online forum.⁷³ Such work helps promote women's equality in areas where traditional gender norms still permeate the agricultural sector.⁷⁴

⁶³ UN CSW, *CSW61 Organisation of Work*, p. 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ UN CSW, *Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work: Concept Note and Discussion Guide*, 2017, pp. 1-4.

⁶⁶ UN-Women, *Speech: "Your leadership and commitment are critical to ensuring a successful outcome of CSW61"*—Lakshmi Puri, 2017.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Tyson et al., *Business Culture and Practice as a Driver for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Summary of the Findings and Recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment*, 2016, pp. 1-12.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁰ Dadalauri, *Equality Means Business: Training Manual for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Private Sector*, 2016, pp. 1-55.

⁷¹ Empower Women, *Sharefair 2016*, 2016.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ UN-Women et al., *Catalogue of Innovations and Good Practices on Gender and Resilience*, 2016, pp. 14-15.

⁷⁴ Waltz, *The Women Who Feed Us: Gender Empowerment (or Lack Thereof) in Rural Southern Brazil*, 2016, pp. 34-35.

In December 2016, UN-Women's Empower Women team welcomed 170 men and women to their Champions for Change program.⁷⁵ The Champions for Change will help facilitate online skills development courses for women on topics such as the care economy and financial literacy, and they will also continue to promote social media campaigns including #BreakTheGlass and #HERstory.⁷⁶ Participants in the #BreakTheGlass campaign record a video of themselves holding a glass as a symbol of solidarity and sharing how they have overcome gender barriers in the workplace.⁷⁷ The videos are posted across social media platforms as examples of success stories to inspire others to challenge gender discrimination in their own field of work.⁷⁸

Also in December 2016, the multinational company Coca-Cola published a midterm progress report on its 5by20 initiative, the company's goal to empower 5 million women in its own business chain by 2020 as one of three sustainability priorities.⁷⁹ 5by20 partners with local organizations as well as international ones, including UN-Women, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in order to develop shared gender inclusion values and business practices that reflect those values.⁸⁰ The latest report highlights that as of 2015, 5by20 has provided skills training and resources for 1.2 million women entrepreneurs in 60 states, and their work thus far primarily impacts agriculture and retail sectors.⁸¹

As markets continue to develop and become increasingly interdependent across the world, the nature of work in public, private, and informal sectors of the economy will continue to change. In light of the SDGs and CSW's upcoming session, CSW, other UN bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and businesses continue to measure and evaluate the current state of gender equality and women's economic empowerment.⁸² Numerous recent reports, campaigns, and business initiatives demonstrate the willingness of the international community to work towards greater women's economic empowerment as a human right and a sustainable business practice.⁸³

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This press release from UN-Women's Empower Women initiative discusses one of UN-Women's training courses that is used to help women achieve economic independence. One of the students in the course offers her feedback on the program and reflects on three related gender topics in articles linked to the press release. Delegates should use this press release as a starting point for understanding ongoing programs for women's economic empowerment and how they impact individual lives.

Greene, P., & S. Perkins. (2016). *Coca-Cola 5by20: Unleashing the Power of Women Entrepreneurs*. Wellesley, MA: Babson College. Retrieved 5 January 2017 from: https://www.empowerwomen.org/~/_media/uploads/unwomen/empowerwomen/resourceimages/empowerwomencocacolababsontccc5by20reportdecember2016-20161219220133.pdf

This report highlights Coca-Cola's progress on its 5by20 Initiative and provides examples of challenges and successes in adapting the initiative for different states' unique needs. The report also includes an in-depth case study of South Africa to showcase a detailed example of the 5by20 initiative in action. Delegates should bear this report in mind as they consider the role of businesses as partners in future UN work for women's economic empowerment.

⁷⁵ Empower Women, *Empower Women Announces the 2016-2017 Champions for Change*, 2016.

⁷⁶ Ibid.; UN-Women, *Bringing the Opportunities Closer to Our Community*, 2016; Empower Women, #HERstory, 2016.

⁷⁷ Empower Women, *#BreakTheGlass Campaign Guidelines*, 2016.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Greene & Perkins, *Coca-Cola 5by20: Unleashing the Power of Women Entrepreneurs*, 2016.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

⁸¹ Greene & Perkins, *Coca-Cola 5by20: Unleashing the Power of Women Entrepreneurs*, 2016, pp. 7-8.

⁸² UN CSW, *Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work: Concept Note and Discussion Guide*, 2017, pp. 1-4.

⁸³ Greene & Perkins, *Coca-Cola 5by20: Unleashing the Power of Women Entrepreneurs*, 2016, pp. 1-52.; UN-Women, et al., *Catalogue of Innovations and Good Practices on Gender and Resilience*, 2016, pp. 1-65.

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<https://www.empowerwomen.org/~media/uploads/unwomen/empowerwomen/resourceimages/business%20policy%20briefv2-20161130165707.pdf>

This report summarizes the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Economic Empowerment. Not only does it outline the benefits of women's participation and leadership in the formal workforce for economic growth, but it also identifies ways in which the inclusion of women is in the interests of individual businesses. Furthermore, the report recommends best practices for women's empowerment in each link in the business chain, including production, management, distribution, sales, and consumption.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women et al. (2016). *Catalogue of Innovations and Good Practices on Gender and Resilience*. [Report]. Retrieved 5 January 2017 from:

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In preparation for the 2016 Regional Sharefair on Gender and Resilience, UN-Women released this report detailing several innovative programmes for women's empowerment, developed by East African women and local and international partners. Programmes address empowering women in post-conflict and/or underdeveloped areas to rebuild economically sustainable communities, with an emphasis on food security, environmental sustainability, and the agricultural market. Delegates can draw from this report to understand the key actors and policy components of tangible solutions for women's economic empowerment, which can be adapted for regions beyond East Africa.

Waltz, A. (2016). The Women Who Feed Us: Gender Empowerment (or Lack Thereof) in Rural Southern Brazil. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 47: 31-40. Retrieved 6 January from:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0743016716301413>

This journal article examines the differentiated gender roles in Brazilian agriculture and their implications for women's empowerment. The case study analysis highlights that on family farms, women tend to do tasks that do not require using expensive machinery or speaking with male commercial partners. The scholar concludes the article by offering suggestions for adapting women's empowerment policies from Brazil's urban factory sector to the agricultural sector, thereby providing an example of the power of institutional arrangements.

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