**56th session of the Human Rights Council**

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

**Panel 2: Human rights economy and women human rights**

*Concept note (as of 27 June 2024)*

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| **Date and venue:** | **Friday, 28 June 2024, 3 to 5 p.m.** **Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva**  *(broadcast live and archived at* [*https://webtv.un.org*](https://webtv.un.org)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | To discuss how economic systems affect women’s human rights and how such systems can be transformed through human rights economy to advance women’s rights and gender equality. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Ms. Marcela Maria Arias Moncada**, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statement:** | **Ms. Nada Al-Nashif**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Hyshyama Hamin**, Campaign Manager of the Global Campaign for Equality in Family Law * **Ms. Emanuela Pozzan**, Senior Gender Specialist at the International Labour Organization * **Ms. Savitri Bisnath**, Senior Director – Global Policy at the Institute on Race, Power and Political Economy at The New School *(video message)* |
| **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 economic systems, including policies and laws, may affect women’s enjoyment of economic rights or create for opportunities to further gender equality, and how the human rights economy may contribute to this. |
| **Background:** | In 2024, global inequality has grown for the first time in 25 years. Around 4.8 billion people are relatively poorer than they were pre-pandemic. In every society they are more likely to be women, particularly those who belong to marginalized groups and face multiple forms of discrimination. The key game changers to reverse the tide and advancing on the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), identified by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in ["Our Common Agenda"](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-international-finance-architecture-en.pdf), include the elimination of gender discriminatory laws and the reform of international financial architecture.  [The current economic systems often hinder gender equality by not recognizing and addressing different positions of women and men in the economy](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2015/UNwomen-PolicyBrief04-MacroeconomicPolicyMattersForGenderEquality-en.pdf). Macroeconomic policies are often considered as gender-neutral, but they can have discriminatory impacts when applied in the societies where there are structural inequalities and discrimination against women in law and in practice.  On a global level, many developing countries face the challenges of not having sufficient resources to respond and recover from crises or to invest in human rights, despite their obligation to do so. Unsustainable and unprecedented levels of global public debt, combined with conditionalities that come with foreign financial assistance and falling tax revenues due to economic slowdown and tax evasion, are constraining the fiscal space of States to safeguard maximum available resources to protect and promote economic and social rights and led to drastic cuts in public services. [Women will likely face the brunt of such cuts](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2015/UNwomen-PolicyBrief04-MacroeconomicPolicyMattersForGenderEquality-en.pdf), as they are over-represented among public sector front-line workers and users of such services, and the reduction of public services may be substituted for through women’s unpaid domestic, care and support work.  At national level, mainstream economic thinking is often based on the assumption that decision-making is choice-based and gender-neutral. However, for example, economic value of unpaid and paid care and support work is not included in the calculation of the gross domestic product (GDP) or other macroeconomic indicators. Combined with the disproportionate share of unpaid care and support work shouldered by women and girls, and the domination of women in paid care and support work, it leads to women’s unequal access to employment and decent work and economic dependency. It can also result in economic insecurity for women when they become recipients of care and support, for example, due to the gender pension gap.  Laws that discriminate against women also limit their economic rights. Within the family, such laws may focus on entering into or the dissolution of marriage, or in the situation when women decide to start a family. For example, whether women can be the heads of households, if they can obtain a divorce in the same way as men, or the existence of paid parental leave. Additionally, laws may restrict inheritance or pension schemes based on gender. Laws that thus impose restrictions on the basis of gender may subsequently inhibit women’s full social and economic participation and opportunities.  [A human rights economy centres people and the planet in economic, social, and environmental policies, plans and programmes and aims at ensuring that policies are firmly guided by human rights norms and standards](https://libraryresources.unog.ch/c.php?g=714166&p=5167185#:~:text=The%20human%20rights%20economy&text=It%20intentionally%20aims%20at%20eliminating,sustainable%20growth%20and%20shared%20prosperity.). It intentionally aims at eliminating discrimination and reducing inequalities by investing in economic, social, the right to development and other rights, and dismantling structural barriers and other impediments to equality, justice, sustainable growth and shared prosperity. The panel aims to discuss how economic systems can be transformed through human rights economy to advance women’s rights. |
| **Format:** | The panel discussion will be limited to two hours. The opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by a two-part interactive discussion and by conclusions from the panellists. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for podium interventions, including 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 14 States or observers, 2 national human rights institutions and 4 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have 1.5 minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. The panellists will respond to questions and comments during the remaining time available.  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 could not 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](https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/56/Pages/default.aspx). Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). |
| **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 webcast and made accessible. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided and webcast during the debate. Participants can access live English captioning on the StreamText web page (<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG>) during the event itself. 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>). |
| **Related documents:** | * UN Women, [Why Macroeconomic Policy Matters For Gender Equality](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2015/UNwomen-PolicyBrief04-MacroeconomicPolicyMattersForGenderEquality-en.pdf) * World Bank, [Women Business and the Law 2024](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstreams/9bc44005-2490-41f8-b975-af35cbae8b9a/download) * Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on unpaid care work and women's human rights (2013, [A/68/293](https://undocs.org/A/68/293)) * Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, Thematic report on eliminating discrimination against women in economic and social life with a focus on economic crisis (2014, [A/HRC/26/39](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/26/39)) |