



**MenEngage Alliance**

working with men and boys for gender equality



# MenEngage Alliance at the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women

## Summary Report

### Introduction

The 61st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) was held from 13-24 March 2017, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Almost 4000 representatives from 500 NGOs and 2000 delegates from governmental and non-governmental organizations attended the two-week session of the Commission.

CSW61 was a vital opportunity for those working for the realization of gender equality, human rights and empowerment of all women and girls to share experiences and approaches, learn from each other, gain inspiration, build solidarity and partnerships, and influence government delegates and UN agencies to implement transformative legislative frameworks to advance the human rights of women and girls around the world.

**MenEngage Alliance was represented through the participation of members and partners from Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and South Asia, and the Global Secretariat.** We have compiled this report to share the experience of MenEngage Alliance at CSW61 with our members, partners and friends, bringing in a specific focus on transforming masculinities and engaging men and boys in women's rights and gender justice for all.

While we celebrate MenEngage Alliance representation across the regions, we acknowledge that many people, especially women's human rights defenders – including several of our members, around the world were not able to attend the event, due to visa issues and increased insecurity for international participants traveling to the United States. MenEngage Alliance and its members and partners are deeply concerned by the continued trend of **restricted access to the commission for NGOs** this year. The US Administration's travel ban denied access to the US to seven countries, and many CSOs reported that representatives from a range of countries beyond these seven countries were not able to obtain visas to the US.

Our board member, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), decided not to attend the event in solidarity with those who could not attend. MenEngage Alliance joined many other women's rights and gender justice organizations in setting aside several empty chairs with a 'reserved' sign during our events to draw attention to the missing voices. More than 700 civil society groups, including MenEngage Alliance, signed a [petition](#) during CSW denouncing the lack of NGO access and citing unprecedented issues at

this year's events, including U.N. security staff removing NGO pass holders from the building and NGO participants being prevented from reaching CSW government delegates in U.N. meeting rooms.

At a time when civil society space is shrinking and women's human rights are under attack globally, global spaces are more important than ever. We strongly believe that no political decisions, boundaries, economic accessibility and affordability, or faith should be a barrier for any one, especially women, to be able to access and participate meaningfully in a forum whose primary intention is to advance and bring about equality, peace and justice. In the coming years we urgently need to step up our collective advocacy for an enabling civil society environment and participatory UN system, at CSW and other spaces where norms are set for development and human rights.



## Highlights

**Broad support from governments around the world for progressive approaches to women's economic empowerment**, including equal pay policies, policies to combat violence in the workplace and measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work. Several paragraphs on engaging men and boys were also included in the commission's agreed conclusions, which reference the need to work with men and boys as partners to transform harmful social norms and attitudes. (Page 5)

**Active participation of young people** in this year's CSW. The second annual CSW Youth Forum took place and resulted in a [Youth Declaration](#). The forum included a dedicated panel on engaging boys and young men in gender equality, co-organized by UN Women, MenEngage Alliance, ManUP Campaign, NexGenMen and the Task Force on Young Men and Gender Equality. Several MenEngage Alliance youth representatives from Lebanon, India and the MenEngage Global Secretariat participated in the forum. Another important contribution by young feminists was the [CSW61 Young Feminist Caucus Statement](#). (Page 8)

**MenEngage Alliance together with its members and partners organized a consultation** on "engaging men and boys in social norms change on women's rights and gender justice: to inform a transformative Agenda for Action to achieve the SDGs" to compile recommendations for the High Level Political Forum at the UNGA to be held in July 2017. (Page 11)

**Engaging and successful side events organized by MenEngage Alliance** members and partners such as ABAAD, Breakthrough, Reform-Resource Centre for Men, Women Peacemakers Program, IPPF, Sonke Gender Justice, MenEngage Africa, Care International, UN Women, UNFPA, Permanent Mission of Iceland to the UN in New York and many others. These events put transforming masculinities and engaging men and boys on the agenda of the international community as a strategy which can contribute to women's rights, empowerment and gender justice. (page 15).

# 1. Advocacy and outcome documents

CSW61 focused on “**Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work**”. MenEngage Alliance advocates for progressive policies to increase boys’ and men’s involvement in unpaid care work, and highlighted the links between women’s economic empowerment, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and peace and security.

## MenEngage Alliance key advocacy points

In advance of CSW, MenEngage Alliance shared its key advocacy messages in a written statement, developed and submitted in partnership with Rutgers. We formulated concrete recommendations to strengthen a gender transformative framework for sustainable development and achieve women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work, including:

- **Scale up and institutionalize evidence-based gender-transformative interventions with men and boys** to challenge the social and cultural norms that define the division of labour between men and women and act as a barrier to women’s economic empowerment.
- **Develop and implement policies to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work**, including parental leave and other policies on the part of both government and employers such as subsidized care services.
- **Engage men and boys as allies, partners and secondary beneficiaries in women’s economic empowerment programs** in order to increase the impact of these initiatives.
- **Scale up gender transformative initiatives to engage men and boys in gender-based violence prevention**, by challenging the social norms around masculinity that are at the root of violence.
- **Engage men and boys as partners and allies in the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights**, including through comprehensive sexuality education.
- **Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development**, including, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality.
- **Develop public information campaigns on the need to redistribute unpaid care work** by raising awareness of the benefits of redistributing care-work and providing positive male role models.

We encourage you to use these messages in your advocacy work with governments, UN Agencies and civil society at local, country, regional and global levels.

## Negotiations and Advocacy

**United Nations Secretary General António Guterres** addressed the commission at the opening ceremony and drew attention to the need to engage boys and men in gender equality:

“in a male dominated world, the empowerment of women must be a key priority. Women already have what it takes to succeed. Empowerment is about breaking structural barriers. Men still dominate, even in countries that consider themselves as progressive. **Male chauvinism blocks women – and that hurts everyone.**”

**Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**, in her opening statement, drew attention to the importance of fatherhood and redistributing unpaid care work between men, women, and the state:

“Paid parental leave, more men sharing care work, and safe affordable childcare services together create many possibilities for more women to be active in the economy and enhance the **essential parenting role of men.**”

**The Chairperson of the Commission, Antonio de Aguiar Patriota** stated in his closing remarks:

“Engaging men and boys for gender equality is a crucial part of transforming the existing unequal power relations between women and men. This involves **challenging notions of masculinity and perceptions of manhood which tolerate and perpetuate inequality.** It requires men and boys to speak out against discrimination, abuse and harassment. The commission must continue to call on governments to design and implement national policies and programmes that address the role and responsibility of men and boys and aim to ensure the equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women in caregiving and domestic work.”

MenEngage Alliance members Reform and Sonke Gender Justice were represented on the official government delegations of Norway and South Africa, respectively, and worked with their governments over the course of the negotiations to include strong language on gender transformative approaches to engaging men and boys.



## Agreed Conclusions

The Commission resulted in a set of [agreed conclusions](#) on *women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work*, in which governments commit to strengthening laws and policies to remove structural barriers and encourage women's full participation in the workforce. It recognizes that:

**“Structural barriers to women’s economic empowerment** throughout their life cycle in the changing world of work, including as regards their terms and conditions of employment, recruitment, retention, re-entry, promotion and progression to management or senior positions, retirement and dismissal, can be compounded by **multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in the private and public spheres**, all of which can be exacerbated during economic, financial and humanitarian crises, armed conflict and post-conflict situations, natural and man-made disasters, and refugee and internal displacement settings.” (paragraph 11)

This year’s conclusions contain a number of promising commitments from governments. Governments committed to **strengthening laws to end violence and harassment** in the workplace, and to implement **equal pay policies**. The conclusions recognise that women’s ability to control their bodies and



exercise their **sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights** is essential for economic independence and empowerment, and call for gender-responsive strategies to increase women’s resilience to **climate change**.

We are pleased to see that the commission recognized a key advocacy point for MenEngage Alliance: the important contributions by **civil society, including women’s and community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders and girls’ and youth-led organizations** to women’s economic empowerment and called on governments to:

**“promote a safe and enabling environment for all civil society actors and increase resources** and support for grass-roots, local, national, regional and global women’s and civil society organizations so that they can fully contribute to women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work (paragraph 40zz)”.

The conclusions also call for significantly increased **investment to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality**. They highlight that additional funds should be mobilized from a range of sources, call on governments to combat the illicit financial flows and encourage developed country governments to fulfil their official development assistance commitments.

For the first time, the Commission recognized the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as it examined the focus area of **indigenous women’s empowerment**. The Commission urged governments to respect and protect indigenous women’s traditional and ancestral knowledge, and address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence that they face.

## Transforming unequal power relations and engaging men and boys

The conclusions place considerable emphasis on the engagement of men and boys and transforming unequal power relations. They encourage governments and the private sector to:

“Fully engage men and boys as **strategic partners and allies** in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by designing and implementing national policies and programmes that address the roles and responsibilities of men and boys, including the **equal sharing of responsibilities in caregiving and domestic work**, and encourage men and boys to engage fully, as agents and beneficiaries of change, with the aim of eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls in both the public and private spheres, by understanding and addressing **the root causes of gender inequality, such as unequal power relations, gender stereotypes and negative social norms** that view women and girls as subordinate to men and boys, as a contribution to women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work.” (paragraph 40bb)

The importance of redistributing unpaid care-work, between women and men and to the state, is particularly stressed, as a means of contributing to the economic empowerment of women and girls. The conclusions call on governments to:

“Strengthen laws and regulatory frameworks that promote the reconciliation and sharing of work and family responsibilities for women and men, including by designing, implementing and promoting **family-responsive legislation, policies and services, such as parental and other leave schemes**, increased flexibility in working arrangements, support for breastfeeding mothers, development of infrastructure and technology, and the provision of services, including affordable, accessible and quality childcare and care facilities for children and other dependents, and **promoting men’s equitable responsibilities with respect to household work as fathers and caregivers**, which create an enabling environment for women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work” (paragraph 40i).

The conclusions recognize the **social significance of fatherhood** and urge governments to introduce **paid parental, including paternity, leave and promote men’s use of such leave**. Language on families was also constructive in that it implied the reality of a **diverse range of family structures**. A relevant addition this year is a paragraph calling for an **end to occupational segregation** by empowering women and men to enter professions dominated by other sexes. A section on **preventing violence against women** also references the importance of the engagement of men and boys, particularly community leaders.

For a complete overview of language from the agreed conclusions on engaging men and boys from this year’s CSW and previous years, see this [mapping document](#) we compiled in order to support the advocacy efforts of our members and partners.

## Critical reflections on this year's policy outcomes

**MenEngage Alliance and our members support the commitments made by governments at this year's CSW to advance women's economic empowerment and urge them to act on these commitments and fully implement the recommendations of the Commission.** We are pleased with the recognition of the need to place engaging men and boys within the broader context of transforming gender norms and stereotypes, as well as the overall sense of support and enthusiasm for this approach throughout the official proceedings and parallel events this year.

As CSWs proceed, we observe a gradual shift from the **technical address of merely engaging of men and boys towards more gender-transformative language, consistent with the need to address root causes and to transform social norms, power, privileges, and stereotypes, in particular related to masculinities or manhood.** We noted contextual framing addressing the need to transform social systems at large, as a central framework for the attainment of gender equality, since gender injustices are expressed through various forms of dominant masculinities and require a shift in patriarchal power structures. In such, we were happy to observe the advancement of this positioning at CSW61.

As we move forward, we will continue to recommend an overall framing which highlights the need to address root causes and social systems, such as in how patriarchy affects everyone, but in different ways with women and girls continuing to face significant and disproportionately high levels of gender injustice, and men and boys, who are both privileged and damaged by patriarchy, but are rarely aware of that fact. This focus provides clear context for the work of engaging men and boys within the broader gender justice movement - as an important strategy in

dismantling these structures, beliefs and attitudes.

Another point worth noting was the adoption into official language of the phrasing "men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change **in the eliminations of all form of violence towards women and girls**", with the latter being key to its inclusion, as the framing suggests that the work of allying men and boys to gender equality can be an instrumental strategy in the overarching target of eliminating gender injustices towards women and girls, and not merely their own personal gain.

However, there were also notable gaps in the conclusions. The paragraph on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, as in previous years, does not acknowledge **sexual rights**. References to **comprehensive sexuality education, sexual orientation and gender identities, and women's right to safe abortion** are all absent. The commission also failed to name specific groups of women and girls who are marginalised throughout the world, whether because of race, ethnicity, caste, class, (dis)ability, age, socio-economic status, HIV status or sexual orientation. **It did not address the global economic, financial and trade structures that exacerbate inequalities within and between countries or the harmful impacts of globalisation that result in the exploitation of female workers.** Another problematic element is the sovereignty clauses that some more regressive countries, including the US, have managed to add, which refer to the importance of national realities and policy space in the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is clear that continued advocacy around these more 'controversial' issues will be crucial in the coming years.

## 2. Youth participation

### Second CSW Youth Forum and Declaration

Building on the success of last year's first CSW Youth Forum, the second CSW Youth Forum was held this year in advance of the main negotiations and the formal CSW event. Nearly 700 young people, aged 10-35 years, gathered at the UN headquarters to share their stories of activism, ideas for a gender just world and urge world leaders to listen to their voices and needs. The forum was organized by UN Women, World YWCA, WAGGGS and UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development's Working Group on Youth and Gender Equality. MenEngage Alliance is a member of the Working Group and co-chairs the Taskforce on Young Men and Gender Equality.

The two days were jam packed with plenary sessions, interactive world café sessions, creative break out workshops and musical performances. The forum opened with UN Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri who told the participants "let me remind every one of you that your voice matters. Use it! This

is your world, this is your space, demand it, claim it, enjoy it, live it and transform it!".

Day One emphasized young women's leadership and young women's economic empowerment. [CEDAW for Youth was launched](#), a publication by UN Women that supports knowledge of why CEDAW is important to youth and describes its impact in advancing gender equality and human rights for women and girls around the world, including young women and girls.

On Day Two, engaging young men in gender equality was addressed in a panel featuring male youth activists from around the world, including MenEngage Alliance representative Musa Hove, of SafAIDS and MenEngage Alliance Zimbabwe. Panellists **encouraged boys and young men to take the spaces in they already have in society and transform them into feminist spaces.**





The forum discussed why intergenerational partnerships are critical to achieve gender equality and sustainable development. It was stressed that all generations must work together, bringing their unique skills and experience, if we are to achieve the SDGs, and must work to combat generational assumptions and stereotypes. In addition to the plenary sessions, there was an array of breakout sessions, including one co-organized by MenEngage Alliance with WAGGGS and Sayfty.com on the prevention of Violence against Women, and another with ManUP and NextGenMen on working with young men and boys on gender justice and healthy masculinity.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Forum presented its own outcome document [The Youth Declaration](#). The Youth Declaration was developed based on the inputs from the sessions and various of participants over the course of the two days. The declaration encompassed a range of themes including women's empowerment in the changing world of work and calls for meaningful participation of young people in all their diversities in political decision-making, investment in youth-led organizations and interreligious and intergenerational dialogue for a gender responsive and youth friendly implementation of the SDGs. It is a progressive and inclusive document, recognizing the rights of SOGIGESC persons and the intersection of multiple forms of oppressions, and rejecting the gender binary.

The declaration emphasizes the importance of tackling social norms and harmful stereotypes and the engagement to men and boys to support the leadership and empowerment of women and girls:

**“Actively engaging all young men, male-identifying, and trans-masculine people is a necessity to promote the rights and equal standing thereof in supporting work toward gender equality, human rights, and economic empowerment of young women, female-identifying, trans-feminine, and gender and/or sex diverse people through activism and advocacy in all spaces.”**

At the closing panel, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka remarked, "The second year of the Youth CSW is changing what UN Women is all about, for the better. You are the living proof that diversity is strength. This is the feminist movement of the future."

The full video recording of the Youth Forum can be accessed [here](#).





### Young feminist statement

Another important contribution from young people was the [written statement](#) by the Young Feminist Caucus. The statement draws attention to the linkages between economics, bodily autonomy, sexuality, climate change, development, and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that negatively impact women and girls. It urges governments to place human rights at the centre of any youth agenda:

“Young women and girls should not be instrumentalized as a tool for economic development; our human rights must be central to any discussion involving us and our economic empowerment.”

The statement also calls on partners and allies, including men, boys, older generations, faith and traditional leaders, to support diverse youth-led and women-led movements and organizations in the fight for gender equality and economic justice.

### 3. Consultation “Engaging men and boys in social norms change on women’s rights and gender justice – to inform a transformative Agenda for Action to achieve the SDGs”

**Thursday, 16 March**

**Organized by:** MenEngage Alliance in partnership with UN Women and UNFPA and in collaboration with ABAAD, Breakthrough, CARE, IDS, IPPF, Promundo, Rutgers, Sonke Gender Justice, and Women Peacemakers Program.

Gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment and rights are a cross-cutting concern throughout Agenda 2030, and concrete targets have been set in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). MenEngage Alliance held a consultation during CSW in order to explore **how gender transformative approaches to engaging men and boys can contribute to achieving crucial goals and targets set by Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.**

This consultation aimed to collect promising practices, risks and obstacles, and program and policy recommendations from CSW participants, for the development of a **comprehensive Agenda for Action** that is inclusive of engaging men and boys and transforming masculinities to contribute to achieving the SDGs, in particular those that relate to women’s rights and gender justice.

Below are some of the key recommendations emerging from the opening panel and the six thematic world café sessions, which will form the key inputs for MenEngage Alliance’s work as we further develop our agenda and strategy to support the implementation and achievement of the SDGs at local levels:

#### **Introductions and opening panel**

- **Joni van de Sand of MenEngage Alliance** opened the consultation by welcoming participants on behalf of the

Alliance and drawing attention to the [High Level Political Fora](#) on Sustainable Development, as a key advocacy opportunity to influence governments to commit to integrate gender transformative approaches that address harmful masculinities and engage men and boys, as stakeholders and allies to women and girls, as part of their national plans for the realization of the SDGs.

- **Leyla Sharafi of UNFPA** stressed the importance of different groups working together on the implementation of the SDGs. She shared that UNFPA are working to incorporate work with men and boys and a focus on social norms change in a more systemic way in their next strategic plan and to strengthen their partnership with MenEngage Alliance.
- **Fionna Smyth of UN Women** highlighted that while many progressive international policy frameworks exist, there is need to address the barriers that are stopping these from being implemented. She stressed the need to work with individual men as well as on changing systems and institutions.
- **Bandana Rana of the CEDAW committee** drew attention to CEDAW article 10, which deals with tackling stereotypical roles of men and women, and highlighted that CEDAW, as a legally binding convention, can be an important tool for gender transformative work that engages men and boys.



- **Merle Gosewinkel of Women Peacemakers Program (WPP)** reminded us that work with men and boys must not be done in isolation from work with women and girls, and must be implemented from a feminist perspective that seeks to challenge patriarchal systems.
- **Itumeleng Komanyane of MenEngage Africa and Sonke Gender Justice** stressed the need to work with men at all levels, from individual and relationships to community and policy level. She added that it is important for civil society groups to work with policymakers on their own gender attitudes and provide training on key issues.

### Eliminating VAW & GBV

- Implement policies and programs that seek to address the **root causes of all forms of violence including social norms, stereotypes and beliefs and attitudes towards power, privileges, stemming from structural injustices**

### and patriarchal power structures.

Providing context around the social systems at large as an overall framework for ending all violence towards women and girls. This violence is manifested in many ways including sexual violence, institutional violence, economic violence, homophobic violence and violence between men, but by providing a model for combating the root causes, we **avoid separating these approaches into silos.**

- Carry out audits on laws relating to GBV that are not properly implemented and develop interventions that **address the social norms that act as a barrier to their implementation.** Encourage governments to see their role in social norms transformation, not just policies and laws.
- Carry out **gender audits of military, law enforcement, and justice and security sectors** to assess the gender dimensions of these institutions and how they perpetuate violence.

## Unpaid care & women's economic empowerment

- At state level, implement laws supportive of men's caregiving, including **paid, non-transferable parental leave, and childcare provisions.**
- **Work through the health system to change social norms around caregiving,** for example by involving men more in pre and post-natal care, and using these visits as an entry point into fatherhood programs etc.
- Introduce **caring as a key competency in education systems** and promote diverse job skills for all.
- Work with the media to promote **non stereotypical, caring depictions of men.**

## SRHR for all

- Create **youth-friendly health services, and spaces for peer-to-peer**

**conversations** and learning between boys and girls in order to break taboos around sexuality.

- Implement **Comprehensive Sexuality Education** in schools, that provides accurate information in addition to a focus on **gender, masculinities and healthy relationships.**
- **Target men in maternal health programs,** as an entry point to encourage them to be more involved in their partner's health as well as their own.

## Peace & active non-violence

- Provide **psychosocial support to men in conflict and post-conflict situations,** particularly ex-combatants, in order to deconstruct ideas of masculinity and train them on active non-violence and alternative masculinities.
- **Contextualize work on masculinities,** so it is not seen as something externally



imposed like the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

- **Identify and work with male allies in political systems** to support the increased participation of women in political and peacebuilding processes.
- **Address militarism as a cause and consequence of patriarchy** and work to redefine security and protection towards a human security model.

### Youth leadership

- Work with youth at **different stages throughout their lives to address age-specific needs**, including in schools and universities.
- **Incorporate education on gender and human rights into education systems**, including through Comprehensive Sexuality Education and revising curricula and textbooks.
- Provide young men and women with not only knowledge on gender issues but also the **skills and tools to take action and leadership roles**.
- **Involve youth in the implementation of the SDGs at all levels**, from local to global, and prioritize funding to youth-focused and youth-led organizations.

### Accountability and confronting backlash

- **Work towards a common definition of accountability in the men and masculinities field**, and work to address both backlash to women's rights and empowerment and towards engaging men and boys work.
- **Put women and girls at the centre of SDG implementation and ensure meaningful participation of CSOs and women's rights organizations in the accountability process.** CSOs have an important role to play in promoting successes and best practices and naming and shaming non-compliant states.
- **Indicators have to be nuanced** to respond to inequalities within what seems like a homogenous setting. Indicators are not the only measure of accountability, we also need to **find effective ways of measuring social norms**.

MenEngage Alliance will build on these recommendations to develop of a comprehensive Action Agenda on the engagement of men and boys in social norms transformation for the achievement of the SDGs, and Goal 5 in particular. We would like to thank everyone that took part in the consultation for your valuable insights and a constructive discussion.

## 4. Side events

### Moving from Rhetoric to Accountability - Work with Men and Boys for the Abandonment of FGM

#### Monday 13 March

**Organized by:** MenEngage Africa, UNFPA

**Panellists:** Bafana Khumalo, Sonke Gender Justice  
Nafissatou Diop, UNFPA  
Seynabou Tall, UNFPA  
Koshuma Mtengeti, Children's Dignity Forum/MenEngage Africa

Panellists at this event shared their approaches and strategies for engaging men and boys to end FGM. They emphasized the importance of tackling the issue both through legislative reform, and at the level of community norms. A disconnect was identified between men's actual support for the practice and women's perception of this support, and therefore the need for open dialogue between men and women, and between generations was seen as crucial. It was acknowledged that laws prohibiting FGM can have counterproductive effects, making it difficult to measure its prevalence, and that laws should be used not only for punishment but also for advocacy and education around the practice.

Panellists proposed a holistic and multi sectoral strategy involving sensitization of girls and boys, youth engagement, work with communities and religious leaders, campaigns in which prominent male public figures come out against the practice, and capacity building of law enforcement personnel to deal with the issue. Participants also highlighted the need for more data on men's and boys' attitudes to FGM and advocacy tools for engaging men in this issue.

### Strengthening civil society and government partnerships to scale up gender-transformative approaches to engaging men and boys

#### Wednesday 15 March

**Organized by:** UNFPA, Promundo and MenEngage Alliance

**Panellists:** Gary Barker, Promundo  
Urvashi Ghandi, Breakthrough  
Inga Dora Petursdóttir, UN Women, Iceland  
Nigina Abaszade, UNFPA  
Joni van de Sand, MenEngage Alliance

The publication [“Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Strengthening Civil Society Organizations and Government Partnerships to Scale Up Approaches”](#) was launched at this side event. This panel discussed the importance of scaling up and institutionalizing the engagement with men and boys as a key avenue for promoting gender-transformative approaches at the structural level. Panellists shared examples of successful CSO-government partnerships such as Promundo Brazil's work to embed engaging men and boys approaches into the national system, Breakthrough's Bell Bajao (Ring the Bell) campaign which has been taken up by the Government of India and several other organizations and agencies in the region as well as the UN Headquarters, the partnership



of the government of Iceland with the HeForShe campaign, and the UNFPA coordinated Eastern Europe and Central Asia MenEngage Platform.

The importance of sharing good practices, while avoiding copy-pasting programs without adapting them to the local context was emphasized, as well as the need to be accountable to and partner with women's rights organizations while implementing such collaborations. Participants also proposed integrating gender transformative approaches into education curricula, building alliances of CSOs, and working with decision makers on their own gender attitudes.



## Women in the Workspace: How Violence Curbs Economic Empowerment

**Wednesday 15 March**

**Organized by:** Breakthrough India, Gender at Work, Azad Foundation

**Panellists:** Ritty Lukose, New York University  
Aruna Rao, Gender at Work  
Urvashi Gandhi, Breakthrough  
Dolon Ganguly, Azad Foundation

This panel began by establishing the paradoxical fact that while India's economy is growing, women's workforce participation is in

fact declining, and how increased access to economic opportunities for women does not necessarily translate into increased agency. Violence, as well as fertility and social and cultural factors, was identified as a key factor explaining this fact. Panellists highlighted that in addition to providing skills training for women, it is necessary to uncover and challenge social norms in the workplace. Breakthrough presented their project focusing on women in the garment sector and their three-tier approach of working with management, workers and their families and the community at large to promote and safe and inclusive workplace.

Participants emphasized the importance of providing holistic training to women including on their rights and of building networks and support systems for women workers. It was stressed that inclusion of women in the workplace is not a positive development in and of itself, and that working conditions need to be addressed and the work sector transformed in order to include women.

## Engaging Boys and Men in Caregiving: How to Challenge Gender-Biased Choices in Education and Work?

**Wednesday 15 March**

**Organized by:** Reform Resource Centre for men

**Panellists:** Laila Bokhari, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Norway  
Ole B. Nordfjell, Reform Resource Centre  
Anthony Keedi, ABAAD  
Kari Nyheim Solbrække, University of Oslo  
Dean Peacock, Sonke Gender Justice

This panel addressed the question: How can we work to get both women and men to realize their potential and to obtain societies where all genders are invested in caring for children, the elderly, and the sick – both in private and professional capacities? Experts from Norway, Lebanon and South Africa shared their experiences of engaging men and boys in care work and challenging occupational segregation.

They discussed the need to encourage more men to enter caring professions such as nursing and childcare, and to provide paid parental leave and incentives for fathers to take it. Panellists highlighted the importance of challenging social norms around the value of care work and the state's responsibility to introduce legislation to encourage men's caregiving, as well as in education around gender stereotypes. The change or reversal of traditional gender roles in refugee situations was discussed as well as the need to provide psychosocial support to refugee men in order to readjust their mind-set to view this change in a positive light and embrace their new role in care work.



### Care Policies in the Agenda 2030: Advancing the Triple R Framework to Recognize, Reduce, and Redistribute Unpaid Care Work

#### Wednesday 15 March

**Organized by:** The Governments of Argentina, Costa Rica, Kenya, Iceland, the Philippines and Switzerland  
In collaboration with UN Women, ILO, OECD, IFAD And Promundo

**Panellists:** Emanuela Pozzan, ILO  
Maria Hartl, IFAD  
Gary Barker, Promundo

This side event discussed the various aspects of unpaid care work and shared strategies and practical approaches to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work in order to advance the implementation of Target 5.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was pointed out that inequality in the distribution of unpaid care work is not only between the genders, but also between higher and lower income groups, and thus redistribution is needed on different levels, between women and men, the family and the society and different social classes and groups. Participants shared a range of strategies to advance the Triple R framework such as time use surveys, investments in rural infrastructure development, accessible public childcare services, flexible working arrangements and ensuring access to social protection and labour rights for domestic workers.

Panellists also acknowledged that to achieve the redistribution of unpaid care work a cultural shift is needed, and men need to engage more pro-actively in their care role. It was suggested to involve men around pregnancy and birth, as an entry point into care work, and for the health sector to support this. The need for countries to have national plans and targets for redistribution of the care work was stressed, with incentives, such as parental leave and parent training among others, to nudge men and boys to do closer to 50 percent of the daily unpaid care work in their homes. The business and corporate world can support this by supporting a better work-life balance and offering specific incentives for men who tend not to use flexible work arrangements as much as women do.

## A Strategy Session to Confront the Global Surge to the Right

**Thursday 16 March**

**Organized by:** MADRE, AWID, Proceso de Comunidades Negras, NoVo Foundation

**Panellists:** Yifat Susskind, MADRE  
Hakima Abbas, AWID  
Charo Mina Rojas,  
Kavita N. Ramdas, (formerly)  
Ford Foundation and Global  
Fund for Women

This session was a strategic exchange among women's rights advocates to offer ideas and strategies to navigate the global political landscape tilting dramatically to the right and the increased backlash against women's human rights. Panellists discussed the surge to the right in diverse contexts such as the US, India and Colombia and highlighted the No Borders on Gender Justice Initiative a collaborative effort to combat xenophobic and exclusionary right-wing policies. They called on the audience to challenge the normalization of oppression and build stronger alliances by facing up to our own privilege. They discussed ways seize the opportunity of the surge of activism that followed the US election, and to move out of a defensive position and put forward a compelling narrative that competes with the right.



The importance of confronting the fundamental injustice of our global economic capitalist system was repeatedly emphasised, as well as the need for cross-issue work and global movement building. Panellists laid out some specific strategies to advance our rights activism, such as ongoing dialogues with policymakers and donors despite setbacks that may emerge, and community-based organizing to deepen community empowerment to demand rights.

## Launch event of the Barbershop Toolbox

**Thursday 16 March**

**Organized by:** Government of Iceland, UN Women

**Panellists:**

- Thorsteinn Viglundsson, Minister of Social Affairs and Equal Rights in Iceland
- Elizabeth Nyamayaro, UN Women
- Gary Barker, Promundo
- Joni van de Sand, MenEngage Alliance
- Tom Stranger, co-author of South of Forgiveness (video address)
- Inga Dóra Pétursdóttir, Icelandic National Committee for UN Women
- Ásdís Ólafsdóttir, Icelandic National Committee for UN Women

This event launched the [Barbershop Toolbox](#), which provides men, as allies with, with the tools to address gender inequality and become agents of change. The tool includes resources from MenEngage members, including Program H of Promundo and Program Ra of ABAAD, as well as MenEngage Alliance's Accountability exercises. Joni van de Sand represented MenEngage on the panel, and emphasized the importance of partnerships with and accountability to women's rights movements – outlining what accountability means to



MenEngage Alliance. She also highlighted the need to mobilize male leaders for women's rights and gender justice, and that the Barbershops have potential to do so, for example with Ambassadors to the UN, by having a personal conversation on gender-relations in their lives, and linking those insights to their political roles as agents of change.

## Supporting Men and Women to Share Unpaid Caring: The Most Powerful Way to Increase Women's Economic Empowerment?

**Thursday 16 March**

**Organized by:** Promundo, OECD

**Panellists:** Monika Queisser, OECD  
 Yiping Cai, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)  
 Gary Barker, Promundo  
 Jillian Bartlett, National Union of Government & Federated Workers of Trinidad & Tobago

This event was a lively discussion on how we can empower women economically by supporting men to share caring responsibilities, including childcare. The introduction of paid, non-transferable parental leave policies of adequate length was identified as a key strategy, as well as tackling the deeply ingrained social norms held by both men and women around care work. The role of the private sector in fostering a caring culture and implementing

flexible working policies was stressed, in addition to the responsibility of the state to provide affordable and accessible childcare services.

Panellists highlighted the need to collect systemic data on unpaid care work, the potential of using income support programs and the health sector as entry points for men's caregiving programs and the role of trade unions in transforming attitudes around care work.



## Boys and Young Men for Gender Justice and Social Change

**Friday, 17 March**

**Organized by:** NextGenMen, MenEngage Alliance, ManUP Campaign, UN Women and Taskforce on Young Men and Gender Equality/InterAgency Network on Youth and Development's Working Group on Youth & Gender Equality

**Panellists:** Urvashi Ghandi, Breakthrough  
 Richard Castillo, Man Up Campaign  
 Shane Strassberg, School of Visual Arts  
 Hizbullah Baryal, Youth for Change and Development and Man Up Campaign  
 Jason Tan de Bibiana, Next Gen Men  
 Jacob Thomas, Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality

This panel explored youth leadership in addressing issues of women's economic empowerment, women's rights and gender equality. Panellists shared their work with young men and boys in diverse contexts in the US, Afghanistan, India and Australia. Urvashi Ghandi presented on Breakthrough's 'Share your Story' campaign encouraging mothers to share their experience of sexual harassment with their sons. Shane Strassberg presented his project that created a smart object to allow young men to experience street harassment, and Jason Tan de Bibiana described his experiences of setting up Next Gen Men. Jacob Thomas emphasized that gender is not binary, and that work with young men and boys should be inclusive of people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities.

The importance of creating safe spaces for young men to explore their ideas of masculinity starting from a young age, integrating gender into school curricula and working with youth over a sustained period and at different stages in their development were highlighted.

## How Counterterrorism Financing Affects Women's Rights Organizing and Gender Equality Worldwide

### Friday 17 March

**Organized by:** Women Peacemakers Program, Duke University-School of Law and ABAAD

**Panellists:** Isabelle Geuskens, Women Peacemakers Program  
Jayne Huckerby, International Human Rights Clinic, Duke University  
Anthony Keedi, ABAAD  
Louise Allen, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security  
Mai E'liemat, Al-Hayat Center

This panel discussion focused on the findings of the Duke IHRC-WPP [joint publication](#) highlighting how countering terrorism finance measures cause resource and other challenges

for women's rights activists. Panellists explained how, a direct and indirect result of these rules, women's rights organizations have lost critical access to resources, as well as the ability to fully use banking facilities, all of which circumscribe how, where, and in some cases, even if, women's rights organizations can undertake their core work on mobilizing human rights, gender equality, and advancing the women, peace, and security agenda. It was acknowledged that this mainly affects small, grassroots women's rights organizations who are often refused funds in favor of larger INGOs, and in some cases counterterrorism is used by governments to legitimize the restriction of civil society space.

Panellists pointed to the need for increased dialogue between CSOs and governments, embedding gender more firmly into international security frameworks and advocacy directed at the UN Security Council for counterterrorism strategies that comply with human rights. It was suggested that civil society has a role to play in documenting cases of this happening, and drawing attention to the incoherence and counter-productivity of these rules.

## Breaking stereotypes to transform social norms on 'women and work':

### Monday 20 March

**Organized by:** UN Women, Church of Sweden, Musawah, MenEngage Alliance, Tearfund, Muslims for Progressive Values, Bahai Faith, WCC, World YWCA, and Rozaria Memorial Trust

**Panellists:** Lopa Banerjee, UN Women  
Marwa Sharafeldin, Musawa  
Bafana Khumalo, Sonke Gender Justice  
Rabia Waqar, Norwegian Church Aid  
Anthony Keedi, ABBAAD  
Inga Dóra Pétursdóttir, Iceland National Committee for UN Women

## Role of men and boys, and faith actors in achieving sustainable change for gender equality and women's economic empowerment

This event used a Ted-EX format as a way to share stories, to create the opportunity for a broader engagement with the audience on working with faith-based approaches for women's rights and gender justice. Lopa Banerjee from UN Women spoke on the importance of working with boys and men and people of faith to transform notions around unpaid care work and in achieving the SDGs. The panellists presented on the importance of challenging existing and rooted stereotypes around the role of women in society and the nature of their work, in order to transform social norms in a progressive, rights-based affirmative discourse on gender equality. The panellists proposed a positive and inspiring socio-cultural narrative on women and work through the collaboration of men and boys, faith actors, youth and other progressive civil society constituencies.



Marwa from Musawa shared the inspiring story of her work around reframing religious doctrine in line with contemporary notions of justice, equality and the lived realities of women and work in Muslim families today. Bafana from MenEngage Africa shared his personal story of achieving norm change through faith initiatives and the engagement of men and boys. Anthony from ABAAD Lebanon shared his experience from one of ABAAD's projects to break

stereotypes through the engagement of men and boys in Lebanon. Rabia from Norwegian Church Aid Pakistan shared about and the promising practice from Pakistan on Women and work and faith.



## Challenging harmful social norms and stereotypes to empower girls and young women

**Tuesday 21 March**

**Organized by:** WAGGGS, Government of Germany, UN Women and UN IANYD's Working Group Youth and Gender Equality

**Panellists:** Andreas Glossner, Vice Chair of the WEOG in the CSW Bureau, Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN  
Ravi Karkara, UN Women  
Danae Fredas Toledo, WAGGGS youth delegate, National Coordinator for the WAGGGS Stop the Violence Campaign, Chile  
Laxman Belbase, MenEngage Alliance

This official side event discussed the importance of the economic empowerment of girls and young women as a human right with a focus on the underlying systemic constraints to gender equality and economic empowerment. Panellists highlighted the importance of challenging the societal attitudes that

normalize violence and harassment or norms around choice of school subjects that undermine girls' and young women's future opportunities.

Andreas Glossner touched upon the role that all governments should play in addressing harmful social norms and stereotypes by instituting transformative policies and strategies as directed by progressive international human rights instruments. Ravi Karkara presented on the connections between economic empowerment and social norms and how UN Women is planning to address these pervasive norms. He further touched upon the importance working from a lifecycle approach and on the strong and transformative role men

can as fathers play in creating equality at family level. Danae Fredas Toledo presented on the [Voices against Violence curriculum](#) that WAGGGS developed in partnership with UN Women.

Laxman Belbase from MenEngage Alliance presented about the importance of working with boys and young men from an early age when they are growing to developing gender norms and values, and developing leadership skills and capacities. He stressed the importance of connecting individual changes to the transformation of structural barriers that foster gender inequality and injustice, so that these transformations are sustainable.

## Contact Information

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