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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 7 July 2025

59/18. Accelerating efforts to achieve women's economic empowerment

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming all women's equal enjoyment of human rights relevant to their economic empowerment, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

Recalling all relevant Human Rights Council resolutions, and agreed conclusions and political declarations of the Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling also that gender equality has been recognized in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, as well as in the Pact for the Future,¹ and that its inclusion and the empowerment of all women and girls are fundamental to all goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recognizing the importance of relevant International Labour Organization standards related to the realization of women's right to work and rights at work, which are critical for the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, recalling the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization and the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and noting the importance of their effective implementation,

Reaffirming the recognition in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in the economy are vital to the achievement of sustainable development and

¹ See General Assembly resolution 79/1.



to significantly enhancing economic growth and productivity, and the commitment to enable women's equal access to decision-making processes and leadership,

Expressing deep concern that one in every ten women lives in extreme poverty and that, if current trends continue, by 2030 more than 342 million women and girls will be affected,

Underlining that half of humanity – more than 3.9 billion women – face legal barriers affecting their economic participation and that women are 30 per cent less likely to participate in the paid labour market than men and are disproportionately concentrated in informal and subsistence work and as contributing family members,

Noting with concern that, globally, women earn 80 per cent of what men earn and that women spend around 3.2 times more time per day on unpaid care work than men,

Recognizing that, globally, the gross domestic product growth rate could increase significantly if every country achieved gender equality and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in decent work, and recognizing also that the economic and social losses owing to a lack of progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls are significant,

Recognizing also that women and girls are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change, in particular with regard to their economic empowerment, and stressing the importance of the participation of women, including older women, Indigenous women and girls, in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policy,

Deeply concerned that girls and women often do not have the same opportunities as boys and men to participate in and learn about the social, economic and political functioning of society, and that they are often directly or indirectly discouraged from taking part in decision-making processes owing to, inter alia, deep-rooted gender stereotypes, as well as deeply entrenched social norms, structures and expectations of gender roles that perpetuate unequal power relations, discriminatory attitudes, behaviours, norms, perceptions and customs, and disregard for their dignity, bodily integrity and autonomy,

Noting with concern that pervasive ageist and ableist attitudes, disproportionately affecting older women, and the disproportionate distribution of unpaid care work throughout the course of their lives undermine their access to decent work, to lifelong learning opportunities and to pension and financial services, thereby deepening their economic exclusion and increasing the gender pay gap with age, especially for women close to or after retirement age,

Recognizing that access to land, water, seeds and other natural resources is an increasing challenge for women living in rural, remote and maritime areas, and stressing the importance of improving access to productive resources, including rural finance, digital tools and climate-resilient infrastructure, and investment in appropriate rural development,

Recalling that gender inequalities have a detrimental impact on all women's and girls' enjoyment of rights, including the right to development, and that structural barriers to gender equality and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination persist in economies and labour markets worldwide, which impose greater constraints on women than on men in balancing work and family responsibilities, and that those structural barriers need to be eliminated in order for women to be able to participate fully, equally and meaningfully in society and in the world of work,

Recalling also that special protection should be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth, during which time working mothers should be accorded paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits, while concerned by discriminatory practices by employers, such as denial of employment and dismissal due to pregnancy or breast-feeding, or requiring proof of contraceptive use, as well as barriers for pregnant women, women on maternity leave or women re-entering the labour market after childbearing,

Recognizing that the establishment of nationally defined gender-responsive social protection floors is a key path to facilitating the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, and that social protection floors, when used as a baseline, have the potential to reduce

poverty and inequality by promoting basic income security, decent work, equal pay for work of equal value and universal access to healthcare and basic services, and poverty eradication strategies, such as affordable energy access, digital and financial inclusion and resilient remittance systems,

Deeply concerned that, owing to gender stereotypes and negative social norms, care and support work as well as domestic work, whether paid or unpaid, is performed either solely or largely by women and girls, including migrants, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and older persons, thereby exacerbating existing structural inequalities,

Recognizing that the sharing of family responsibilities creates an enabling family environment for women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, which contributes to development, and that women and men make a significant contribution to the welfare of their family,

Expressing concern that the difficulties, intensity and gendered distribution of unpaid care and support work create and perpetuate inequalities in the enjoyment of human rights, contribute to the perpetuation of the feminization of poverty and hinder gender equality, which prevents the full enjoyment of human rights, constitutes a barrier to women's full, equal and meaningful involvement in the labour market and to women's economic opportunities, autonomy and entrepreneurial activities, restricts women's ability to participate in decision-making processes and to exercise leadership positions and poses significant constraints on all women's and girls' education and training,

Recognizing that gender stereotypes about the role of women and girls underpin many of the barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of access to at least 12 years of quality education, and that stereotypes are also perpetuated in school curricula and materials,

Noting with concern the underrepresentation of women and girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and the fact that a gender digital divide persists in girls' and women's access to and use of information and communications technology, including in education, employment and other areas of economic and social development, both in urban and rural areas, and emphasizing the importance of affordable digital public infrastructure and digital skills development in closing the divide,

Reaffirming that the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is crucial for gender equality and the empowerment of women, including their economic empowerment and their full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in public and private life, and that the causes, experiences and consequences of poverty can have a disproportionate impact on women and girls and that they may have limited or no access to safe, available, affordable, accessible, quality and inclusive healthcare services, including those related to mental health, maternal and neonatal health, and menstrual health and hygiene management, and underlining the need to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education,

Deploring violence against women and girls in all its forms, in public and private spaces, whether online or offline, and recognizing that these forms of violence are major impediments to the achievement of women's economic empowerment and their social and economic development, often resulting in, inter alia, absenteeism, missed promotions, job losses, exploitation and the loss of property, thereby hampering women's ability to enter, advance and remain in the labour market and to retain a livelihood and sources of income,

Acknowledging that further reform of the international financial architecture is an important step in mobilizing additional public and private financing, including by reducing the cost of remittances, strengthening concessional financing and scaling up inclusive digital infrastructure, particularly for developing countries, reducing inequalities and allowing States to prioritize the mobilization and allocation of resources to uphold economic, social and cultural rights, including those relevant to women's economic empowerment,

1. *Stresses* that the realization of women's and girls' equal enjoyment of human rights relevant to their economic empowerment is crucial to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 5, 8 and 10 for increasing the agency and autonomy

of women, as well as of girls in accordance with their age and maturity, and their full, equal and meaningful participation in society;

2. *Reaffirms* that the right to education is a multiplier right that enables the agency and autonomy of women, as well as of girls in accordance with their age and maturity, and specifically their right to take part in the conduct of public affairs as well as in economic, social and cultural life, and to fully, equally and meaningfully participate in the decision-making processes that shape society;

3. *Urges* all States to take effective action to remove barriers to women's economic empowerment by:

(a) Reviewing, repealing and eliminating laws, policies and practices that negatively affect the human rights of all women relevant to their economic empowerment, including discriminatory laws, policies, practices or customs, in accordance with international human rights obligations;

(b) Ensuring women's full autonomy in economic decision-making, by ensuring equal rights and eliminating all forms of de jure and de facto economic discrimination, including with regard to access to ownership and control over productive resources, legal capacity, pay, taxation, economic and social models, and regulations and practices that subordinate women as economic actors;

(c) Providing full and equal access to formal financial services, financial resources and financial products for all women throughout the course of their lives;

(d) Enacting or strengthening and enforcing laws and regulations or other appropriate measures that uphold the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the public and private sectors as a critical measure to eliminate the gender pay and pension gap;

(e) Ensuring that women living in rural, remote and maritime areas have equal access to ownership, use of and management of land and natural resources, and to equal or priority treatment in land and agrarian reform and in land resettlement schemes, and supporting their integration into sustainable value chains by improving access to digital infrastructure, market information and financial tools;

(f) Pursuing, by effective means, policies of preventing and eliminating gender-based violence and harassment in public and private spaces, whether online or offline, with an emphasis on effective legal, preventive and protective measures, including raising awareness regarding the rights of women who are victims of or at risk of gender-based violence, including harassment in the world of work and in the household;

(g) Ensuring access to justice and accountability mechanisms and timely and effective remedies for the effective implementation and enforcement of laws aimed at preventing and eliminating all forms of discrimination, including by informing women and girls about their rights under relevant laws in an accessible way and by improving legal infrastructure, inter alia by training justice practitioners to carry out their responsibilities in a non-discriminatory manner, to ensure equality before the law and equal protection of women and girls by the law;

(h) Increasing investment in care and support policies and infrastructure to provide universal access to affordable and quality services for all, including childcare, and health and support services for persons with disabilities and older persons, and expanding access to paid maternity, paternity and parental leave and social protection for all workers, including both for informal workers and for those in non-standard forms of employment;

(i) Promoting the progressive realization of the right of girls to education by providing them with access to at least 12 years of quality education, by implementing appropriate measures;

4. *Calls upon* States to accelerate efforts to achieve women's economic empowerment by:

(a) Promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation and consultation of women, and of girls in accordance with their age and maturity, in the design, preparation and implementation of economic and social laws and policies at the local and national levels, and

promoting gender equality in decision-making bodies and women's economic leadership, including through women's equal representation in legislative, executive and judicial bodies, trade unions and employers' organizations;

(b) Ensuring that all development strategies are gender-responsive and fully respect human rights, including the right to development, have a particular focus on the poorest and those furthest behind and in vulnerable situations, especially women and girls living in or at risk of poverty, and work towards ending the structural barriers to women's and girls' access to economic resources;

(c) Taking concrete steps to support gender-responsive budgeting, to address gaps in resourcing for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and to ensure investments in this regard;

(d) Establishing or strengthening comprehensive and universal social protection systems, including floors, that integrate a gender perspective to ensure equal access to social protection for all women, including those living in poverty, without discrimination of any kind, and taking measures to progressively achieve higher levels of protection, including for those working in the informal economy, by facilitating the transition from informal to formal work;

(e) Expanding, in accordance with domestic legislation and policies, the reach of sustainable pension schemes, including but not limited to strategies such as social pensions, and increasing their benefits, with a view to ensuring income security in old age, and by expanding non-contributory pension schemes to cover older women, particularly those who have engaged in informal or unpaid care work and domestic work throughout their lives;

(f) Promoting the implementation of equal pay policies through, for example, social dialogue, collective bargaining, objective appraisals and gender-neutral job evaluations, awareness-raising campaigns, promoting shared parental leave between parents, pay analysis and transparency, and gender pay audits, as well as certification and review of pay practices and working conditions and the increased availability of data disaggregated by sex and analysis of the gender pay gap;

(g) Developing and promoting financial literacy and financial education programmes for women and girls, in order to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to have access to financial services and financial products, in particular women working in rural areas and those leading and working in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;

(h) Creating a climate that is conducive to increasing the number of women entrepreneurs and the size of their businesses by providing them with training and advisory services in business, administration, information and communications technology and financial services and by facilitating networking and information-sharing by providing them with training and advisory services in business, administration and digital skills – including in e-commerce and financial technology – and by facilitating mentorship networks, market access and capacity to meet sustainability-linked trade requirements;

(i) Mobilizing and allocating resources to develop and implement policies and programmes to support women's entrepreneurship and new opportunities for women entrepreneurs, which will lead to business expansion for existing women-owned microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises, and ensuring that emerging environmental and trade-related measures are inclusive and do not disproportionately affect them;

(j) Promoting a work-life balance and the equal sharing of responsibilities within the household and measures to recognize, reduce, redistribute and value unpaid care, support and domestic work, as well as the proper recognition, representation, remuneration and reward of care workers;

(k) Eliminating gender stereotypes from all educational processes, practices and teaching materials, including through the periodic review and updating of school curricula, textbooks, programmes and teaching methods, and the inclusion of human rights education for educators and students, including on gender equality and non-discrimination, as part of

the mandatory school curriculum, and ensuring that all girls are encouraged to freely choose their fields of study;

(l) Conducting or encouraging further women-led research about the impact of structural adjustments, taxation, debt, macroeconomic policies and trade and investment agreements on human rights and gender equality, and improving the situation of women and girls living in poverty;

5. *Encourages* States to support women's and girls' access to skills development, technical and vocational education and training relevant to the demands of the labour market, as well as lifelong learning opportunities, inter alia by expanding the scope of education and training opportunities ranging from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology, by closing the digital gender divide and by promoting their full, equal and meaningful participation in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, the green economy and the digital transition, while addressing the barriers to women's and girls' equal and safe access to online spaces, so as not to leave them further behind and also promoting a lifelong-learning approach to support and empower women to return to work after periods of care leave;

6. *Recalls* the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and urges the private sector to examine its workplace culture and environment, as well as its recruitment, promotion, retention and termination practices, and to assess its service delivery, as a means to overcome gender stereotypes and negative social norms in all spheres of life, to address inequalities and to take the measures necessary to ensure that the private sector, both as employers and service providers, are held accountable when they fail to abide by laws and regulations;

7. *Recognizes* the right of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, to work, on an equal basis with others, including the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities, in line with articles 5 and 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and calls upon States to develop comprehensive social protection systems covering disability-related extra costs and ensuring access to, for example, non-contributory cash transfer schemes, to empower persons with disabilities when choosing their support services;

8. *Reaffirms* the important role of civil society actors and organizations, trade unions and national human rights institutions for women's economic empowerment;

9. *Encourages* States to strengthen the collection and use of more and better disaggregated data and to use such data to inform evidence-based, gender-responsive budgeting and policymaking processes to identify and address gaps in funding, equal opportunities, and barriers to women's economic empowerment and women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in decision-making processes in employment, whether formal or informal;

10. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a report on trade agreements, including their gender equality provisions, and their impact on women's economic empowerment, in consultation with States and all relevant stakeholders, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the International Labour Organization, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, relevant special procedures of the Human Rights Council, regional organizations and human rights bodies and civil society, including women's and children's rights organizations, and to present the report to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-fifth session;

11. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

32nd meeting
7 July 2025

[Adopted without a vote.]