

Sustainable Development Goal 5 and interlinkages with other SDGs

An Expert Group Meeting in preparation for HLPF 2025:

“Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind”
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[Antonia Kirkland Talking Points for Panel 1 - How can the CEDAW Convention continue to guide efforts to achieve SDG 5, particularly in the context of the HLPF review?](#)

Good morning Everyone,

It's a pleasure to be here with you all today, **just 4 days after the [Equal Rights Amendment](#) to the United States Constitution was finally declared the “law of the land,”** guaranteeing everyone gender equality, and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. For women and girls in the US, and other countries, **constitutional equality is a major step towards achieving the [SDG 5.1.1](#) indicator** on ‘whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.’

Because as an international human rights organization Equality Now's **mission** is to achieve legal and systemic change that addresses violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world, and not just in the US, we were keen to contribute to the development of [5.1.1](#), based on CEDAW and other human rights standards.

However, despite all the good intent articulated in SDG 5.1.1, as we heard and according to the World Bank's [Women, Business and the Law 2024](#) report, **not a single country** has yet achieved full legal equality. **Equality in law**, as we know, is the essential foundation for gender equality, including to eliminate discrimination, harmful practices and all forms of violence against women and girls, both in the physical and digital worlds.

It is very concerning then that, at a time when data is the new global currency and women and girls are increasingly in need of regulation of the digital realm to protect them, brologarchs and tech leaders like Elon Musk are inserting themselves into government policy both domestic and foreign. It is therefore critical that the CEDAW Committee act and lean into the recently adopted [Global Digital Compact, the GDC](#), which recognizes both that “women and girls’ full, equal and meaningful participation in the digital space are essential to close the gender digital divide and **advance sustainable development** and that “cooperation” is essential to eliminating “all forms of violence, including **sexual and gender-based violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology.**”

Ending violence against women, including trafficking and sexual exploitation, is the ambition of SDG 5.2 of course, but also an aspiration of SDG 8.7 on decent work for all, which calls for an end to human trafficking.

[CEDAW's 2020 General Comment 38](#) urges social media platforms, in addition to State Parties, to “take responsibility for exposing women and girls to trafficking and sexual exploitation through use of their services.” Building on this, a **new CEDAW General Comment on the SDGs and Tech Facilitated Gender-Based Violence**, including online sexual exploitation and abuse, would be very timely.

It could concretize the feminist principles of the GDC, the important [CSW67 Agreed Conclusions](#) on innovation and technological change for achieving gender equality, and help harmonize a definition of tech-facilitated GBV, or “TFGBV”. And it could be guided by regional frameworks including [GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women](#), and the forthcoming OAS Latin America model law on TFGBV.

Continued accountability for the Implementation of SDG 5 and interlinked goals **by CEDAW is essential** as it is the main international human rights treaty on women's rights and has a stronger **enforcement mechanism** than the weaker Voluntary National Reporting system of the HLPF.

State Party reports should follow CEDAW's [2022 Guidance](#) on SDG reporting, as well as **provide financial resources and support** so the Committee can continue its constructive dialogues with governments and issue strong concluding observations as it did recently with [Italy](#), for example, covering technology from both a digital divide and a freedom from violence perspective.

With all this in mind, the HLPF could take Action, including by:

- 1) Urging immediate ratification of CEDAW and its Optional Protocol by holdouts like the US, as an essential step towards realizing SDG 5.1 in particular;
- 2) Urging member states to strengthen CEDAW, and all other human rights mechanisms, through technical and financial support, particularly given the new US Administration;
- 3) Supporting successful strategies such as UN Women's global [Equality in Law for Women and Girls by 2030: A Multistakeholder Strategy for Accelerated Action](#), which co-sponsored a [Global Summit](#) last month, that brought together parliamentarians, government officials and civil society representatives from diverse regions who then committed to jumpstarting or continuing efforts to reform discriminatory nationality laws, impacting thousands of women and their families;

and

→ Finally, the HLPF Ministerial Declaration could welcome the elaboration of a **new CEDAW General Comment on TFGBV and the SDGs**, as well as encourage CEDAW to continue highlighting the SDGs in their reviews and concluding observations.

As the CEDAW Committee [strongly proclaimed to the HLPF last year](#), a “**surge**” of action and investment “from the international community is **imperative** to achieve not just SDG 5 but all SDGs,” thereby securing the future of people and our planet.

Thank you.