

## Meeting of the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative

Morning Session, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

20 November 2019

<b>2019 Gender Responsive Standards Initiative Meeting Participant List</b>		
<b>Ms. Viktoriia Chepelova</b>	Advisor	Eurasian Economic Commission
<b>Mr. Timur Nurashv</b>	Director of Department of Technical Regulation and Accreditation	Eurasian Economic Commission
<b>Ms. Gabriella White</b>	Senior Policy Analyst	Standards Council of Canada
<b>Ms. Marion Stoldt</b>	Chair	UNECE WP. 6
<b>Ms. Lorenza Jachia</b>	Secretary	UNECE WP. 6
<b>Ms. Christine Löw</b>	Director, Liaison Office Geneva	UN-Women
<b>Ms. Deborah Wautier</b>	Project Manager, Policy & Stakeholders Engagement	CEN-CENELEC
<b>Ms. Noelia Garcia Nebra</b>	Programme Manager, Capacity Building	ISO
<b>Mr. Ray Walshe</b>	Assistant Professor	ADAPT Research @ Dublin City University
<b>Ms. Stephanie Eynon</b>	Standards-Makers Development & Engagement Manager	British Standards Institution
<b>Mrs. Rachna Sehgal</b>	Chair, Task Force on Gender Responsive Standards Declaration	Bureau of Indian Standards
<b>Mr. Peter Morfee</b>	Principal Technical Advisor	Worksafe New Zealand
<b>Mr. Oisin Curtis</b>	Consultant	UNECE WP. 6
<b>Mr. Robert O'Neill</b>	Intern	UNECE WP. 6
<b>Mr. Tauno Kangur</b>	Economic Affairs Officer	UNECE WP. 6
<b>Ms. Lowri Angharad Rees</b>	Programme Specialist	UN Women
<b>Mr. Guggi LARYEA</b>	Senior Manager	amfori
<b>Ms. Silvia Vaccaro</b>	Policy Officer Standardization	DG GROW - European Commission
<b>Mr. Nathan Osburn</b>	Communications Director	ASTM International
<b>Ms. Mathilde Crepy</b>	Programme Manager	European Environmental Citizens' Organisation for Standardisation (ECOS)
<b>Ms. Maria Eugenia Do Kroetz</b>	Intern	Mission at the WTO
<b>Dr. Patrice Braun</b>	Adjunct Professor, Research & Innovation	Federation University Australia

<b>2019 Gender Responsive Standards Initiative Meeting Agenda</b>		
<i>11:00 – 11:10</i>	<b>Adoption of the Agenda and Tour-de Table</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Marion Stoldt, Chairperson, Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP6)</li> </ul>
11:10 – 11:20	<b>Introduction to the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Lorenza Jachia, Secretary, Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP6)</li> </ul>
11:20 – 11:30	<b>Video: Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development</b>	
11:30 – 11:45	<b>Setting the Scene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Christine Löw, Director, Liaison Office Geneva, UN Women</li> </ul>
11:45 - 12:30	<b>Presentation of Action Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Stephanie Eynon Standards-Makers Development and Engagement Manager, British Standards Institution, United Kingdom</li> <li>• Ms. Rachna Seghal, Chair- Task Force on Gender Responsive Standards Declaration, Bureau of Indian Standards</li> <li>• Ms. Gabrielle White, Senior Policy Analyst, Standards Council of Canada</li> <li>• Ms. Deborah Wautier, Project Manager, Policy &amp; Stakeholders Engagement, CEN-CENELEC</li> </ul>
12:30 – 12:45	<b>Approval of Programme of Work</b>	
12:45	<b>Closing of Session</b>	

## **1. Adoption of the Agenda and Tour-de Table**

1. The morning session of the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative was convened at the Palais de Nations in Geneva, Switzerland on 20 November 2019.
2. The Chair of the Working Party presented the meeting agenda and it was adopted by participants.
3. The Chair introduced the goals of the Initiative and detailed its activities since 2018. The speaker recognized the signatories to the Declaration on Gender Responsive and Standards Development and acknowledged the gender action plans selected for presentation at the meeting. The floor was given to the Secretary to the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP6).

## **2. Introduction to the Gender Responsive Initiative**

4. The Secretary to the Working Party presented the rationale for the creation of the Initiative. She highlighted that fundamental lack of representation of women and their interests and needs in standards development. She cited the importance of ungendered product designs, such as seatbelts for pregnant women. The speaker explained that the absence of the female perspective in such procedures, women are placed at undue risk, both in the workplace and at home.
5. The speaker discussed how the Initiative aims to encourage stakeholders to promote standards for the achievement of gender equality – a prerequisite to sustainable development. With this understanding, in excess of 55 signatories/45 national standards bodies/many international standards bodies committed to developing their own gender action plans.
6. The speaker presented brief examples of gender action plans and activities undertaken towards increasing female representation in standards and standards making;

## **3. Video: Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development**

7. Video (delayed for technical reasons) available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4Cu5V6pbSQ&t=5s>

## **4. Setting the Scene**

8. The representative of UN Women highlighted that 2020 will mark the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. She underscored the significance of the Beijing Declaration as a blueprint for advancing women's rights and discussed the comprehensive review of the implementation for the initiative, towards promoting gender equality.
9. The speaker presented UN Women's new multigenerational campaign, "Generation Equality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future". She further noted the importance of the Generation Equality Forum as

a civil society-centered, multi-stakeholder gathering for gender equality. Convened by UN Women – with Mexico and France assuming the role of co-chairs – the Forum will host a high-level event in Paris in 2020, with the purpose of reviewing the first 5 years of the SDGs.

10. The speaker recognized how gender equality is central to the success of the SDGs, but women continue to face issues in making decisions or even having their rights recognized throughout the developing and developed world.
11. She examined the value of standards and their impacts on society. She emphasized that technical standards are not always beneficial to women, especially with gender-blind studies. For example, seatbelts and other equipment that are inadequate for women, cannot be improved through further gender-blind lens. She also discussed the fact that certain standards that do not promote gender equality and can lead to hostile work environments. Gender responsive standards are ways to promote gender equal standards through an increase in female participation. Several standards have overlap, like ISO standard that promotes equal pay and considerations for promotion and the standards making community should look to utilizing this between the national and international communities.
12. Implementing standards was highlighted as one of the more important tasks of the initiative. The speaker called attention to how evidence-based standards creation is necessary for the viability and integrity of standards. She relayed the point that the declaration’s main goal is to mainstream standards and equal gender standards initiatives.
13. The Chair to the Working Party opened the floor to questions for Ms. Löw and the following topics were discussed:
  - i. What kind of people will be there at the Paris event?
    - a. She communicated the highly inclusive nature of the forum and noted that various high-level stakeholders and national representatives will be there;
  - ii. What are the anticipated accomplishments of the Paris meeting?
    - a. She said that the activities are aimed to set up action coalitions to address sustainable development and economic issues that will also include gender issues;
14. The representative from BSI emphasized discussed the importance of gender expertise and promotion of requirements for a greater number of technical experts in the field.
15. She called attention to the Standards Council of Canada and its work to recruit women in standards. She emphasized that the standards community must try recruiting again and change techniques if women are not being hired. She underscored the importance of a developed language to encourage women to apply.
16. A two-part question was posed to the representative of BSI: Who can be a gender expert? and does it require specific experience? In response to this enquiry, the speaker provided the following clarifications:
  - a. People who have studied gender or have worked in the field of gender equality; some may be technical experts but not specifically want to be gender experts even if she’s a woman and is on a committee.

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17. The representative from UN Women explained that the concept of diversity goes beyond gender. She described how women have different experiences and factors, which help make them to make decisions. She noted that any profession should want to have diversity to make informed decision-making possible.
18. The professor from DCU recognized the importance of examining the gender aspect of pre-existing standards. Assessing existing standards with a gender lens can help to identify unintended, gendered impediment to their equitable usage.

### 5. Presentation of Action Plan: British Standards Institution (BSI)

19. The representative of BSI recognized the present status of gender inclusion and discussed the under-representation of women with non-inclusive data. She outlined the work of her organization to support gender equality and outlined their Gender Action Plan and strategy for diversity and inclusivity. The speaker explained how the Action Plan includes: (i) creating a diverse community of BSI standard makers; (ii) implementing more inclusive standards; and (iii) ensuring BSI is a leader in diversity/inclusivity. The speaker reported on the diverse composition of the teams related to the Action Plan and demonstrated their representative nature, which made their expertise critical to making inclusive standards. This idea was furthered by the creation of an advisory panel to ensure gender inclusive standards are envisioned and created.
20. The speaker described how the organization promotes a culture, which strives to address non-inclusive environments through transparent accountability and inclusive standard making. She underlined how close BSI is to realizing its objectives and how they plan to achieve their respective goals. She found that feedback is essential with an emphasis on recruitment and cultural environments. This will ideally promote champions for gender inclusion that can use relevant data on inclusive standard making. The speaker then discussed the highlights of BSI's Action Taking, which included the signing of the declaration and an internal launch of standards-makers campaign on inclusivity. In addition, BSI had a stand at the Women in Stem Conference earlier in 2019, at which they surveyed committee members on diversity.
21. The Chair to the Working Party opened the floor to questions. The following topics were discussed:
  - i. A question was posed regarding whether BSI's action plan is a horizontal strategy and who are the underrepresented groups they're looking to involve?
    - a. The speaker responded that BSI has a team to recruit from public interest sides and that they aim to recruit women and ethnic minorities. She pointed out that awareness raising and reaching out to different organizations has increased participation from underrepresented groups;
  - ii. The representative from the Bureau of Indian Standardization asked how does removal of titles lead to greater inclusion?
    - a. She answered that concerns were raised by committee members that did not want any gender title, which inadvertently highlighted the assumptions of the title i.e. that women are secretaries. She

pointed out that men in committees referred to another by titles but to women by first names and that titles may also dissuade people from participating because they are intimidating;

- iii. The representative from ISO questioned how is BSI collecting data on titles?
  - a. The speaker explained that BSI is not yet asking questions but is creating an optional survey to get a sense of participation

## **6. Presentation of Action Plan: Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**

- 25. The representative from the Bureau of Indian Standards described how women are not represented by technical standards, which is causing a significant lack of inclusivity.
- 26. The speaker explained how the Bureau of Indian Standards has created a task force that aims to create projects and action plans, which promote gender responsive standards and encourage the greater contribution of Indian stakeholders towards the achievement of the SDG.
- 27. She presented the various activities of the Indian Action Plan, which incorporated the fostering of a more inclusive environment, the creation of Gender Responsive Standards, the establishment of greater engagement between stakeholders and standards makers, and the development of promotional activities via social media coverage and other resources. The speaker went on to highlight various areas that standards could be framed for including the farming, mining, manufacturing, automotive, and domestic sectors.
- 28. The Chair to the Working Party opened the floor to questions. The following topics were discussed:
  - i. It was acknowledged there has been issues with the term ‘neutral’ because it is hard to define what is “neutral”?
    - a. The speaker recognized that defining the term “neutral” requires a lot of study to determine the appropriate use of the term.

## **7. Presentation of Action Plan: Standards Council of Canada (SCC)**

- 29. The representative from the Standards Council of Canada discussed the recent developments in standards and gender responsiveness in Canada. She highlighted how gender responsiveness is growing exponentially in Canada and is promoted through domestic and foreign government policies.
- 30. The speaker presented the work of the Standards Council of Canada, and focused attention the organization’s gender strategy, which seeks to improve gender representation in standardization system by building gender expertise into standardization and committing sound research to area of study. She examined the critical role of awareness-raising and underlined how standards makers are not commonly versed in sociological issues, especially gender. She concluded that the Working Party must create awareness to ensure that women are not greatly underrepresented in standards making.

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31. She discussed the importance of creating quality management systems with gender responsive methodologies. She underlined that this would ensure that gender is not a fleeting issue. These systems would be utilized through training/lunch and learn.
32. She went on to acknowledge the key challenges that the initiative and her organization face. There have been problems ensuring relevant stakeholders recognize gender as an issue in standardization and to help them recognize that action can be taken. In addition, it is difficult to ensure that people know that gender standardization applies to more than just female equality and that is problematic to acquire data that relevant to this field of study and work.
33. The Chair to the Working Party opened the floor to questions. The following topics were discussed:
  - i. It was questioned how gender inclusion has been promoted and received in the representative's work?
    - a. The representative answered that it has been met with both blank stares and enthusiastic promotion i.e. APPEC;

### 8. Presentation of Action Plan: CEN-CENELEC

34. The representative from CEN-CENELEC discussed a survey her organization developed regarding member's commitments to their Gender Action Plans. She found that 13 out of 22 members had signed gender action plans and made progress towards their commitments. She went on to discuss the challenges faced by experts in gender responsive standards.
35. The speaker discussed how the survey found that the most relevant topic regarding gender action plans was addressing work towards gender balanced representation. To address this topic adequately, she noted, would require good practice at both the technical and governmental level.
36. The last question of the survey addressed what members thought was the priority action that should be taken for gender action plans. Members overwhelmingly emphasized the need for a greater effort for the collection and dissemination of gender related data. The speaker concluded her presentation by providing a three-year outline of the activities for CEN-CENELEC's action plan. She reported that in Year 1, the organization would seek to: (i) establish informal coordination groups; (ii) collect and share best practice of gender inclusive projects; and (iii) collect disaggregated data at the technical level. In Year 2 and 3, they would assess the work of the preceding year and ensure that the work was in line with the goals of the Action Plan.
37. The speaker described how the organizations Action Plan would collaborate with the established internal groups, Women 4 Cyber and Women in Energy. She examined the pillars of their policy objectives that were based on the harmonization of the single market and maintenance of the competitiveness of European industries.
38. The Chair to the Working Party opened the floor to questions. The following topics were discussed:
  - ii. It was asked if all members should be collecting desegregated data themselves or do so collaboratively since they are all doing it?

- a. The representative replied that all members should collect as much data as they can on their own and then to create a forum that can allow for the collectivization of said data;

## **9. Approval of Programme of Work**

39. The Secretary of the Working Party reiterated the priorities of the group and the relevant actions, deadlines, results.

40. It was decided that these actions will be approved at the group's next webinar

## **10. Closing of Session**