Concept Note

WORK-LIFE (IM)BALANCE: Policies and practices empowering women to achieve their full potential in the workplace and the family

Thursday 16th March 2017, 11.30 a.m. - 12.45 p.m. | Conference Room 8, UN HEADQUARTERS

Context: The increase in women’s global labour force participation, and the generalisation of the double-income family model bring not only advantages but also challenges for women’s economic empowerment. Discrimination against potential and recent mothers in recruitment, remuneration and promotion at the workplace, the so-called “motherhood pay gap”, the lack of equal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work within the family all hinder the realization of women’s rights to decent work and full and productive employment and their economic empowerment. Moreover, funding a family is often considered a burden that only couples of a certain economic situation can afford – a startling phenomenon in societies with an ageing population.

Purpose: The panel aims to raise awareness on the difficulties that working mothers have to face in fulfilling their multiple roles in the workplace and at home. The speakers will share policies, best practices and programmes aimed at the realization of women’s rights and empowerment, and the establishment of circumstances where founding a family no longer constitutes an additional burden, but rather a source of joy and personal fulfilment for both parents, without the fear of being left behind.

The diverse background of the panellists will allow for sharing social and family policies aimed at the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work, the provision of affordable or subsidized quality childcare and parental leave, among others, but it will also provide a platform for sharing personal narratives on how these outstanding women, not only as policy-makers and successful professionals, but also as parents and partners could tackle these challenges, and the difficulties and lessons learnt on the way to their achievements. The audience will also learn about the inspiring projects – the Judit Polgár Chess Foundation and Andrea Bocelli Foundation – supporting women and girls of the next generations through social inclusion and development, education, talent support and lifelong learning, giving an inspiration that women can achieve their full potential in the workplace and in the family as well.

Invited speakers:
- H.E. Ms. Katalin Novák, Minister of State for Family, Youth and International Affairs, Ministry of Human Capacities of Hungary;
- Ms. Meg Jones, Director for Women’s Economic Empowerment at UN Women;
- Ms. Judit Polgár, Chess Grandmaster, beholder of the title "UN Women Global Champion Planet 50-50 by 2030";
- Ms. Veronica Berti, spouse of Mr Andrea Bocelli, founder of the Andrea Bocelli Foundation.

Format: Moderated by H.E. Ms Katalin Bogyay, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the UN, the 75 minutes session will consist of brief presentations by invited panelists, a moderated discussion, followed by an interactive question and answer session. For more information, please contact Magdolna Pongor (magdolna.pongor@mfa.gov.hu) and Queenee Choudhury (Queenee.choudhury@unwomen.org).