



CONCEPT NOTE

High-level Launch

JUSTICE FOR WOMEN: LAUNCH OF THE HIGH-LEVEL GROUP REPORT

Hosted by UN Women, International Development Law Organization, World Bank and
Pathfinders' Task Force on Justice

Wednesday 13th March 2019, 10:00–12:00

*Riverview Room: 28th Floor, East Tower, Millennium Hilton Hotel, One UN Plaza,
Near the United Nations Secretariat at the corner of 44th Street and 1st Avenue*

Introduction

Justice for women is a critical dimension of social protection, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women. As a public good, justice is a means of protecting women and girls from violations of their rights. When laws and justice systems are effective in upholding women's agency, claims to productive resources, protection of dignity and bodily integrity, they serve as pathways to gender equality as well as all dimensions of sustainable development.

Within this context, a **High-level Group on Justice for Women** is launching a global report on justice for women as part of a broader ongoing work of a Task Force on Justice, established by the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies to examine the scale of the justice gap, make the case for action and investment in justice through strategies, tools and approaches that will increase access and act as a platform for increased local, national, regional, and international commitments.

Equal and effective justice for women and girls provides a foundation for more sustainable and inclusive patterns of development and is essential to the aspiration of the 2030 Agenda to reach the furthest behind first. Building on the work of the Task Force on Justice, the report of the High-level Group addresses the following questions:

- **The justice gap for women and girls.** What do women and girls need and want when they seek justice? How is women's access to justice impeded by gender discriminatory legal frameworks and social norms, and gender bias in the delivery of justice for women?
- **Making the case.** What is the case for action and investment in access to justice for women and girls? What impact will an increase in access to justice have on violence against women, on women's access to health, education and other essential services, and on women's economic empowerment?
- **What works.** What strategies, tools and approaches will increase access to justice for women and girls? How can gender discriminatory laws, policies and budgets be addressed, and gender bias reduced in formal and informal justice systems?
- **Call to action.** What commitments should national and local actors make to close the justice gap for women and girls? How can international and regional cooperation support access to justice for women and girls at national levels?

Context

Four decades after the landmark Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and with the unprecedented consensus on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the global commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls has never been stronger. The rallying call of the 1992 Vienna Declaration and the 1995 Beijing Conference — that women’s rights are human rights and human rights are women’s rights — still resonates around the world. Across the globe, women’s demands for accountability for violations and abuses have gained greater attention and consequence than ever before. Stoked by a watershed moment for gender equality, driven by activities, campaigns and movements worldwide, such as #MeToo, NiUnaMenos, SheDecides, women’s marches, local and national-level agitation, many governments and corporations have underlined their commitment to change.

These movements have exposed the persistent disparity between the promise of justice and the realities on the ground, in communities, in the workplace and in the home. Women continue to face legal discrimination, patchy legal protections and uneven implementation of existing safeguards. While there is much warranted attention on ending violence, the areas of family justice and penal justice, among others, have been relatively neglected. Around the world, discriminatory social norms and laws, compounded by multiple layers of disadvantage—due to poverty, ethnicity, disability, geography, and migratory status—remain powerful obstacles to equal rights and opportunities for hundreds of millions of women.

The adoption of a global commitment to promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies and access to justice for all (SDG 16) and a standalone commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (SDG 5) are unprecedented. There is enormous opportunity to make a difference in the lives of women and girls through the global momentum afforded by these pledges.

Objective of launch

The launch of the High-level Group report on Justice for Women will be an opportunity to discuss the findings and recommendations of the High-level Group on **what works to increase justice for women**. It will bring together government representatives, civil society organizations and UN partners.

The High-level Group report ends with a **call to action** to justice leaders of all countries and sectors to make a difference in the lives of women and girls around the world. To help answer this call to action, the launch will provide a platform for countries and organizations to work together to make the most of the opportunities that the High-level Political Forum and the SDG Summit in 2019 provide.

Insights from the **Justice for Women Report** can be used by all actors:

- in their efforts to mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
- to generate ambitious and credible commitments; and
- to rally around promising approaches for the realization of the ambitions of SDG5 and SDG16.

Format of launch

The event will be hosted by the co-conveners of the HLG: UN Women, the International Development Law Organization, the World Bank and the Task Force on Justice. It will be interactive in nature and commence with keynote statements from members of the HLG. It concludes with a closing session during which the co-conveners share forward-looking remarks.