

E-discussion: Gender Equality in the World of Work

International Women's Day. Getting to equal by 2030: The future is now

International Women's Day, 8 March, provides an opportunity to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. While there have been some progress over the past century, genuine gender equality in the world of work remains an elusive goal.

Women in the workplace

Women make up more than half of the world's population and half of the world's potential. Yet, women and girls often lack access to vocational education and skills training. Many also lack the basic functional skills, such as literacy and numeracy, to participate meaningfully in the work force. The effective participation of women in education and training is a particularly powerful tool for alleviating poverty and promoting economic and social empowerment. Skills for employment not only equips women with the competencies they require for specific jobs, but allows them to improve their employability and develop their social skills. They also learn to actively participate in civil society and politics.

The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda provides, among others, a roadmap for accelerating gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It aims to end discrimination against women, by ensuring equal access to quality technical training and skills development, and promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, and equal pay for work of equal value. Indicators established for each of the sustainable development goals provide the means for tracking and measuring progress.

Discussion questions for consideration:

What are some of the ways to increase gender equality in the workplace?

What can be done at the country-level to ensure access to skills training for young women and girls? What are some of the barriers to their participation?

How do existing laws and policies in your country help or hinder the increase in participation of women at all levels in the workforce?

How can the public and private sectors promote gender equality?

What role does entrepreneurship play in terms of women's economic empowerment?