

Permanent Mission of Japan, Canada, Finland, France, Mexico and Thailand, OHCHR, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Women, and Geneva Academy have a pleasure to invite you to:

## WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND THE SDGs ~Closing the gender gap in a rapidly changing society~

### Date, Time and Venue

Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> November, 13:15 -14:45, Room XXIII, Palais des Nations

### Program

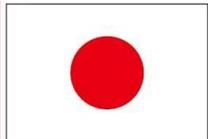
- **Opening Remarks**
  - Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva
  - Ms. Hilary Gbedemah, Chairperson, CEDAW

- **Panel Discussion**

*Moderator:* Ms. Nicole Ameline (Member of CEDAW)

*Panelists:*

- Ms. Esther Eghobamien-Mshelia (Member of CEDAW)
- Ms. Hiroko Akizuki (Member of CEDAW)
- Ms. Christine Löw (Director, UN Women Liaison Office Geneva)
- Dr. Joanna Bourke Martignoni (Senior Research Fellow, Geneva Academy)
- Ms. Elselot Hasselaar (Project Lead, Inclusive Economies Practice, Centre for the New Economy and Society, World Economic Forum)



Light refreshments will be served before the event in front of Room XXIII.



## **Background and Issues**

- Although women's economic empowerment is about basic human rights and at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the progress in this area has been rather slow. At the recent G20 Osaka Summit, G20 leaders took up women's empowerment as an important agenda and committed to further address issues such as the gender gap in labor force participation as well as in unpaid care work, and the quality of women's employment including gender pay gaps.
- The 2016 Report of UNSG's High-Level Panel pointed out "adverse social norms; discriminatory laws and lack of legal protection; the failure to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid household work and care; and a lack of access to financial, digital and property assets" as systematic barriers to women's economic empowerment. Three years after the report, however, these barriers continue to hamper women's participation in the economy. For example, a joint report by ILO and OECD on women at work has found that despite significant efforts to address the situation, gender segregation by occupation persists even among G20 countries.
- Technological transformation by Big Data, robots and artificial intelligence (AI), which is rapidly changing the society as a whole, is having a major impact on women's economic empowerment and complicating international efforts to close the gender gap. At the 5th World Assembly for Women (WAW!) held in Tokyo in March 2019, participants pointed out that one billion girls are under threat of being left behind in technology development. They emphasized the need to close the digital gender gap and ensure equal access to new technology and IT development. To this end, G20 leaders emphasized the importance of providing support for girls' and women's education and training, including improved access to STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) education, as well as enhancing girls' and women's access to digital technology, especially for those in poverty and in rural areas.

## **Objective of the Event**

The panel discussion focuses on identifying challenges in economically empowering women and finding ways of overcoming them, highlighting the following issues.

- Social transformation necessary for economic empowerment of women
  - Removing constraints imposed on women's participation in the economy by laws, policies, practices and stereotypes; what and how gender-responsive actions should be taken by governments and private sectors
  - Ensuring gender equal economic opportunities (e.g. financial inclusion, women's entrepreneurship)
- Women's economic empowerment in societies undergoing technological transformation
  - Closing the digital gender gap
  - Improving access to quality education, including STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) education
  - Ensuring equal access to the benefits of technology