Press release

Whose Economic Empowerment?

Will national partnerships with private sector accelerate implementation if global obstacles remain?

**New York, 17 July 2017:** On Monday, 17 July, the sponsors of the High-Level Panel report on Women’s Economic Empowerment are presenting a panel on “Accelerating women’s economic empowerment to achieve the 2030 Agenda”, head-lined by the Secretary-General. They will be joined by a diverse Member State ‘group of champions for women’s economic empowerment’. Given the knowledge and expertise of the High-Level Panel and the national level experience of the group of champions, they will have many examples of opportunities, but will they highlight the risks?

The High-Level Panel report brought together a wide range of stakeholders to identify drivers of transformation and focus on expanding women’s economic opportunities in the world of work, emphasizing the essential role of the private sector. Despite the benefits such partnership opportunities may bring, the danger in prioritizing them is to neglect the structural and regulatory responsibilities of the state – thereby risking undermining its power to realize women’s human rights – for which it is ultimately responsible.

Will the July 17 panelists examine the risks of using public monies to subsidize private corporations, which would not invest in development projects otherwise? Would this not only divert public resources from strengthening the decent work agenda, anti-violence legislation and service delivery, among other things, but also undermine the ability of the state to honor commitments to the 2030 Agenda, including women’s empowerment? Will they provide examples of how the global tax system, through the erosion of tax bases and continuing existence of secrecy jurisdictions, drain the public purse of the resources needed to promote women’s rights? Will they show how trade and investment agreements, which empower corporations to sue governments that seek to regulate public health or the environment for lost future profits?

These constraints are a key issues for participants in the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development currently taking place at the UN in New York. They were also a key part of the analysis of women’s empowerment in the UN Women flagship report, Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016—Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights. Will the High-Level Panel experts take the opportunity to broaden its framework to benefit from this report?

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**Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2017**

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Beirut/Bonn/Ferney-Voltaire/Montevideo/New York/Penang/Rome/Suva, July 2017

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