



ILC GENDER GLOSSARY

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INTRODUCTION

The **gender audit**, conducted in 2017, identified a **lack of clarity and consistency of key gender concepts and language** and recommended to clarify those terms and build awareness amongst those working in the ILC global support team and ILC members, especially on:

- the concept of 'gender justice'
- the importance of mainstreaming gender across all of the ILC 10 commitments
- distinguishing the thematic focus on women's land rights (commitment 4) from gender justice as a crosscutting principle for ILC's work.

One of the first actions in response to the audit was the elaboration of this gender glossary to provide guidance to the ILC global support team and ILC Members to ensure a gender just approach across ILC operations.

You can consult this gender glossary according to your specific needs, be it during planning or implementation of activities, or just to clarify any doubts you might have. Of course, you can also circulate it within your organisation and beyond if you think it may be of interest to other!

Please let us know if you have any feedback, we'd be happy to hear from you.

GLOSSARY

ACCESS

Access is the opportunity of making use of something, whether material or immaterial. Control is the ability to define its use.

- **to resources**

Women and men have different access to and control over productive resources (natural resources, human resources, and capital resources). Access and control over resources are different for women and men based on norms and opportunities.

- **to justice**

Women often face hurdles to access justice, including geographical distance or time allocation , lack of economic resources or illiteracy or are discriminated against by laws and policies (see **discrimination**)

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Adopted by the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, the Beijing Platform of Action is a comprehensive outline of strategic steps to concretise and enhance the goals of **CEDAW**. Though not legally binding, the Platform for Action has great symbolic value, because it was agreed upon world governments.

CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted in 1979 , is the second most ratified convention (90% of UN member states). CEDAW defines discrimination against women, covering civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, and identifies actions to eliminate it. It covers discriminatory laws, customs and practices and highlights the nature and impact of gender- and sex-based discrimination; it also identifies and lays out state obligations to eliminate discrimination and achieve equality.

Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound and committed to undertake measures to ensure protection

against discrimination against women.

CEDAW includes a system of reporting by State parties (every 4 years) and ensure the possibility for civil society to engage with the Committee through shadow or alternative reporting. Optional Protocol to CEDAW introduced the competence of CEDAW Committee to consider petitions from individuals or groups who have exhausted all national remedies and to conduct inquiries into grave or systematic violations of the Convention.

The CEDAW Committee makes recommendations on any issue affecting women to which it believes the States parties should devote more attention, such as GR 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women

DISAGGREGATED DATA (SEX)

Statistical information where data are collected by sex to measure differential impacts of programme and operations on men and women, and highlight differences and inequalities.

DISCRIMINATION

Any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which hamper full enjoyment of human rights. Racial and gender discrimination are the most relevant forms of discrimination. Discrimination occurs in various forms, in everyday life. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when certain groups are explicitly disadvantaged by the legal framework. In indirect discrimination, neutral laws and policies affect specific groups.

- **gender discrimination**

The **CEDAW** convention describes discrimination against women as “made on the basis of sex , which has the purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women [...] of human rights and fundamental freedoms”. While gender discrimination goes beyond women’s issues, as it broadly refers to socially constructed gender roles and norms, women are definitely the most affect by gender-based discrimination.

- **systemic discrimination**

systemic discrimination is a consequence of policies and practices intrinsic to institutional operations. These policies and practices affect minorities and specific groups, which lack to address issues because of their internal structure and assumptions.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER

Sex is about biology, gender is about society. Sex refers to biological distinction between men and women. Gender refers to social attributes and are an acquired identity, during socialisation within a given community. Gender is context and time specific and is a cross-cutting socio-cultural variable. Gender influence perception, norms and behaviours about men and women in a given context.

The word “gender” was first used to describe social differences by the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Brighton, in the mid-1970s, in order to find an analytic tool to refine analysis of the diversified impacts of development on different categories (including different categories of women).

EMPOWERMENT (OF WOMEN AND GIRLS)

Empowerment is the process of gaining power and acquiring control over assets and resources, and, more broadly, over one’s own life. Empowerment of women and girls is crucial to the ability of making autonomous and strategic choices and is relevant both within their homes and in society, at national and international level, in order to transform structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. Women’s and girls’ empowerment focuses on agency, participation and leadership, to make strategic choices

Empowerment cannot come from external actors: no one can empower another. However, it is a process can be reinforced and supported by local or international actors.

Women’s empowerment requires systemic transformation not only at institutional level, but also in those supporting patriarchal structures. Women’s empowerment represents a challenge to patriarchal relations -in particular within the family- but it does not imply losses for men, rather it should include an active contribution of men and systemic change in power relations.

Education, training, awareness raising, increase of participation and control over resources and assets, and transformative actions with regard to discriminatory structures and institutions are key tools for women's and girls' empowerment. Women's empowerment requires and implies transformation of the division of labour and of society.

- **economic empowerment**

In most cases the empowerment of women and girls focus on better access and opportunities to use resources and assets. Economic empowerment implies better control over economic assets and aims at improving the economic condition of a given group of people, in this case women and girls. As a consequence of economic empowerment women and girls gain better access to other assets and achieve improved living conditions. They also gain autonomy and independence from families and within their communities. Economic empowerment is also connected to ensuring equal pay to women and men.

- **social empowerment**

Social empowerment means gaining a stronger and self determined role in society. It is about autonomy and self-confidence. Social empowerment aims at challenging exclusion processes and change social and power relationship. Such a change relies over individual and collective actions. In the case of women's and girls' empowerment this also implies challenging discriminatory norms and practices which exclude women and girls from decision making processes. Social empowerment also regards reconstruction of roles within the society, hence it has both individual and collective impact.

- **legal empowerment**

Legal empowerment aims at strengthening capacity to exercise rights. It implies both the necessary knowledge and opportunities to access justice in an effective and meaningful way. Legal empowerment is a collective process which also includes both awareness raising and changes and reforms of legal institutions and provisions. It builds upon different elements such as access to justice and rule of law and definition of specific economic, social and cultural rights. With regard to women and girls legal empowerment focuses on the legal literacy but also on ensuring that de jure legal rights correspond to de

facto enjoyment of such rights. Both State laws and traditional justice systems are concerned by legal empowerment.

EQUITY

Equity is linked to social justice. It is about basic needs to be fulfilled and burden and rewards to be spread avoiding excessive divergence and unbalance across society. It also implies policies inspired by and implemented with impartiality, fairness and justice.

Equity is about access to economic and social assets. From a sustainable development perspective equity is crucial also in terms of intergenerational approach: a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

A household where a woman is the sole or main responsible for income and decision making. This might be the consequence of a diverse range of situation: widowhood, abandon of the household of the adult man, temporary or permanent migration. It can also be a deliberate choice of women.

Depending on customs and laws, formal recognition of female headed households might vary. The assumption that the head of household should be an adult man (even if young), disregarding women's economic contribution and role in the maintenance of the household, is a form of gender bias and gender discrimination.

FEMINISATION OF AGRICULTURE

Feminisation of agriculture refers to the measurable increase of women's involvement and participation in the agricultural sector. This has both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, it leads to more active roles of women within the society, on the other hand it might produce more precarisation as women face more challenges in accessing resources and credit, and in exercising control over land.

Feminisation of agriculture implies that agricultural markets become gendered institutions affecting men and women differently. Hence, this requires different and dedicated approaches.

FEMINISATION OF POVERTY

Feminisation of poverty is a measurable phenomenon that produced the increase the gap between women and men caught in the cycle of poverty. The result is that worldwide women's earning are on average slightly more than 50 per cent of men's. The number of women in poverty keeps increasing and this leads to lack of access to critical resources such as credit, land, inheritance, education and health care. Being caught in the cycle of poverty strongly affects women's autonomy and empowerment. Women are not automatically poorer than men, however, because of contingent basis of their entitlements, they are generally more vulnerable. If they are caught in the cycle of poverty it is more challenging for them to escape it.

FEMINISM

Feminism is both a belief and a movement. It is the belief in social, political and economic equality of women and men, and it is the movement to achieve such equality. It can also be defined as a global and constant campaign against gender inequalities, striving for equal rights. Feminism is also about autonomy, freedom of choice, fight against discrimination. It addresses discriminatory norms, behaviours and practices that hinder women's rights and agency. While feminist struggles may vary depending on different societies, cultures and context they are broadly tied together by the common philosophy of achieving equality, fighting patriarchy and reinforcing women's agency. Different philosophical and political approaches to feminism exist.

- **Engaging men and boys**

As feminism is not about depriving men but achieving justice and equality for all, feminism is not only a women's matter. Hence, engaging men and boys is crucial to achieve the final goal of ending discrimination in all spheres of life. This includes: identification of men

and boys as possible allies to challenge discrimination and recognition the crucial importance of change in men' attitudes and behaviours.

- **Intersectional feminism**

Intersectionality addresses multiple layers of discrimination. In feminist perspective it represents an analytical tool to identify, understand and respond to the different ways in which discriminations based on sex and gender intersect with other forms of discrimination, based on race, class, working and living conditions, social and family status. The core of intersectional feminism is the understanding that people live multiple and layered identities, leading to multiple discriminations caused by social relations and structures of power.

Intersectionality aims to address these multiple forms of discrimination identifying how they concur to create inequalities and unbalance of powers.

- **Indigenous feminism**

Indigenous feminism is part of the intersectional theory and practice of feminism. It focuses on the specific impact of discrimination on indigenous women and builds upon the analysis on decolonisation and indigenous sovereignty. It also takes into account the specificities of indigenous cultural values and priorities in the effort to empower indigenous women, in a response to mainstreamed and external (mostly western) approaches and values. It builds upon specific needs of and responses by indigenous women to discrimination and inequalities.

Indigenous feminism is particularly relevant from a land rights perspective, since environmental and land struggles are a crucial component of broader indigenous issues.

GENDER

Gender refers to social and cultural features defining women and men in the society, including expected behaviours and values. Hence gender is opposed to sex intended as biological distinction. As socially constructed

and determined categories gender roles vary widely within and between cultures, and often evolve over time. Gender is also a determining social factor, and therefore influence relations between women and men, in particular with regard to the distribution of productive and reproductive work. Gender roles are also affected by other factors such as education, and political and economic systems.

Social interactions and power relations are reflect different gendered roles and responsibilities, but also contribute to determine these roles.

The concept of gender is cross-cutting socio-cultural variable, which has an impact on social, political, cultural and economic life, including access to and control over resources and decision-making roles.

The concept of gender is not interchangeable with women. Gender roles and gender relations concern the entire society, and gender stereotypes are detrimental for both men and women, in particular as they might contribute to raise unrealistic expectations and require to behave in narrowly defined ways.

GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender analysis aims at providing lens to understand the contexts and design gender sensitive and gender responsive projects and policies. It is important not to simplify and conflate gender with women, and hence avoid understanding gender analysis as solely focused on women.

Gender analysis builds upon the understanding of gender relations, differentiated roles, power dynamics, and diversity of needs, contexts and impact.

GENDER AUDIT

A gender audit is an assessment of the capacity of an organisation to effectively institutionalise gender equality and be gender aware, gender responsive and gender sensitive throughout all of its programs, policies, structures and proceedings (including budgeting and monitoring). The process of auditing focuses on effectiveness and implementation and it is usually conducted in a participatory manner. A gender audit also identifies

good practices and gaps, and suggest recommendations to build upon positive experiences and address challenges, in order to promote gender justice and contributes to enhance organisational ownership with regard to gender issues .

GENDER AWARE

A program or a project are gender aware if they take into account gender roles and gender differences within the society , and understand the impact of these differences on the needs of women and men.

GENDER-BALANCE

Gender-balance is used to describe equal participation of women and men. This can concern areas of work, projects, programmes and any other activities or events. Ideally, in a scenario of gender equality women's and men's participation should be proportionate to their share of population. However, in many context women are underrepresented both in proportional and total numbers.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender Based Violence (GBV) defines any harmful act perpetrated on the basis of gender roles. Therefore, GBV varies in nature and extent across cultures and societies. It includes both actions perpetrated by and against individuals and harmful practices embedded in specific contexts (for example honour killings). As act of violence, GBV can be of different kinds, including physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic.

GENDER BLIND

A project, program, policy or activity is considered gender blind if it fails to recognised the impact of ascribed and imposed gender roles on women and men, in specific social, cultural, political and economic contexts. Gender blindness contribute to maintain the status quo, as it does not take into account the diversity of needs and responses, and the power

differentials.

GENDER BUDGETING

Gender budgeting is the application of a gender sensitive approach in the budgetary process. It entails incorporating a gender perspective to the elaboration of budgets and in the monitoring phase. The purpose of gender budgeting is to avoid unforeseen negative impact and to actively promote equality and end discrimination.

GENDER DYNAMICS

Gender dynamics is a term used to describe the relationships and interactions between and among boys, girls, women and men. These dynamics are influenced and informed by socio-cultural components and power relationships. Gender dynamics can reinforce or challenge existing norms, depending on how they are developed, manifested and implemented.

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality refers to equal rights, equal enjoyment of rights, equal opportunities, equal access to resources, justice and other social assets, between men and women. The aim is not to make women and men “the same”, but to ensure that equal chances, opportunities and responsibilities do not depend upon gender nor sexual identity. Gender equality implies that interests, needs and priorities of all individuals are taken into account, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a “women’s only” issue, but concerns societies in their entirety. Equality between women and men is both as a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

- **Formal gender equality**

Formal gender equality (or de jure gender equality) applies when statutory laws explicitly mentions and ensure principles of equality of

women and men, through measures and provisions oriented to equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms, equal treatment and equal access to resources and opportunities in all the fields.

- **Substantive gender equality**

Substantive (or de facto) gender equality means that the formal gender equality is put in place and the equality in and by law is complemented and correspond to equality in impact, outcome and/or results. Substantive gender equality requires specific attention to the broad context of women's disadvantages and the impact of gender-neutral laws on the effort to eliminate those disadvantages in the practice of women's access to rights and resources.

Substantive gender equality is crucial to ensure that women can exercise and fully enjoy all human rights and freedoms and achieve equality in practice, and to eliminate discrimination against women.

GENDER EQUITY

Despite being often used as synonyms equality and equity are two very distinct concepts. The issue is controversial as the use of one term rather than the other significantly vary upon contexts. In itself the notion of equity entails the provision of fairness and justice, in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities. In the case of gender equity this means the recognition of different needs and power and that this must be addressed in a way that rectifies this unbalance.

However, in some cases "gender equity" has been used to perpetuate stereotypes about women's role in society, suggesting that women should be treated 'fairly' in accordance with their roles ((in particular with regard to discriminatory traditions, norms, customs or beliefs). This understanding risks perpetuating unequal gender relations and solidifying gender stereotypes that are detrimental to women, and such use of equity in relation to the advancement of women is unacceptable. Hence, International Human Rights treaties refer to 'equality' rather than equity, as clearly stated by CEDAW Committee in its General Recommendation 28 calling States Parties: "to use exclusively the concepts of equality of women and men or gender equality and not to use the concept of gender equity in implementing their obligations under the Convention".

On the other hand, some grassroots groups consider 'equity' as a better way to ensure fairness as it implies providing different (and adapted) responses to different needs, while equality would simply promote "equal" rights or provisions, disregarding the pre-condition of historical discrimination that affects women. Therefore, in using "gender equity" it should be ensured that this is not masking a reluctance to speak openly about discrimination and inequality.

GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER DIVERSITY

Gender identity is individual experience of one's own gender. It can correlate with assigned biological sex but it can also differ. Gender identity is influenced by social identity: as each society has its own categories gender identity might also change among societies. While most societies are gender binary (male/female), with related models of masculinity and femininity, some present third gender categories.

Unrelated to the specific categories promoted by each given society, in all societies gender identities goes beyond the binary model. This is described as **gender diversity**. Since gender is a personal and social feature gender identity and is not automatically linked to biological characteristics, people might identify in different ways. This variety includes cisgender, transgender, genderfluid, intersex, gender questioning and genderqueer people. The concepts of gender identity and gender diversity are not related to sexual orientation.

GENDERED-IMPACT

Gendered-impact is an expression used to make reference to the diverse impact of a given situation on women and men, in specific society or worldwide. It takes into account the specificities of gender roles and assess how they are affected by political and social processes or dynamics.

It is mostly used with regard to global processes (e.g. gendered-impact of war, corruption, land-grabbing...), but it can be developed with a specific geographic or socio-cultural focus (e.g. gendered-impact of land-grabbing in Africa)

GENDER JUSTICE

Gender Justice can be defined as situation where, de facto and de jure, being a woman or a man does not affect enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights; where differential impact of policies and law is taken into account; balance and proportionality in participation and decision making are in place. In a gender just context, whether at community, society or organisational level (or globally) there should be no explicit nor implicit discrimination nor unbalanced powers relations.

While the impact of gender injustice primarily affects women and girls, achieving gender justice is crucial for the society as a whole.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender mainstreaming is the approach promoted and implemented by the UN system and international community toward realising progress on women's and girls' rights. It is not an independent objective, but rather a strategy towards equality. It mainly refers to the effort to take into account the implications for women and men of any action undertaken.

Gender mainstreaming aims at ensuring design and implementation of projects, programs and policies, in particular in the field of development do not reinforce existing inequalities (nor create new ones), operate to address these inequalities, and ultimately attempt to challenge discriminatory gender roles and relations. More broadly gender mainstreaming aims at integrating gender perspective in projects and programs.

GENDER NEUTRAL

Any project, program or policy is considered gender neutral when it doesn't include any specific attention to gender issues. Gender norms, roles and relations are not impacted in positive nor negative terms. Compared with a gender-blind project a gender neutral one simply does not produce any change from a gender perspective

GENDER PARITY

Parity is mostly about equal representation in numerical terms. Ensuring gender parity is part of gender mainstreaming strategies.

GENDER RELATIONS

Gender relations are a subset of social relations. Hence, they are a social construct, which can be transformed and change over time. The term defines those relations binding women and men intended as social groups in a given community. These include power distribution, access to and control over resources, wealth distribution. Gender relations intersect with other kinds of social relations and contribute to define people roles and identity.

GENDER RESPONSIVE

Gender-responsive programs, projects and policies aim at overcoming gender biases. The aim is to ensure women's engagement and agency, and to achieve a true benefit for women. Furthermore, these actions integrate measures to promote women's empowerment and foster inclusion and equal opportunities. Design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of gender-responsive actions are built upon both women's and men's specific concerns, needs, and experiences.

GENDER SENSITIVE

In gender sensitive programs, projects or policies gender is considered a means to reach development goals. Societal and cultural factors involved in gender-based exclusion and discrimination are taken into account. Gender sensitive programs, projects and policies focus on instances of structural disadvantage of women's position.

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE

In gender transformative approach promoting gender equality considered fundamental, including to achieve positive development outcomes. Gender norms, biases and relations are explicitly targeted, addressed and challenge in all areas of work.

HARASSMENT (SEXUAL)

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence: the unwanted and unwelcome behaviour of oppressing and produce vulnerability through sexual attention and interest. It includes the so called 'quid pro quo' harassment (where sex is provided in exchange for something, either a benefit or avoidance of detriment) and 'hostile environment' harassment (which consists in intimidating and hostile behaviour affecting a whole group of people). Sexual harassment can be verbal, non verbal/visual, and physical and can take place in work environment, domestic and public spaces.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are commonly understood as being those rights which are inherent to the human being. Human rights are guaranteed by human rights law and customary international law; including specific Conventions, treaties and other legal instruments at international and nation level, protecting individual and groups against violations. Human rights law places an obligation on States to act in a particular way and prevents from undertaking specified actions.

All human rights and human rights instruments equally apply to men and women. In addition, the CEDAW provides a specific focus and attention to women's rights.

INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING

Inclusive decision-making refers to a situation where all members of a given community are involved in the process that leads to specific decision. While not exclusively related to gender issues, inclusiveness particularly

concerns the role played by women, which are often marginalised or excluded because of existing gender roles and dynamics, and de jure and de facto discrimination.

INDICATORS (GENDER SENSITIVE)

Gender indicators are a tool used in monitoring and evaluation processes. They aim at monitoring gender-related impact, changes and progress. They include sex-disaggregated data, but goes beyond that. In general indicators are statistics with a reference point useful to make value assessments. Indicators are normative in nature, so that a change from the reference point can be interpreted as positive or negative result. In the case of gender statistics the parameter is usually the situation of men in the same context (country, workplace, region, field etc.). In a few gender specific cases (mostly related to maternity) the parameter is the situation of women in another country or context. Indicators are both quantitative and qualitative.

Gender-sensitive indicators allow for the measurement of changes in the relations between women and men in a certain policy area, programme or activity, as well as changes in the status or situation of women and men.

INHERITANCE RIGHTS

Different legal provisions regulate inheritance rights according to the legal tradition of each context. These provisions regulates how and to whom, goods and property are transmitted after the death of a given holder. Inheritance rights might be regulated through the use of wills. From a women's land rights perspective inheritance law is crucial as in many context widows are de facto or de jure excluded by land and property inheritance.

LGBTQ

Acronym standing for individuals from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer/Questioning Community. A more inclusive term is LGBTQI (I standing for intersex) or LGBTQ+ (to include Intersex people and

anyone else not recognising one self into an heteronormative identity). All the variations of the acronym encompass individuals who have a non-normative gender identity or sexuality.

MARGINALISED GROUPS

Groups of people at risk of multiple discrimination due to the interplay of different elements, including sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, health status, geographical situation, education or income. Marginalisation is context-dependent. Becoming to a marginalised group in a given context, heightens the exposure to violations, discrimination and inequalities, and hamper access to rights, goods and services in a variety of domains (such as education, justice, housing, healthcare and employment).

MASCULINITY

Notion referring to what it means to be a men, including patterns and gender roles leading to a socially and historically constructed imagery about of what men ought to be. Masculinity is often considered **hegemonic** with regard to the automatic and implicit links between power and masculinity.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION (GENDER SENSITIVE)

Part of gender mainstreaming, gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation(sometimes referred as gender-specific monitoring and evaluation) integrates gender equality concerns into the evaluation objectives, methodologies and approaches.

Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is used to reveal whether a programme addresses the different priorities and needs of women and men, and whether it produced a positive impact on gender dynamics.

Gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation relies on gender sensitive indicators. To be effective it also requires a preliminary gender sensitive planning, in order to ensure responsiveness and coherence. Both quantitative and qualitative data are crucial to effectively measure

impact. Therefore sex-disaggregated data are the minimum fundamental component of gender-sensitive/gender specific 'gender-specific monitoring and evaluation'

PATRIARCHY

Patriarchy refers to values and societal structure that institutionalise or reinforce male physical, social and economic predominance in societies. It refers etymologically to the power (arché) of the father (pater) and characterises anthropological and cultural traditions in several parts of the world. In a feminist discourse patriarchy is mentioned as the most grounded and relevant obstacle against achieving equal rights for women. It is also often connected to heteronormativity, machismo and sexism against women and LGBT people.

QUOTAS

A quota consist in defining a proportion (percentages or places) to be allocated to women in a given situation, in order to accelerate the achievement of gender balance in participation or representation. Hence, is a positive measurement instrument applied to correct a situation of imbalance, ensure inclusion of women and to promote equal access to training and opportunities. Gender quotas can be used in public political arena (such as parliaments), in economic life (for example corporate boards) or in educational contexts.

Quotas may be mandated by specific laws (constitution, electoral, labour or gender equality laws) or be applied on a voluntary basis (political parties, associations, independent bodies).

While the system of quotas is used also on other targets, gender-balance related quotas are the most commonly used worldwide.

SEX

Biological distinction between men and women.

SEXISM

Any action or attitude that contributes to discriminate a person solely on gender identity: most of sexist behaviour target women. However, sexism does not concern binary opposition between sexes or gender identities as women can be sexist too with regard to other women.

Sexism is linked to power and stereotypes: those with power are typically treated with favour and are often those who discriminate and sexist attitudes are often based on false beliefs and generalisations about gender differences.

Sexism can be encountered both in institutional and informal contexts (work place, family, educational situation, media, political discourse). Sexism can be more or less explicit, and sexist attitudes are often interiorised, so that people do not recognise their own behaviours as sexist, and hence discriminatory.

- **Non-sexist use of language**

Non-sexist use of language focus on the effort to avoid implicit or explicit sexist behaviour when speaking or writing.

It applies to languages that presents gendered nouns and pronouns and its basic norm is to avoid ambiguous generic masculine in the grammatical forms of nouns.

It also consists in discriminatory expressions describing women and men in terms of physical appearance or attributed gender-roles by sex.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION/INCLUSION

Social exclusion, is a process of exclusion that creates a situation of social disadvantage, excludes people from social fabric and systematically prevent from access to rights, opportunities and resources normally available. This includes lack of access to housing, healthcare, resources, education, employment and democratic participation. The consequence is that people are relegate to the fringe of society. Social exclusion is a major concern in all parts of the world and in diverse economic systems. Addressing social exclusion is crucial to achieve SDGs and respond to persistent inequalities.

Social inclusion is a positive process that aims at responding to social exclusion ensuring that everyone, individuals and groups, have access to human rights (in particular economic, social and cultural) and services. It also has a psychological and emotional component as it implies that people needs, feelings and actions are valued.

STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are generalisations: they consist in attributing a set of common features to a specific group of people (by ethnicity, class, nationality, religion, culture or gender) assuming that all the individuals belonging to that group will conform to those traits.

Hence, gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas about roles and characteristics assigned to female and male members of the society. These stereotypes can limit or strongly affect the development of talents and competences of women and men as well as their access to professional and life opportunities. Stereotypes about women, in particular, are the results but also the cause of deeply engrained discriminatory attitudes and prejudices. Gender stereotypes are often used to justify and maintain the imbalance of power and sexist attitudes.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW)

VAW is defined by the art. 1 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, as: “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.

Three contexts of violence are identified by CEDAW: Family, community and state.

Violence against women, encompass physical, sexual, emotional, economic and psychological violence occurring within the family and within the general community (including work places and educational institutions). It also includes harmful practices, trafficking and forced prostitution. Violence against women might also be perpetrated or condoned by the State.

- **Domestic violence**

The most common case of violence against women, consisting in a pattern of abusive and threatening behaviours, including all the forms of violence mentioned above and reinforced by intimidation, isolation and coercion, perpetrated by intimate partners to exert power and control.

Because they occur in intimate relationships and often within the household, domestic abuse is often not recognised as violence, for instance, sexual violence in marriage is not considered rape in some countries.

WIDOWS

State laws, norms or customary practices sometimes exclude widows from inheritance rights, this often results in land and property grabbing. This is particularly serious for women living in rural areas which are often dependent on their land and are evicted by their relatives after their husband's death. Widows' challenges in having access to justice contributes to their difficulties in claiming their rights. Ensuring the rights of women who are head of households contributes to protecting the right of widows

WOMEN'S AGENCY, LEADERSHIP AND VOICE

Agency refers to the capacity of a person or a group to act independently and be proactive agent of change. Leadership is the capacity to act as leader or representative of a group or community. It also concerns the competence to mobilise people and influence processes of change. Agency and leadership are both about gaining space within a community or an organisation. Women's agency, leadership and voice are crucial elements of women's empowerment processes.

These three elements are strongly interlinked. While in several societies women's voices are barely heard, women's leadership is difficult and women's agency is challenged the combination of them is crucial to achieve gender equality.

WOMEN'S EQUAL RIGHTS

Women's equal rights respond to the idea of equality of women and men in access to civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights

WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

Women's land rights are crucial to end poverty and discrimination. Women's land rights refers to all the rights related to access, use, control and ownership over land.

Women's land rights are inked to the protection and achievement of other human rights rights, such as the rights to life, housing, food and health.

Women's land rights are more comprehensive than the idea of women's access to land, as they encompass the importance of women's decision making role, agency and autonomy (in terms of use and control).

For the same reason they are also more comprehensive than the idea of ownership, which in certain cases could be just a legal recognition with no practical effect.

WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Women's human rights defenders (WHRDs) are women who engage in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also refers to all people who commit to the defence of women's rights and to the realisation of gender justice and equal rights. WHRDs act under the protection of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of 1999.

As all human rights defenders WHRDs face risks connected to their activism to uphold human rights, however, as women, they also face gender-specific risks and might be target of gender-based violence.

Their work is often seen as challenging sociocultural norms, gender roles, and notions of the family.

WORK-FAMILY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance and work-family balance refer to balance between work related activities and other activities, related to personal and family responsibilities and other important life priorities. Achieving balance between work and family life is fundamental to promote equal opportunity.

While work-life balance is a concern for both men and women, work-family balance is more often mentioned about women, with an implicit reference to motherhood and gender divisions of labour. This lack of balance contributes to reinforcing gender inequalities as the conflict between family responsibilities and work-related demands significantly influence women's disadvantage in the labour market.

Work and societal arrangements should be sufficiently flexible to enable workers of both sexes to engage in other activities and ensuring work-life balance; work and societal arrangements should also take into account existing discrimination and imbalance in terms of work-family responsibilities and contribute to redress them and ensure equal sharing of responsibilities in the household and in the workplace.

FURTHER READING:

[Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)

[ECBI, Pocket Guide to Gender Equality under the UNFCCC](#)

[EIGE, Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus](#)

[FAO, AGROVOC](#)

[IFAD, Glossary on gender issues](#)

[Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, Glossary on gender-related terms](#)

[OSCE, Glossary on gender-related terms](#)

[UNWomen, Gender Equality Glossary](#)

[USAID, Glossary on gender terms and concepts](#)

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