

# Infrastructure and Sustainable Development: Making infrastructure investments work for women and girls

Side event of the Second Committee  
73<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Assembly

16 October 2018

3 pm – 6 pm

United Nations Headquarters, New York  
Conference Room 2

## **Background**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has reinforced the recognition that infrastructure forms the backbone of modern societies and that inadequate access to infrastructure and its services prevents the realization of human rights, perpetuates inequality, and hampers progress towards environmental sustainability. Furthermore, we have overwhelming evidence to show how the absence of adequate infrastructure disproportionately affects the most disadvantaged, especially women and girls.

A recent study by the G20's Global Infrastructure Hub has shown that there is a current infrastructure investment gap of USD 97 trillion to meet global needs by 2040. The need to invest in infrastructure and provide scalable solutions is evident, but how can they be financed, particularly in low-income countries where the gaps are greatest and the capacity of most households to pay user charges lowest?

- How can infrastructure investments be harnessed most effectively to create synergies between environmental sustainability and gender equality by both reducing women's disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, *and* enhancing the productivity of their economic activities and opening up new employment opportunities?
- What kind of support is needed to build capacity in countries to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, and the principle of 'leaving no one behind' is a part the design and delivery of every investment?
- Where could the international community be the most useful?
- What role is there for different stakeholders, including government, the private sector, and civil society?

UN-Women and UNOPS have co-organized this side event bringing together a group of leading experts to explore some of the key policy choices facing countries as they seek to address gaps in their capacity to effectively plan, deliver, and manage sustainable, resilient, inclusive, and gender-responsive infrastructure.

### **Moderator**

- **Anneli Lepp**, Rapporteur, Second Committee

### **Opening remarks**

- **Åsa Regnér**, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, UN Women
- **Nick O'Regan**, Director, Infrastructure and Project Management Group, UNOPS

### **Panelists**

- **Richard Kozul-Wright**, Director, Globalization and Development Strategies Division, UNCTAD  
The big picture: the infrastructure challenge and implications for gender equality
- **Natalie Elwell**, Senior Gender Adviser, World Resources Institute  
Infrastructure for All: how we can build our environment to advance gender equality
- **Sonal Shah**, Independent Consultant, India  
Integrating a gender perspective in urban transport
- **Prof. Jim Hall**, Director of the Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford  
Infrastructure can't fulfil its essential role in the 2030 Agenda without gender mainstreaming