

**FIRST MEETING OF THE PGA'S ADVISORY BOARD ON GENDER EQUALITY
13 NOVEMBER 2023**

INFORMAL SUMMARY

On 13 November 2023, the President of the General Assembly for its seventy-eighth session, H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, convened the first meeting of his Advisory Board on Gender Equality.

Introduction by PGA

PGA highlighted the need for the UN to lead by example on gender equality and the role that the Advisory Board can play in creating an inclusive work environment at the UN and beyond. It was stressed that Ambassador Keisha McGuire has been appointed as the PGA's Special Envoy and Special Adviser on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and she will coordinate the work of the Board on his behalf.

PGA identified key opportunities for gender mainstreaming such as the Summit of the Future in 2024, the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, a *Gayap Dialogue* as well as relevant international days and campaigns. He expressed his commitment to the gender parity mandate given by the GA revitalization resolution and to promoting women's leadership in the UN.

Building on the efforts of his predecessors, PGA announced that he will launch the 2nd phase of the training campaign on gender equality and the prevention of sexual harassment, in partnership with UN-Women, and continue to work with the Board towards establishing an emergency daycare at UNHQ.

Key points from the interactive discussion

1. Gender mainstreaming in the General Assembly

Members of the Board expressed support for PGA's priority on gender equality and welcomed the appointment of the Special Envoy and Special Adviser on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. It was noted that the General Assembly acknowledged the work of the previous Advisory Board through its latest resolution on GA revitalization, which encouraged future PGAs to continue the practice of convening an Advisory Board on Gender Equality.

Several participants expressed concerns about the general pushback on gender issues in the General Assembly deliberations and sought PGA's support to rebuild the trust among delegations, including through the holding of a *Gayap Dialogue* on the topic.

The Summit of the Future was identified as one of the key opportunities for gender mainstreaming during the current session, and participants recommended inviting the co-facilitators to the next meeting of the Board. Some Board members suggested exploring options to express support for the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan and Gaza.

In terms of gender parity within the General Assembly, participants commended PGA's efforts to ensure gender parity in the appointment of co-facilitators and co-chairs of General Assembly processes as well as in the selection of panellists for GA meetings and other events. Further efforts are needed to promote women's leadership in the General Assembly for positions where nominations are submitted by Member States.

2. Training campaign

PGA informed the participants of his intention to launch the 2nd phase of the joint campaign, in partnership with UN-Women, encouraging all staff at Permanent Missions to complete the online UN trainings on gender equality and the prevention of sexual harassment. The goal is to have all 193 Permanent Missions in New York join the campaign, up from the 44 Missions who joined in the 1st phase. Board members also supported the expansion of this campaign to other UNHQ locations (Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi) and proposed to leverage informal groups and alliances in support of the campaign.

3. Establishment of an emergency daycare at UNHQ

The Department of Operational Support (DOS) provided an update on the initiative, highlighting the administrative and legal challenges while proposing some options to move forward with the project. DOS recommended hiring a third-party childcare provider to operate the daycare. In terms of governance, DOS outlined two broad options to solve the challenges surrounding the current board which has become inoperable. Board members expressed strong support for the emergency daycare which is an important part of creating a more equal and inclusive work environment. It was further highlighted that Member State funding is currently available to support the project, and the timely utilization of available funding was stressed.

4. Other recommendations:

- Proposal to update General Assembly Rules of Procedure to use gender neutral language (requires GA decision).
- Utilize informal networks of women diplomats to build partnerships for common objectives.
- Mobilize men for gender equality through initiatives such as the Barbershop.
- Invite prominent figures on women's empowerment to speak at upcoming GA events.

Conclusion

PGA thanked Members of the Board for their active participation and innovative ideas presented during the meeting. The President expressed his wish to continue to work closely with Board members to transform these ideas into concrete action that would make a positive impact. The date and venue of the next Advisory Board meeting will be announced in due course.

Annex:

List of participants

- H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly
- H.E. Mr. Collen Kelapile, Chef de Cabinet of the PGA
- H.E. Ms. Keisha A. McGuire, PGA's Special Envoy and Special Advisor on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- H.E. Mrs. Egriselda Aracely González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador
- H.E. Mr. Jörundur Valtýsson, Permanent Representative of Iceland
- H.E. Ms. Thilmeeza Hussain, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives
- H.E. Mr. Antonio Manuel Revilla Lagdameo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines
- H.E. Mrs. Pascale Christine Baeriswyl, Permanent Representative of Switzerland
- Mrs. Krassimira Tzoneva Beshkova, Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative, on behalf of H.E. Ms. Lachazera Stoeva, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria
- Ms. Almaha Mubarak F. J. Al-thani, Third Secretary, on behalf of H.E. Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar
- Ms. Sanda Ojiambo, CEO and Executive Director, UN Global Compact
- Mr. Moez Doraid, Deputy Executive Director for UN Coordination, Partnerships, Resources and Sustainability, a.i., on behalf of Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Executive-Director of UN-Women
- Mr. Miguel Mourato Gordo, Director of Human Resources, on behalf of Ms. Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (Observer)
- Mr. Patrick Carey, Director of Administration, on behalf of Mr. Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support (Observer)
- Mr. Rio Hada, Chief of Equality, Development and Rule of Law Section, on behalf of Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York
- Ms. Pamela Morgan, Co-chair of NGO Committee on the Status of Women
- Ms. Cecile Noel, Commissioner of the NYC Mayor's Office to End Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence