



**President of the
General Assembly**
79th Session



SECOND MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S ADVISORY BOARD ON GENDER EQUALITY

14 May 2025

INFORMAL SUMMARY

On 14 May 2025, H.E. Mr. Philemon Yang, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session, convened the second meeting of the Advisory Board on Gender Equality focused on “promoting women’s economic empowerment by supporting safe workplaces including addressing technology facilitated harassment and violence”.

Introduction by the President of the General Assembly

In his opening remarks, the President of the General Assembly stressed that ensuring safety in the workplace, free from harassment and violence, was essential to achieving women’s full economic empowerment and participation. He noted that sexual harassment affected more women than men influencing their decision to remain in the labor force and, resulting in an annual cost of \$2.6 billion in lost productivity. He noted that technology was compounding the issue, and this called for greater cooperation among governments, the private sector and civil society.

He underlined the importance of raising awareness of these issues. He announced his intention to convene a seminar on sexual harassment and the link to technology-facilitated harassment and violence against women for Permanent Missions and welcomed Board members’ inputs to shape the content.

Key takeaways from the interactive discussion

Impact of harassment on women

Rapid advances in technology have created new sites of violence against women, with one study estimating that between 16 and 58 per cent of women and girls have been affected. It takes many forms such as the creation of deepfakes, doxing, misinformation, trolling, hate speech, hacking, and stalking. In some cases, online violence may lead to incidents offline. Understanding and addressing the growing challenges of technology-facilitated violence is essential to protecting women’s rights in both public and professional domains. Members noted that lack of digital safety undermined women’s economic empowerment by impacting their ability to remain in the workforce, reducing their presence online for e-commerce, other work uses or for social use leading to a heavy physical, mental and financial toll.

Addressing discrimination and social norms

Education, particularly from an early age, was considered a powerful tool to challenge harmful social norms. Involving boys and young men in reshaping attitudes toward gender and violence and challenging misogynistic narratives in online spaces were some of the strategies shared to tackle this issue. Additionally, members stressed the importance of raising awareness among women about their rights related to access and use of digital technology.

Legislation, regulatory frameworks and safeguards

While more than 151 countries have adopted measures on sexual harassment in the workplace, only 75 address online sexual harassment. Members discussed the gaps of current legal and other regulatory frameworks in addressing the different forms of technology facilitated violence against women. Reviewing current laws and adopting new ones in line with international norms and standards was considered essential to protect and respond to technology facilitated violence against women.

Members pointed to normative frameworks such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW), the Violence and Harassment Convention (ILO Convention 190), and the Global Digital Compact as guiding instruments on what action needs to be taken. These frameworks provide opportunities for aligning global standards and supporting national implementation efforts.

International cooperation was a key strategy proposed to address the challenge of prosecuting crimes committed through online platforms hosted by companies abroad, that may be out of reach of domestic laws in the countries where victims live.

To ensure user safety, it was stressed that relying only on companies' internal policies was insufficient. Rather, it was necessary for governments to regulate technology companies, with emphasis on the development of safety-by-default features for digital platforms and Artificial Intelligence systems. However, even in the absence of such regulatory frameworks or internal institutional policies, members noted that companies ought to be required to adhere to international human rights standards. Some examples were shared on how to ensure everyone enjoyed the benefits of technology. For example, engaging in "techplomacy" as a way of connecting governments and tech companies, promoting responsible investing in Artificial Intelligence and performance scoreboards as incentives to encourage accountability and transparency from corporate actors.

Women in technology

Supporting more girls and women to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) was another critical pathway for getting more women into the technology sector. In this way, working on the design and development of these technologies could address biases and lead

to more inclusive digital and Artificial Intelligence tools including the development of large language models. During the discussion members noted that it was essential to also address the quality of the jobs that technology was creating and ensure that women's contribution was recognized. One of the concerns raised was the psychological effect of data scrubbing on young women in the global south, which exposed them to violent images and words with no mental health support provided to them.

Increasing women's participation in leadership roles in the technology space was underscored as a strategic way to shape the culture of companies toward a more inclusive environment and the design of innovative and safe technologies.

Recommendations

- Members highlighted key processes and upcoming events which could be used for advocacy to call for collective action, using the messages and recommendations from the Board. These include ECOSOC, the High-Level Political Forum in July 2025 focusing on the review of SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, the Secretary General's panel on Artificial Intelligence and the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies.
- The Beijing +30 Action Agenda was highlighted as an opportunity for Member States to commit to actions aligned with their national priorities and develop roadmaps to address among other things, how to ensure women and girls could reap the economic benefits of the digital revolution through access to new skills, opportunities and services.
- Members recommended that PGA undertake a training campaign on preventing sexual harassment for New York delegates.

Conclusion

The President of the General Assembly expressed his deep appreciation to all members for their insights and reaffirmed his intention to draw from these discussions in his continued advocacy for gender equality, women's economic empowerment and equal access to new technologies.

Annex: List of Participants

1. H.E. Mrs. Marie-Thérèse Abena Ondoa, Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family of Cameroon
2. H.E. Ms. Sandra Jensen Landi, Deputy Permanent Representative on behalf of Christina Markus Lassen, Permanent Representative of Denmark
3. H.E. Mrs. Egriselda Aracely González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador
4. Ms. Kristel Lõuk Deputy Permanent Representative on behalf of H.E. Mr. Rein Tammsaar, Permanent Representative of Estonia
5. Mr. Robert Kayinamura, Deputy Permanent Representative of Rwanda
6. Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Executive Director, UN Women
7. Ms. Tonilyn Lim, Programme Head, UN Global Compact on behalf of Ms. Sanda Ojiambo, Executive director, UN Global Compact
8. Professor Rangita de Silva de Alwis, University of Pennsylvania Law School and Member of the Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
9. Ms. Analisa Leonor Balares, CEO, Womensphere Global Institute and Humansphere Foundation
10. Ms. Pamela Morgan, Co-chair of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women
11. Ms. Rina Amiri, Senior Diplomat and Independent Policy Advisor.