

International Equal Pay Day 2025 Event:

The EPIC Debate

Thursday, 18 September 2025

TIME: 17:00 – 19:00

Venue: ILO Office

1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plz # 30, New York City

Background

International Equal Pay Day, observed annually on 18 September, draws global attention to one of the most persistent indicators of inequality in the world of work: the gender pay gap, which currently stands on average, at 20 per cent globally¹. Despite progress in many sectors, pay inequities persist, highlighting the need for practical, scalable, and inclusive solutions that can work across diverse economic and workplace realities.

At a time when labour markets appear to be weakening, there are widening inequalities, and mounting challenges to multilateralism, our collaborative message must be even more powerful: equal pay for work of equal value is a fundamental matter of labour and human rights, social justice, and economic resilience, and a strategic priority for building competitive and sustainable enterprises.

As a Fundamental Convention, the ILO's Equal Remuneration Convention (C100) directly addresses the principle of equal pay for men and women for work of equal value. International Labour Standards (ILS) emphasize the crucial role of workers' and employers' organizations in achieving this goal through social dialogue, with Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining at its core

In the lead-up to the [Second World Summit for Social Development](#) (WSS-WSSD2) in November 2025, which seeks to reaffirm global solidarity, commitment to poverty eradication and full and productive employment with decent work for all building the foundations for a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world, this event will highlight how pay equity contributes to the social dimension of sustainable development.

To celebrate International Equal Pay Day 2025, EPIC will host a side event, organized back-to-back with the EPIC Technical and Steering Committee meetings. This gathering will underscore the importance of whole-of-society approaches bringing together governments, the social partners and other stakeholders, such as academia, civil society organizations and the private sector, in driving transformative change—especially in a global context marked by economic, environmental, and social changes.

The event will feature a dynamic “*EPIC Debate*”, between a representative each from employers’ and workers’ organizations. The debate is intended to foster an open, thought-provoking discussion on the challenges, and opportunities and solutions for achieving equal pay for work of equal value. During

¹ ILO. 2024. [Global Wage Report 2024–25: Is wage inequality decreasing globally?](#) Geneva: International Labour Office.)

the debate, participants from the floor will also be invited to engage, ensuring that the conversation reflects a wide range of voices and perspectives.

The event will conclude with an informal reception, providing an open and welcoming space to deepen exchanges, strengthen collaborations, and encourage mutual support across stakeholders working towards closing the discriminatory gender pay gap.

In line with the themes of the World Social Summit and broader efforts toward social development, the EPIC side event will be both a celebration of progress made and a call to action, affirming that closing the gender pay gap is not an optional ambition, but a necessary step toward achieving social justice, equality, and sustainable economic development for all.

Event Objectives

The EPIC high-level side event aims to:

- Reaffirm the global commitment to closing the discriminatory gender pay gap as a fundamental principle and right at work, a key pillar of social justice, sustainable development, and economic resilience, in alignment with the spirit of the upcoming World Social Summit.
- Reinforce equal pay for work of equal value as a shared goal that benefits workers, businesses and society at large.
- Highlight the urgency of achieving equal pay for work of equal value and position pay equity as a human right and social development imperative.
- Facilitate a dynamic dialogue and exchange among participants through an open and engaging EPIC Debate.
- Strengthen networks of collaboration and mutual support among stakeholders committed to achieving gender pay equity, fostering whole-of-society approaches that are essential for transformative and sustainable progress.
- Amplify the visibility of EPIC's mission and expand its reach, encouraging deeper engagement and wider alliances in the global movement toward pay equity.

Agenda

Time	Segment	Speaker(s)
17:00-17:04	EPIC video is played to mark the beginning of the event	
17:04-17:07	Welcoming remarks	Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon , Special Representative to the UN and Director of the ILO Office for the United Nations
17:07-17:10	Opening remarks	Maíra Lacerda , Chair of EPIC, Head of the Special Advisory Office for International Affairs at the Ministry of Labor and Employment, Brazil
17:10-18:10	The EPIC debate	Moderator: Bathylle Missika , Head of the Division for Inclusive Development and Partnerships OECD Development Centre <u>Debaters:</u> Employer representative: Shea Gopaul , IOE Permanent Representative to the UN

		<p>Worker representative: Paola Simonetti, Director, Equality Department, ITUC</p> <p>Representatives from governments, civil society and academia (TBC from the audience)</p>
18:10-18:13	Closing and key takeaways	Seemin Qayum , Policy Advisor, Sustainable Development and OIC of the Economic Empowerment section at UN Women
18:15-19:00	Reception	

Key Information

Format: the event will be held in person only

Audience: Approximately 60 participants are expected, including representatives from the United Nations, governments and their permanent missions, the private sector, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society, and academia. EPIC members attending the EPIC Technical and Steering Committee meetings in New York will also be present.

Language: The event will be held in English

Food and beverage: Following the event, drinks and a selection of finger food will be served (buffet style), offering participants an opportunity to continue networking in an informal setting.