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# GLOBAL GOALS WEEK

Gender Equality, the Mother of all SDGs:  
SDG 5 as the Foundation to Sustainable Development

Women's Pavilion Programming, in partnership with World Majlis

## Session Agenda

**Date:**

Monday January 17th, 2022

**Time:**

Meet at 2:00 – 2:30 PM at the Women's Pavilion Majlis  
Fireside discussion 3:00 PM - 3:20 PM Dubai Time  
Panel discussion on stage 3:25 PM - 4:30 PM Dubai Time

Women's Pavilion tour 5:00 PM - 5:30 PM Dubai Time

**Venue:**

Women's Pavilion – Majlis (Floor 1)

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**Without gender equality, we cannot hope to achieve fully any of the other Global Goals. Only when women thrive, humanity will thrive. Progress needs to take place on many levels, but especially in the intangible area of harmful stereotypes and (invisible) societal gender norms.**

We still have a long way to go before we achieve gender equality, about 36 years longer today than we did two years ago (World Economic Forum). The pandemic highlighted and exacerbated inequalities, as sectors dominated by women were hardest hit and much of society fell back to old gender norms with women as (unpaid) caregivers and men as providers. And the pandemic is just one example of women being disproportionately impacted.

If we want to push forward the essence of the Global Goals, emphasizing their sustainability, we need to start with addressing gender equality. Gender equality (or the lack thereof) feeds into issues of poverty, climate change, and education. As a result of lower wages, a lack of decent work leading to reliance on the informal economy, and unpaid care work, women are more likely than men to live in poverty (Oxfam). Women are also more likely to experience adverse effects of climate change, in part due to disparities in economic opportunities, unequal access to resources, and barriers to political participation (UNDP). Girls are less likely to receive an education than boys, with only 49 percent of countries having achieved gender parity in primary education (UNICEF). In sum, women tend to bear the brunt of many of our global issues.

## Overview and Key Questions

A common factor to all these issues are the stereotypes and (invisible) gender norms held by society that prevent women from full participation in society and achieving their full potential. In 2020, a study by Pew research found that a median of 40% of those surveyed agreed with the notion that men should have more right to a job than women when jobs are scarce, while 56% disagreed. This number has remained almost unchanged in countries where previous data is available. Reworking perspectives like this one and eliminating the narratives that hold young girls and women back are amongst the most powerful tools we have to bring about a highly necessary paradigm shift on gender roles in society.

Gender equality cuts across all SDGs. So, whether the goal is to generate sustainable economic growth and end poverty, stop climate change, or improve access to education, we need to ensure women and girls are an equal part of the solution.

- Over the decades we have identified the necessary reforms needed in our legal systems and institutions for gender equality to happen. We know what capacity building measures, investments and other steps we need to take. Why then does implementation remain slow?
- How can we better bring to life the cross-cutting nature of SDG5 for all the Global Goals in our development programming? Both with regard to institutional setup, mainstreaming, and the quality of underlying data?
- How can we track progress on gender equality in more intangible spaces such as the elimination of (invisible) societal gender norms and stereotypes?

Please join us in this Women's World Majlis to share your insights and collectively contribute to building a gender-equitable future.

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**Hind Alowais**

Senior Vice President of International Participants for International Organizations and Non-Official Participants, Expo 2020 Dubai, UAE

Currently, Ms. Alowais is the Senior Vice President of the International Participants Department at Expo 2020 Dubai where she oversees the presence and participation of international and intergovernmental organizations, and a wide range of stakeholders including global and local NGOs, academic institutions, philanthropic foundations, and global initiatives. In this role, Ms. Alowais led on establishing the Women's Pavilion and developing the strategic partnership with Cartier to create a space that tackles the agenda of gender equality and women's empowerment in a meaningful way.



Before taking up a position at EXPO2020, Ms. Alowais was the first Emirati national to hold a senior position at the United Nations Entity for Advancement for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women). Ms. Alowais was also previously the Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of the UAE to the United Nations in New York. She has worked on key security files such as the Syria conflict, Combatting Piracy in Somalia, and disarmament issues before becoming actively involved in the Rio+20 process and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ms. Alowais also worked for the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 15 years. Following stations in Beirut and New York, she played a central role in the UAE's successful campaign to host the International Renewable Energy Agency in Abu Dhabi. She also served as Special Assistant to UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs, HH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and advised on key policy issues. Her work focused on multilateral diplomacy and on supporting the advancement of the UAE's agenda at the UN.

In her work for the EXPO 2020 and the Women's Pavilion, Ms. Alowais draws upon these experiences to push forward the gender equality and women's empowerment discourse across all sectors.

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## Fireside chat

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### **Rt. Hon. Helen Clark**

Former Prime Minister of New Zealand; Former Administrator of UNDP

#### **Virtual participation**

Helen Clark was Prime Minister of New Zealand for three successive terms from 1999–2008.

Throughout her tenure as Prime Minister and as a Member of Parliament over 27 years, Helen Clark engaged widely in policy development and advocacy across the international, economic, social, environmental, and cultural spheres. She advocated strongly for New Zealand's comprehensive programme on sustainability and for tackling the problems of climate change. She was an active leader of her country's foreign relations, engaging in a wide range of international issues.



In April 2009, Helen Clark became Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She was the first woman to lead the organisation and served two terms there. At the same time, she was also Chair of the United Nations Development Group, a committee consisting of all UN funds, programmes, agencies, and departments working on development issues. As Administrator, she led UNDP to be ranked the most transparent global development organisation. She completed her tenure in 2017.

Helen continues to be a strong voice for sustainable development, climate action, gender equality and women's leadership, peace and justice, and action on pressing global health issues. In July 2020, she was appointed by the Director-General of the World Health Organisation as a Co-Chair of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, called for by the World Health Assembly, which will report in May this year. She chairs the boards of the Extractive Industries Transparency Organisation, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and of other public good organisations and initiatives.

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## Extended panel

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### **HE Epsy Campbell Barr**

Vice President and Foreign Minister, Costa Rica

Epsy Campbell Barr is the First Vice President of the Republic of Costa Rica (2018-2022).



She is an economist with Master's Degrees in International Cooperation for Development, and Advanced Management Techniques in Political Decision. She served as a Member of Parliament during the periods 2002-2006 and 2014-2018. HE Campbell Barr was a member of the Advisory Panel for UNDP's 2016 Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean titled, "Multidimensional Progress: Well-Being Beyond Income" and coordinated the 2016 Meeting of Parliamentarians and Political Leaders of African Descent of the Americas and the Caribbean.

She has spoken at numerous academic, governmental and civil society events in the United States and the Caribbean. HE Campbell Barr is particularly concerned with human rights, issues related to women, indigenous and afro-descendant people, poverty, social development and the environment.

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**HE. Hon. Mrs. Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah**  
Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare, Mauritius



Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah holds a Kingdom BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences, and United Kingdom Certificate in MPharm Pharmacy from the University of Brighton. Her initial specialization was on Infectious Disease in Developing Countries and she has been published in the prestigious Journal of School of Pharmacy, London. Her career includes being the Avacare Health International Mauritius Lead Regulatory Officer and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life Mauritius Assistant Permanent Secretary.

She is Currently the Hon Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare and has been assuming the role since November 2019. HE. Hon. Mrs. Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah is also an avid reader, writer and enjoys horse riding, rugby and cricket.

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**Ms Sonja Hyland**  
Deputy Secretary General Global Issues, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland



A career diplomat since 1996, Ms Sonja Hyland is currently Deputy Secretary General Global Issues at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Formerly, she has been the Ambassador to Ethiopia, South Sudan, Djibouti, the African Union, and IGAD (2017 – 2019) and Ambassador to Mexico, Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru from 2013 - 2017. Other posts have included Political Director, Director for Trade Promotion and Economic Messaging, Deputy Director for Multilateral Affairs, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassies of Ireland in Stockholm and Madrid, and Ireland's Representative to the Political-Military Group at the Perm Rep in Brussels.

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## Appendix

### Expo 2020 Dubai, the Women's Pavilion and the World Majlis programme

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#### EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Since the first Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, Expos have connected people and provided special spaces to spark dialogue amongst those who are curious about the future.

Running from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022, Expo 2020 Dubai will bring the world together to imagine, design and build a more sustainable, dignified and prosperous world. One that is cleaner, safer and healthier. One inspired by collective action around shared challenges, and in which future generations will flourish. Under the theme of "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future" and our three sub-themes of Sustainability, Mobility and Opportunity, Expo will be a platform for positive, collaborative change.

#### THE WOMEN'S PAVILION AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Our Women's Pavilion, under the exhibition title 'New Perspectives', is a critical component of this vision and will be curated by Expo 2020 Dubai in collaboration with Cartier. In highlighting the positive contributions of women, we will demonstrate that when women thrive, so too does all of humanity.

The UAE has dedicated itself to ensuring that issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) are centrally addressed in everything we do at Expo 2020 Dubai. By shining a light on women past and present, known and unknown, the Women's Pavilion challenges the misconceptions that women still frequently face, seeks out new perspectives on the impact women bring to our world, explores new approaches to creating a more equal world, and identifies ways in which we, together, can create new perspectives, change deep-rooted perceptions, and adjust mindsets.

Through different modes of convening, our goal is to highlight that the only way to peace, prosperity, and sustainability is through the full and equal participation of women.

#### WORLD MAJLIS PROGRAMME

Deeply rooted in the traditions of the UAE, the Majlis is one of the cornerstones of Emirati civilisation. In Arabic, "majlis" means 'place of sitting' and refers to both a social gathering space and a formal legislative assembly for government. A place where people meet to hear informed opinions and shape decisions on subjects that matter to the community. The host of the majlis and his guests sit facing one another and engage in respectful but vibrant conversation, with the view of better understanding issues and exploring solutions.

*The majlis has been inscribed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It defines majlis as a "sitting place" where community members gather to discuss local events and issues, exchange news, receive guests, socialise and be entertained."*

The World Majlis aims to be one of the most engaging and thought-provoking dialogues ever held at an Expo. It is a space for ideas and conversations to make important and complex topics relatable to the general public. It brings together diverse points of views across geographies and generations. It invites open and informed exchanges between its participants with the objective to generate new insights and start meaningful connections between people and new ideas.

#### WOMEN'S WORLD MAJLIS

The Women's World Majlis is a key programming series at the Women's Pavilion in partnership with the World Majlis. In ten sessions, we will look into ten Expo Thematic Weeks' topics through a gender lens by recognizing and celebrating women's role and positive contributions in advancing sustainable development adapting a free-flowing conversation format.

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