



Committee: UN WOMEN

Topic: TIME'S UP / ME TOO MOVEMENTS AND
SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN WORK PLACES

Official Language: ENGLISH

UN Women calls for seizing the opportunity created by the global outcry over sexual harassment and moving it towards solution-based implementation of laws and policies to end violence against women once and for all.

INTRO

"I am really tired of talking about women," said Toni Van Pelt, president of the National Association of Women. "We must focus on the men. We must be demanding that the men step forward and take responsibility, whether they think they are the good guy or not. They are not the good guy if they are not speaking out against this, if they are allowing the bullying to continue."

MeToo was created over a decade ago by female activist Tarana Burke, who works with Girls for Gender Equity and founded Just Be Inc., organizations focused on empowering women of color. She launched the hashtag after her own experience with abuse kept her from helping a traumatized young girl.

She said that she could not find the strength to say out loud the words that were ringing in her head over and over again as a girl tried to tell her what that girl had endured. She wrote: "I couldn't even bring myself to whisper...'me too.' "

The high-profile organizers – among them producer Shonda Rhimes, director Ava DuVernay and actor Reese Witherspoon – formed Time’s Up as the next step to the #MeToo movement, which came amid a national reckoning over sexual assault and harassment and the ousters of prominent men accused of these acts in a variety of industries.

“Now, unlike ever before, our access to the media and to important decision makers has the potential of leading to real accountability and consequences,” the letter made by these women said. “We want all survivors of sexual harassment, everywhere, to be heard, to be believed and to know that accountability is possible.”

The leaderless initiative is made up of several groups that have different goals – from creating legislation to combat sexual misconduct to ensuring women of color and LGBTQ are represented equally, according to the Times.

“TIME’S UP is a unified call for change from women in entertainment for women everywhere,” Time’s Up’s website said. “From movie sets to farm fields to boardrooms alike, we envision nationwide leadership that reflects the world in which we live.”

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It underscores that while no group of women or girls is exempt, the risks and vulnerabilities for some are greater. Identifying the most marginalized women and girls is fundamental to being able to effectively respond and reach them.

For instance, migrants, refugees and internally displaced people are at greater risk of sexual violence of any kind and may lack formal recognition by the State, which prevents them from

accessing health, police, justice or social services. Indigenous women and those from ethnic or racial minorities often face the highest levels of discrimination across social, political and economic dimensions. Women living with disabilities and those living in rural areas face physical and/or communication barriers.

That's exactly what is needed to solidify #MeToo's viral legacy, according to sociologist Jen Schradie, who studies digital activism for the Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse, France. "Based on my research, the movements that are most successful are those who have an organizational infrastructure in place: a network, a coalition, a united front of a group of celebrities or established organizations," she said.

She points to the civil rights movement as the ultimate example of success. "The energy we see in the #MeToo movement is very similar to that of the civil rights movement," Schradie said, "but the difference is, the civil rights movement was able to connect people who just heard about it with actual organizations who were coordinating resistance."

She had found that the groups that can sustain high levels of online participation are those which are more structured and have volunteers and staff dedicated to keeping that online effort in place.

"People want concrete ways to be part of a solution, and that's where the #MeToo movement needs to go," said Kristen Houser, chief public affairs officer at the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

Houser declared that talking about victimization doesn't end victimization, that we need people to intervene. We need whistle-blowers. Parents need to be great role models. To ask your school, church, civic organizations and youth sports clubs to be proactive. Walk the walk in your own home."

Many of these men's and women's rights organizations say that all anyone has to do to get involved is reach out to the many local, state and national organizations that have been fighting for equality for women for decades. Volunteer. Donate time and money. Do more than lift your finger to "like."

Here is how Time's up plans to target the issue:

- Legal aid to survivors of sexual harassment
- Increase gender parity
- Create legislation that better penalizes sexual misconduct

CONTROVERSIAL POINTS

- If we connect the dots from a culture of male authority and patriarchy to the fact that women do not get equal pay; it leads to birth control and abortion that is being kept from women.
- Change must come from the business community but also from across all sectors, including families. Let's not forget that women grow up as little girls in a particular framework. The inequities start early, and they're subtle. Do they get the No. 1 gaming console in the home? Do they get the newest cell phone?
- If women are in position of authority, they will help stop the submission of other women, so that men can't corner them, can't force them into sexual acts, because women won't need the financial stability, the economic security.
- As these leaders grapple with recent stunning revelations from the #MeToo movement and persistent pay and leadership gaps, there seems clear consensus that something needs to be done. The question is: Where do we go from here? How can businesses and governments



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address deeply ingrained bias and institutional barriers to women's success and equality at work?

- Research has shown that the gender pay gap is lowest in countries where overall equality is higher and in countries where collective bargaining coverage is high. In fact, collective bargaining is generally an effective way of promoting gender equality. Even when it comes to equal pay litigation, there is evidence to suggest that without formal pay structures associated with collective bargaining, claimants' law firms would not be in a position to adequately fight equal pay or back pay claims.
- The initiative also arises as those in the #MeToo movement have said they recognize it may be more difficult for working-class women to seek justice than those in high-profile industries like media and Hollywood. Time's Up points to an open letter written on behalf of 700,000 female farmworkers in November who said they stand in solidarity with the women in Hollywood against sexual misconduct.

COUNTRIES INVOLVED

What do 424 million working-age women have in common? They all live in countries with no legal protections against sexual harassment at work.

There are 152 countries that have prohibited discrimination in promotions and/or demotions based on gender, but only 126 countries guarantee protections from discrimination based on both gender and race/ethnicity."

To understand whether countries are doing enough to prevent sexual harassment and gender discrimination at work, WORLD Policy Analysis Center performed a comprehensive analysis of national laws and policies related to sexual harassment and employment discrimination in all 193 countries that are members of the United Nations.

Among the findings:

- Legal gaps in legislation leave too many women vulnerable to sexual harassment during the workday: Sixty-eight countries do not have any workplace-specific prohibitions of sexual harassment.
- Twenty-five countries do not extend any explicit protection from discrimination in workplace compensation.
- There are 126 countries that protect women from discrimination in promotions and/or demotions based on both gender and race/ethnicity.

The #MeToo campaign has gone global, inspiring women to share personal accounts of sexual harassment in 85 countries and counting, with women in France, Italy, and nations across Latin America and the Middle East launching their own offshoot hashtags. In many parts of the world, however, sexual harassment is not only pervasive—it is also perfectly legal.

According to a new research from the WORLD Policy Analysis Center at UCLA, 68 countries—more than one in three—do not have any workplace-specific protections against sexual harassment. These legal gaps span countries in all regions and at all income levels, collectively leaving 924 million working-age women—including 235 million who are currently in the workforce—with no legal recourse when faced with an abusive supervisor or hostile work environment.

One recent analysis from the McKinsey Global Institute estimates that closing gender gaps in the workplace could help add up to \$12 trillion in global gross domestic product by 2025. For national economies, reaching gender parity in employment could boost GDP by 5%

in the United States, 9% in Japan, 12% in the United Arab Emirates, 27% in India, and 34% in Egypt. At a time when the global economy is still recovering from a downturn, we can't afford to ignore discriminatory conditions that reduce economic potential.

Meanwhile, world leaders like Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada and French President Emmanuel Macron speak on women's advancement around the world, putting it at the center of their agendas during conventions and summits.

Since #MeToo went viral in the wake of sexual harassment allegations against producer Harvey Weinstein, Twitter reports that more than 1.7 million women and men have used the hashtag in 85 countries.

In Italy, women rallied behind a version called #QuellaVoltaChe, which translates to "That time when," while French women decided to put their harassers by name under #BalanceTonPorc, which roughly translates to "snitch out your pig."

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