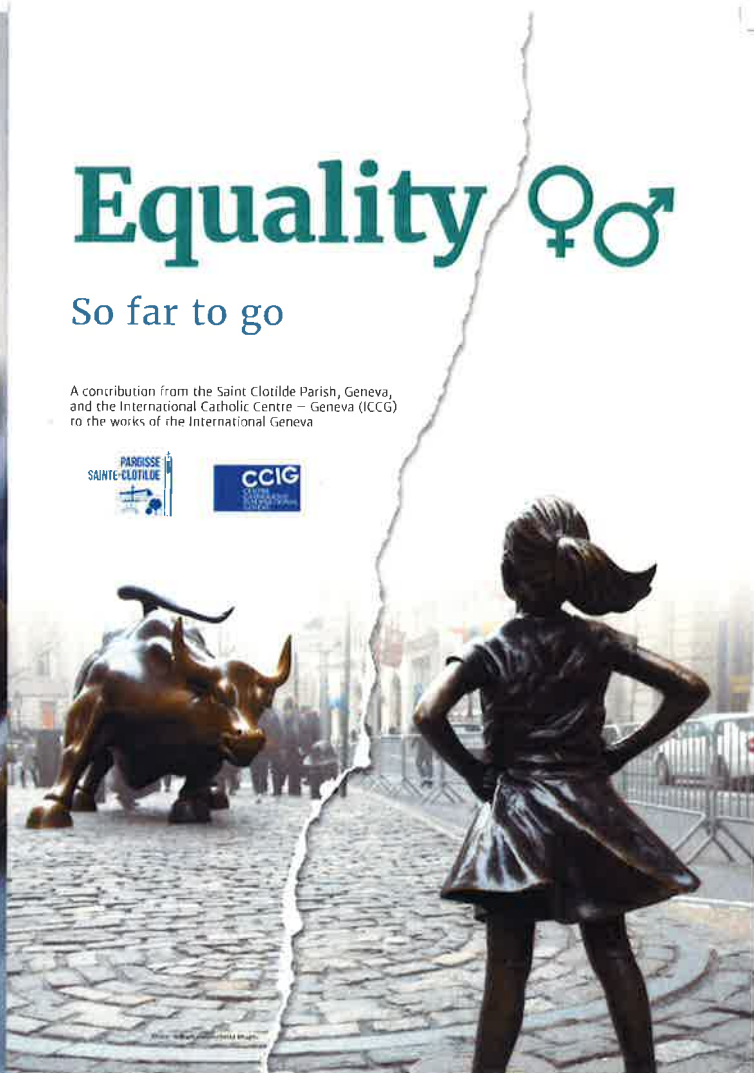




# Equality ♀♂

So far to go

A contribution from the Saint Clotilde Parish, Geneva,  
and the International Catholic Centre – Geneva (ICCG)  
to the works of the International Geneva





**Design:** Fritz Koenig, sculptor, 1989. The bull is a symbol of the New York Stock Exchange, and the bull market is a term used to describe a rising market.

**Material:** Bronze, 1989. The bull is a symbol of the New York Stock Exchange, and the bull market is a term used to describe a rising market.

**Information:** The bull is a symbol of the New York Stock Exchange, and the bull market is a term used to describe a rising market.



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## Foreword

by Mrs. Sandra Golay,  
President of the Council of  
the Parish of Saint Clotilde,  
Geneva

In his Apologetics, which may be briefly defined as the part of theology which defends Christianity against the attacks it is subjected to, Tertullian, a Father of the Church who lived in the dawn of our first millennium, invented a formula, "one is not born a Christian, one becomes one", which would become famous.

In the middle of the second millennium, Erasmus, in his treatise on education "De pueris instituendis", "How to educate children", adapted it as follows: "one is not born a man, one becomes one".

A few centuries later, Simone de Beauvoir, a French philosopher and literary woman, would transform it in turn in her book, "The Second Sex", which would nourish the feminist movements of the whole world and feed them always: "one is not born a woman, one becomes one".



Tertullian, Erasmus, Simone de Beauvoir: three approaches to being human.

According to Tertullian, one must become a Christian, an imperative necessity.

For Erasmus, one must cultivate himself, "do his humanities" as was said at the time, to achieve the status of Man, with a capital M.

As to Simone de Beauvoir, her formula is somewhat pessimistic. Men and women are equal at the outset. But man, who wants to dominate everything, enslaves the woman. For Marianne Mercier, editor-in-chief and co-founder of "La pause Philo", "this statement is not: an injunction made to women, who would be asked to go through a long apprenticeship to meet the feminine ideal ... it is: the first time that one distinguishes the fact of being female from that of being a woman. It is only beginning in the 1970s that this difference will be referred to using the terms sex and gender".

These things being asked, what the devil will the Roman Catholic Parish of Saint Clotilde, Geneva, do in this galley, you may tell me.

Well, she is on the bench of the slave galley and she intends to row strongly to advance the cause of equality between men and women in, it must be said, this ocean of inequality. The Promised Land is in plain view, but as John's Book of Revelation announces salvation and yet delays it time and again, the desire to reach its shore is a source of endless frustration.

This rowing is commanded - not only upon herself, of course, but upon all Christian communities in the world - in the name of the principle of the equal dignity of all persons, as specified by the "Justice and Peace" of the Pontifical Council under the "Compendium of Social

Doctrine of the Church" which is quite clear on the issue even if there is sometimes a tendency to question the way the statements in its paragraphs are implemented:

§ 146: "The masculine and the feminine differentiate two individuals of equal dignity, who do not, however, reflect a static equality, because feminine specificity is different from masculine specificity and this diversity in equality is enriching and indispensable for a harmonious social life: "If we want to give women the place to which they are entitled in the Church and in society, a condition is required: the serious and thorough study of the anthropological foundations of the masculine and feminine condition, seeking to clarify the woman's own personal identity in her relationship of diversity and mutual complementarity with man, not only with regard to the roles to be played and the functions to be performed, but also and more deeply with regard to the structure of the person and its meaning".

And § 147: "The woman is the complement of the man, just as the man is the complement of the woman: the woman and the man complement each other, not only from the physical and psychic point of view, but also from the ontological. It is only because of the duality of "masculine" and "feminine" that the "human" is fully realised. It is "the unity of the two", that is, a relational "uni-duality", which allows each person to perceive the interpersonal and reciprocal relationship as a gift which is at the same time a mission: "To this" 'unity of the two' are entrusted by God not only the work of procreation and the life of the family, but the very construction of history". "The woman is a "helper" for the man just as the man is a "helper" for the woman! "In their meeting a unitary conception of the human person is made, based not on the logic of egocentrism and self-affirmation, but on that of love and solidarity".

This is why the Parish of Sainte-Clotilde decided to associate with the International Catholic Centre of Geneva (ICCG) in order to promote the cantonal and federal legislation in the matter enshrined in international law, both within our parish and in interested circles in Geneva. The intention driving this project is to strengthen the link between Geneva International and local Geneva by addressing issues of concern to the international community and also to the local community.

To this end, in consultation with the ICCG, the parish's mission is to inform and sensitise, in particular, both workers and employers on the need to fully commit themselves to the promotion of equality between men and women. It is a question of showing that the

international work that is done in Geneva has a local impact and that our parish intends to take part in it through its pastoral work.

In addition to this publication intended for institutional actors, the parish and the ICCG have produced a multilingual pamphlet recalling the Proceeding to be followed in Geneva in case of discrimination on grounds of sex. It will be widely distributed initially in the parish. In addition, a large and free symphony concert will be held at Victoria Hall in September 2018 to highlight the importance of this issue to the public and the media.

This is what our parish intends to do and I felt that it was our duty to commit ourselves with all our strength to this cause through these modest actions. If a parish cannot raise mountains by itself, it must however bring its stone to the building, with an open look at our world.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the Republic and Canton of Geneva, to the City of Geneva, to the European Headquarters of the United Nations at Geneva, to the International Labour Organization, to the Swiss Confederation and of course, to our Episcopal Vicar, Father Pascal Desthieux, as well as to all the teams of the Roman Catholic Church of Geneva and in particular the Pastoral of the world of labour who have been willing to join our project by putting at our disposal their expertise and their testimonies.

My gratitude also goes to our partner, the International Catholic Centre of Geneva, which has not feared to share its ideals with our small Geneva parish, and with which, I hope, we will continue a fruitful collaboration at the local level.





## Foreword

by Mr. Jean-Claude Huot,  
Workforce Chaplain,  
International Catholic  
Centre – Geneva (ICCG)



Equality between men and women: so far to go!

On Tuesday, 29 May 2018, the Swiss Council of States finally approved a law obliging companies with more than 100 employees to evaluate their compensation policy every four years to verify its conformity with the principle of equality between men and women that has been enshrined in the Federal Constitution for the past 35 years! This is scant progress towards meeting a fundamental requirement such as pay equality. And the fate of this law remains uncertain, as the National Council has yet to rule on it. Yet pay inequalities remain significant: they reached an average of 12% in Switzerland in 2016. And 60% of that difference was inexplicable<sup>1</sup>.

This observation, while specifically concerning Switzerland, illustrates an inequality that exists worldwide. As noted in the ILO document reproduced in this brochure, more female workers than men live in poverty, and their earnings are on average 20% lower than those of their male colleagues.

This fact has led development researchers to study the gender-specific dimension of social and economic dynamics. In so doing, they distinguish aspects pertaining to biology from those that can be explained by culture and social norms. For the latter dimension we use the concept of “gender”.

In the Catholic Church, strong criticisms are being levelled against this concept, because it is giving rise to considerable debate on human gender identity<sup>2</sup>. In the thinking around development, the gender question

is nevertheless limited to an examination of the functions of men and women in a given society. It is about identifying injustices that may be concealed in the role ascribed to each gender. The challenge, then, is to achieve justice and peace, human rights for all, men and women, rich and poor, and universal participation in political, cultural, social and economic life.

The Carême Action<sup>3</sup>, for example, launched a major effort involving the families of fishermen in the Philippines. While the men went out to fish, the women cultivated small plots of land. This distinctive life experience had to be taken into account in order to effectively support local organisations. For example, local organisations were able to set up trainings specific to men and to women in order to strengthen their ability to manage their family budgets, their market access, and their struggle against the disappearance of the mangrove or the climate change-related salinization of soils.

ICCG sees this in the work carried out by its member organisations. To effectively promote human rights, it is crucial to take into account the anxiety that local societies have about women's and men's roles. Observing inequalities between women and men in their access to education, food or land ownership makes it possible to run specific programs aimed at the similar application of human rights for women and men. Well-educated, more financially independent women can function more capably. In this way men and women can address injustice collaboratively. The ultimate winner is global development based on human rights.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/travail-remuneration/salaires-revenus-cout-travail/niveau-salaires-suisse/ecart-salarial.html> (viewed on 29 June 2018)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.laviedesidees.fr/IMG/pdf/20140325\\_cathoggenre.pdf](http://www.laviedesidees.fr/IMG/pdf/20140325_cathoggenre.pdf) (viewed on 29 June 2018)

<sup>3</sup> This was at the time when I worked for Carême Action (2007-2013)

And yet, throughout the world, women are the most highly represented in the weakest economic sectors, informal employment, and unpaid work. In Switzerland, for example, 9.2 billion hours of unpaid work were done in 2016. This is more than the number of hours of paid work done (7.9 billion hours). And 61% of those unpaid hours were worked by women<sup>4</sup>. The same is true on a global level. Women do the lion's share of unpaid work, be it domestic, agricultural or care given to family members. This begs a crucial question: where is the social recognition of this contribution?

The Irish government wants to eliminate two paragraphs from an article in the constitution dating to 1937: "The State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved", states the first paragraph, and the second concludes: "The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home"<sup>5</sup>. The wording of these provisions is, granted, obsolete. But at least the provisions recognize domestic and educational work. If domestic and familial chores belong to men as much as to women, recognition of the contribution of this unpaid work to the common good should not disappear, nor should the State's willingness to protect it.

Generally speaking, unpaid work, whether domestic, volunteer or caregiving, remains invisible. The wealth of nations is measured in GDP or GNP. But such an instrument does not make it possible to take into account the true wealth that a society develops. Yet this instrument still remains the preferred tool in the development of public policies.

A first improvement would be to conduct a gender-specific analysis of public budgets and to then establish policies taking that analysis into account<sup>6</sup>. We could then consider whether public budgets really contribute to reducing inequality, on the one hand, and to recognizing the value of the tasks currently done mostly by women. We could look, for example, at the budgets allocated to early childhood services in western countries, or at investment in the education and professional training of women in many parts of the world, etc.

Can effective recognition of unpaid work enhance equality between men and women? This remains to be seen. But the question is worth asking. In any case, there is a long way to go before women and men in society receive equal treatment<sup>7</sup>. And Christians who affirm, following the Apostle Paul, that in Christ, "There is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave nor free man, there is no longer male nor female" (Gal. 3, 27-28), have a duty to practice this equivalence of recognition. It is fortunate that Saint Clotilde Parish and the International Catholic Centre of Geneva (ICCG) have joined forces in this publication to contribute to awareness raising on topics that run through both local life in Geneva and the international bodies that reside here. The hundredth anniversary of ILO in 2019 will doubtless be an opportunity to revisit some of these issues.



<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/travail-remuneration/travail-non-remunere/compte-satellite-production-menages.assetdetail.3882344.html> (viewed on 29 June 2018). For details see this graph: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/travail-remuneration/travail-non-remunere/compte-satellite-production-menages.assetdetail.3882367.html>

<sup>5</sup> Dispatch from Reuters published within 24 Heures of 7-8 July 2018.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://femmesleaders.ch/comment-mettre-en-place-un-budget-genre/> for explanations and ongoing discussions held by the city of Geneva concerning its athletic subsidies: <http://www.ville-geneve.ch/dossiers-information/genre-sports/enquete-ligne-2016/>

<sup>7</sup> I prefer the German term "Gleichberechtigung" to the French "égalité", because the latter could evoke a negation of the differences. The German concept seems to me to be free of this ambivalence.



## Message

# from the Reverend Pascal Desthieux, Episcopalian Vicar for the Canton of Geneva

The Catholic Church is fully committed to equality between men and women, insisting on the equal dignity of all in the eyes of God. It is also true that, within it, equality is not perfect since women do not have access to ordination. However, the Church is working on that and appoints more and more women to positions of responsibility, compensating them in the same way as men (and most of the time much better than priests).

For the Catholic Church, women have a dignity equal to that of men. Here is how it is defined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (No. 369):

Man and woman are created, that is to say they are willed by God: in perfect equality as human beings, on the one hand, and on the other hand in their respective nature of male and female. "To be a man", "to be a woman" is a good and willed or desired reality of God: man and woman have an inimitable dignity which immediately comes to them from God their creator (see Gen 2: 7, 22). Man and woman are, with the same dignity, "in the image of God". In their "male being" and "female being", they reflect the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. "For each other" - "a unity of two".

Already St. Paul affirmed that we are no longer to treat man and woman differently because, in Christ, we are all the children of God:

*All of you whom baptism has united to Christ, you have put on Christ; there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither man and woman, for you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3: 27-28).

The last popes have all insisted on the dignity of women - St. John Paul II even dedicated an apostolic letter to them: *Mulieris Dignitatem* in 1988 - and to the importance of giving more space to women in church responsibilities.

Thus, for Pope Francis, "we must still widen the spaces for a more incisive feminine presence in the Church" (*The Joy of the Gospel* No. 103). In his eyes, "there is no doubt that we must do a lot more for women." Not only must the woman be "listened to more", but her voice must have "real weight", "a recognized authority, in society and in the Church" (General Audience of April 15, 2015).

In fact, we are starting to see some women appointed to key positions in the Vatican. But it is true that it is still a very timid response. Since women do not have access to ordination, there are no women priests or bishops in the Catholic Church, and that will not change anytime soon as the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has just recalled:

*Christ wanted to confer this sacrament on the twelve apostles, all men, who, in turn, communicated it to other men. The Church has always recognized herself as linked to this decision of the Lord, which excludes the ministerial priesthood from being validly conferred on women* (Cardinal Ladaria Ferrer in *L'Osservatore Romano* of May 30, 2018).



Inasmuch as positions of great responsibility are linked to the episcopal office, there is consequently no woman at the head or even as a secretary of a Vatican dicastery.

There is, however, a desire that this changes and that women undertake more responsibility. In the diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Freiburg, two women sit on the episcopal council, which would have been unthinkable in the past. In the Church in Geneva, of the 14 services (such as the catechesis or education centre) and chaplaincies (such as hospitals or prison), 13 are run by women and only one by a man. Among the lay employees in our cantonal church, 80% are women. In the cantons of Vaud and Freiburg (which have greater financial means to hire lay people), for a long time now the number of women pastoral agents has exceeded that of men, including priests.

Note that as to wages, there is no difference between men and women secular pastoral agents (as there is no difference between priests: the young priest who starts earns the same salary as the bishop). Moreover, with equal education, lay theologians, whether male or female, receive a salary much higher than that of priests.

In conclusion, I would like to welcome the contribution of women in positions of responsibility, whether in society, in politics or in church. I am convinced that they bring a different touch, an often more balanced point of view, and that this makes us more "fertile". When I was appointed Episcopal Vicar, I wanted to strengthen my team with a female assistant, who brings a lot to our thinking.

## Message

from Mrs. Nathalie  
Fontanet, State Councillor,  
Finances and Human  
Ressources Department,  
Republic and Canton of  
Geneva



The achievement of equality between women and men is in law and in fact a requirement established both at the national level, by the Federal Constitution, and at the international level, by numerous treaties and conventions, including in particular the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Switzerland signed that convention in 1997, two years after adopting the Federal Law on Equality, which puts into effect the principal of equal treatment in the employment sphere.

Enormous strides have been made over the past thirty years: women are now better educated and more active professionally, and some have managed to break through the glass ceiling to join the ranks of upper management in the economic and political worlds alike.

However, despite this progress and the existing legal bases, a great deal of discrimination continues to hold back women in the workplace in Switzerland and Geneva. The reports that Switzerland must submit in the framework of its international commitments and the recommendations that have been issued to it on this basis speak volumes.

## Switzerland and its cantons can do better!

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has highlighted the fact that Switzerland is one of the European countries with the highest numbers of women in the workforce. In Geneva in 2016, women represented 47% of the resident workforce over 15 years of age. Nevertheless, only 9% of the female workforce belongs to the category of executives, senior managers and managers, as opposed to 14% of men. Fewer women thus manage to break through the glass ceiling and secure high-level jobs. And those who do so may find themselves facing the challenge of salary discrimination.

Indeed, the higher one rises in the hierarchy, the greater the wage disparity becomes; in Switzerland in the aforementioned category the gross median salary of men is over 18% higher than that of women. The wage differential is 12% for all professional positions taken together, and almost 40% of the difference cannot be attributed to explicable, objective factors. According to an estimate by the Federal Statistical Office, this potential discrimination represented total lost wages of 7.7 billion francs in 2010 for women.

Furthermore, women are overrepresented in the lower paid lines of business and professions. Unpaid caregiving – that invisible work done largely by women – represents lost earnings for women of nearly 100 billion francs each year and has adverse consequences on the pensions that they receive in retirement. This discrimination against women – especially these financial losses – has significant economic and social impacts not only on women, but also on entire households and all of society. In order to effectively promote equality, it is necessary to take into account this bigger picture.

This discrimination impacts women and their private and professional lives, and it influences their choices.

Ways of thinking must change and evolve. Awareness-raising work with interested companies, employees and groups is proving essential for convincing those who mistakenly think that equality has now been achieved in Geneva. Such work is all the more effective when multiple actors join forces to work toward a common goal.

Geneva is home to many international organisations. With the presence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human rights, secretariats of various international human rights treaties, and some of the leading NGOs active in the field, to name a few, Geneva is known worldwide for the promotion and protection of human rights.

What could be better, then, than a project seeking to deepen ties between international Geneva and local Geneva for the promotion of human rights – to act together for the prevention of discrimination? Equality is everyone's business, and to achieve it, everyone must be involved at his or her own level.

I applaud the initiative of the Sainte-Clotilde Parish council and this publication, which is an integral part of this initiative and which I am certain will help to promote this constitutional principle of equality between women and men, which Geneva, Switzerland and the international community hold dear.



## Message

# from Mrs. Esther Alder, Administrative Advisor for the City of Geneva

Reports on the equality of men and women at work follow, and their findings are often disappointing, even worrying. That of the International Labour Organization (ILO) "World Employment and Social Outlook - Trends for Women 2018" is no exception to the rule. It notes that the gaps between men and women in the world of work remain considerable. Women's access to the labour market remains limited. Even when they are successful in this market, they only have limited opportunities to obtain quality employment. Unfortunately, they are still too often held back by stereotyped social norms and socio-economic constraints.

This report, which is part of the "Women in the Workplace" initiative launched by the ILO for its 100th anniversary, sets out several avenues for improving gender equality. One of the most important, in my opinion, is the introduction and reinforcement of policies that favour a balance between professional and private life. The lack of childcare facilities in fact penalises women disproportionately. It has earned our country a poor ranking in the "glass ceiling index" published by a famous British magazine in March 2017. The offer is indeed very uneven depending on the canton.

Reconciling professional and family life has long been a priority for the City of Geneva. Since 1986, the Early Childhood Service has worked to promote the creation of new child care centres. This commitment was shown by a spectacular increase in the number of childcare places. Since 2011, this number has increased by approximately 30% to almost 4,000 places. By 2020, 95% of the demands expressed by parents should be met.

The development of peri and extracurricular activities has also been significant. School restaurants are still welcoming more children (+38% between 2009 and 2017). The very affordable price of the meals and the quality of the care make it a very popular service, favoured by all layers of the population. The city also promotes access to quality recreation for children after 4 pm. For example, it organises and finances Discovery Workshops and Mobile Workshops, run by competent associations. These workshops, which take place in many schools, offer recreational, cultural and sports activities for children from all backgrounds.

In addition to support for parenting, which allows women to pursue a professional activity calmly, the City of Geneva has also developed a policy since 2007 to promote equality between women and men within municipal administration. The Regulations for the realisation of equality, which went into effect in 2009, establishes equal treatment and parity in all areas and at all levels. The proportion of women senior managers is thus steadily increasing (from 34% in 2009 to 42% in 2016).

In Switzerland and Geneva, progress is undeniable, but men and women inherit as always a very traditional view of their respective roles. These stereotypes have harmful consequences not only for our country's economy, but also for the well-being of women. To move forward, it is thus essential that we change mentalities profoundly. That is why I want to commend the ILO's "Women in the Workplace" initiative, which contributes to the advent of a more egalitarian society!



## Message

# from Mr. Michael Möller, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva



In July 2015, I launched, in agreement with Ambassador Hamamoto, Permanent Representative for the United States to the United Nations in Geneva, and Caitlin Kraft-Buchman, Director of the non-governmental organisation Women@TheTable, a network of advocates for gender equality within the framework of International Geneva (International Gender Champions - Geneva or IGC).

Indeed, gender equality is essential to achieve the goals of peace, rights and well-being for us all as well as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Agenda on the 2030 horizon. Many of us note with regret that twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, too little has changed. In the face of persistent inequalities in the participation of women and men, real change now requires greater visibility for women at the highest levels, and concrete actions to make a difference in our daily lives. Through the presence of a wide range of actors and its tradition of partnerships, Geneva International provides an ideal platform for enhanced action in promoting gender equality.

Today, the IGC initiative has more than 120 members in Geneva. The network brings together the permanent representatives of some 50 states, the heads of some 40 Geneva-based international organisations and some 30 heads of civil society organisations (including NGOs, academic institutions and companies). Among them, the Republic and Canton of Geneva and the Swiss Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva are essential partners in the local development of this initiative. Moreover, thanks to their support, the initiative has spread to the Lake Geneva area, with the integration of several sports federations as well as the International Olympic Committee, located in Lausanne. It is also the Swiss Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York which has taken the initiative beyond international Geneva by launching a similar network in the other centre of multilateral activity that is the City of New York.

The IGC network is based on three simple ideas. First of all, its members must take a position, in the form of a commitment, against debates where only experts of one sex are represented. The purpose is to encourage reflection around discrimination, and to counteract the idea that certain subjects could only be mastered by men or by women. On the other hand, the IGC initiative has adopted a personal approach in which leaders, rather than their organisations, take upon themselves responsibility for their own commitments. In addition to their refusal to participate in solely male (or female) panels, these leaders must each make two concrete and measurable commitments to promote gender equality in their organisation or through their programmes. For my part, for example, I have pledged to promulgate a gender equality policy for the United Nations Office in Geneva (done), to conduct an inquiry into perceptions on the subject among my staff (done as well) and to deliver a high level speech on the issue. Since gender equality issues are interconnected, any attempt to make a difference in this area must transcend disciplines, organisations and other traditional settings. Creating synergies among the various sectors and actors of the international Geneva community is therefore the third founding idea in this network.

Other centres of multilateral activity have followed Geneva's example and we hope that others will launch similar initiatives in the near future. We continue to broaden the network of "Champions" in Geneva with actors who reflect the diversity and the ecosystem of Geneva. By reinforcing the cohesion of international Geneva as well as its integration into the local fabric, this initiative demonstrates once again how international Geneva can innovate and bring together very diverse actors around a common objective.



UNOG  
The United Nations Office at Geneva



## Message

from Mrs. Valérie  
Berset Bircher, Federal  
Department of the  
Economy, Education and  
Research, Switzerland



The report on trends in women's employment in the world is published every 4 years, and is particularly followed by Switzerland. In 2012, Switzerland supported a large amount of research for this report as part of a project on the effects of the financial crisis on the labour market. This year's report published by ILO states that "gender gaps in the labour market are one of the most urgent issues for the international community. Women in fact are significantly less likely than men to participate in the labour market, whether they are working or looking for work: in 2017, women's global participation rate - at just over 49 percent - is almost 27 percentage points lower than that of men.

As the report shows, women have limited access to quality employment. This is one of the reasons why the majority of the poor are women. Equality between women and men is a precondition for sustainable development and growth that benefits everyone. Integrating more women into the labour market leads to clear economic benefits and other important positive effects, such as improving the well-being of women and their families.

Gender equality has been established, therefore, as a cross-cutting component for all Swiss economic cooperation projects since 2013. This cross-cutting component is reflected in different programmes. In trade promotion programmes, for example, it is a question of improving the productivity and participation of women in value chains; an example in the textile sector is presented below. In the area of private sector promotion, there are programmes to promote women's entrepreneurship and access to financing. Access to more and better quality jobs for women is measured for several projects.

One of the flagship projects for economic cooperation in the employment of women is the Better Work programme, supported by Switzerland since 2009 (Betterwork). This programme, the result of a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), seeks to improve working conditions in the textile industry. Employees in this sector are 80% women and equality represents an important component of this programme. Last year, an impact assessment, independent of the programme, showed very promising figures. Thanks to the establishment of Better Work in countries, whether they are working or looking for work: in 2017, women's global participation rate - just over 49 percent - is almost 27 percentage points lower than that of men. In Vietnam, Indonesia or Bangladesh, the gender pay gap has decreased by 17%, sexual harassment at work has decreased by 18%, access to pre-natal care for women has increased by 26% and training for women supervisors has increased their productivity by 22%.

The representation of women in plant management committees for factory workers and the training of women executives are key strategies to improve women's working conditions and improve their productivity. Additionally, improving the quality of employment of these women leads to improvements in the lives of families and communities of workers. In factories participating in the Better Work programme, workers send up to 33% more supplementary money to their families. The latter are changing the way they use these funds: the money is invested in education, healthcare and nutrition.

In conclusion, women tend to work in specific sectors, have different needs, face an unequal distribution of unpaid domestic work and often do not have the same access to education. For these reasons, gender-sensitive programmes are very important for Swiss economic cooperation.

## Message

from Mrs. Franceline James,  
President of AS-APEE (the  
Association of Parents of  
Encephalopathic Children,  
Burkina Faso)



For a great many years now, teacher trainers in Burkina Faso have observed with interest the integration of disabled children into regular schools. Ms Fatou Cisse, a teacher trainer and former school inspector, makes the following points (I quote):

"A disability is no longer defined as a condition (the partial or total reduction in certain abilities) but as the product of an interaction, when a disability comes up against the environmental impossibility of participating in an activity. A visually impaired child who manages to obtain eyeglasses, for example, is not necessarily disabled, but she finds herself in a state of disability if she is unable to obtain the necessary glasses".

Some traditional cultural values exacerbate the consequences of this interaction between personal and environmental factors (myths, prejudices, etc.), making it very difficult for some children to receive an education.

**Discrimination may be based on ethnicity, social background, disability, or gender. Among children who experience discriminatory treatment, girls with disabilities have the most difficulty gaining access to school.**

In Burkina Faso society, school education lies at a crossroads resulting from the transformation of traditional societies under pressure from modernity. In traditional societies, while men work primarily in the fields, women have always handled – by hand and without electricity – all aspects of everyday life (a reality that affects life in countless villages in this entirely agricultural country and most residents of large cities): meal preparation (having swept the yard at dawn: cutting wood, lighting a fire and cooking food for the daily meals), laundry (going to look for water in wells or

at a pump), washing, rinsing, hanging up the laundry), activities organised in every courtyard for an extended family that can include many people. The sharing of chores and solidarity among women are clearly indispensable to this functioning.

The passage to modernity calls into question this age-old social structure. Enabling all children to receive schooling? A magnificent project! But who will "handle" (all the tasks listed above)? Who will wash? (Dust and heat make it necessary to change clothing often.) The concrete difficulties for parents who wish to educate boys and girls are immense.

Sending children to school in order to facilitate their integration into the working world is also a laudable objective – except that there are far too few salaried positions to meet demand. Everyone therefore seeks employment in the civil service, leading to an excess of state positions that produce no economic added value.

The educational situation of girls is thus fragile, since the essential tasks that they perform in the home are irreplaceable due to the poverty of the majority of families, in cities and the countryside alike. In the present-day situation, with the income of farming communities being undercut by globalisation and its attendant injustices, women's commercial activities are frequently all that enables families to meet subsistence level food needs. The schooling of girls and the ability to derive income from their education therefore remains precarious. Girls with impairments – who are therefore often in a state of disability – are obviously the most vulnerable in the system. Education protects them neither from a lack of prospects nor from hazards such as unwanted pregnancies. [In the case of the latter,] their parents will end up having to raise those children.



Teacher trainers are making an effort to eradicate traditional thinking about disabilities, "which are attributed to the breaking of a taboo by the mother during pregnancy or to a curse visited upon the family", with the aim of promoting a scientific, medical view of disability. We should also remember the risk, which is sadly a reality in our own country, of scientific thought being imposed to the detriment of, not in parallel with, traditional thinking: for us, the question of the meaning of an illness has completely fallen by the wayside, for science has no answer at all to the question, "Why is this happening to me?" Patients who are very well cared for on a technical level (how illness comes about and how to treat it) are thus left with a feeling of emptiness that can drive them to despair at best, or into the clutches of cult leaders at worst. This senseless trade-off might conceivably be avoided in a changing society such as Burkina Faso; making amends for an offense to the spirits is not incompatible with receiving needed medical care. The "why" and the "how" could therefore coexist.

Equal opportunity for girls and boys should not be considered in isolation from the overall social and economic conditions in Burkina Faso any more than it should here [in Switzerland]. Let us recall that fighting for this equality means always and everywhere combating the social injustice that crushes the small, the poor, and often girls.





## The International Labour Organization (ILO) and gender equality

### ILO vision of equality between women and men

*"Since 1999, the ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming has been operationalized through successive Action Plans. Gender equality is not only an inherent value of the ILO, but perhaps more than ever, strong ILO leadership is needed in this area, as major gender gaps in the world of work persist. Recent ILO data shows that millions*



*of women are losing ground in the quest for equality in the world of work. There is no*

*time for complacency and no time to waste. And the ILO must lead by example."*

Guy Ryder, director general

The ILO's goal is to promote equal opportunities for women and men to obtain Decent Work. This is fairly paid productive work carried out in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. ILO considers gender equality a critical element in efforts to achieve its four strategic objectives:

- Promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work
- Create greater opportunities for men and women to secure decent employment and income
- Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all
- Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue

### ILO mandate on gender equality

The ILO's mandate to promote gender equality in the world of work is enshrined in its Constitution and reflected in

relevant international labour standards. The four key ILO gender equality Conventions are the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156) and Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183). Conventions 100 and 111 are also among the eight fundamental Conventions and the principles and rights enshrined in those Conventions are found in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The ILO mandate on gender equality is reinforced by related Resolutions adopted by its highest decision-making body, the International Labour Conference. The most recent of these is the Resolution concerning Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work, adopted in June 2009; and the Resolution concerning the Promotion of Gender Equality, Pay Equity and Maternity Protection, adopted in June 2004. Attention to gender equality in all aspects of the ILO's technical cooperation is mandated by the Governing Body's March 2005 Decision on Gender Mainstreaming in Technical Cooperation.

The ILO's gender equality mandate is also set in the context of an array of international instruments advancing equality between women and men. Amongst others, these include the UN Charter itself, numerous resolutions of the General Assembly, the 1997 UN Economic and Social Council's Agreed Conclusions on gender mainstreaming, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and its follow-up, and the Millennium Development Goals and the soon to be adopted Sustainable Development Goals.



Photo: Fotolia Marino



## ILO policy and strategy on gender equality and mainstreaming

The ILO's policy on equality between women and men, expressed in the Director-General's Circular no. 564 (1999), calls for mutually reinforcing action to promote gender equality in staffing, substance and structure. This is achieved by mainstreaming gender equality into all aspects of ILO work. The Bureau for Gender Equality provides office-wide support to this process. The promotion of gender equality is reflected in the ILO programme and budgets for which the entire organization shares responsibility. The overall strategy is to intensify the mainstreaming of gender equality into all ILO programmes, including Decent Work Country Programmes and national poverty reduction policies and strategies. The ILO supports constituents in this process through the collaboration of its gender specialists and gender focal points.

The ILO approach to gender mainstreaming is two-pronged and based on analysis that considers the specific and often different needs and interests of women and men in the world of work. On the one hand, awareness of these different needs and interests is integrated into all policies, programmes, projects and institutional structures and procedures. On the other hand, especially where inequalities are extreme or deeply entrenched, they are addressed through gender-specific measures involving women and men, either separately or together or through measures designed explicitly to overcome inequalities. Mainstreaming can include gender-specific actions where necessary.

The organization has developed a single, overarching Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010-15, which operationalizes the 1999 ILO policy on gender equality. The Action Plan also facilitates effective and gender responsive delivery of the Decent Work Agenda, in line with the June 2009 Resolution concerning Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work. All five ILO Regional Offices and the subregional and country offices have developed their own gender policies and strategies adapted to regional and national contexts. This is to more effectively promote gender equality in respective programmes, particularly in Decent Work Country Programmes.

## An integrated approach to gender equality and decent work

The Decent Work Agenda is cross-sectoral in nature and therefore implemented effectively through integrated and coordinated policy and institutional interventions. This covers different strategic objectives, such as promotion of fundamental rights, employment creation, social protection, and social dialogue. An integrated approach to gender equality and decent work form part of this approach. This means, for instance, enhancing equal employment opportunities through measures that also aim to improve women's access to education, skills training and healthcare, while taking women's role in the care economy adequately into account, for instance through work-family balance measures and providing workplace-level incentives for the provision of childcare and parental leave.



"Nana" by Niki de Saint-Phalle. Photo: Fotolia pictures



## Trends for Women – 2018 Global Snapshot

International Labour Organization ILO

### Introduction

The past 20 years have witnessed some progress for women in the world of work and in terms of

gender equality in society. Today, more women than ever before are both educated and participating in the labour market, and there is greater awareness that gender equality is of paramount importance in efforts to reduce poverty and boost economic development. The adoption of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and the resolve of world leaders “to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value” (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, target 8.5.) and “to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” (SDG 5) by 2030 are proof of that awareness.

Yet, despite the progress made thus far and the global commitments to secure further improvement,

women’s prospects in the world of work are far from being equal to men’s. This “global snapshot” looks at the progress (or lack thereof) made during the past decade and assesses women’s labour market prospects by examining the gaps between men and women according to a selection of ILO statistical indicators, namely labour force participation, unemployment, informal employment and working poverty. It shows that not only are women less likely than men to participate in the labour force, but when they do participate, they are also more likely to be unemployed and more likely to be in jobs that fall outside the scope of labour legislation, social security regulations and relevant collective agreements. These findings complement ILO’s recent work on women’s

labour market conditions and wages by providing an up-to-date quantitative assessment of the extent and

depth of women’s disadvantages and how these are likely to evolve globally in the near future.

Gender disparities in the selected labour market indicators presented here capture only partially the complexity of both the labour market challenges faced by women and the improvements that women have achieved thanks to conducive conditions in the specific economic and institutional context. In its wider approach to understanding the issues surrounding women and work, the ILO routinely identifies many structural and cultural factors, ranging from occupational and sectoral sex segregation to workplace discrimination and gender stereotyping. Such a wide-ranging approach is essential for providing a more comprehensive picture of gender inequalities in the labour market, including variation in gender disadvantage by region, socio-economic class, ethnicity and age, among other factors. The brief appraisal offered in this global snapshot is designed to focus on key patterns of progress and regression. Where challenges and obstacles to women’s equal participation persist, societies will be less able to develop pathways for economic growth combined with social development. Closing gender gaps in the world of work thus remains one of the most pressing labour market and social challenges facing the global community today.

## Gender gaps in labour force participation remain wide

Globally, the labour force participation rate for men and women aged 15 and over continues its longterm decline; it stands at 61.8 per cent in 2018, down by 1.4 percentage points over the past decade. The decline in women's participation rate has been slower than that of men, resulting in a slight narrowing of the gender gap. These trends reflect different patterns across the life cycle, resulting from changes in both education participation among youth and, at the other end of the scale, older workers' retirement choices. The headline finding, however, is that, on average around the world, women remain much less likely to participate in the labour market than men. At 48.5 per cent in 2018, women's global labour force participation rate is 26.5 percentage points below that of men. Since 1990, this gap has narrowed by 2 percentage points, with the bulk of the reduction occurring in the years up to 2009. The rate of improvement, which has been slowing since 2009, is expected to grind to a halt during 2018–21, and possibly even reverse, potentially negating the relatively minor improvements in gender equality in access to the labour market achieved over the past decade. Underlying this global trend, there are considerable differences in women's access to the labour market across countries at different stages of development. The gap in participation rates between men and women is narrowing in developing and developed countries but continues to widen in emerging countries, where it stands at 30.5 percentage points in 2018, up by 0.5 percentage points since 2009. This trend is projected to continue into 2021, as women's participation rates will decline at a faster pace than men's. While the widening gender gap in participation rates shows that women in emerging countries are still a long way from catching up with men in terms of labour market opportunities, it also reflects the fact that a growing number of young women in these countries are enrolled in formal education, which delays their entry into the labour market. In fact, since the early 1990s, gender gaps in participation rates among youth aged 15 to 24 in emerging countries have been widening, whereas gender gaps in educational attainment have shrunk considerably. Gender gaps in labour market participation are especially wide in the Arab States, Northern Africa and Southern Asia, and are expected to remain wide in the near future, mainly due to the extremely low participation rates of women in the labour market in these regions. Underlying this trend, there is concern that owing to restrictive gender and cultural norms women in these countries are more constrained in terms of their options to seek paid employment.

Conversely, women's participation rates are gradually approaching those of men in many developed countries. At 15.6 percentage points in 2018 (nearly half of the figure observed among emerging countries), the gender gap in participation rates in this group of countries is the lowest recorded since 1990; although it remains wide in a number of countries, especially in Southern Europe, it is projected to narrow further by 2021. Much of the progress achieved over the past couple of decades in developed countries can be attributed to the fact that women and men in these countries have near equal educational achievements and women face less restrictive social norms regarding paid work. Public policies also play an important role. For instance, family support policies, which aim to improve work–life balance, rights to paid leave and return to equivalent work, as well as affordable childcare services for working parents, are known to have made a substantial contribution to lifting the participation rates of women, and especially those of mothers, in these countries. Having said that, evidence of persistent gender pay gaps in many developed countries highlights ongoing problems of gender gaps in job quality despite women's increasing labour market presence. Because women have significantly improved levels of human capital (e.g. education and experience), which have even overtaken those of men in several developed countries, new research is pointing to other factors that can explain the enduring wage penalty faced by women, such as employers' discriminatory hiring and promotion practices, for example. Meanwhile, developing countries show the smallest gender gap in participation rates (11.8 percentage points in 2018), which is expected to remain stable throughout the period 2018–21. Women in this country group have one of the highest rates of participation (69.3 per cent), which often reflects the economic necessity to seek employment, driven by the prevailing poverty and a lack of access to social protection, as discussed below.



Photo: Fotolia pixelrain

## Women are more likely than men to be unemployed in large parts of the world

Not only are women less likely than men to participate in the labour force, but those who do are also less likely to find employment. As of 2018, the global unemployment rate of women, at 6 per cent, is approximately 0.8 percentage points higher than that of men. This translates into a ratio of female-to-male unemployment rates of 1.2 in 2018. By 2021, this ratio is projected to remain stable in developed countries and to increase in both developing and emerging countries, mirroring the deterioration in the relative position of women in terms of global unemployment observed over the past decade. Developing countries show the highest ratio of female-to-male unemployment rates across income groups, at 1.3 in 2018. This largely reflects the fact that unemployment rates among men in these countries are low by international standards, while the rates among women are only slightly above the global average. Such a relatively low unemployment rate, however, is far from being an indication of a healthy labour market, either for men or for women. Indeed, the rate of unemployment is not considered a robust test of labour market performance in developing (and, to some extent, developed) countries. This reflects the complexities of informal employment and the limited access to social protection systems, both of which pressure women and men to take up any employment opportunity, regardless of the working conditions. At the same time, entrenched gender roles and labour market discrimination continue to hamper women's access to decent jobs. In fact, the female unemployment rate is expected to increase further in this group of countries (while the rate among men is expected to remain stable), thus increasing the ratio of female-to-male unemployment rates by 2021.

In emerging countries, the female-to-male unemployment rate ratio is in line with the global average, at 1.2 in 2018. This ratio is, however, expected to increase by 2021, which risks discouraging further the already low labour market participation of women in these countries. This is especially the case in the Arab States and Northern Africa, where, in addition to low participation rates, women face unemployment rates that are more than twice as high as men's. Gender differences are even starker among young cohorts, which does not bode well for women's labour market integration prospects in these regions, where the unemployment rates range between 16.3 and 19.5 per cent in 2018. Recent reports by the ILO show that, despite women's expressed preferences for paid jobs, socio-economic factors and prevailing social norms continue to obstruct their participation in paid employment, particularly in these regions. The constraints are often directly linked to the disproportionate burden of unpaid care and household responsibilities that women have to assume, which restricts both the educational and employment opportunities they can access and their ability to participate in the labour market.

In contrast, women in developed countries are closer to parity with men in terms of unemployment rates, with a ratio of female to male unemployment rates of 1.1 in 2018, and with no significant changes expected in the near future. In certain regions, such as Eastern Europe and Northern America, women even register lower unemployment rates than men. While this reflects the substantial efforts to achieve gender parity in educational attainment and skill qualifications, the success in attaining unemployment rate parity is also attributable to the long-lasting negative effects of the 2008 economic crisis, which have impacted some male-dominated sectors, such as construction, more strongly than the rest of the economy.



## Vulnerable employment is more severe for women in developing countries

Globally, over 42 per cent of workers are either own-account or contributing family workers (categories defined as “vulnerable employment”). This translates into over 1.4 billion workers who are more likely than those in other categories of employment to be in informal employment and living in poverty, and to have limited or no access to social protection systems. In developing and emerging countries, progress in reducing vulnerable employment is stalling, as the number of own-account and contributing family workers has been rising in line with the increasing labour force. As a result, the share of workers in these categories of employment in developing and emerging countries is particularly high, reaching 76.4 per cent of total employment in developing countries and 46.2 per cent in emerging countries in 2018.

There are important gender disparities in terms of the relative composition of own-account and contributing family work. While for men both categories experienced a slight decline over the past decade, women's share as contributing family workers has dropped by 4.6 percentage points and their share as own-account workers has increased by 1.8 percentage points. As a result, at 36.2 per cent in 2018, the share of own-account work among men is 10 percentage points higher than that of women globally. In contrast, women are more than twice as likely to be contributing family workers compared to men. There are also significant differences between countries grouped by income level. In developing countries, contributing family work accounts for 42.3 per cent of female employment in 2018, compared to 20.2 per cent of male employment. Moreover, no improvements are anticipated during the period up to 2021. Emerging countries, in contrast, have experienced a substantial reduction in the female share of contributing family workers, which decreased from 22.8 to 17 per cent between 2009 and 2018. Meanwhile, the share of women employed as own-account workers has increased by 2.4 percentage points, which suggests that the progress in narrowing the gap may be driven by the

shift of some of these female workers from contributing family work to own-account work. In developed countries, the numbers of women in own-account and contributing family work are limited, accounting for just 6.9 and 1.6 per cent of total female employment, respectively, in 2018. In all countries, the labour market status of own-account and contributing family worker carries the risk of more limited access to the raft of employment and social protection rights conferred on workers who have an open-ended, formal employment contract. This risk is especially large in emerging and developing countries, where these employment categories are a strong indication of informality, poor working conditions and lack of social protection. More specifically, own-account work does not seem to be a stepping stone to better labour market opportunities. In fact, the likelihood of own-account working women expanding their activities and becoming employers appears to be low.

Globally, female employers – in other words, self-employed women with employees – account for only 1.7 per cent of total female employment in 2018 (a marginal rise from 1.5 per cent since 1990), compared to 4 per cent among men. Even in developed countries where this share is higher (2.2 per cent in 2018), working women continue to face labour market barriers when it comes to accessing business and management positions. For instance, although women today are more strongly represented in middle and senior management positions compared to two decades ago, very few are appointed to the top jobs, especially in large companies. According to the latest available estimates women account for less than one-third of senior and middle management positions in the majority of developed countries, and represent less than 5 per cent of chief executive officers (CEOs) of publicly listed companies.





## Informality remains pervasive among women in emerging and developing countries

There is a very strong likelihood, especially in emerging and developing economies, that own-account and contributing family workers are defined as members of the informal economy. This connection arises because own-account workers are typically not registered as legal entities, while contributing family workers do not have written employment contracts and therefore typically fall outside the scope of labour legislation, social security regulations and relevant collective agreements. However, these workers are not the only category of employment to be exposed to systematic labour market risks. The broad category of informal employment includes other groups, such as workers in the informal sector and workers in formal sector enterprises who hold informal jobs.

Women are over-represented in informal employment in developing countries, in part because there is a higher proportion of women who work as contributing family workers – a category which accounts for around one-third of the overall informal employment in developing countries. According to the ILO, the share of women

in informal employment in developing countries was 4.6 percentage points higher than that of men, when including agricultural workers, and 7.8 percentage points higher when excluding them, in the latest year with available data. This gender gap is much higher in some sub-Saharan African countries, where the gap stands at over 20 percentage points. In close to one-third of sub-Saharan countries with available data, the share of women in non-agricultural employment who are in informal employment is over 90 per cent, while for men the share hovers at around 82 per cent.

In contrast, men in emerging countries face a higher incidence of informal employment (at 70 per cent) than women (at 65 per cent), with a slightly larger gap when considering non-agricultural sectors only. This mainly reflects the trends observed in emerging countries in Asia and the Pacific, where the share of women in non-agricultural informal employment is typically lower than that of men, with some notable exceptions in countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia and Viet Nam. However, informality rates for women employed in non-agricultural sectors in the emerging countries of Asia and the Pacific remain high, standing on average at 58 per cent compared to 65 per cent among men.



Photo: Fotolia Thomas Kleber



Photo: Fotolia FotoAndalucia

## Working poverty is widespread among both men and women

Being in paid employment is not a sufficient condition in many countries in the world for a person to escape poverty. In emerging and developing countries, as many as one in four working men and women live below the moderate poverty threshold (a per capita household income or consumption of less than US\$3.10 per day in purchasing power parity terms). The gender patterns are complex because, while women constitute a higher share of the low-wage workforce, they are more likely than men in some countries to be supplementing another household income and therefore contributing to the household's efforts to escape poverty. This is true, on average, for the Arab States, where 13 per cent of working women fall below the poverty threshold compared to 22 per cent of working men. However, the opposite situation arises in sub-Saharan Africa, where 63 per cent of working women compared to 59 per cent of working men live in poverty. Larger gender gaps in working poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, and more generally in developing countries, reflect the fact that women in many of these countries are almost as likely as men to participate in the labour market. However, they remain far more likely to be employed in subsistence activities and home-based production. In fact, sub-Saharan Africa is also where we find the

widest gender gap in own-account and contributing family employment, suggesting that this is a strong causal factor shaping women's greater likelihood of living in poverty than men in this region, although other factors also need to be considered in exploring this linkage, such as the number of earners in the household and access to supplementary forms of welfare income, among others. In contrast, in emerging countries, the probability of being in working poverty is higher among men than among women. However, far from representing progress in reducing female working poverty, this result instead reflects the low female participation rates in these countries. Gender disparities also persist with regard to average wages. Across a sample of developed, emerging and developing countries, for example, women are found to earn, on average, 20 per cent less than men. A significant proportion of this gap is due to the over-representation of women in sectors and occupations with a higher incidence of low pay. In addition, a weakness or absence of well-functioning labour market institutions and policies, such as collective bargaining and minimum wages, are also partly responsible for persistent gender wage inequality.

## Gender gaps in the labour market aggravate social protection gaps

The problem of inadequate access to social protection is not specific to women. Policies of austerity in many richer countries and persistent underdevelopment of welfare states in the poorer regions mean that all working people face social protection gaps. Nevertheless, the combination of gender gaps in labour market outcomes and women's greater propensity to work in non-standard forms of employment (with irregular hours and interrupted working patterns) drives gender disparities in social protection. This situation is very well documented in terms of access to old-age pensions. Women's lower levels of labour force participation in comparison to men's, the sizeable gender pay gaps, a greater likelihood of shorter or interrupted employment careers and the over-representation of women in informal and vulnerable work, all negatively affect their ability to build up pension entitlements in contributory pension schemes. Indeed, these factors contribute to lower rates of pension coverage for women and lower pension levels, ultimately driving higher levels of old-age poverty among women than among men. Measures that focus on compensating for gender inequalities and closing the gender pension gap, such as the recognition of periods of care provision in some public pension schemes, are thus of the utmost importance. Moreover, non-contributory (tax-financed) pensions play a key role in ensuring women's access to, at least, a basic pension; yet, as benefit levels are often low and insufficient to compensate for the lack of contributory provision, they typically fail to provide an adequate level of income security in old age. Closing gender gaps in the labour market and in employment therefore has important knock-on effects with regard to ensuring adequate social protection for women.

## Significant additional efforts are required to close gender gaps in the labour market

In the past decade, governments, together with employers and workers as well as their representative collective organizations, have implemented a number of measures to address the challenges that women face in the world of work. Especially notable is progress on family support provision, formalization of key areas of female-dominated informal work (such as domestic work) and efforts to address vertical sex segregation, especially in areas where reform has the potential to reduce sex discrimination. However, as this global snapshot highlights, current efforts by the major labour market actors to reduce the gender gap in labour market participation, while meaningful, are not sufficient. The difference in access to decent work opportunities between men and women is a major obstacle in global efforts to achieve a more equitable and inclusive labour market, and is expected to remain so in the coming years, unless additional efforts are made to address the persistent gender gaps outlined above. As shown in previous reports, the overwhelmingly unequal demands that women face with regard to household and care responsibilities continue to manifest themselves as labour market inequalities in terms of the types of jobs which women can both access and in which they can enjoy sustained employment. Indeed, the global challenges of informality and working poverty are also rooted (often organizationally and culturally) in patterns of sectoral and occupational sex segregation, which systemically constrain the opportunities open to women to gain access to better jobs. This suggests that tackling the labour market challenges confronting women will require not only efforts by governments, employers and trade unions to bridge the gap in the labour market, but also initiatives to dismantle the unequal demands that women face. Reducing gender gaps in the labour market therefore requires comprehensive measures, tailored specifically to women (in recognition of their widely varying circumstances), which will ultimately contribute to the welfare of society. In developing and emerging countries, there remains the unresolved challenge of fostering the transition from informal to formal jobs,

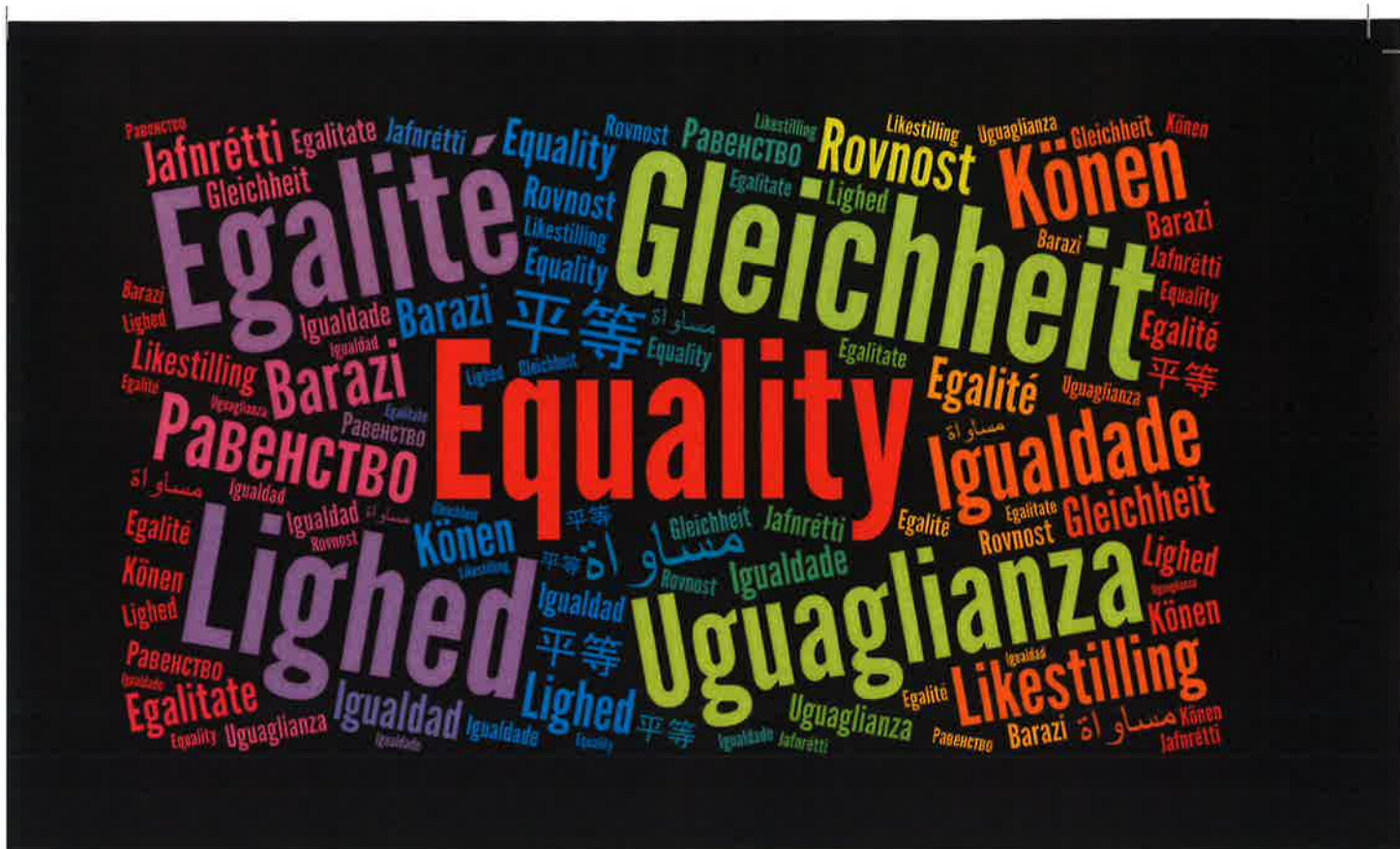


Photo: Fotolia Ricochet 64

particularly among rural women in the agricultural sector. Promoting economic diversification, within both agricultural and non-agricultural activities, will contribute to achieving a higher degree of formalization, while reducing the incidence of working poverty through income diversification. Continuing to foster female enrolment in formal education, vocational training and entrepreneurship programmes is crucial in supporting the transition of women into decent jobs. At the same time, there is considerable scope to improve the reach and effectiveness of public policies for family support by expanding the coverage of child-related services and promoting a more even redistribution of family responsibilities across members of the household (and possibly local communities). More generally, it is imperative for all countries and all constituent interest groups (especially governments, employers and trade unions) to work towards achieving the Agenda for Sustainable Development through measures that ensure quality jobs for women, reduce gender stereotypes and discrimination in both education and the workplace, and recognize, reduce and redistribute the disproportionate burden of care and household responsibilities that women currently bear.

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See also [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)



## Federal Bureau of Gender Equality, Switzerland

### Two Geneva personalities from the history of equality in Switzerland

The march towards equality between women and men began a long time ago and its progress is extraordinarily slow. It was carried on by personalities who showed a boundless commitment. Their ideas and actions, generally incongruous within the context of their time, often provoked a violent rejection. Here, among many others, are the portraits of two leading personalities in Geneva who wrote the history of equality in Switzerland.



Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin (1826-1899)  
Photo © Sozialarchiv, Zürich

#### Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin (1826-1899)

*"I am convinced that we will one day emerge victorious from our struggle which has no other goal than to ensure everywhere the reign of justice, freedom, education and happiness for every one that is a human being".*

She was one of the first women to campaign for women's suffrage in Switzerland. She claimed equality between women and men not only politically, but also socially and in civil law. She campaigned mainly for women to have more access to education. It was because of a petition that she launched in 1872 that young women were admitted to study at the University of Geneva.

Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin called on women to unite internationally to claim their rights together. In 1896 she founded one of the first international women's organizations, the International Women's Association, paving the way for the equality movement in Switzerland and throughout Europe.



## Emilie Gourd (1879-1946)

*"Without the emancipation of women, the term democracy is only hypocrisy and lies."*

Emilie Gourd devoted her entire life to the fight for the social, political and economic equality of women. Deeply imbued with the ideals of equality and freedom of the French Revolution, the Genevan invested both her time and her personal fortune in the women's emancipation movement, presenting herself as a "career feminist". President of many associations and organizations, she campaigned for the political rights of women especially in Geneva, but also at the national and international level. She founded the journal "The Feminist Movement" (now "The Emilie"), of which she remained editor-in-chief until her death. In this function, she addressed other aspects of equality, such as the need for maternity insurance, equal pay or improved educational opportunities for girls and women. Today, "The Emilie" is the oldest feminist newspaper still published in Europe.

In 1946, upon the death of Emilie Gourd, the canton of Geneva refused for the third time to grant women the right to vote and to stand for elections. It was not until 1960 that the struggle of a lifetime finally came to an end: that year, Genevan women obtained equal political rights at the cantonal level.

Source: [www.admin.ch](http://www.admin.ch)



Emilie Gourd (1879-1946)  
Photo © Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

## Federal office for gender equality, Switzerland

# UN session on women's economic empowerment: Switzerland campaigns for equal pay

Bern, 13.03.2017 - The 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will kick off on 13 March 2017 in New York. Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work is the focus of this year's session. Equal pay will be one of the focal points of Switzerland's efforts during the session. Representing the country is a delegation led by FDFA Secretary General Benno Bättig and Director of the Federal Office for Gender Equality Sylvie Durrer. Together with other partners, Switzerland is launching the Global Equal Pay Coalition, which seeks to eliminate wage inequality by 2030.

A gender pay gap exists in every country in the world. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), women earn 23 per cent less than men worldwide. This disparity is detrimental not just to women and their families but to society as a whole. According to the delegation's co-head, FDFA Secretary General Benno Bättig, "the fight against wage inequality and the economic empowerment of women benefit the whole economy. It pays to invest in equality". That is why women's economic empowerment is a core component of Switzerland's foreign policy in addition to being a key domestic policy concern. At this year's CSW session, Switzerland will also push for unpaid care and domestic work to be better recognised and valued, and for a strengthening of the role played by the private sector on this issue.

Today, in collaboration with its partners Switzerland will launch the Global Equal Pay Coalition, an initiative which aims to eradicate wage inequality by 2030. With the equal pay self-test tool for companies, Logib, Switzerland is playing a pioneering role in the promotion of equal pay.

This instrument, which is available in four languages, has attracted keen interest worldwide. Logib offers companies with more than 50 employees a simple way to find out whether their equal pay policy is being respected.

Also leading the Swiss delegation is Sylvie Durrer, Director of the Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality at the Federal Department of Home Affairs. Beth Krasna, a member of the board of the Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETHZ) who also sits on the board of various companies will be part of the delegation alongside representatives of the Federal Administration, civil society (NGO-Coordination post Beijing and Alliance F). Joining them is a young representative from the FDFA's Youth Rep programme, a Swiss National Youth Council project run in collaboration with the FDFA.

The CSW is the UN's central body responsible for improving gender equality. The official delegations will be joined at this year's CSW session, which runs from 13-24 March, by over 8,000 NGO representatives.

Source: [www.admin.ch](http://www.admin.ch)



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra



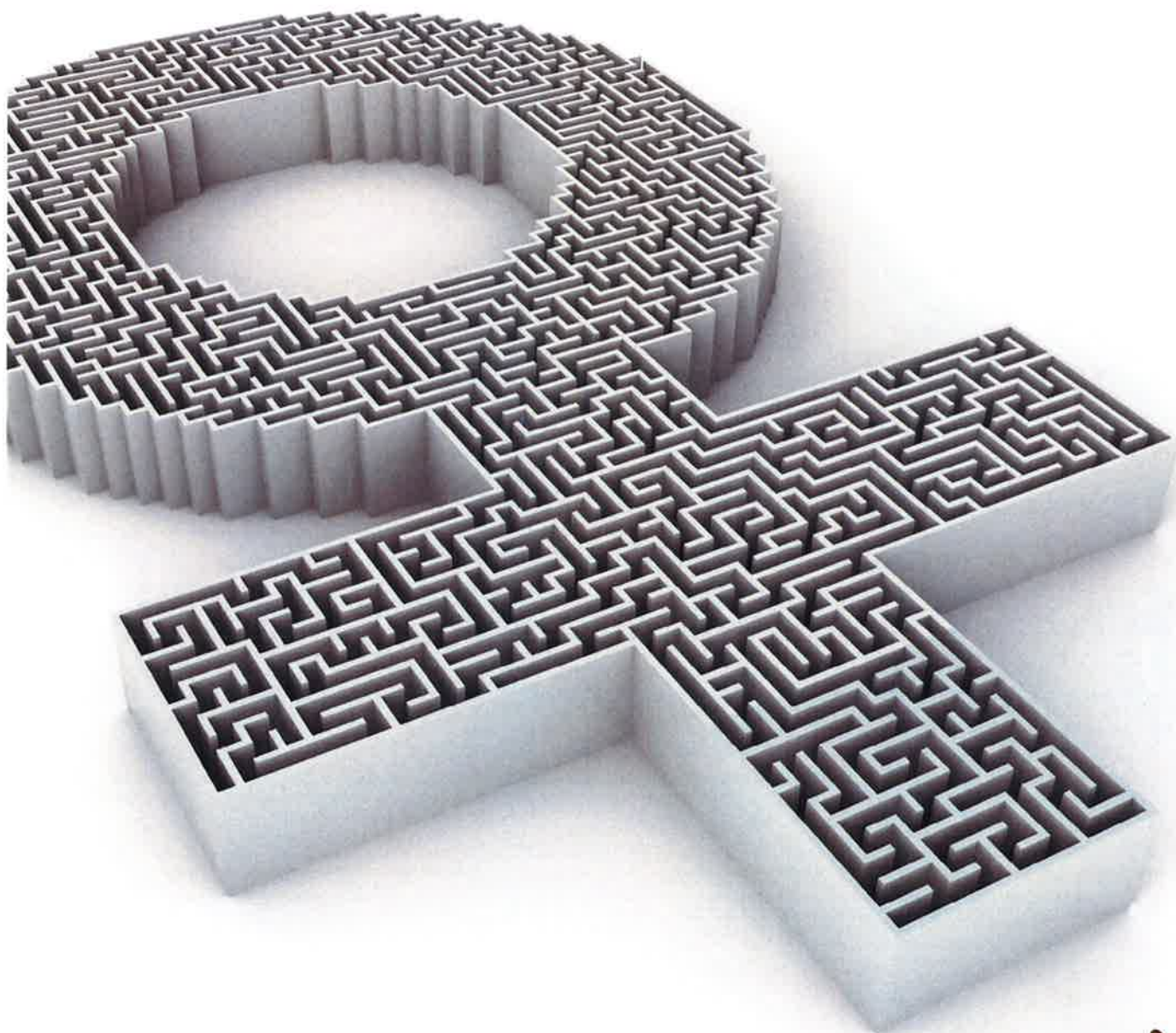


Photo: Fotolia vexworldwide



## Republic and Canton of Geneva

# Proceeding to be followed in case of discrimination on grounds of sex

### Cases falling under private law

#### MEDIATION AUTHORITY

Mediation, previously a compulsory step in Geneva, has become optional, the male or female plaintiff being able to waive it unilaterally.

The mediation proceeding is conducted by mediators of the Labour Tribunal and governed by Labour Tribunal law and by the new Swiss Code of Civil Proceeding.

When a claim is based upon the federal law on equality between women and men, dated 24 March 1995 (LEg), the mediation authority is composed of a male or female mediator, who presides, and two mediator assessors, a man and a woman.

When the man is an employer, the woman must be an employee and vice versa.

On the other hand, anyone who suffers or is at risk of suffering discrimination under the terms of the LEg may now apply to the mediation authority without any proceeding.

The registry of the Labour Tribunal works for the mediation authority, so the request for mediation is forwarded to the following address:

- > **The Labour Tribunal  
Mediation authority  
Boulevard Helvétique 27  
PO Box 3688  
1211 Geneva 3  
Tel. 022 546 89 00**

In case of non-mediation, an authorisation to proceed is sent to the male or female plaintiff, which allows him or her to appeal to the Labour Tribunal within three months.

If the attempt at mediation is unsuccessful, the mediation authority may submit to the parties a judgement proposal, which will deploy the effects of a final decision if it is not contested by one of the parties within 20 days. In the event of opposition, this proposal becomes void and an authorization to proceed is issued to the plaintiff to bring the action before the Labour Tribunal.

Moreover, where the claims of the plaintiff do not exceed Fr. 2,000, it may ask the mediation authority to make a final decision, against which only recourse to the Labour Tribunal Chambers of the Court of Justice is possible.

#### JUDICIAL AUTHORITY OF THE FIRST INSTANCE

The male or female plaintiff, in case of failure or waiver of the mediation, may submit his or her claim to the Labour Tribunal to the following address:

- > **The Labour Tribunal  
Boulevard Helvétique 27  
Case postale 3688  
1211 Genève 3  
Tel. 022 546 89 00**

The Labour Tribunal adjudges disputes arising from an employment contract under private law regardless of the value in dispute. It settles disputes under the LEg in a doubly equal composition (employers / employees and women/men).

### JUDICIAL AUTHORITY OF THE SECOND INSTANCE

When the judgement rendered by the Labour Tribunal is not satisfactory to the parties, they may file an appeal or recourse (depending on the amount in dispute). To do so, they must submit or send, within 30 days of receipt of the contested judgement, a memorandum of law, written and citing grounds, to the following address:

- > **The Labour Tribunal Chambers  
(Civil Court of the Court of Justice)  
Place du Bourg-de-Four 1  
Case postale 3108  
1211 Genève 3  
Tel. 022 327 68 68**

The Labour Tribunal Chambers is competent to hear appeals and recourses against the decisions of the Labour Tribunal. It is also responsible, in some cases, for adjudging recourses against the decisions of the labour mediators.

It sits in a composition of three judges, including a presiding judge, a Labour Tribunal judge who is a male or female employer and a Labour Tribunal judge who is a salaried employee. It includes at least one person of each sex when it decides a case arising from the LEg.

### Cases falling under public law

#### MEDIATION AUTHORITY

plaintiff being able to waive it from the outset. He or she may, however, change his or her mind during the proceeding. As in private law, it will also be possible, as soon as the legislative amendments in this area go into effect, to refer the matter to the mediation authority, without any proceeding.

As regards mediation, the competent administrative jurisdiction is the Administrative Court of First Instance (French acronym TAPI). It is possible to request mediation outside of any judicial proceeding, and it is then the TAPI that must be dealt with directly.

Mediation is attempted by the TAPI. If it fails or if the plaintiff has waived it, then the Administrative Chamber of the Court of Justice will deal with the appeal.

Cases falling under public law should be sent to the following address:

- > **Administrative Court of First Instance  
Rue Ami-Lullin 4  
Case postale 3888  
1211 Genève 3  
Tel. 022 388 12 20**

### JUDICIAL AUTHORITY OF FIRST INSTANCE

Within the framework of a judicial proceeding, it is the Administrative Chambers of the Court of Justice to whom the request must be addressed. It first examines the admissibility, then transmits it to the TAPI for mediation, if the plaintiff did not from the outset waive it.

It will decide the dispute as a unique cantonal instance, unless the law designates another jurisdiction that would rule before the Administrative Chambers. In cases enumerated by the law, the Council of State may be designated as the first instance of appeal. The Administrative Chambers is then the second instance of appeal.

However, as a general rule, cases falling under public law must be brought before the Administrative Chambers, which rules at the cantonal instance at the following address:

- > **Administrative chambers  
(Court of Public Law of the Court of Justice)  
Rue du Mont-Blanc 18  
Case postale 1956  
1211 Genève 1  
Tel. 022 388 23 30**

### Useful links

Judicial power, tribunals:

- > <http://ge.ch/justice/litiges-employes-employeurs>

Forms for judicial complaints:

- > <http://ge.ch/justice/tribunal-des-prudhommes>
- > <http://ge.ch/justice/formulaires>

Federal law on equality between women and men:

- > <http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/rs/1/151.1.fr.pdf>

Law on the Labour Tribunal:

- > [http://www.ge.ch/legislation/rsg/f/s/rsg\\_e3\\_10.html](http://www.ge.ch/legislation/rsg/f/s/rsg_e3_10.html)

Law on administrative proceedings:

- > [http://www.ge.ch/LEGISLATION/rsg/f/s/rsg\\_E5\\_10.html](http://www.ge.ch/LEGISLATION/rsg/f/s/rsg_E5_10.html)

Judgements rendered in application of the LEg:

- > <http://www.leg.ch>

This site allows the public to learn about the federal law on equality as well as to be able to obtain knowledge on the jurisprudence rendered on the basis of said law.

Only the official version in French is valid.





## Presentation

# of the Association of Swiss Friends of APEE

## (the Association of Parents and Friends of Encephalopathic Children) in Burkina Faso

The purpose of the Association of Swiss Friends of APEE (the Association of Parents and Friends of Encephalopathic Children) in Burkina Faso is to support the construction and operation of an inclusive school for disabled children in the town of Bobo Dioulasso.

The vast majority of disabled children in Burkina Faso – the legacy of endemic meningitis in the country, difficult childbirths, etc. – are excluded from public school. Furthermore, these children are poorly regarded in society, which sees in their disability all sorts of evil signs.

The Swiss Friends of APEE want to help promote the schooling of disabled children in Burkina Faso in order to enable them to be able to live a dignified life and subsequently to have employment opportunities.

Since 1994 APEE has run an inclusive school in Bobo Dioulasso that has served some 120 pupils in five classes. Moreover, one customized class has served about twenty polyhandicapped children, using specialised means.

APEE's inclusive school was located in a private villa that in no way corresponded to the needs of this unique school and its style: the premises were too small, too cramped, and somewhat dilapidated.

The construction of the new school with 9 classrooms, a cafeteria, an administrative building and a covered playground was made possible by financial support from ten Geneva communes, private gifts, and contributions from members of the association, which has sixty members. APEE's inclusive school, which eventually will be able to accommodate 300 pupils, is twinned with the École et Foyer de Clair Bois-Lancy; indeed, the École de Clair Bois-Lancy also serves polyhandicapped children. At present this twinning is done for the benefit of the two schools, which are so different from one another but which serve the same children. Furthermore a partnership between APEE and INSIEME-Geneva (the Association of Parents and Friends of Mentally Handicapped Persons) is being built with a view to exchanges and mutual enrichment.

### Registered office of the association:

Amis suisses de l'APEE  
c/o Christian Frey  
Route du Prieur 12  
Landecy  
1257 Croix-de-Rozon



After a long search, a site was found, and construction of the school complex with 9 classrooms has just been completed.

