



Powering through the crisis: how a focus on women will bring economic development

An UNCTAD 14 Civil Society Forum

Tuesday 19th July, 3-4:30pm

Powering through the crisis, a seminar organised jointly by ActionAid and the Bretton Woods Project, will examine the structural transformations economies need to confront poverty and realise the SDGs, in particular SDG 5: Gender Equality. Inspired by our own work and that of key thinkers in the North and South, the event will demonstrate that realising women's economic empowerment is a prerequisite for the transformative economic system change required to realize the global development goals. Our speakers will present evidence of the economic policy challenges faced domestically and internationally by developing countries, with a particular focus on inequality, exploitative employment and the often invisible unpaid care burden that women and girls bear.

Presentations by:

Nguyen Phuong Thuy, ActionAid; Vietnam

Sargon Nissan, Bretton Woods Project; United Kingdom

Discussant

Patita Tingoi; AWID Association of Women's Rights in Development

UNCTAD 14 sets the challenge to "move toward an inclusive and equitable global economic environment for trade and development". Yet we face a global economic climate that poses huge obstacles to countries' ability to realise this vision, exacerbating the struggle to transform their economies for the long-term benefit of their people. ActionAid and the Bretton Woods Project's seminar at the UNCTAD 14 Civil Society Forum will examine the structural transformations economies need to confront poverty and realise the SDGs. Realising women's economic empowerment is a prerequisite for the transformative economic system change required to realize the global development goals. Our speakers will present evidence of the economic policy challenges faced domestically and internationally by developing countries, focusing on inequality, exploitative employment and the often invisible unpaid care burden that women and girls bear. The seminar will explore how global rules and trade and investment agreements limit developing countries' ability to implement much needed industrial policies that in turn lead to the creation of more and better jobs.

Presentations will draw from ActionAid's work in Vietnam showing why fiscal policy reform requires tax justice, without which women and the most impoverished are impacted the most. This will also highlight how the unpaid care burden underpins an unsustainable economic model and derails efforts to achieve the SDGs. These experiences will demonstrate how trade agreements undermine these objectives, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement and the risk posed by the proposed EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement. BWP will share the findings of its recent work examining how efforts by international policy-makers, including the IMF, to consider women's participation in the economy and labour market still fall far short of the empowering, transformative changes required.