

## CONCEPT NOTE

### Side Event: “Breaking Biases, Building Equality”

Friday, 13 March 2026 | 10:00 - 11:15 a.m.

Conference Room 2 (CR-2), United Nations Headquarters

[RSVP here](#)

The legal, social, and cultural norms that govern the world continue to be major obstacles to achieving real gender equality in political, economic, social, and family participation. In fact, 40% of the world's women and girls live in countries with "high" or "very high" levels of discrimination, according to the OECD ([SIGI 2023](#)).

In the public and private spheres, women face stereotypes that act as invisible brakes on access to credit, technology, or property rights, which make equality with their male peers difficult. Legal barriers exacerbate this situation. According to [UN Women](#), in 155 out of 173 countries, there are still legal restrictions based on gender for women to access employment or start a business.

In the case of Latin America, they also face social norms that affect their economic independence: it is taken for granted that “women are caregivers” ([ILO](#)). This gender bias limits their participation in the economy: only 1 out of 2 has a job compared to 3 out of 4 men. The result is that for every 100 men in [multidimensional poverty](#), there are 122 women.

The urgency of action is clear. According to the [Global Gender Gap Report 2025 by the World Economic Forum](#), at the current pace, it will take us **123 years** to achieve total parity (the equivalent of 5 generations). In a global context of great uncertainty in all areas, accelerating parity measures is not only a moral imperative but also a stabilizing element for economies.

To address these challenges, within the framework of the [CSW 70](#), which analyzes as a priority theme the importance of guaranteeing access to justice for all women and girls by eliminating discriminatory laws and practices, the **BBVA Microfinance Foundation and the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations** are organizing the event *Breaking Biases, Building Equality*.

Since its inception, the BBVAMF has had a strategy for the economic empowerment of women that has allowed [7 out of 10 to move out of poverty](#). The Foundation, along with international experts, will share experiences and initiatives to **break down structural barriers, biases, and gender norms**. The event will also feature the testimony of an entrepreneur served by Banco Adopem in the Dominican Republic who, thanks to financial inclusion, has managed to progress and overturn social norms in a highly male-dominated sector like construction.

To achieve effective and lasting gender equality, eradicate poverty, and achieve sustainable development, it is crucial to address and transform the deep-rooted social and cultural norms that limit women's rights and economic autonomy. Only then will equality become a social driver and a reality for future generations.