

Commission on the Status of Women

equality and women's empowerment is the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

The Commission on the Status of Women last considered education and training as a priority theme in 1997, and has repeatedly addressed critical aspects of women's and girls' access to, and participation in education, training, science and technology, as well as access to decent work in its deliberations and outcomes, including in its agreed conclusions of 2007 on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.²

Women's and girls' access to, and participation in education, training, science and technology, and their access to full employment and decent work are also addressed in human rights instruments and by related monitoring mechanisms. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) requires States parties to eliminate discrimination against women in education and employment. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights contains a specific provision on fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value for women. International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions of particular relevance to gender equality include the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156).

III. Critical issues

Education is a key driver of economic growth and social change, and its importance for achieving gender equality is well-recognized. Educated women are more likely to delay marriage, enjoy better health, and participate in family decisions.³ Educational opportunities have expanded over the last decades, enabling a larger share of the world population to access formal education. The ratio of girls' to boys' enrolment has steadily improved, reaching 96 girls per 100 boys at primary level, 95 girls per 100 boys at

by teachers and in textbooks also contribute to poorer educational results. In addition, non-formal training, an important complement to the formal education system, too rarely caters to women's specific needs.

While education has many non-market benefits, it is commonly expected to lead to improved productivity and higher earnings. Women's educational gains, however, do not always translate into improved employment opportunities. Among the 20 to 24 year-old population, women continue to lag behind men in labour force participation in all regions, with South Asia recording the greatest gap with 82 per cent of men and 27 per cent of women employed or seeking

also been raised about possible gender biases