A global gathering agrees to close infrastructure and service gaps

UN Women serves as the substantive Secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the world’s largest annual gathering on gender equality.

Representatives from more than 163 states and over 5,200 members of non-governmental organizations attended the 63rd session in March 2019.

In two weeks of intense dialogue, ministers, senior government officials and other stakeholders deliberated on a comprehensive agenda for achieving social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure that are gender-responsive and advance the rights of women and girls. Persistent and often large gender gaps in these areas, such as in pensions, parental leave, health care, and water and sanitation, are among the steepest obstacles to ending discrimination.

The resulting Agreed Conclusions adopted by Member States provide a road map of measures for countries to close the gaps, end discrimination and address the needs of different groups of women and girls. The measures encompass increased investments in social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, coupled with assurances that spending will be protected from budget cuts that could undermine progress over time. Member States stressed the imperative of recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work, and scaling up quality, affordable public care services, as well as mobilizing resources, strengthening women’s participation and improving the evidence base. Other measures aim to guarantee safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation, end violence against women and girls, and ensure that transport planning accounts for the different needs of women and men, along with persons with disabilities and older people.

Photo: As members of the next generation, Girl Scouts and Girl Guides came to the Commission to share their views on stepped-up actions to achieve gender equality.