

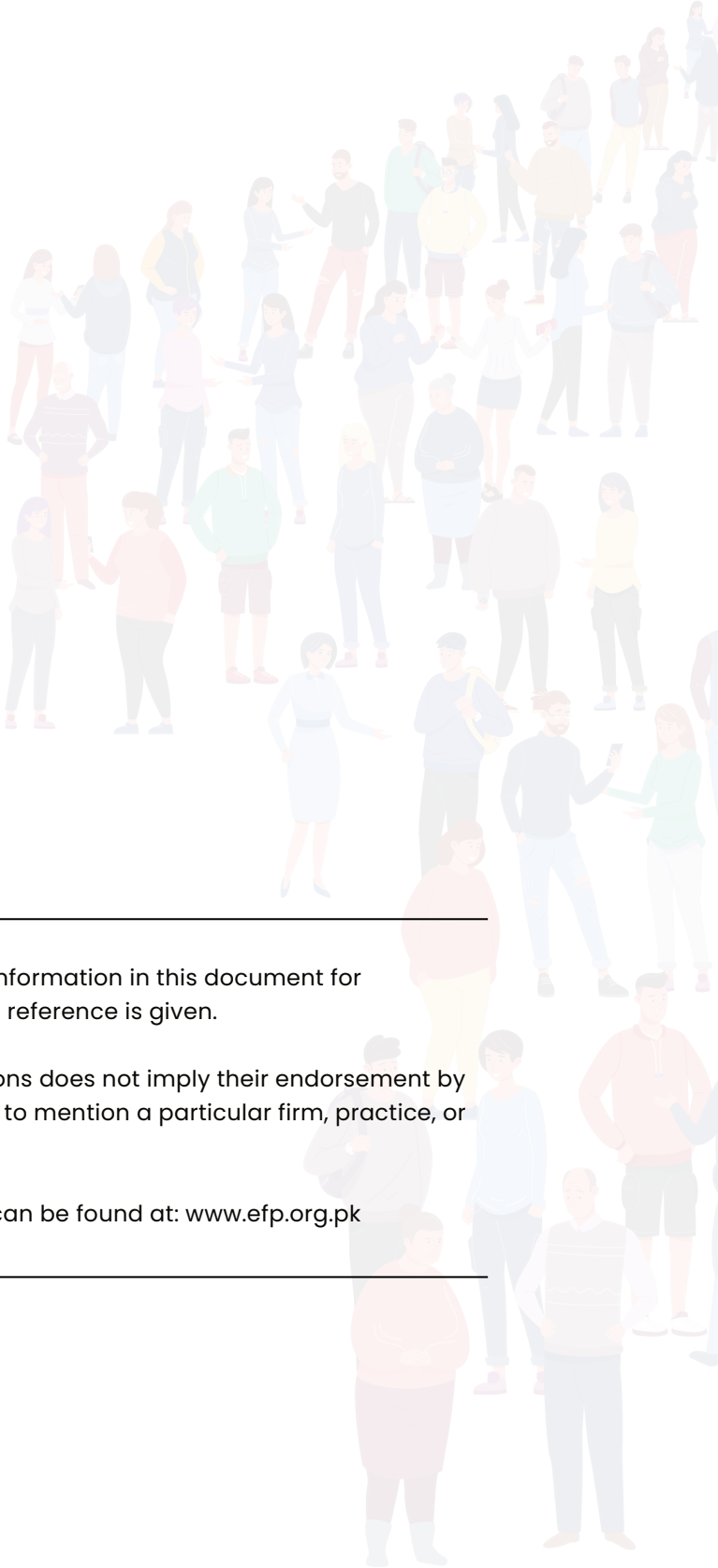


**EMPLOYERS'
FEDERATION
OF PAKISTAN**
The Apex Body of Employers

GENDER EQUALITY POLICY GUIDELINES



A GUIDE TO DESIGN GENDER-INCLUSIVE
ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES



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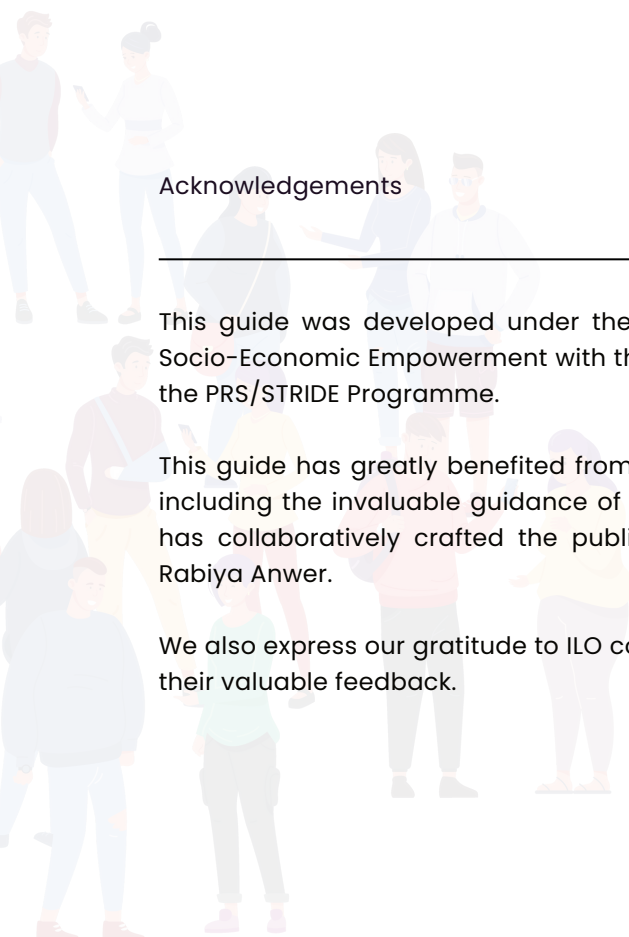


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CONTENTS

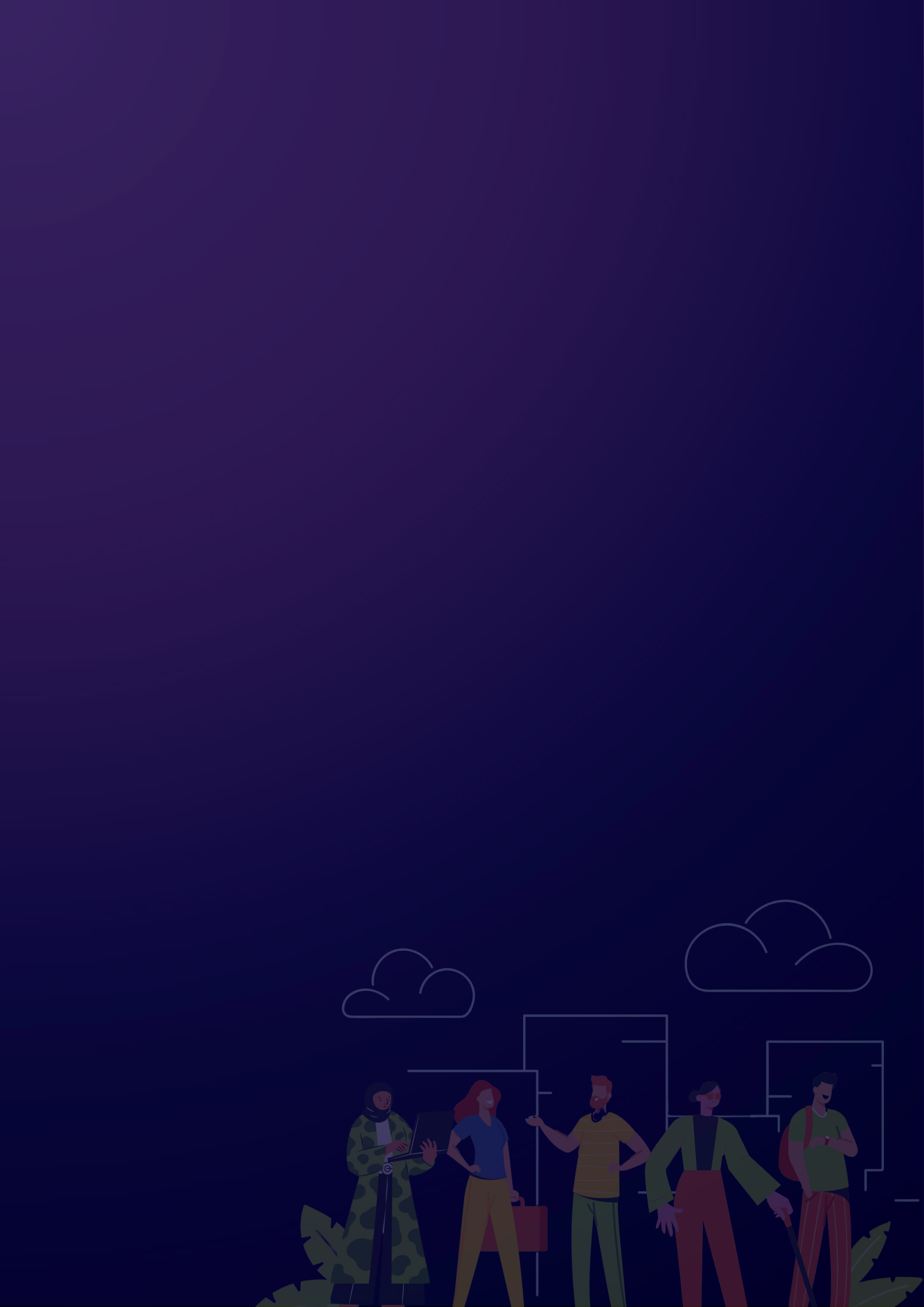
●	Foreword	7
●	About this Guide	9
●	Introduction	9
●	Background	10
●	Advantages of an effective policy	11
●	Definitions and Key Concepts	12
●	Evolution of the Policy Guidelines	14
●	Gender Equality Policy Guidelines	16
	1. Promoting Cultural Transformation – Equal Opportunity Employment	
	2. Implementing Diversity and Inclusion Policies to retain and promote talent	
	3. Prevention of Violence and Harassment at the Workplace	
	4. Prioritizing the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of all	
	5. Establish supportive structures for women and men re-entering the workforce	
	6. Promoting Gender Equality as a Business Imperative/Case	
	7. Advancing Diversity and Inclusion – Collaborative Approach	
●	Affirmative Statement	21
●	Summary Checklist	23
●	Annexes	26

LIST OF BOXES

Box 1.	Monthly Mean Wages per occupation and sex	09
Box 2.	Women in the Labour Force	10
Box 3.	Spotlight on Good Practices	11
Box 4.	ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming	13
Box 5.	Key Findings and Lessons Learned	14
Box 6.	Exploring intersectionality issues with women	16
Box 7.	Gender Mainstreaming – Organizations must ensure	19
Box 8.	Spotlight on Good Practices	19

LIST OF ACRONYMS

EFP	Employers' Federation of Pakistan
ILO	International Labour Organization
PRS	Promoting rights and social inclusion through organization and formalization
STRIDE	Strengthening integrated policy framework for formalization and decent work
WEC-PK	Women Employment Concerns and Working Conditions Project
UN	United Nations
GEDI	Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
D&I	Diversity and Inclusion
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
WEF	World Economic Forum
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
MNE	Multinational Enterprises Declaration



FOREWORD

Recognizing the importance of women's participation in economic activities for inclusive sustainable development and realizing the lack of institutional and legal framework for promoting gender equality at the workplace, EFP prepared the EFP Gender Equality Policy and Process Guidelines in 2008 with technical support from the ILO under the project WEC-PK funded by Canadian International Development Agency.

Looking back over the past 15 years, significant changes have emerged in the landscape of the workforce. The enactment of legislation on the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace in 2010, the shift from MDGs to SDGs, the adoption of the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment, 2019 (No. 190), and the growth of informal economies necessitated the need to update and align the 2008 EFP Gender Equality Policy in compliance with local legislations and international standards.

EFP in collaboration with the ILO, is excited to present an updated Gender Equality Policy Guidelines aimed at promoting gender equality in the workplace. The policy guidelines stand as a culmination of extensive efforts, including industry surveys, amalgamated studies showcasing good practices in gender equality, immersive focus group discussions, and alignment with the ILO standards and conventions, marking a significant stride towards ratifying C190 in Pakistan. The policy guidelines have been reviewed and updated with technical support from ILO under the Project of Promoting Rights and Social Inclusion through Organization and Formalization (PRS) Phase II, funded by the Government of Japan.

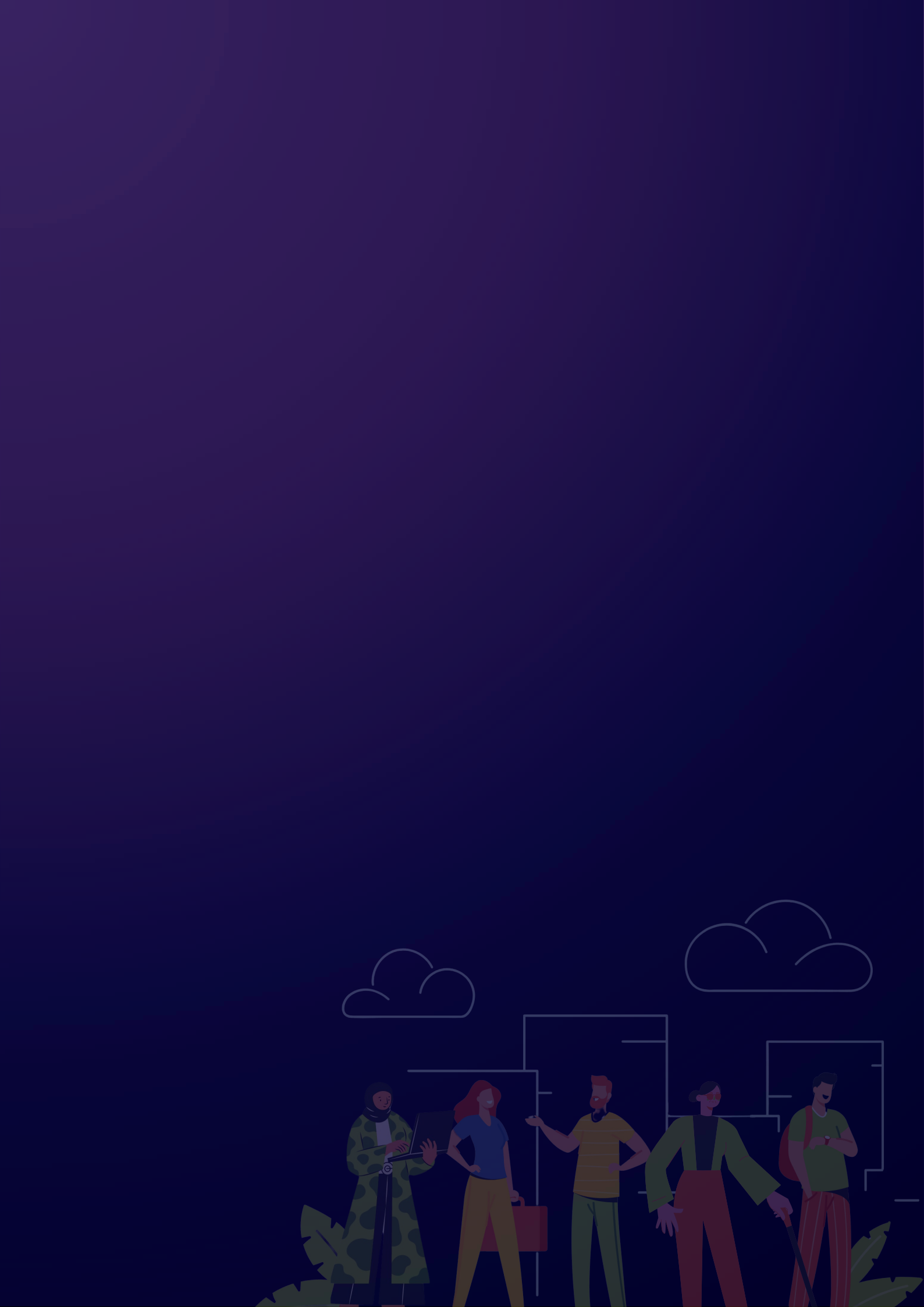
These policy guidelines offer support to employers in updating or developing the policies within their organizations encompassing crucial aspects like local legislation supporting women at the workplace, training, and development, ensuring equal opportunities, fostering a safe work environment, and promoting equality for workers with family responsibilities. Importantly, these policy guidelines aim to promote the application of international standards, including those set by the UN SDGs and the core conventions of the ILO.

We firmly believe that employers will stand strong in supporting our efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace by subscribing to these Policy Guidelines.

Malik Tahir Javaid

President

Employers' Federation of Pakistan



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The EFP Gender Equality Policy Guidelines serve to guide individuals engaged in reviewing, formulating, and implementing organizational policies and practices to promote gender equality and cultivate an inclusive, diverse workplace. It is not exhaustive in its coverage of the presented subjects but rather provides recommendations and examples.

It is essential to note that these suggestions do not replace the original texts of legislation and consultations outlined in the “References and Linkages” section.

INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan, According to a study by the World Bank, 49% of the total population (241.5m) are women. The participation of women during the last couple of years has increased and women are now actively engaging with the labor market, demonstrating unwavering commitment and determination. A growing number of women are venturing into higher education across various fields, showcasing their potential within the industry, particularly in management roles.

However, disparities persist in terms of opportunities and access to resources. Only 21.4% of women are employed, while men's participation is three times higher, at 67.9%.¹ Additionally, only 25% of technical roles and 5% of leadership roles in Pakistan are occupied by women. These statistics underscore the need for strategic initiatives to bridge this gender gap in labour force, in leadership and management positions, and ensure equal opportunities for women in the professional realm.

Women face discrimination in their professional paths due to societal biases. They also face various challenges due to limited access to education and skill development. This leads to various gender inequalities: a concentration of women in lower-paying jobs; Gender pay gaps (Box 1: Monthly Mean Wages per occupation and by sex in 2020–2021); and limited representation of women in leadership positions.

In recognition of these gender inequalities in the world of work and the need to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, this Gender Equality Policy Guidelines has been developed.

Several studies, results of consultations with members of EFP, and good practices in enhancing women's participation and gender equality, formed the basis for developing the Guidelines.

These policy guidelines assist organizations in developing and improving workplace policies and measures to create a fair and inclusive workplace and to enhance women's labour force participation and women's representation in leadership positions while promoting the application of international labour standards and improved productivity.

Gender Equality is not just the right thing to do but a crucial driver for organizational growth and sustainability.

Occupation	Monthly Mean Wages (2020-21)		
	Total	Male	Female
Total	24028	24643	20117
Mangers	68214	68935	61112
Professionals	41815	47597	33236
Technicians	33553	34392	28362
Clerical support workers	34259	34329	32721
Services and Sale workers	20770	20871	17650
Skilled Agri. & Forestry Workers	24917	24948	14036
Craft and related trade workers	20091	21709	10554
Plant and Machinery Operators	21721	21742	19980
Elementary Occupation	16238	17241	10170

Box 1. Monthly Mean Wages per occupation and sex



BACKGROUND

While there is a steady increase in female participation in Pakistan, the growth in employment for women has lagged slightly behind that of men. This positive trend is notably evident in the increasing number of women actively engaging in higher education across diverse fields, highlighting their potential and contribution to various industries, particularly in management roles.

The Pakistani business landscape provides both challenges and opportunities. For instance, while women have made strides in certain sectors, their representation in decision-making roles remains disproportionately low. In the finance sector, where women constitute a substantial portion of the workforce, their presence in executive roles remains limited. In every industry, women typically face barriers, particularly in traditionally male-dominated sectors like manufacturing and technology.

According to the EFP Research Report on Women Empowerment in Pakistan,¹ data indicates that female participation in management positions remains low at 19.7%, contrasting with male representation at 80.3%. This trend aligns with findings from the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Government of Pakistan report in 2022 (refer to Box 2 for further details).

Box 2. Women in the Labour Force

The overall labor force participation rate (LFPR) of women in Pakistan is about 22.7 % against male's 83.3 %. A significant number of women are engaged in unpaid family labor within the agricultural sector. Moreover, they predominantly occupy low-paid, low-skilled positions, primarily situated at the bottom tier of the urban industrial workforce.

Occupational segregation is evident in the concentration of women within specific sectors mentioned below. Furthermore, within these sectors, women tend to occupy lower-ranking positions.

- private households with employed persons;
- health and social work;
- education;
- arts, entertainment, recreation, and other service activities; and
- accommodation and food service activities

Sources: [National Gender Policy Framework, Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Government of Pakistan 2022.](#)
[Status of Women in Pakistan, UN Women Report 2023.](#)

Employers, as key stakeholders in the socio-economic fabric, wield significant influence in shaping workplace dynamics. Recognizing the multifaceted benefits of gender equality, they can proactively implement policies and initiatives that foster inclusivity, dismantle discriminatory practices, and create an environment where women can excel. Encouraging women's active participation in all business activities not only aligns with ethical principles but also positions the company as a catalyst for positive societal change.

Pakistan's historical commitment to promoting equality is evident through its active participation in international forums such as the ILO. Since 1947, Pakistan has been a dedicated member of the ILO, ratifying 36 ILO Conventions,² including key Governance Conventions (C.144 & C.81), and eight out of 10 Fundamental Conventions, including the Convention on Equal Remuneration, 1951 (C-100), and the Convention on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958 (C-111).

¹ EFP Women Empowerment in Pakistan Report 2022

² [Ratifications for Pakistan, International Labour Organization](#)

These ratifications underscore Pakistan's steadfast commitment to addressing discrimination and promoting equality as fundamental principles. Businesses operating within the country are not only morally compelled but also legally obligated to align their practices with these international standards. By doing so, employers contribute to the global effort of creating workplaces that uphold the principles of fairness, non-discrimination, and equal opportunities.

As we navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape, the imperative to champion gender equality stands out as a crucial facet of fostering sustainable growth, innovation, and social responsibility. The active and meaningful participation of women in the workforce is not just a matter of ethical consideration; it is a strategic imperative that contributes to the overall success and resilience of businesses. Recognizing this, employers play a pivotal role in shaping an environment where diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunities are not merely aspirational goals but integral components of organizational culture.

Box 3. Spotlight on Good Practices

Established in the year 2012, with over 100+ branches and about 2000+ employees, Mobilink Microfinance Bank has been offering its financial services across Pakistan.

MMBL launched its Women Inspirational Network (WIN) in 2021, with the key ambition to empower women through a combination of financing, upskilling, financial literacy campaigns, policy advocacy, communication, industrial open houses/seminars, and partnerships.

In January 2022, MMBL launched its Gender Mainstreaming Policy in alignment with SBP's Banking on Equality Policy, to narrow the organizational gender gap. Applicable across all levels of MMBL's corporate and geographical structure, the policy aims to facilitate female professional development and progression. It encourages gender diversity in leadership and management positions through targeted hiring strategies.

Sources: EFP Women Empowerment in Pakistan Report 2022

ADVANTAGES OF AN EFFECTIVE POLICY

- Achieving gender balance taps into the strengths of both women and men, fostering a harmonious and productive workplace for organizational success.
- Enhances talent attraction and retention, while also optimizing human resource utilization.
- Enhance legal compliance and reduce the risk of workplace conflicts
- Integrating diverse thoughts, skills, and talents from a broad pool of human resources elevates competitiveness, bringing varied perspectives to problem-solving and innovation.
- Supports employee growth, morale, satisfaction and commitment and reduces labour turnover
- Mainstreaming women in decision-making processes inject fresh and creative dimensions into business strategies, enhancing adaptability and innovation.
- In the fiercely competitive global landscape, gender equality becomes a catalyst for better organizational effectiveness, positioning the company as a progressive and adaptive entity.
- Specialized actions towards gender equality goals contribute significantly to enhancing the country's image, showcasing commitment to social progress and inclusivity.

DEFINITIONS & KEY CONCEPTS

This section explains the concepts that are used throughout this guide.

▶ Sex vs. Gender

Sex – Biological differences that men and women, boys and girls are born with, that are universal

Gender – Social differences and relations between the sexes that are learned, change overtime, and vary across culture

▶ Gender Inclusive

This term refers to initiatives, activities, or programmes that are open to both men and women but are designed to overcome any barriers to full participation that one of the two sexes may experience. In most cases, it targets the increased participation of women and girls. Implementing gender-inclusive programmes is a powerful way to promote gender, equality and eradicate gender bias.

▶ Gender Equality

Gender equality, as defined by the UN ILO, is a fundamental principle anchored in the belief that all individuals, regardless of their gender, deserve equal rights, opportunities, and treatment in all spheres of life. It encompasses a commitment to eliminating discrimination and bias based on gender, promoting fairness, and ensuring that everyone, irrespective of their gender identity, can enjoy the same privileges and access to resources.

Gender equality extends beyond mere numerical balance;

- it strives to dismantle deeply rooted societal norms and stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination.
- It advocates for the empowerment of all individuals, irrespective of gender, ensuring they have the freedom to make choices about their lives and pursue opportunities without facing prejudice or bias. This includes equal access to education, healthcare, employment, and decision-making roles.

▶ Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)

Discrimination – any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation – *as defined in C111*

The ILO's Conventions notably play a vital role in confronting such discriminatory practices and acknowledge violence and harassment as human rights violations and obstacles to equality, non-discrimination, and inclusivity.

The Conventions focusing on equal remuneration (C-100), advancing decent work for domestic workers (C-189), and elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work (C-190), collectively underscore its dedication to eradicating discrimination and fostering workplaces that are fair, just, and respectful on a global scale.

▶ Principles of Gender Equality

Organizations are called upon to embrace and equally value both the similarities and differences inherent in the roles of women and men. Acknowledging that gender diversity enriches the workplace, special measures are essential to eradicate gender inequality and actively promote the empowerment of women.

An organization should strive to implement institutional procedures and work culture that consider the different parameters, interests, experiences, and values of women and men by incorporating a sense of fairness and justice. To ensure the continuity of affirmative actions, empowerment, and the inclusion of women in decision-making processes and upward mobility initiatives, organizational leaders must champion and embody these principles.

Box 4. ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

The Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO, announced by the Director-General in 1999, states that mutually reinforcing action to promote gender equality should take place in staffing, substance and structure.

Source: [Gender: Equality between men and women](#).

Gender Mainstreaming

As explained by ILO³, Mainstreaming includes gender-specific activities and affirmative action, whenever women or men are in a particularly disadvantageous position. Gender-specific interventions can target women exclusively, men and women together, or only men, to enable them to participate in and benefit equally from development efforts.

- the process of assessing the implications for women and men on any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in any area, and at all levels
- a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.
- the ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality

Gender Equality at the Workplace

In simple words, Gender equality in the workplace entails ensuring fairness and equal opportunities for individuals of all genders. It involves eliminating discrimination, promoting inclusivity, and fostering an environment where everyone, irrespective of gender, can contribute and advance based on merit and skills.

Practices and initiatives that can provide a comprehensive understanding of gender equality principles, workplace dynamics, and best practices should align with recognized international standards and conventions, emphasizing merit-based selection, inclusivity, and the elimination of gender-based discrimination.

Some Key Concepts

- **Equal pay for equal work** – Men and women receive equal pay for the same or similar work
- **Equal pay for work of equal value** – Men and women receive equal pay for different jobs
- **Sexual harassment** – any behaviour of a sexual nature that affects the dignity of women and men, which is considered as unwanted, unacceptable, inappropriate and offensive to the recipient, and that creates an intimidating, hostile, unstable or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment is committed when an employer, supervisor, manager or co-worker, undertakes or attempts to influence the process of recruitment, promotion, training, discipline, dismissal, salary increment or other benefit of an existing staff member or job applicant, in exchange for sexual favours.

³ [Gender: Equality between men and women, International Labour Organization](#).

EVOLUTION OF THE POLICY GUIDELINES

EFP, the apex body representing the private sector, collaborated with the ILO to conduct a research study in 2008.⁴ The findings revealed a significant gap in organizational strategy, particularly the absence of a gender dimension.

For a deeper understanding of this significant gap and to formulate a suitable, innovative, and actionable strategy, EFP conducted an in-depth groundwork including assessing the present scenario concerning the status of women, gauging awareness levels regarding gender issues, analyzing prevalent practices within the corporate sector that either foster or hinder women's participation, examining the growth pattern of women-friendly provisions within the existing legal framework, and evaluating the overall intensity of the challenges that lie ahead.

EFP undertook the following initiatives, and the outcomes of these activities served as the foundation for the Gender Equality Policy Guidelines:

- ▶ **Survey on 'State of Women in Private Sector – Pakistan'**
A broad-based survey that compiled data through interviews of 1000 women in ten major sectors: The survey results provided a deep insight into the employment concerns of working women.
- ▶ **Survey of 'Gender Equality in Private Sector: Showcasing Good Practices in Pakistan'**
50 private sector organizations gave their input on the current practices applied within their organization showcasing the good practices on gender equality.
- ▶ **Multi-stakeholder consultation meetings**
Through a series of multi-stakeholder consultation meetings, the updated policy guidelines underwent drafting, presentation, and subsequent review for finalization. These sessions proved instrumental in gathering insightful recommendations and valuable inputs, which significantly shaped and enhanced the overall quality of the policy guidelines.

Box 5. Key Findings and Lessons Learned

Upon reviewing the research findings from 2022 and gathering feedback from stakeholders during diverse activities within the current project, the insights that have been distilled as the key lessons learned, establishing the groundwork for the EFP Gender Equality Policy Guidelines 2024 are mentioned below:

- Digital divide - access to technology and comparable opportunities, resulting in the prevalence of low-paying jobs and a diminished standard of living.
- Societal conditions often channel women into feminized professions, including teaching, lower-level administrative roles, back-office support, coordinators, secretarial positions, receptionists, shop floor assistants, customer service support, laboratory assistants, nursing, etc. In higher-paying sectors, their concentration is notable in fields such as medicine and financial institutions.
- Following marriage, balancing employment and family responsibilities becomes challenging for women, particularly those with children, leading to difficulties in managing work-life equilibrium.
- Promotions in our firm are predominantly experience-based, with males benefiting from longer tenures. Conversely, female employees, who tend to leave sooner, face challenges in reaching managerial levels.

4 [Gender: Equality between men and women, International Labour Organization](#)

Policy Guidelines

The Policy Guidelines serve as a comprehensive reference for organizations seeking to develop or revise their Gender Equality Policies. They are meticulously crafted to align with both national legislation and international standards. Further details regarding these requirements and standards are outlined in the annexes section for additional clarity.



GENDER EQUALITY POLICY GUIDELINES

01 Promoting Cultural Transformation – Equal Opportunity Employment

Equal Opportunity Employment with a commitment to cultural transformation and ensuring organizations foster an environment where diversity is celebrated. Promoting cultural transformation through equal-opportunity employment is crucial for dismantling gender biases, fostering diversity, and creating an inclusive workplace that maximizes the potential of all individuals.

Just to name a few, implementing these strategies involves:

- ☐ *Leadership Pledge: Organizations must overtly express their commitment to becoming Equal Opportunity Employers. This commitment should be ingrained in organizational values and communicated transparently.*
- ☐ *Merit-centered Recruitment and promotion: Enforce merit-based recruitment processes that eliminate gender biases. Establish guidelines and compliance ratios uniformly across all organizational units to ensure fairness.*
- ☐ *Leaders as Advocates: Leverage influential leaders, including male CEOs, as 'Ambassadors' or 'Champions' to champion cultural change. These leaders should advocate for gender diversity, actively participate in initiatives, and endorse inclusive practices.*
- ☐ *Diversity Training Programs: Implement training programs addressing unconscious biases and promoting diversity and inclusion. Equip employees with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to an egalitarian workplace.*
- ☐ *Ensuring Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value: Establish robust job evaluation processes to assess the value of each role objectively. Ensure that these processes consider factors such as skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions to determine fair and equitable compensation.*
- ☐ *Regular Audits: Conduct regular audits of pay structures to identify and rectify any discrepancies in compensation for work of equal value. This proactive approach ensures ongoing compliance with equal pay principles.*
- ☐ *Diversity Training Programs: Implement training programs addressing unconscious biases and promoting diversity and inclusion. Equip employees with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to an egalitarian workplace.*
- ☐ *Creating Accountability Systems: Appointing an executive-level Chief Diversity Officer to oversee the implementation and progress of gender equality initiatives, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with organizational goals.*
- ☐ *Equal Opportunity for Vertical and Horizontal Mobility: A company sets specific promotion criteria that focus on skills and achievements. Through mentorship programs, employees receive guidance on career development. As a result, individuals with similar potential, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities for both vertical promotions and lateral moves within the organization.*

Box 6. Exploring intersectionality issues with women

Intersectionality recognizes that individuals may face overlapping and interconnected forms of discrimination or disadvantage, influenced by factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and more.

Example: women may generally face barriers but women with disabilities face more barriers to accessing quality employment in high-valued added sectors

Policy Integration – a few recommendations :

- Customize policies to respect diverse cultures, ensuring they are culturally sensitive and inclusive.
- Implement policies addressing economic disparities, including tailored financial support and training programs for women from diverse economic backgrounds.
- Develop policies bridging the urban-rural gap, ensuring accessibility for women in both settings and addressing region-specific concerns.

GUIDELINES CONTD.

02 Implementing Diversity and Inclusion Policies to retain and promote talent

Implementing diversity and inclusion policies within organizations goes beyond retention; it celebrates every individual and fosters positive career growth. These policies create an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and included, allowing them to thrive and contribute meaningfully. Celebrating diversity leads to a vibrant workplace culture, enabling everyone especially women to access equal opportunities, break barriers, and achieve career milestones.

A few strategies that prioritize the development of diversity and inclusion policies are:

- ☐ *Family-Friendly Policies: Introduce flexible work hours, remote work options, and parental leave to accommodate diverse family needs.*
- ☐ *Diversity and Inclusion Policies: Establish diverse hiring panels, ensuring representation in recruitment processes, and creating an inclusive environment for all employees, accommodating individuals with diverse abilities.*
- ☐ *Unconscious Biases: Recruitment processes and access to opportunities must be devoid of unconscious biases, fostering a more diverse workforce enriched with talents from various backgrounds.*
- ☐ *Equal Access to Skill Development: Ensures that all employees, irrespective of gender, have the same opportunities to enhance their capabilities and professional growth.*
- ☐ *Mentoring Programs: Implement mentoring programs where experienced employees, both male and female, serve as mentors to guide and share knowledge with their mentees.*
- ☐ *Inclusive Budget Allocation: Ensuring that all employees, regardless of gender and professional level, have equal access to learning resources and opportunities.*

03 Prevention of Violence and Harassment at the Workplace

The Prevention of Workplace Violence and Harassment policy is a fundamental component of the organization's commitment to gender equality. Workplace violence and harassment encompass any unwelcome behavior, conduct, or threat that causes harm, discomfort, or fear among employees. This includes but is not limited to, physical violence, verbal abuse, bullying, intimidation, and any form of discrimination.

Organizations can implement this by:

- ☐ *Establishing Clear Guidance: Develop and communicate clear guidelines on acceptable behavior, emphasizing a zero-tolerance approach to violence and harassment.*
- ☐ *Education and Training: Conduct regular workshops and training sessions to educate employees about recognizing, preventing, and reporting incidents of violence and harassment.*
- ☐ *Reporting Mechanism: Implement and effectively communicate a confidential and accessible reporting system for employees to report incidents without fear of retaliation.*
- ☐ *Support Services: Provide support services, including counseling and legal assistance, to victims of workplace violence and harassment.*
- ☐ *Risk Assessment: Identify hazards and assess the risks of violence and harassment, with the participation of workers and their representatives, and take measures to prevent and control them.*
- ☐ *Grievance Mechanism: Establishment of a dedicated Committee and process for addressing grievances related to gender-based discrimination, harassment, and or violation of women's rights. Equal representation of women and men in the Committee.*

GUIDELINES CONTD.

04 Prioritizing the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of all

The Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellbeing aims to create a work environment where the safety, health, and overall well-being of all employees are prioritized. It encompasses measures to prevent accidents, and injuries, and promote physical and mental wellness at the workplace.

Implementation Guidelines are:

- ☐ *Safety Protocols: Implement and regularly update safety protocols which includes emergency procedures, proper handling of equipment, and adherence to industry safety standards.*
- ☐ *Health and Wellness Programs: Introduce health and wellness programs and provide resources such as fitness facilities, mental health support, and preventive health check-ups. Conduct specialized training sessions addressing the specific safety needs of women and individuals with disabilities.*
- ☐ *Accessible Workplace: Implement accessible design features in workspaces accommodating diverse abilities of all employees.*
- ☐ *Necessary Welfare Facilities: Essential welfare facilities for gender inclusivity, such as female toilets, changing rooms, and breastfeeding areas, are provided.*
- ☐ *Awareness Raising: Conduct regular training sessions to educate employees on safety practices, emergency procedures, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.*

05 Establish supportive structures for women and men re-entering the workforce

Ensuring a seamless transition and establishment of supportive structures that cater to the unique needs of women returning to professional environments after extended breaks, such as maternity leave or career hiatus.

Implementation guidelines are:

- ☐ *Returnship Programs: Design and implement returnship programs that offer short-term employment opportunities, training, and mentorship to women looking to re-enter the workforce.*
- ☐ *Training and Mentorships: Training sessions and skill development programs to update the knowledge and expertise of women returning to work and pair them with the experienced professionals within the organization to guide them through the reintegration process.*
- ☐ *Career Counseling: Personalized career counseling services to assist returning women in aligning their skills and aspirations with available opportunities within the organization.*

06 Promoting Gender Equality as a Business Imperative/Case

It's a smart thing to do! Fostering women's empowerment and gender equality is a moral imperative and a compelling business proposition. Promoting gender equality and diversity is not just a checkbox; it's pivotal for initiating a positive cultural shift within the organization and is a strategic necessity for businesses.

For example, Companies involved in exporting face stringent requirements under the new GSP Plus framework, emphasizing adherence to human rights, including gender equality. Companies championing gender diversity and equality build a positive brand reputation, attracting socially conscious consumers and investors.

While this might pose financial challenges for SMEs, they can explore cost-effective options by leveraging existing resources and seeking guidance from employers' organizations or collaborating with larger companies within the industry.

GUIDELINES CONTD.

07 Advancing Diversity and Inclusion – Collaborative Approach

Employers, as policyholders, should proactively collaborate and engage with academic institutions to integrate Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) into the mainstream curriculum.

To achieve this goal, regular round table conferences and meet-ups should be organized. These events aim to foster collaboration and discussion among stakeholders, including employers and academia, to establish D&I as a standalone course in university curricula.

Employers are encouraged to document and share their noteworthy Gender Equality initiatives and best practices with development partners such as EFP. By doing so, these success stories can serve as valuable role models, motivating and inspiring others within the industry.

Box 7. Gender Mainstreaming – Organizations must ensure:

- Integrate gender equality principles into organizational business strategies comprehensively.
- The identification of issues and problems across all activities should be such that gender differences and disparities can be diagnosed.
- Gender concerns are incorporated into planning, programming, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating.
- Understand women's and men's constraints and opportunities in relation to knowledge and skills, conditions of work, social protection, family responsibilities, and economic and political decision-making.
- Eliminate structures and procedures perpetuating social biases, ensuring equal standing for men and women.
- Foster balanced and active participation of women in all organizational processes.
- A strong commitment from the leaders and sufficient resources, both financial and human, are crucial to effectively implement and integrate the concept into practice.

Box 8. Spotlight on Good Practices

Engro Polymer and Chemicals Limited (EPCL) is a large private enterprise established in 1997 and since then, it has been the only PVC resin manufacturer in Pakistan. The Engro Group observes some of the good practices and programs when it comes to gender inclusivity. Among various initiatives, a few highlights are mentioned below:

- A Returner-ship Program under the name of the 'Break ke Baad' focusing on females returning to work was initiated last year. And it had a ratio of 80% of females being confirmed in regular positions.
- A very specified lean-On campaign that focuses on male colleagues passing on opportunities to their female colleagues to balance out any gender gap that may exist is addressed.

Sources: EFP Women Empowerment in Pakistan Report 2022

Affirmative Statement

The Affirmative Statement, an integral component of the EFP Gender Equality Policy Guidelines, stands as a formal commitment by organizations to champion gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace. This endorsement signifies a dedication to translating the outlined commitments and recommendations into tangible actions, fostering an environment that is fair, respectful, and supportive for all employees.

The Affirmative Statement serves as a guiding document, steering the organizations' policies and practices to align seamlessly with the values and principles encapsulated in the Gender Equality Policy Guidelines. This collective pledge is a testament to our shared vision of creating workplaces that are not only diverse and inclusive but also equitable and empowering.



AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF GENDER EQUALITY POLICY GUIDELINES

On behalf of M/S _____

I/We voluntarily pledge our support and commit to the principles outlined in the EFP Gender Equality Policy Guidelines.

This affirmative statement underscores our unwavering commitment to gender equality, diversity, and inclusion by reviewing or formulating policies and practices, aiming to foster a workplace characterized by fairness, respect, and support for all.

Head of Organization Name _____ Signature _____

Summary Checklist

This is a Summary of the checklist provided in the Gender Equality Policy Guidelines and a few additional checklists for organizations to review while engaging in formulating organizational policies and practices striving to create gender-inclusive workplaces.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

► Promoting Cultural Transformation – Equal Opportunity Employment

- ☐ Overtly express your commitment to becoming Equal Opportunity Employers. This commitment should be ingrained in organizational values and communicated transparently.
- ☐ Appointing an executive-level Chief Diversity Officer to oversee the implementation and progress of gender equality initiatives, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with organizational goals.
- ☐ Gender concerns incorporated into planning, programming, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating.
- ☐ Establish robust job evaluation processes to assess the value of each role objectively. Ensure that these processes consider factors such as skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions to determine fair & equitable compensation.
- ☐ Set specific promotion criteria that focus on skills and achievements.
- ☐ Individuals with similar potential, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities for both vertical promotions and lateral moves within the organization.
- ☐ Conduct regular audits of pay structures to identify and rectify any discrepancies in compensation for work of equal value. This proactive approach ensures ongoing compliance with equal pay principles.
- ☐ Consider taking all hiring managers and HR teams through unconscious bias training.
- ☐ Regular training, including for male leaders, on the importance of women's participation and inclusion.
- ☐ Leverage influential leaders, including male CEOs, as 'Ambassadors' or 'Champions' to champion cultural change. These leaders should advocate for gender diversity, actively participate in initiatives, and endorse inclusive practices.
- ☐ Intentionally celebrate women and men with unconventional personalities and styles as leaders. Give equal visibility to women and men occupying decision-making and leadership positions as role models.
- ☐ Promoting Gender Equality as a Business Imperative/Case. Promote gender diversity in management for a positive shift in corporate culture. e.g. Gender breakdown of company's board of Directors and top management.
- ☐ Company's annual report or sustainability report including leadership statements on reaching gender equality goals.

► Implementing Diversity and Inclusion Policies to retain and promote talent

- ☐ Introduce flexible work hours, remote work options, and parental leave to accommodate diverse family needs.
- ☐ Establish diverse hiring panels, ensuring representation in recruitment processes, and creating an inclusive environment for all employees, accommodating individuals with diverse abilities.
- ☐ Set targets with the recruitment team related to the total number of women applicants, use of women-focused networks, and number of women candidates to be shortlisted (as appropriate). Preferred 30% or greater.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Enforce merit-based recruitment processes that eliminate gender biases. Establish guidelines and compliance ratios uniformly across all organizational units to ensure fairness.
- ☐ Make gender inclusivity policies and practices readily available. e.g. Notice boards, the intranet, or other internal communication platforms are good ways to create a section for employees to access them.
- ☐ Recruitment processes and access to opportunities must be devoid of unconscious biases, fostering a more diverse workforce enriched with talents from various backgrounds.
- ☐ Ensures that all employees, irrespective of gender, have the same opportunities to enhance their capabilities and professional growth.
- ☐ Implement mentoring programs where experienced employees, both male and female, serve as mentors to guide and share knowledge with their mentees.
- ☐ Provide and communicate leadership development and mentorship programmes. Share information about leadership development and mentorship programmes, including those targeting women specifically. Make these available to staff by providing funding, subsidies, and/or leave time to facilitate greater participation.
- ☐ Inclusive Budget Allocation: Ensuring that all employees, regardless of gender and professional level, have equal access to learning resources and opportunities.

► Prevention of Violence and Harassment at the Workplace

- ☐ Establishing Clear Guidance: Develop and communicate clear guidelines on acceptable behavior, emphasizing a zero-tolerance approach to violence and harassment.
- ☐ Be brave: Respectfully call out behavior that is not in line with the company's inclusive way of working.
- ☐ Conduct regular workshops and training sessions to educate employees about recognizing, preventing, and reporting incidents of violence and harassment.
- ☐ Implement and effectively communicate a confidential and accessible reporting system for employees to report incidents without fear of retaliation.
- ☐ Provide support services, including counseling and legal assistance, to victims of workplace violence and harassment.
- ☐ Commitment from organizational leaders to set an example and enforce the policy consistently.
- ☐ Establishment of a dedicated Committee and process for addressing grievances related to gender-based discrimination, harassment, and or violation of women's rights. The committee will consist of representatives from senior management and the ratio of women to men should be determined to ensure a balanced and impartial approach to grievance resolution.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

► Prioritizing the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of all

- ☐ Implement and regularly update safety protocols which includes emergency procedures, proper handling of equipment, and adherence to industry safety standards.
- ☐ Introduce health and wellness programs and provide resources such as fitness facilities, mental health support, and preventive health check-ups. Conduct specialized training sessions addressing the specific safety needs of women and individuals with disabilities.
- ☐ Implement accessible design features in workspaces accommodating diverse abilities of all employees.
- ☐ Conduct regular training sessions to educate employees on safety practices, emergency procedures, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

► Establish supportive structures for women re-entering the workforce

- ☐ Design and implement returnship programs that offer short-term employment opportunities, training, and mentorship to women looking to re-enter the workforce.
- ☐ Training sessions and skill development programs to update the knowledge and expertise of women returning to work and pair them with experienced professionals within the organization to guide them through the reintegration process.
- ☐ Personalized career counseling services to assist returning women in aligning their skills and aspirations with available opportunities within the organization.

► Designing impact metrics and identifying indicators

- ☐ Keep the list of gender metrics and indicators lean to ensure that the metrics are easy to track and report on for business.
- ☐ Use both quantitative and qualitative data together to create a well-rounded picture of your organization's performance with regards to gender-inclusive practices and initiatives.
- ☐ Administer and act upon organizational culture surveys regularly. Examples of the questions the company can include to collect staff feedback are: What are the top three things you value most about your company? What are the top three things you'd like to improve about your company? To the extent possible, data should be sex-disaggregated.

ANNEXES

References and Gender Equality Initiatives

Below is the compilation of key references and visual summaries of leading gender equality initiatives and approaches used to inform the key themes for EFP Gender Equality Policy Guidelines

1 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan ⁵

The Gender Equality Policy Guidelines stated in this document is linked with the legislation made in Pakistan, which promotes equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, to eliminate discrimination in respect thereof.

Article 25 of the Constitution states that:

All citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of law, there shall be no discrimination based on sex.

Article 34 of the Constitution states that:

steps shall be taken to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of national life.

Article 38 (a) of the Constitution states that:

secure the well-being of the people, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, by raising their standard of living, by preventing the concentration of wealth and means of production and distribution in the hands of a few to the detriment of general interest and by ensuring equitable adjustment of rights between employers and employees, and landlords and tenants.

2 National Laws and Regulatory Legal Framework

The policy aligns with both national and provincial legislations, including key laws such as:

- Workmen Compensation Act, 1923
- Factories Act, 1934
- Maternity Protection Act, 1958
- Minimum Wages Ordinance, 1961
- Employees Social Security Ordinance, 1965
- Shops & Establishment Ordinance, 1969
- Employee Old Age Benefit Institution, 1976
- Industrial Relations Ordinance, 2002
- Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010 & (Amendment) 2022

3 United Nations Convention ⁶

CEDAW – UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women is often described as an international bill of rights of women. Considering a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

The convention defines discrimination against women as:

"... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

4 Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) ⁷

Only ILO instrument that provides direct guidance to enterprises (multinational and national) on social policy and inclusive, responsible, and sustainable workplace practices.

Its principles are addressed to multinational and national enterprises, governments of home and host countries, and employers' and workers' organizations providing guidance in such areas as employment, training, conditions of work and life, industrial relations as well as general policies. The guidance is founded substantially on principles contained in international labour standards.

⁵ [The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan](#)

⁶ [Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)

⁷ [The MNE Declaration and gender equality](#)

ANNEXES

5 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁸

SDGs are goals to be achieved that respond to the world's main development challenges. The SDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

The SDGs break down into quantifiable targets that are measured by indicators.



The promotion of gender equality and empowering women is the fifth of the seventeen sustainable goals. All United Nations member countries including Pakistan agreed and committed to achieving them within the stipulated deadlines.

The UN SDG task project task force on education and gender equality has identified seven strategic areas: strengthening post-primary education; guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights; Investing In Infrastructure to reduce women's girl's time burdens; guaranteeing property and inheritance rights; eliminating gender inequality in employment; Increasing women share in seats in national parliament and local government bodies and combating violence against women.

The Government of Pakistan translated SDGs for the country and categorically identified targets for each goal. Every year the Government brings out a progress report on targets. The current report shows that progress on the goal to achieve gender equality in the country is off track but some improvement has been witnessed in recent years.

6 Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact⁹

The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact explains that corporate sustainability starts with a company's value system and a principles-based approach to doing business. This means operating in ways that, at a minimum, meet fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption. By incorporating the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact into strategies, policies, and procedures, and establishing a culture of integrity, companies are not only upholding their basic responsibilities to people and the planet but also setting the stage for long-term success. The ten principles are as under:

Human Rights:

- Principle 1 – Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Principle 2 – make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Labour

- Principle 3 – Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- Principle 4 – the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- Principle 5 – the effective abolition of child labour; and
- Principle 6 – the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Environment

- Principle 7 – Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8 – undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9 – encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Anti-corruption

- Principle 10 – Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

⁸ [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

⁹ [Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact](#)

ANNEXES

7 International Labour Organization Core Conventions ¹⁰

- Convention 190 – Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (Not Ratified by Pakistan)
C-190 is the first international treaty to recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. This framework extends to encompass gender-based violence and harassment, reflecting a global commitment to fostering safe, respectful, and inclusive work environments.
- Convention 100 – Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (Ratified by Pakistan)
C-100 emphasizes the principle of ensuring equal pay for men and women engaged in work of equal value. It defines "remuneration" to include the ordinary, basic, or minimum wage, along with any additional benefits, whether in cash or kind, provided directly or indirectly by the employer to the worker.
- Convention 111 – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (Ratified by Pakistan)
The convention defines discrimination as distinctions based on race, color, sex, religion, etc., which should not hinder equal opportunities in employment. It clarifies that job-specific requirements are not discriminatory, broadly covering employment aspects like vocational training, entry into occupations, and employment terms.

Supporting Conventions:

- Convention 122 – Employment Policy, 1964
- Convention 155 – Occupational Safety and Health, 1981
- Convention 156 – Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981
- Convention 161 – Occupational Health Services, 1985
- Convention 171 – Night Work Convention, 1990
- Convention 183 – Maternity Protection Convention, 2000

8 Poverty Reduction Strategies by World Bank ¹¹

The World Bank is dedicated to global poverty reduction as its paramount development objective. To achieve this, the bank advocates for accelerated economic growth through second-generation institutional reforms. By integrating gender policies, employers contribute significantly to poverty reduction objectives. Evidence from various developing countries supports the notion that improvements in the economic conditions of women lead to quicker enhancements in overall family well-being.

9 Bridging Global Gender Gap Strategy – World Economic Forum

Recognizing the significance of underutilizing human potential by sidelining half of the population, the World Economic Forum devised an index to gauge the gender gap within a country. The objective is to mitigate or eliminate this gap, ensuring a more effective allocation of human resources.

Structure of the Global Gender Gap (WEF). ¹²

10 Government of Pakistan

National Gender Policy Framework for Development and Empowerment of Women – Empowering women is indeed a top priority national agenda for which the Planning Commission pursued a strong manifesto for ensuring equal rights for women and had put in place a National Gender Policy Framework.

Accelerating Economic Growth and Reducing Poverty (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) – attempts to provide an integrated approach to a diverse set of factors that influence poverty in Pakistan.

An important finding carried out under the Strategy paper shows that women are among the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the country. Women's access to and control over productive resources is limited. Lack of skills, limited opportunities in the job market, and social and cultural restrictions limit women's chance to compete for public resources.

¹⁰ [ILO vision of equality between women and men](#)

¹¹ [Poverty Alleviation Strategies, World Bank Group](#)

¹² [Structure of the Global Gender Gap \(WEF\)](#)



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