

# Women's Network Newsletter



## Engaging Men in Gender Equality

Gender equality and the empowerment of women is everyone's business. To achieve gender equality, we need everyone — including male allies — who recognize the challenges and biases women and men of different intersectional realities continue to face. It is important to note that gender equality is a universally agreed principle— derived from the Charter of the United Nations, which unequivocally reaffirms the equal rights of men and women. This principle is further reflected in the UNOV/UNODC gender strategy, which recognizes that gender equality commitments will not be met without the active engagement of men. This is particularly relevant to law enforcement and border management work which often exhibits a male-dominated, masculine work culture.



Importantly, emerging and evolving threats in criminal activity and national security as well the gender composition of many societies urge us to rethink gender equality and inclusion. Pervasive gender norms appear detrimental for both men and women in law enforcement and the communities they serve. Research has shown that the occupational experience of law enforcement and border management work differs significantly among men and women and often affects both genders negatively. Therefore, involving men in addressing the harmful effects of gender norms and structural inequalities is key to achieving equitable and effective law enforcement work.

The following publications outline actionable and concrete steps on male engagement for gender equality.

[MenEngage — UNFPA Advocacy Brief](#)

[Engaging Men in Gender Equality at the OSCE](#)

[The Design of Everyday Men](#)

Allyship in gender equality does not come with an instruction manual and instead requires the active and ongoing effort of (un)learning biases and stereotypes at work and in life. It is also important to remember that men are not a homogenous group and have a wide range of experiences, opinions, and understanding of gender equality. In consideration of this reality, the December 2022 edition of the newsletter highlights the concrete gender equality goals committed to by men in leadership in the CCP. We recognize that a one-off engagement is inadequate and risks presenting false progress. Hence, we urge colleagues and counterparts to make process-driven, sustainable efforts to guarantee gender equality goals are genuinely achieved.

### Meet Jorge Vargas Mediavilla, CCP's Criminal Justice Officer in Latin America and the Caribbean Region and a Gender Equality Champion

**Q:** *What are the main benefits of supporting gender equality in the delivery of the work of CCP and the impact it has in the region you cover?*

**Jorge:** It is important that customs and law enforcement officers work in an inclusive and efficient environment and overcoming gender obstacles contributes to the overall efficiency of these teams. In certain countries in the region, law enforcement work at port facilities remains male-dominated. As a result, there is a risk that the women that join may find the environment unfavorable initially. But over time, through active gender-conscious engagements such as training, and consistent dialogues on gender equality, these matters are openly discussed and promoted, resulting in a higher feeling of inclusion amongst women and men.



**Q:** *Could you explain some of the activities you have spearheaded supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women?*

**Jorge:** We delivered back-to-back training on gender and human rights, including sexual harassment, gender roles, and stereotypes. This allowed us to analyse the expectations, stereotypes and concerns common among all officers. We did not simply deliver training but also facilitated an environment for conversation; the discussion of this "elephant in the room" brings us closer to overcoming stereotypes and creating a work environment free from the tensions and challenges of gender inequality. **Cont. on next page.**

## 2023 COMMITMENTS FROM CCP COLLEAGUES

As a global coordinator and building on the great work of the Women's Network, in 2023, I commit to integrate in all training a mandatory gender component/module. Further, and in institutions where it is possible, CCP will request the nomination of at least 40% women participants in all training and workshop engagements with law enforcement and border agencies.



Ketil Ottersen  
Head, CCP

As the coordinator of such a wide global programme, I recognize the varying demands and actions geared towards women's empowerment. Hence, in 2023, I pledge to actively consider gender and diversity considerations both in hiring of experts and engaging with counterparts.



Gilles Thomas  
WCO-Head, CCP

In 2023, I plan to strengthen my commitment to supporting women's professional development in CCP units as well as in our own UNODC team in the Middle East and North Africa region. I view the pursuit of change internally as an exemplary practice for promoting equality externally. I pledge to continue our regional initiative 'Customs, Cargo and Women – A talk for her!', launched in June 2021 with dedicated training and development activities for all female CCP officers.



Wolfgang Aigner,  
Regional  
coordinator, MENA

Supporting the career growth and active participation of female law enforcement officers will remain central to the work of CCP in Eastern and Southern Africa. Therefore, in 2023, I commit to include gender equality discussions with Enforcement Managers during all CCP Steering Committee meetings directed at improving nominations and access to opportunities for female officers in CCP teams.



Edmund Landy Tei  
Law Enforcement  
Expert, ESA

To address concerns about the underrepresentation of women in CCP units in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and in the Pacific, I plan to integrate regular brainstorming sessions in all workshops held in 2023 to explore practical ways on how men can contribute to the transformation of restrictive gender norms and discuss possible benefits of equal participation of women and men in, for example, container search teams.



Ulrich Meiser,  
Regional  
Coordinator, SA,  
SEA and Pacific

In 2023, I plan to oversee the completion of the regional gender study on the position of women in customs, conducted in cooperation with customs administrations in the Southeastern Europe region, as it will provide findings for discussion and use for the development of further regional activities aimed at supporting women in law enforcement.



Alen Gagula  
National Project  
Officer BiH

In 2023, CCP in Central Asia plans to actively promote gender equality by delivering gender sensitivity training for members of Port/Air Cargo Control Units. The training will specifically target HR managers and Heads of Departments of law enforcement agencies on the need for gender-conscious recruitment criteria, flexible working hours, and the provision of equal work opportunities for all officers.



Batyr Geldiyev  
Regional Coordinator,  
Central Asia

In 2023, and building on the work of CCP in previous years in Pakistan, I am keen to encourage counterparts to provide equal training and development opportunities to male and female officers. To achieve this goal among lead counterparts, I seize every occasion to applaud the promoters and convince the hesitators.



Pooyan Shateri Kashi  
Region Coordinator,  
Pakistan

**Cont. Q:** What do you consider is the most significant work required to fulfil gender equality goals within the CCP in your region? And what do you think is the role of men in achieving these goals?

**Jorge:** While every country in the region has different gender realities, and it may be difficult to give a one-size-fits-all solution, I believe we need to insist on having men on board and be part of the solution. These law enforcement officers have a chance to influence not just their immediate workplace but also society as a whole. As male staff of an exemplary organ (UNODC) and programme (CCP), our function also includes actively promoting gender equality in both external and internal work.

## CCP conducted a gender workshop in South and Southeast Asia

In November 2022, a regional workshop titled "Mainstreaming Gender Equality to Strengthen Women's Leadership" was held under the Blue Enforcement Project in Bangkok. Our joint workshop with Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) brought together 26 women from organizations including the Sri Lankan Navy and Ministry of Fisheries (Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources), the Maldives' National Defence Force and Environmental Protection Agency, and Thailand's Department of Fisheries and Port Customs Office.



Gender mainstreaming, communicating gender equality in the workplace, and the influence of gender norms on women in customs and fisheries sectors were some of the topics covered by the workshop. The workshop further provided an opportunity for participants to bond over shared experiences such as gendered challenges in their line of work. One of the group exercises revealed that women might not have the same chance to participate in training and travel opportunities as their male peers. This disadvantage may, in turn, directly impact their career progression. [Full story.](#)

## OSCE and UNODC continue efforts toward gender inclusive border security in South Eastern Europe

Together with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), CCP and the Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) organized a two-day regional training on gender mainstreaming in border and law enforcement agencies in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Click [HERE](#) to access the full news.