Key concepts for gender inequality

What is gender?

While ‘sex’ can refer to the biological sex a person is born with, ‘gender’ is a point of reference for the socially defined roles, characteristics and opportunities that such societies generally consider appropriate for men, women, boys and girls and people with non-binary identities.

Gender roles have brought about an unequal distribution of power to the detriment of women.

Gender is not a static concept but rather one that changes over time and place. That which is regarded as acceptable for women today may not have been so well received in the past.

When women do not conform to socially established gender roles, they tend to become the object of discrimination and experience inequality, both of which impede them from exercising their rights.
Discrimination against women denotes any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex. This has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying women’s recognition, enjoyment or exercise of their rights.

The elimination of all forms of discrimination against women must be achieved on a basis of equality of men and women.

Equality between women and men refers to an equality of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil spheres or in any other field.

This translates, among other things, into an equality of opportunities and in access to resources as well as in the equitable distribution of family responsibilities.

Equality goes hand in hand with the principle of non-discrimination and in that sense equality will only be possible to the extent that discrimination against women is eliminated.
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