



UNITED NATIONS  
INDONESIA



# Guidance for Avoiding All Male Panels



# How to Avoid All-Male Panels (Manels)

“Manel” is a term used to refer to an “All-Male Panel” that has and is used to highlight the exclusion of women and other marginalized groups as subject-matter experts.

## Why?

Manels are enabled usually by insufficient efforts to look at the world outside of familiar circles, limited understanding of the importance of diversity for the quality of the conversation, and unconscious bias. Diversity broadens perspectives brought into a discussion, creating spaces for engagement and innovation among different viewpoints and experiences.

Homogeneity is a problem because similar voices can result in crowding out other expertise and alternative arguments. Manels perpetuate the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women by completely ignoring them. The lack of inclusion of women on expert panels is also reflective of how few women are in leadership positions in various fields.

The “No-Manel Pledge” is not just about putting women on panels or as speakers. It is also about diversity across intersectionality<sup>1</sup>. It sets the stage for inclusivity that considers gender, race, sexual orientation, class, disability, geography, and language.

<sup>1</sup> An intersectional approach shows the way that people’s social identities can overlap, creating compounding experiences of discrimination. It is a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other.

# For Organizers

1. **Make your commitment known.**  
Ensure external stakeholders are aware of your Ending Manel Pledge via your website and social media platforms. Be deliberate in your diversity and inclusivity.
2. **Let key members of your team know.**  
Your executive assistant and communications team should know about your commitment to the pledge. You may also want to share organizational commitment via an internal message.
3. **Explore Intersectional quotas when organizing an event.**  
Endeavor to have an inclusivity clause in event TORs to provide wider consideration to gender identity, ethnicity, socio-economic background, geography, language, and disability. Your event planning and costing should also take account of specific challenges and efforts needed to enable diverse participation.
4. **Re-examine your speakers/panelist criteria.**  
Make sure that when approaching potential speakers, look not only for Directors or CEO level (who tend to be predominantly male), but also seek out subject matter specialists and emerging talent from diverse backgrounds (as outlined in Step 3 above). While it is important to have 'big names' associated with senior leadership which tends to attract larger audiences, it is equally important to be purposeful about the inclusive narrative we would want to create.
5. **Involve women in the planning of the events.**  
To bring about a gender-balanced panelist/speakers engage women in the organizing of the event and in the decision making position. This will improve not only the richness of the discourse, but also expand the network for your organization.
6. **Avoid tokenism<sup>2</sup>.**  
Avoid putting only one woman, just because she is a woman, on a panel and ask that person to speak on minority (e.g. women) issues. Avoid one-time only efforts, make diversity the norm for your events. (Same goes about other minority groups). Similarly, it is important to note that moderators/MCs do not have the same function as a panel member whose role is to offer expert opinions, so simply having a woman as a moderator/MC while the rest of the panel are all men is also tokenistic.
7. **Create Pay Equity.**  
If your event is offering to pay moderators and panel members, be mindful to ensure that there is no pay differential between men and women (panelists or moderators).
8. **Have an accountability mechanism.**  
Once the commitment has been made organization wide and staff are informed of the guidelines, keep track of progress, identify challenges as they arise, how they were addressed and include these in your annual reporting, as appropriate.

<sup>2</sup>. Tokenism: the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce.

# For Invited panelists

1. **Ask who the other panelists/speakers are** and how gender balance and intersectionality will be achieved.
2. **Expect women's participation as the default.** As a condition of acceptance, state that you are part of the group who have taken the "No Manel" pledge and expect women will be on the panel and be able to participate in a meaningful way.
3. **Nominate female leaders/resource persons** to take your place in speaking engagements whenever possible.
4. **Encourage women in your organization to be speakers/panelists.** Ensure to send a diverse group of delegations to meetings and the women/minority representative get to speak/heard in meeting. Put up these colleagues as speakers and representatives from your organization. Women who would like to be included in the database of panel members for Indonesia should send an email to [info@womenunlimited.id](mailto:info@womenunlimited.id) with their names, contact details and area(s) of expertise.
5. **Propose women panelists to organizers.** Identify qualified and experienced women from within your organization(s), reach out to partner organizations for suggestions or go to [womenunlimited](http://womenunlimited.id) (Bahasa Indonesia only) for a growing list of women experts from various fields.
6. **Reserve the right to withdraw** or nominate someone else even at the last minute, should the finalized speakers/panelist list be all male.
7. **Ensure equal speaking fee/payment between female and male speakers based on expertise.** Discussing financial remuneration (when applicable) might still be considered inappropriate or awkward at times but ensuring equal payments/fees among female and male speakers is crucial to promoting pay equity.

# For Participants

## 1. Demand Inclusion.

If participants see an all-male panel, find appropriate avenues to provide constructive feedback. Let organizers know the issue of diversity that was left out of the conversation. The event managers/panelists/other participants may not be aware of this. If the event has not yet taken place (but may have been announced publicly), be proactive in contacting the organizers to suggest possible alternate speakers (including yourself if you are a woman with the relevant experience).

## 2. Use the Power of Social Media

Meeting organizers and panel members when contacted privately and informed about potential manels usually appreciate the advice and try to make necessary adjustments. However, in other instances, it may be more useful and effective to highlight these shortcomings using social media and tagging both the organizer(s), panelists, as well as other organizations (NGOs) that monitor occurrences of manels both here in Indonesia (@PanelLaki; @unwomenid) and around the world @GenderAvenger (on Twitter), for example.

