

Emerging issue

**Harnessing COVID-19 recovery for gender equality and a sustainable future**

Thursday, 24 March 2022, 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.

***Overview***

The devastating disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has set back progress made towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but it has also provided an opportunity to take transformative action and build back better. As the world continues to grapple with the pandemic, policy attention has turned to the need for measures to recover and rebuild that can address longstanding challenges of poverty, inequalities and environmental degradation. As the UN Secretary General stated in his landmark [Common Agenda report](#), the world stands at the cusp of either ‘breakdown’ or ‘breakthrough’. There is therefore an urgent imperative to harness the recovery to create more sustainable and equal economies and societies, and get progress on gender equality back on track.

The pandemic has drawn attention to a trio of interlocking crises – on jobs, care and the environment – that systematically undermine gender equality and threaten the survival of people and the planet. A jobs and livelihoods crisis has pushed large swathes of people behind and increased their vulnerability to shocks. In many countries, fragile progress on women’s employment has been significantly set back by the pandemic, and lack of access to social protection has left them with little to fall back on. At the same time, the pandemic has created a global care crisis, which has left millions of children and care-dependent adults without the support they need, while imposing harsh choices and enormous costs on women and girls. To add to the challenges the world faces, the accelerating environmental crisis is taking a disproportionate toll on the poorest countries and the most marginalized women and girls who have contributed least to the problem. Just transitions in the form of fundamental changes to economies and social protection and care systems are required to respond to the planetary crisis and forge lasting recovery, as the COVID-19 period has amply demonstrated.

***Objective***

The objective of this dialogue is to learn from positive experiences and highlight how countries can ‘build back better’, while prioritizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will also contribute to the 2022 annual theme of the Economic and Social Council and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, *Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

The dialogue will bring together stakeholders including government officials and representatives

of non-governmental organizations, youth and the United Nations system. The interactive dialogue will start with presentations by a small number of invited participants, followed by good practice examples and other contributions from Member States and non-governmental organizations.

### ***Guiding questions***

- How can the COVID-19 recovery be harnessed to strengthen synergies between the gender equality and environmental sustainability agendas?
- What policy measures have contributed to promoting care for both people and planet?
- What examples of recovery efforts have been effective in prioritizing women's access to decent jobs, social protection and sustainable livelihoods?
- What measures are needed to ensure that just transitions are gender-responsive and leave no one behind”?
- What actions have States taken to expand the availability and affordability of care services to address the increase in unpaid care and domestic work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

### ***Format and participation***

Consideration of the emerging issue will be through an interactive dialogue. A CSW Vice-Chair will chair and moderate the meeting. The topics will be introduced by five invited speakers. Following their introductions, the moderator will open the floor and support the dialogue and its interactive nature through follow-up questions. Initial comments will be limited to four minutes, and any follow-up comment to one to two minutes. Member States will participate in the dialogue on a voluntary basis. No speakers' list will be kept.

UN-Women will facilitate an online application process for representatives of NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC. The list of NGOs proposed for participation in the event will be distributed to Member States through respective Bureau members.

### ***Outcome***

The outcome of the meeting will be in the form of a summary of the Chair of the Commission, prepared in consultation with the regional groups, through the members of the Bureau.