GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COVID-19:
Lessons on gender equality for a world in turmoil
• **The data**: close to 5,000 measures taken by 226 countries and territories during the first 18 months of the pandemic

• **The question**: How have governments responded to the specific challenges that women have faced?

• **The verdict**: overall insufficient attention to gender dynamics, but significant cross-country variations and instances of innovation.

• **The opportunity**: identify the constraints and enablers of gender-sensitive emergency response
HOW HAVE GOVERNMENT RESPONSES STACKED UP?

1,605 gender-sensitive measures across 196 countries and territories

- Two-thirds of these measures were adopted between March and May 2020
- More than half (52%) focused on responding to violence against women and girls
Violence against women and girls: a significant response, but gaps remain

163 COUNTRIES adopted 856 MEASURES to address violence against women and girls

Only 13 COUNTRIES mainstreamed VAWG into their COVID-19 response plans

Only 0.0002% of COVID-19 response funding by major donors went towards ending gender-based violence
Women’s economic security and unpaid care were not prioritized

Out of all social protection and labour market measures...

- Only 12% targeted women’s economic security
- Only 7% supported unpaid care work

Across 32 countries, only 10% of women reported receiving cash relief compared to 16% of men
Women’s participation and leadership: Inequalities persisted during the pandemic

Of 262 COVID-19 task forces, only...

- 7% reached gender parity
- 11% were majority women
- 82% were majority men

Glass ceilings

Only 18% of task force leaders were women

Glass walls

15% of task forces with an economic focus had no women members
LESSONS ON GENDER EQUALITY FOR A WORLD IN TURMOIL
Strong democratic institutions are critical for an inclusive gender response

Countries with powerful feminist movements, stronger democracies or higher women’s representation in parliaments adopted an average of...

5 more GENDER-SENSITIVE MEASURES

...than those countries without those features
Women’s participation and leadership is a key driver of gender-responsive government action.

In the first year of the pandemic, women staged 2,711 protests to demand action on VAWG across 100 countries.

Women in public office supported gender-sensitive from violence against women services in Iceland, Fiji and Uzbekistan, to measures for women entrepreneurs in the informal sector in Brazil and Egypt, to emergency family leave for parents in Chile and Norway.
Countries with more robust public services and social protection systems have a head start when crises hit...

...but policy innovation happened amid constraints.

At least 41 countries extended social protection to informal workers, and 15 of these introduced special provisions for women in the informal economy.
Digital tools can sustain feminist activism online and enable rapid roll-out of support.

More than 100 COUNTRIES used digital tools to adapt support to VAWG survivors.

Electronically paid cash transfers reached beneficiaries on average one MONTH FASTER than manual or part-electronic programmes.

Togo’s fully digital cash transfer programme for informal workers during the pandemic, reached 30,000 recipients within two days of its launch. By 2021, women accounted for 63% of the over 800,000 recipients.
Real-time data on the gender impacts of crises and what works to mitigate them are critical.

- Limits on in-person data collection, triggered a rise in remote data collection.
- UN Women partnered with mobile phone operators to conduct rapid gender assessments in over 50 countries.
- Data innovations have directly informed gender-sensitive government responses across a range of countries.

In Indonesia, Senegal and Ukraine gender data were used to advocate for additional resources to mainstream gender into recovery programmes and policies.
Thank you!

#GenderTracker