



# IANWGE COMPENDIUM ON INTEGRATING GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19: KEY MESSAGES AND ACTIONS FROM UN ENTITIES



**IANWGE**

United Nations Inter-Agency Network on  
Women and Gender Equality





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IANWGE COORDINATED MESSAGING ON GENDER AND COVID-19</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ENTITY BRIEFS ON GENDER AND COVID-19</b>	
ESCAP	13
ESCWA	15
FAO	17
ICSC	19
IFAD	21
ILO	23
IOM	26
OHCHR	29
UN Global Compact	34
UN Women	37
UN-HABITAT	44
UNAIDS	47
UNCDF	50
UNCTAD	53
UNDESA	55
UNDP	57
UNDPO	60
UNDPPA	62
UNECE	64
UNEP	66
UNESCO	68
UNFCCC	71
UNFPA	73
UNICEF	75
UNIDO	78
UNODC	81
UNU	85
UNV	87
UNWTO	88
WFP	89
WHO	91
WIPO	93

---



# FOREWORD

**Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**

**Executive Director of UN Women;**

**Chair, United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality**



With the COVID-19 pandemic, the world faces what the United Nations Secretary-General has identified as the most challenging global crisis since the Second World War. To mitigate its effects, the entire UN system has rapidly pivoted its attention and resources to targeted and system-wide measures addressing the multiple facets of the crisis, one of the most prominent of which is its impact on women and girls. A key facet of recovery plans must be the intentional inclusion of resilient women and girls to build back better.

The effects of the pandemic on women and girls can be seen across the many dimensions of their lives. Maternal mortality, gender-based violence and the burdens of unpaid care work and unemployment on women are significantly increasing due to the crisis. While all students are impacted by school closures, women and girls who are pulled out of educational institutions are less likely to return than men and boys, and this risks reversing hard-earned educational and employment gains for women and girls. At the

same time, we are seeing just how reliant the world is on the increased contributions of women as workers and caretakers in almost all dimensions of public, private and economic life, often without recognition or compensation. It is critical that the global response to and recovery from the COVID-19 crisis actively reverses these harmful trends and includes women in the shaping of those plans.

The UN system must work together to ensure that the varied impacts of COVID-19 on the lives of all women and girls are comprehensively addressed, and that women's voices are fully represented in that work. In this context, as Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), one of the largest networks of gender focal points in the UN system, I am pleased to present this compendium which takes an 'all of UN system approach' to the COVID-19 crisis. The compendium brings together the collective gender expertise of 32 entities and contains coordinated, action-oriented key messages on incorporating gender considerations at all stages of the COVID-19 response, followed by detailed entity-specific messages and actions.

The compendium is a response to [A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#), which details the United Nations' planned urgent socio-economic support to countries in the face of COVID-19 through five streams of work. It serves as an essential resource to support all actors, including governments, civil society partners and UN entities, in their systematic integration of gender considerations into the COVID-19 crisis response, with longer-term impact. This means ensuring that all women have access to adequate health services; the provision of social protection and basic services to help women cope with adversity, including gender-based violence; prioritizing the protection of women's economic empowerment including specific



**IANWGE**

United Nations Inter-Agency Network on  
Women and Gender Equality



vulnerabilities in the labour market; guiding the necessary surge in fiscal and financial stimulus measures to make macroeconomic policies work for women; and promoting women-led resilience and response systems.

This compendium is a call to action for governments and all relevant stakeholders to put women and girls at the centre of COVID-19 response and recovery. I encourage you to disseminate the compendium widely and to act on its coordinated messaging as we address this unprecedented global challenge together, in solidarity. I have faith that as a collective we have the capacity to meet this crisis head-on and to create better, more equal societies. Women and girls, and indeed humanity, deserve nothing less.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a trailing line.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

Executive Director of UN Women; Chair, United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality



# INTRODUCTION

As COVID-19 continues its global sweep it leaves no part of humanity unaffected. Beyond the health emergency, countries around the world find themselves dealing with its unprecedented socio-economic consequences, including its disproportionate impact on women and girls and on the exacerbated exclusion and inequalities they face as a result of the pandemic. Further, women and girls who experience additional and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization, such as women and girls with disabilities, older women, indigenous women, LGBTI women, rural women and women in conflict-affected contexts, may suffer heightened challenges.

In what would otherwise have been a critical year for gender equality as the global community prepared to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic risks rolling back many of the valuable and hard-won gains that had been made in the past decades.

Addressing the outbreak's unequal and long-term impact on women and girls, and supporting their central and essential role in responding to COVID-19, requires a coordinated response that incorporates the gender dimensions of the outbreak. It is imperative that an effective COVID-19 response include women and girls in all of their diversity, both as leaders and participants, in the formulation of policies and programmes for emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

All public institutions, including the United Nations, must respond to the crisis in all its dimensions. In recognition of both the contributions of women and girls in the crisis as well as the particularly devastating social and economic consequences they face, the Secretary-General has urged governments to place women and girls at the centre of their COVID-19 recovery efforts.<sup>1</sup>

In the report,<sup>2</sup> [Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-](#)

[19](#), the Secretary-General emphasises the need for the United Nations to work in a coordinated and decisive manner to ensure that lives are saved, livelihoods are restored, and the global economy and the people we serve emerge stronger from this crisis.

To operationalize the response of the United Nations to the COVID-19 crisis, the subsequent report [A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#)<sup>3</sup> (UN Framework) details the United Nations' planned urgent socio-economic support to countries in the face of COVID-19. The UN Framework consists of an integrated support package across 5 pillars of work:

1. Health First: Protecting Health Services and Systems during the Crisis;
2. Protecting People: Social Protection and Basic Services;
3. Economic Response and Recovery: Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers;
4. Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration;
5. Social Cohesion and Community Resilience.

The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), chaired by the Executive Director of UN Women and comprised of gender specialists from 60 United Nations offices and departments, funds and programmes and specialized

<sup>1</sup> [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women April 2020](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding To The Socio-Economic Impacts Of Covid-19 March 2020](#)

<sup>3</sup> [A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19", April 2020](#)



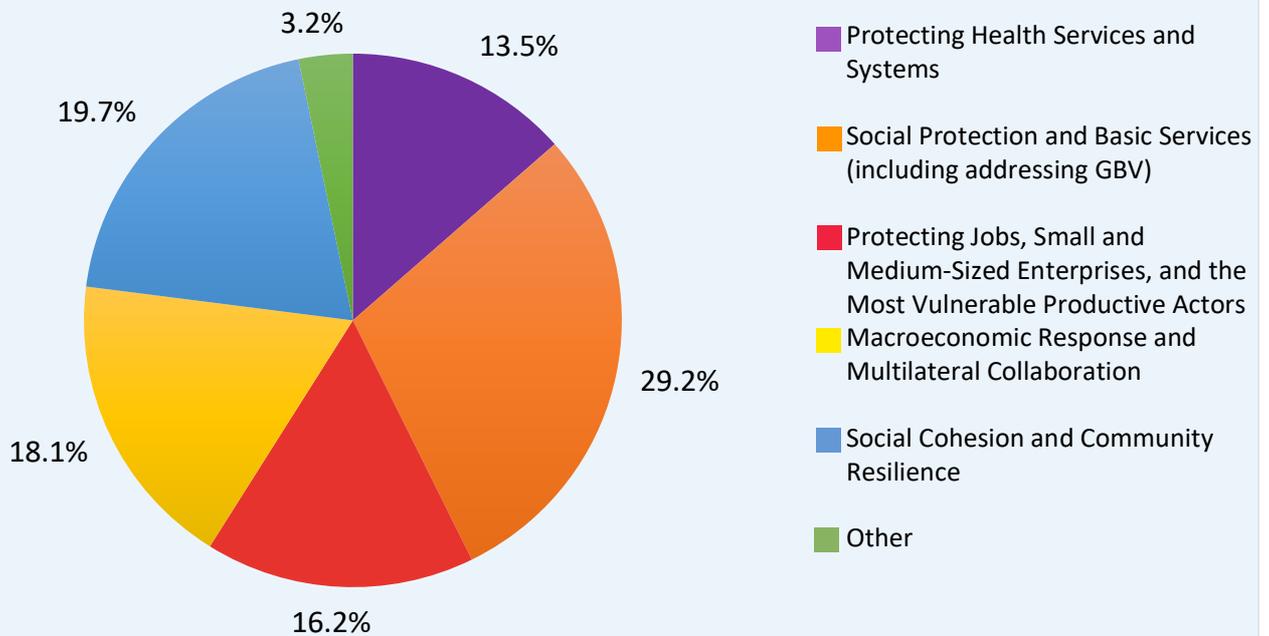
agencies, has responded to the call of the Secretary-General for coordinated action during this crisis. This resulting compendium captures the key messages and efforts of the entities of the UN system as they address the varied gender dimensions of the pandemic. It presents 32 individual action-oriented entity briefs supplemented by a coordinated set of common messages aligned with the five pillars of the socio-economic response of the UN Framework.

The compendium aims to support all actors, including the UN system, governments, and civil society partners, to systematically integrate gender considerations into the COVID-19 crisis response. Women’s leadership and participation at all stages of the COVID-19 recovery and response is a critical cross-cutting issue which must be systematically addressed and integrated within each of the UN Framework’s pillars.

Figure 1 below presents the distribution of the key messages as aligned to the five pillars of the UN Framework. Collectively the entities of the UN system placed strongest emphasis on the need for gender-responsive social protection and basic services, including those addressing gender-based violence, in the context of integrating gender considerations in the crisis response.

For a comprehensive list of resources from the UN system on Gender and COVID-19, please see this [list of gender-related COVID-19 resources by UN entity](#).<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1: Distribution of key messages from the UN System on integrating gender considerations in the response to COVID-19, by pillar of the UN framework**



<sup>4</sup> List of gender-related COVID-19 resources by UN entity: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20>

[work/unsystemcoordination/gender-related-covid-19-resources-by-un-entity-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2803](https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/unsystemcoordination/gender-related-covid-19-resources-by-un-entity-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2803)



# IANWGE COORDINATED MESSAGING ON GENDER AND COVID-19

## Women’s leadership and participation for an inclusive and effective response to COVID-19

Women stand at the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis, as health care workers, care-givers, and as some of the most exemplary and effective national leaders in combating the pandemic. The crisis has highlighted both the centrality of their contributions and their disproportionate burdens. Women’s leadership and participation are essential to effective response and recovery efforts, be it in peaceful societies or in conflict settings, where women and girls are most at risk and where the provision of health services may be affected by the political dynamics of the conflict. Women leaders and women’s organizations have already demonstrated their skilled ability to successfully lead in COVID-19 response and recovery. To uphold women’s rights and fully leverage the potential of women’s leadership in pandemic preparedness and response, women’s ongoing roles in the response must be recognized. Women, especially women from marginalized groups, such as women with disabilities, minority, refugee, or displaced women and more broadly, women’s organizations must be included in all decision-making. In addition, women must have access to sufficient and reliable information to make informed choices that support the recovery of their communities. As such, the importance of including women and their perspectives in all of their diversity in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes at each stage and in all spheres are addressed within the five pillars that follow.



### I. **Health First: Protecting Health Services and Systems during the Crisis**

Despite constituting the majority of frontline healthcare workers, women remain disproportionately under-represented in national and global health leadership. In past health emergencies, the lack of participation of women in such spaces has led to gaps in responses to the specific experiences, challenges and requirements of women and girls. **Ensuring the equal participation of women at the decision-making level in all stage of the response, recovery and rehabilitation remains critical.**

Women stand at the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. Making up 70 per cent of the health

workforce,<sup>5</sup> and the majority of health service industry workers, as well as primary care givers for sick family members, women play a key role in ensuring the well-being and resilience of their communities. In addition to being more exposed to the virus, these women also face the risk of exhaustion and burn out. **Governments need to ensure that all care sector professionals are adequately protected against transmission, including by ensuring availability of personal protective equipment which include menstrual hygiene products such as sanitary pads and tampons, in addition to gloves, masks and gowns.**

Women are more likely to be in the household and charged with the provision of food, water and the management of family health. Keeping households

<sup>5</sup> WHO (2019) Gender equity in the health workforce: Analysis of 104 countries



clean with various detergents and cleaning materials may expose women to chemical pollution harmful to their health. **It is therefore important that information on the proper use of these cleaning materials be shared at household levels, especially with women.**

Women and girls face particular barriers to accessing hygiene and sanitary materials due to increased household competition for scarce resources and/or decreased household income. **Securing access to preventive measures, including water, soap and sanitizers, without discrimination, and addressing the barriers and risks women and girls face in accessing hygiene and sanitary materials and facilities, is key.**

Threats to and interruption of routine, core health services pose a danger to women and girls. Evidence from past epidemics, including Ebola and Zika, indicate that efforts to contain outbreaks often interrupt and divert resources from essential health services. **The continuity of these core services, including for sexual and reproductive health such as family planning, access to contraceptives, pre- and post-natal health, and care of women and girls with HIV, must be ensured.**

Older women and men are at a higher health risk from COVID-19. Women represent the majority of older persons world-wide, especially those over the age of 80. They tend to have lower incomes and pensions, if any, and fewer possibilities to access care and other services. **Governments need to prioritize the care needs of older persons living alone or in residential care, particularly those without access to services and resources.**

Women who experience intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization, including women with disabilities, LGBTI women, HIV positive women, rural women, indigenous women and migrant women, face greater risks due to social, legal and physical barriers, leading to disparities in access, quality and availability of healthcare. **Accurate COVID-19 prevention and medical information must**

**reach all women and girls, including those in refugee and IDP camps, remote and rural communities.**

**The collection and reporting of sex disaggregated data and gender analysis, at a minimum, on infection cases and deaths is necessary to better understand the differentiated impact of COVID-19 on women and men.**



## II. Protecting people: Social Protection and Basic Services

Women do two and a half times as much unpaid care work as men, so when health systems are overloaded, that burden lands largely with women. At present, the burden of unpaid care work on many women is increasing due to school closures, aged family members at risk and other consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak, further restricting women's work and economic opportunities. **The value of paid and unpaid care work in supporting the world economy must be recognized to ensure investments in and resilience of the care economy in current and future crises. In addition, the global response to the current outbreak presents an opportunity for the redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work. Universal social protection, which relieves the care burdens disproportionately borne by women and girls, constitutes an essential component of any policy designed to combat the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in the short as well as longer term.**

The COVID-19 outbreak has exacerbated the already high prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV), including domestic violence and trafficking. Emerging data indicates that greater economic stress in households coupled with increased social isolation due to quarantines and stay at home orders is increasing incidences of GBV, effectively resulting in a global "shadow pandemic" of violence against women and girls. To combat this "shadow pandemic", **GBV-related services must be declared essential, including remote counseling, psychosocial support and the availability and preparedness of shelters and alternative accommodation.**



Threats to the continuity of core services, including education, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and justice and psychosocial services, pose dangers to women and girls. Women and girls with disabilities as well as older women are at particular risk of violence and abuse and often face barriers to reporting when systems (such as hotlines) do not consider their communication needs. **Member States must ensure that innovative solutions and alternative delivery structures allow for the maintenance of essential services in a manner that ensures accessibility for all women and girls.**

COVID-19 is likely to negatively impact all dimensions of food security and nutrition through reduced capacity for food production and distribution, decreased purchasing power of households, and deteriorating access to nutritious food in both rural and urban areas. Governments need to recognize the specific food and nutrition needs of women and girls and adopt special programmes for their social protection, such as cash transfers. **Highly vulnerable women and girls – including older women, women who are heads of households, pregnant and nursing women and girls – need to be targeted by specific food security and nutrition interventions.**

Girls are at greater risk than boys of missing out on learning. Rather than be given time to engage in distance learning, girls are more likely to be asked to support their families with household chores and to assume caregiving roles. Rural girls and girls living in poverty are particularly affected given the existing gender digital divide that impacts these groups more heavily. **Governments need to develop tools for distance learning, including the use of national television, and ensure access to different modes for transferring knowledge and information. Once schools and other educational institutions reopen, it is essential to ensure that these girls and women return.**



### III. Economic Response and Recovery: Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers

**Strategies and action plans for COVID-19 economic recovery and resilience planning must be bottom-up, needs-based and gender-responsive, and ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and women’s organizations.** To avoid negative repercussions on women, and to ensure that they benefit from services and stimulus initiatives, women’s leadership remains key in the development and implementation of COVID-19 response plans and budgets. Utilizing existing tools such as gender-responsive local economic assessments enable rapid assessments in targeted areas to analyze local economic recovery needs.

Women disproportionately work in insecure, lower-paid, part-time and informal employment, with little or no income security and associated social protection benefits, such as health insurance. The COVID-19 crisis is rolling back the already tenuous gains on women’s labour force participation, including for the 740 million women who currently work in the informal economy. This may result in devastating impacts on women’s personal and family incomes. **Governments need to develop targeted women’s economic empowerment strategies which mitigate the impact of the outbreak and its containment measures, and support women’s recovery and their resilience against future shocks. Governments should target individuals rather than households when implementing direct cash transfers to diminish women’s economic dependence on men.**

**A gender perspective remains essential to recognize and address the changing nature of work, including employment and income protection, and closing the gender pay gap.** In addition, family-friendly policies that protect employees, and support improved child and family well-being are vital. This includes paid leave to care for themselves when needed, or for sick family members, as well as modifications to flexible



work policies that especially accommodate the needs of women with domestic care burdens. In particular, the effectiveness of existing arrangements for telecommuting and the technical capacity to support staff, including staff in the UN system, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, should be assessed and revised accordingly if needed.

**To ensure the survival of women-owned businesses, government bailouts and support measures must be gender-responsive and cover micro- and small businesses where women entrepreneurs tend to be more represented.** Women entrepreneurs are often discriminated against when attempting to access credit. Without open and favourable lines of credit women entrepreneurs may have to close their businesses. Greater transparency and a simplification of procedures related to public procurement will also help women's businesses to benefit from increased governmental intervention in the economy.

The pandemic is undermining rural women's jobs and income-generating potential due to lockdowns of affected areas, market disruptions and the slowdown of agricultural supply-demand chains. Mitigation measures need to specifically target rural women's jobs and enterprises to prevent declines in their economic activities and to build their resilience. **It is essential to incorporate gender analysis and gender expertise in the formulation and implementation of response measures affecting rural livelihoods, food security and agriculture.**

**Sustained investments in the care economy must be at the center of efforts to 'build back better'.** Investments in social protection and care services stimulate aggregate demand, create employment in people-centered sectors and open up training and employment opportunities for women who suffer a loss of jobs as a result of the crisis. The participation of key stakeholders including paid and unpaid caregivers, care recipients and their respective organizations remains a pre-requisite for the formulation and implementation of effective policies which address recovery and resilience.



#### IV. Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration

A global pandemic calls for coordinated, multilateral efforts at the global and regional levels to suppress transmission, and to shoulder the short and long-term socio-economic impacts of the outbreak. **These systems need to embed gender-responsive measures in political processes to ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and women's organizations.**

**Governments, the private sector and relevant financial institutions must work together to prioritize a support mechanism to protect women-owned businesses, female entrepreneurs and informal workers affected by COVID-19.** Special assistance funds are essential to support women affected by the impact of COVID-19 who are unable to access formal unemployment benefits.

**To ensure the soundness of economic recovery programs and packages, it is critical that gender impact analyses be conducted at all levels and stages of crisis response and policy formulation.** A gender analysis better ensures the inclusion and advancement of women in employment including through subsidies, relief and fiscal policies.

**To retain women's productive participation in the labour force, support measures must be based on the principle of universality and include informal, part-time and seasonal workers, categories that include more women than men.** The same applies to female-dominated sectors such as the hospitality, food and tourism sectors, all of which have come mostly to a standstill by the confinement measures put in place by governments.

COVID-19 has had a negative impact on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 5 and other gender-related SDG targets. **Further analysis is required to examine the effect of diverting resources from SDG implementation to the COVID-19 crisis, and on the**



**short and long-term impact that the pandemic is expected to have on the ability of countries to achieve SDG 5 and the gender-responsive implementation of all the other SDGs.**

Women’s inclusion at decision-making fora including on conflict prevention and peacemaking efforts is fundamental to achieving just, inclusive and sustainable peace. The call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire in recognition of the threat that violent conflict poses to any COVID-19 response has yet to be fully heeded. Women’s civil society voices should be amplified to build pressure on conflict parties for ceasefires and partial peace agreements. **To this effect, local women’s civil society organizations, including those of women peacemakers and human rights defenders, need to be supported with dedicated and flexible resources.**

**The aftermath of the crisis and the post-recovery phase constitutes a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to foster resilient, inclusive and sustainable economic recovery in the medium-and long-term that equally benefits women and men** and transforms gender-discriminatory social norms, power relations and stereotypes.

**The collection of data that is disaggregated by sex, at a minimum,** is essential to establish robust monitoring and reporting frameworks and understand the gendered differences in exposure and treatment, as well as in the socio-economic impact of the crisis. This data must inform national strategic plans on COVID-19 preparedness and response.



## V. Social Cohesion and Community Resilience

**Engaging existing women’s organizations and networks facilitates community-level risk communication and community engagement for effective response and resilience.** Special attention and outreach need to be extended to organizations of marginalized women who are more likely to be left out of policy dialogues, such as women with disabilities and indigenous women. Targeted

outreach to these key networks can facilitate communication of risk and community engagement, including by dissemination of information on public health and social services in culturally appropriate and effective ways. The information must be received and understood by all members of society, including those with no access to modern digital technology and the internet.

**The restriction of movement in response to the pandemic has shut out international humanitarian actors and peacekeepers.** Women’s organizations are playing a critical role as expert local peacebuilders to maintain social cohesion, peace and stability. They produce and distribute relevant materials and supplies in communities and healthcare facilities, finding alternative ways to shelter and support women who are quarantined, while continuing their political and peacebuilding work.

Access to rights and participatory governance are being transformed due to the scale and impact of the public health threat. Emergency measures can have an impact on democracy in the medium to long-term, particularly as there will be less civic space to keep the discussion, agenda and political space for feminist and gender equality movements. **With many of the traditional spaces of public engagement and debate limited by COVID-19 prevention, the internet is serving as a political forum. Internet access and safety is therefore increasingly important, especially for women activists and those in politics who risk heightened forms of violence.**

**Women’s participation in the international Intellectual Property (IP) system needs to be sustained and protected during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.** The protective measures put in place to mitigate the pandemic have resulted in widespread economic disruption. This likely poses new and heightened barriers for women inventors to successfully obtain patents. Diversity and inclusion in IP remain important, especially given the critical role of innovation in the fight against COVID-19.



**Local authorities must work with communities to collect and use data that is disaggregated by sex, among other factors,** for situational analyses and for effective monitoring and addressing of the COVID-19 crisis. The significance of the collection and use of reliable sex-disaggregated data on all dimensions of the crisis is pivotal to the sound and sustainable recovery from the crisis in all affected communities.

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Economic and Social  
Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

## ESCAP KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Women are at increased risk of gender-based violence while access to health services dwindle**
  - As households are placed under strain by self-isolation and quarantine measures, the risks of gender-based violence tend to increase.
  - The protection of the human rights of women and girls must be prioritized.
- **Women continue to shoulder a disproportionate and increasing burden of care**
  - As households are balancing telecommuting work commitments with the added responsibilities of homeschooling for children, the already disproportional burden of unpaid care work carried by women increases manifold.
  - Financial support to and flexible work arrangements for women must be encouraged.
- **Women in vulnerable employment and entrepreneurs are at increased risk of financial hardship**
  - Women are at increased risk of heightened vulnerability due to the informality of their work as daily wage earners, small business owners and those working in informal sectors.
  - Targeted support, including through catalyzing women's entrepreneurship, is essential to create resilience amongst women and girls.

## ESCAP GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

The Asia-Pacific region is amongst the worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and women are amongst the hardest hit by the ongoing global crisis. In the Asia-Pacific region, women shoulder a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, i.e., more than four times as much as men. Many women are engaged as daily wage earners, small business owners, women entrepreneurs and those working in informal sectors and are therefore experiencing increasing risks and vulnerabilities during this period.

ESCAP works with governments on two key actions:

### 1. **Implementing the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review.**

In November 2019, Member States and civil society organizations from the Asia-Pacific region came together to review progress made on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs and identified clear opportunities for accelerated action. ESCAP Member States adopted the Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, a comprehensive set of commitments and actions on region-specific issues to advance the gender equality agenda over the next 5 years. Within the context of the global and regional response to COVID-19, the Declaration provides a strong basis for coordinated efforts by Member States, the UN system, civil society organizations and the private sector, to support implementation of international gender commitments, for monitoring of priority actions, and for regional reporting of results.



In the Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP will be working with the UN system on the critical means toward achieving the SDGs, including partnerships, financing, technology and regional cooperation, while highlighting the critical importance of the gender dimension.

On the programmatic side, ESCAP will focus on three priorities identified by governments from the region, namely: women's economic empowerment (including through support to women entrepreneurship and off-setting the hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic); women's political participation and leadership (including in crisis management and response); and data and statistics (including differential impact analysis of COVID-19 on women and men). Regional and sub-regional reports analyzing progress and challenges in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will be accompanied by a series of multi-stakeholder consultations in 2020, including strategies and policy response to address the impact of COVID-19 on women.

**2. Catalyzing women's entrepreneurship by enhancing women entrepreneurs' access and use of financial services; strengthening women entrepreneurs' use of ICT and digital solutions to support their business; and through policy and advocacy initiatives.**

The Beijing+25 regional survey showed that, of the 41 respondent countries, a majority considered women's economic empowerment as a priority challenge. Women's entrepreneurship, specifically, is identified as a priority area of focus over the next 5 years as a means to enhance women's empowerment.

Equal access to economic resources is still elusive, including land, credit, technology, vocational training, and markets. To close the gap in women's economic empowerment, ESCAP is helping build national capacity to address structural barriers and enable women entrepreneurs to start and develop their businesses. ESCAP's approach is holistic, focusing on the regulatory and enabling environment, leveraging finance and investment tools, as well as enhancing capacity in ICT. Through a specially developed fintech fund, women's bond and impact investment funds, public and private sector funding will be mobilized in the amount of US\$100 million to invest in women entrepreneurs. While it is true that all businesses are impacted by the COVID-19, women entrepreneurs face additional challenges. In addition to bearing the financial and operational constraints resulting from the current context, women are also disproportionately affected due to additional care and domestic responsibilities. The project has initiated steps to include support into ongoing activities to support women entrepreneurs in COVID-19 affected countries. Some examples include providing policy advice to the governments on providing special services for women-owned Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); conducting a rapid assessment of the COVID-19 impact on women entrepreneurs; and working with partners to support resource mobilization for additional loans for women-led MSMEs affected by COVID-19, among others.

## **ESCAP GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES**

The Impact and Policy Responses for COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific (pages 18 – 20)  
<https://www.unescap.org/resources/impact-and-policy-responses-covid-19-asia-and-pacific>

For more information, please contact Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, ESCAP, at [caic@un.org](mailto:caic@un.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Economic and Social  
Commission for West Asia (ESCWA)

## ESCWA KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Women face increased risks of gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic**
  - GBV service providers must design innovative outreach services to survivors, including remote counselling and psychosocial support, increase the preparedness of shelters to include protocols and measures to protect sheltered women from epidemics, and rigorously update services to combat violence against women and girls.
- **Ensure women and girls receive access to distance learning educational tools and programmes**
  - Ministries of education need to develop tools for distance learning, including the use of national television, and ensure access to different modes for transferring knowledge and information. These distance learning programmes should be made accessible to women and girls, particularly in hard-to-reach populations.
- **National fiscal stimulus packages should continue to promote national priorities for the inclusion and advancement of women in employment.**
  - Socio-economic policies should focus on protecting women from falling into poverty and protecting workers in the informal sector through emergency cash transfers, small scale grants or loans.
- **Women should be included in all areas and at all stages of decision-making processes related to the prevention and response to the pandemic**
  - Governments, policymakers and international actors must support the inclusion of women frontline responders, women leaders, women-led organizations/networks, and youth rights groups as important partners in the COVID-19 response.
- **Ensure women and girls have access to health-services**
  - Governments should guarantee that women, particularly displaced, refugee and migrant women, have access to affordable, quality and equitable healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health and GBV services. All women should also have access to WASH services, especially vulnerable women.
- **The collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data on the impact of COVID-19 is key**
  - Arab Governments and international actors must collect sex-disaggregated data on the impact of COVID-19 and establish more robust monitoring and reporting frameworks to understand gendered differences in exposure and treatment, as well as the socio-economic impacts to inform national strategic plans on COVID-19 preparedness and response.



## ESCWA GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

ESCWA has developed several policy proposals covering the social, economic, health care and humanitarian impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Arab region, including on the impact on gender equality for Member States.

ESCWA believes it is necessary to consider the COVID-19 pandemic in the Arab States region through a gender lens considering existing social biases, gender norms and gender-based discrimination in order to address women's and girls' needs as well as enable them to contribute to the shaping of the COVID-19 response.

Areas of gendered intervention should include the following: health care; poverty and lack of economic opportunities; food insecurity and malnutrition; access to information, including technology and distance learning; gender-based violence; and humanitarian settings.

## ESCWA GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

ESCWA and partners warn: Violence against women has increased due to COVID-19; Women will lose twice as much as men in terms of jobs:

<https://www.unescwa.org/news/escwa-partners-warn-violence-against-women-has-increased-due-covid-19-women-will-lose-twice>

The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality in the Arab Region:

[https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/20-00131\\_gpid\\_pb\\_eng\\_apr5.pdf](https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/20-00131_gpid_pb_eng_apr5.pdf)

Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Poverty and Food Insecurity in the Arab Region:

[https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/en\\_20-00119\\_covid-19\\_poverty.pdf](https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/en_20-00119_covid-19_poverty.pdf)

Regional Emergency Response to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19:

<https://www.unescwa.org/oes-speeches/regional-emergency-response-mitigate-impact-covid-19>

For more information please contact Mehrinaz El Awady, ESCWA, at [elawady@un.org](mailto:elawady@un.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

## FAO KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Governments should adopt social protection measures that recognize the specific food and nutrition risks and needs of women and girls**
  - COVID-19 is likely to have a negative impact on all dimensions of food security and nutrition through reduced food production and distribution capacities, decreased purchasing power of rural households, and deteriorating access to nutritious food in both rural and urban areas of affected countries.
  - Given the socio-cultural realities that underpin gender inequalities in rural settings, women and girls tend to be penalized by a reduction in the quality and quantity of their food intake.
  - Governments need to recognize the specific food and nutrition needs of women and girls and adopt special programmes for their social protection, such as cash transfers.
  - Highly vulnerable women and girls – including older women, women who are heads of households, pregnant and nursing women and girls – should be targeted by specific food security and nutrition interventions.
- **Mitigation measures need to specifically target rural women's jobs and enterprises, to prevent declines in their economic activities and build their resilience.**
  - Policies regarding mobility, physical distancing, transportation, and closure of markets may undermine rural women's ability to produce, process and market food. Rural women and female headed rural households should be specifically targeted in economic recovery efforts and social protection interventions, ensuring that women and men farmers have equal access to agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, finance, services, information and appropriate technologies in time for the next planting season and beyond.
- **Rural women's knowledge, voices and leadership must be integrated in all stages of the COVID-19 response,** to ensure that women's needs and priorities as farmers, processors, vendors, service providers, traders, wage workers and entrepreneurs are adequately addressed.
  - Governments and their development partners must adopt a long-term approach to mitigate the pandemic's impact on rural livelihoods and build resilience for future shocks, with particular focus on fostering partnerships with rural women's associations to ensure that the solutions adopted tackle the hurdles that rural women face.
- **Women face increased risks of gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic**
  - COVID-19 can cause increases in GBV due to tensions within rural households and communities associated with isolation, food and financial insecurity, and closure of schools.
  - Rural women and girls have fewer opportunities to access essential support services due to limited availability of legal, social and policing structures in rural settings. Furthermore, food scarcity and restricted mobility may force rural women to survival sex, which can result in sexual exploitation for commercial purposes.
  - Governments need to raise awareness in rural areas about expected risks of GBV and guide individuals through existing referral mechanisms.



- **Governments and their partners need to ensure availability of sex-disaggregated data on agriculture, food security and nutrition as part of the evidence base for gender-sensitive responses to COVID-19.**
  - Gender analysis should be conducted, and gender expertise incorporated, in the formulation and implementation of response measures affecting food security, agriculture and rural livelihoods.

## FAO GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

FAO is one of the three Rome-based agencies, together with IFAD and WFP, working to fight hunger, strengthen food security and promote sustainable agriculture and rural development. The COVID-19 outbreak is triggering massive social and economic impacts on rural settings, posing a serious threat to agriculture, food security and rural livelihoods, and potentially deepening gender inequalities. The pandemic is undermining rural women's income-generating potential, due to lockdowns of affected areas, market disruptions and the slowdown of agricultural supply-demand chains. In this context, FAO is focusing on:

- Generating knowledge on the pandemic's impacts on rural women's livelihoods and well-being;
- Providing policy advice and technical assistance for gender-sensitive agricultural and rural development response measures;
- Mobilizing relevant networks.

## FAO GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

COVID-19: Our hungriest, most vulnerable communities face "a crisis within a crisis".

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1269721/icode/>

Committee on World Food Security, 2020. Impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition.

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1920/Chair/HLPE\\_English.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1920/Chair/HLPE_English.pdf)

Gendered impacts of COVID-19 and equitable policy responses in agriculture, food security and

nutrition: <http://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/es/c/1276740/>

Addressing inequality in times of COVID-19: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8843en>

COVID-19 and rural poverty: <http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA8824EN>

Social protection and COVID-19 response in rural areas:

<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8561en>

Impact of COVID-19 on informal workers: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8560en/CA8560EN.pdf>

Migrant workers and the COVID-19 pandemic: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8559en/CA8559EN.pdf>

Enabling agricultural innovation systems to promote appropriate technologies and practices for farmers, rural youth and women during COVID-19:

<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca9470en>

For more information, please contact Susan Kaaria, Senior Gender Officer, FAO at [Susan.Kaaria@fao.org](mailto:Susan.Kaaria@fao.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)

### ICSC KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Monitor and assess the impact of the COVID-19 response on staff in the organizations of the United Nations common system**
  - In addition to the impact of COVID-19 on the United Nations common system's programme delivery, the impact of the COVID-19 response on staff well-being, staff morale and productivity, should be monitored and assessed and disaggregated by gender, age and locality.
- **Assess and revise existing mechanisms for mass-scale telecommuting in the organizations of the United Nations common system**
  - The effectiveness of existing arrangements for telecommuting and the technical capacity to support staff, especially women, during a mass-scale telecommuting, as required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, should be assessed and revised accordingly.
- **Ensure consistency in implementing duty of care standards across the United Nations common system**
  - A consistent and harmonized approach for implementing duty of care standards should be instituted across the United Nations common system, especially during a global crisis such as COVID-19.
- **Ensure the equal participation of women and men at the decision-making level when organizations of the United Nations common system respond to the COVID-19 crisis.**
  - Equal participation of women and men at the decision-making level should be ensured in all stages of the COVID-19 crisis, from the preparation phase to during and after the crisis, including recovery, assessments and audits.
- **Collect and use sex-disaggregated staff data during COVID-19**
  - Up-to date sex-disaggregated staff data should be collected from all organizations in the United Nations common system, including pre and post COVID-19 scenarios, and used in all COVID-19 policy responses and reviews.

### ICSC GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- ICSC secretariat developed its business continuity plan to ensure its continued support to the organizations' mandates in the context of COVID-19. The ICSC's business continuity plan included modalities of programme delivery during the crisis, communication strategies, new communication platforms, flexible working arrangements, duty of care measures and technical support during telecommuting.
- ICSC secretariat collaborated closely with the CEB/Human Resources Network in support of the organizations' duty of care efforts for UN health workers and other staff whose work directly exposes them to COVID-19. This resulted in an exceptional approval by the ICSC Chair, for the payment of COVID-19 Danger Pay in respect of this category of staff. This is in recognition of the fact that they are



required to work in unprotected environments of health emergencies, as declared by WHO, in furtherance of the mandates of the organizations.

- ICSC secretariat's tools and services on all matters related to conditions of service for the United Nations common system, provided under the ICSC mandate, have been updated and processed without interruption, including ad hoc requests stemming from COVID-19.

## ICSC GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

A Framework for Human Resources Management: <https://commonsystem.org/hrframework/>

Danger Pay during COVID-19: <https://icsc.un.org/Home/DataDangerPay>

For more information, please contact Shihana Mohamed, Human Resources Policies Officer, ICSC, at [mohamedsh@un.org](mailto:mohamedsh@un.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD)

### IFAD KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Rural women and girls will be among the hardest impacted by the pandemic**
  - The spread of illness can devastate poor rural communities and small-scale food producers who already face challenges such as weak resilience, poor nutrition and limited access to resources and services. Women and girls in these communities are already disadvantaged in multiple ways and the pandemic can further exacerbate these existing inequalities.
- **Women's and girls' leadership, voices and needs should be included in all stages of a response (from design to implementation, supervision, completion and evaluation), in all types of responses (including crisis and recovery responses) and at all levels.**
- **Rural women and men should have equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from livelihoods support and economic relief packages.**
  - In addition to its potential health effects, COVID-19 threatens to profoundly affect the livelihoods of poor rural farmers who depend on agriculture.
- **Efforts to create more equal share of care and domestic responsibilities should continue as emergencies tend to exacerbate the burdens of unpaid domestic work on women and girls.**
- **Women and girls face increased risks of gender-based violence (GBV).**
  - Heightened risk of gender-based violence in the affected rural communities should be taken into consideration and appropriate prevention, mitigation and protection strategies should be identified. GBV support and services should be treated as essential and remain funded and operational during the pandemic.
- **Global cooperation is required to make sure that this pandemic does not leave a devastating loss of lives and livelihoods.**
  - The coronavirus pandemic is a global emergency affecting all countries, requiring immediate and sustained international action.

### IFAD GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

Promoting gender equality is a key element of IFAD's work to reduce rural poverty and improve food security and women make up about half of all participants of the projects IFAD supports. IFAD's COVID-19 strategy is in line with the UN response to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and will be implemented in alignment with its country-level coordination and financial architecture. With the support of social inclusion and nutrition technical expertise, IFAD will conduct assessments and collate emerging data and information on the status and evolving impacts of the crisis on IFAD's target groups including women and girls.



IFAD's strategic response to the COVID-19 crisis is centred on a coordinated range of activities that address immediate impacts, prevent the erosion of results from past and ongoing operations, and put in place the building blocks to support post-crisis recovery. The main elements of IFAD's gender responsive strategy are:

1. Continue to systematically address gender equality and women's empowerment while repurposing existing projects to the COVID-19 context.
2. Set up a new Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) to provide responses to address vulnerabilities in rural communities at scale. All proposals submitted to the RPSF are expected to take into account IFAD's mainstreaming themes and promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
3. Any support to public policy response mechanisms are expected to ensure that they incorporate gender analytical data.
4. While accelerating recovery, ensure that women's and girls' voices are thoroughly reflected.

## IFAD GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

IFAD's dedicated website for COVID-19 response: <https://www.ifad.org/en/covid19>

Rural Poor Stimulus Facility to accelerate the recovery of poor and vulnerable rural people from the COVID-19 crisis: <https://www.ifad.org/en/rpsf>

Empowering and protecting rural women in the time of coronavirus – IFAD's COVID-19 response in Nigeria: <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/story/asset/41900870>

Women's Self Help Groups Micro ATMs in the times of COVID-19, India: <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/blog/asset/41893470>

Solidarity and flexibility: IFAD-supported artisans to produce masks and hairnets to protect against the coronavirus in Brazil: <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/story/asset/41861569>

For more information, please contact Ndaya Beltchika, Lead Technical Specialist - Gender and Social Inclusion, IFAD, at [n.beltchika@ifad.org](mailto:n.beltchika@ifad.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

International Labour Organization (ILO)

## ILO KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **COVID-19 response efforts should be gender-responsive and ensure no one is left behind**
  - Response efforts to the COVID-19 crisis should support, and not undermine, a transformative agenda for gender equality. They should furthermore ensure that no one is left behind, in particular groups of women, such as women with disabilities, women living with HIV, indigenous women, and women migrant workers.
- **Women face increased risks of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic**
  - The changing nature of work and the workplace, which has been so evident in the context of the COVID-19 isolation measures, should be recognized with a view to preventing and addressing gender-based violence and harassment, including domestic violence.
- **Ensure that social protection measures are gender-responsive**
  - Social protection measures should be inclusive and gender-responsive, including protecting the livelihoods of all workers, including those workers in the informal economy and in non-standard forms of employment.
- **Acknowledge the value of paid and unpaid care work performed by women**
  - The value of paid and unpaid care work in supporting the world's economy, as demonstrated during this crisis, should be recognized, and investments should be made in the care economy in the post-COVID-19 world of work to ensure future resilience to such crises.
- **Prioritize national health and social sectors where women are more represented**
  - Considering the challenges that countries have faced during, and in the aftermath of, the COVID-19 crisis, the health and social service sectors – where women are far more prominent – should be designated as national strategic sectors.
- **Ensure that the COVID-19 response follows a rights-based approach**
  - The COVID-19 response should follow a rights-based approach, including through the application of international labour standards, in particular Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

## ILO GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

The ILO is responding to the impacts of COVID-19 in a gender-responsive, including by:

- Reorienting programming and funding priorities to address COVID-19 immediate responses, and medium and long-term consequences from a labour and employment policy perspective, including the gender implications.



- All country, regional and global level outcomes to support gender equality and non-discrimination, rated through a new marker system, supporting the commitment to leave no one behind, including in the context of the COVID-19 response.
- Reorienting projects for awareness-raising, tools and providing protective equipment for workers.
- Monitoring social protection measures being taken, including maternity and paternity leave policies and investments in childcare.
- Providing guidance on specific family leave and care policies measures that can be taken.
- Monitoring the impact of the pandemic on employment, including in sectors particularly affected, many of which are female dominated.
- Measuring and evaluating the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the gender pay gap with a view to promoting and enhancing measures to advance gender pay equity in a post-COVID-19 labour market.
- Supporting the adoption of measures at national, sectoral, enterprise, and workplace level in line with the key principles of the ILO Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment and Recommendation No. 206, including to address the impact of COVID-19 on issues related to violence and harassment in the world of work.
- Developing policy briefs, including:
  - Informal economy policy brief;
  - A brief highlighting the importance on international labour standards and social dialogue, including for gender equality;
  - A brief on the impact of COVID-19 on the health sector; and
  - A brief on COVID-19 and the impact on gender equality in the world of work.
- Producing a modular package of training products and outlets for sharing knowledge and resources on “COVID-19, gender and the World of work”, composed of:
  - A webinar series (initiating in Late April through May);
  - A moderated Community of Practice targeting gender experts and practitioners (launching in May); and
  - A blended learning programme on “Leave no One behind in response to COVID-19” (August through September, depending on travel restrictions).



## ILO GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

The website [COVID-19 and the world of work](#) features a series of documents that have been developed in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. It includes entries about sectors and occupations in which women are disproportionately represented and thus impacted by the pandemic. Examples include the following videos, articles and briefings:

- The need to scale up investments in health workforces: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/video/institutional-videos/WCMS\\_740690/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/video/institutional-videos/WCMS_740690/lang--en/index.htm)
- COVID-19: Are there enough health workers?: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/2020/04/03/covid-19-are-there-enough-health-workers/>
- The impact of COVID-19 on inequalities in the world of work: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/video/institutional-videos/WCMS\\_740289/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/video/institutional-videos/WCMS_740289/lang--en/index.htm)
- New guidelines to help employers support families during COVID-19: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_740217/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_740217/lang--en/index.htm)
- Family-friendly policies and other good workplace practices in the context of COVID-19: key steps employers can take: <https://www.unicef.org/media/66351/file/Family-friendly-policies-covid-19-guidance-2020.pdf>
- COVID-19: Social protection systems failing vulnerable groups: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_739678/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_739678/lang--en/index.htm)
- COVID-19 and the world of work: Impact and policy responses: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_745337.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_745337.pdf)
- The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/video/institutional-videos/WCMS\\_745628/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/video/institutional-videos/WCMS_745628/lang--en/index.htm)
- COVID-19 and the World of Work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response: [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/WCMS\\_746909/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/WCMS_746909/lang--en/index.htm)
- COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples: [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/indigenous-tribal/publications/WCMS\\_746893/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/indigenous-tribal/publications/WCMS_746893/lang--en/index.htm)
- COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV: [https://www.ilo.org/aids/Publications/WCMS\\_747263/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/aids/Publications/WCMS_747263/lang--en/index.htm)
- COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring no one is left behind in the response and recovery: [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/WCMS\\_747327/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/WCMS_747327/lang--en/index.htm)

For more information, please contact Emanuela Pozzan, Senior Gender Specialist, ILO at [pozzan@ilo.org](mailto:pozzan@ilo.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

## IOM KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **The COVID-19 pandemic is having an unprecedented impact on the mobility of people**
  - The COVID-19 pandemic is – first and foremost – a health issue. However, it is also having an unprecedented impact on mobility both in terms of regimes for border and migration management, and the situation of all people on the move, including women and girls, displaced by conflict or disaster.
- **Displaced populations are at increased risk for contracting infectious diseases**
  - Across the world, in less affected countries, displaced populations in camps or camp-like settings are already highly vulnerable to contracting infectious disease, in conditions where a virus can more easily spread.
  - People in conflict-affected areas, especially women and girls, may be some of the hardest populations to reach and monitor, yet are the most ill-equipped to protect themselves against infection.
- **Ensure that all migrants have access to health care and information**
  - All migrants, in regular or irregular situations, and including women and girls in exploitative situations, should have access to health information, testing, treatment and care, so that response teams can include them in contact tracing and community interventions.
- **COVID-19 responses should support all vulnerable groups of women and girls, including migrants**
  - Efforts to support all vulnerable groups of women and girls, including migrants, should be strongly considered to avoid harmful consequences, minimize hardship, as well as reduce public health risks.
  - The need for migrant-inclusive approaches in the overall COVID-19 response calls on countries to address the particular needs and vulnerabilities of migrants, regardless of their legal status, in the spirit of Universal Health Coverage.
- **The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, including for migrant women and girls**
  - In the short-term, within countries that have been hardest hit, migrants are exposed to many of the same vulnerabilities as other citizens, and often to a greater extent. Foreign nationals are more likely to be in overcrowded households or employed in short-term, or precarious work with limited provision for sick leave. Other migrants, in both regular and irregular status, may have limited access to public health services, or fear accessing such services. They may also be excluded from public health information programming or, when informed, lack the financial means to manage periods of self-isolation or quarantine. Women and girls in these situations may face additional challenges as a result of existing and intersecting vulnerabilities.
- **Migrants are at increased risk of stigmatization as a result of this crisis**



- We should remain vigilant against the stigmatization of any particular group during this crisis, including migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. IOM remains concerned about the spread of misinformation and the use of stigmatizing narratives as they can keep people from coming forward with symptoms or for contact tracing, which in turn can hamper the provision of adequate care and derail efforts to reduce further transmission.
  - All authorities must make every effort to fight xenophobia, linked to the origin and spreading of the pandemic. This is especially important given the uncertain length and impact of this crisis. Social distancing should not be at the expense of long-term social cohesion.
- **Data should be gathered accurately and disaggregated by sex and age to better inform public policy decision making at the local, regional and international level.**

## IOM GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

Since January, and in line with WHO recommendations, IOM's global workforce has been mobilized across the world, drawing down on decades of experience, most recently with the Ebola epidemic, and working with dozens of governments to plan their responses and save lives as the global health crisis evolves into the most significant mobility crisis ever.

IOM's strategic response focuses on reaching the vulnerable and building operational capacities to address the mobility dimensions of this pandemic. These actions include:

- Risk communication and community engagement activities, by leveraging community networks to ensure public health information is communicated in accessible and culturally appropriate ways to the most vulnerable, including migrants, regardless of status.
- Cross-border coordination and capacity building to strengthen health surveillance at entry and exit points (airports, seaports and land border crossings).
- Crisis coordination to facilitate information exchange between stakeholders.
- Trainings for government employees.
- Population mobility mapping exercises to anticipate needs and prioritise measures by layering information about travel restrictions, points of entry status, airlines and the status of stranded migrants, in collaboration with WHO.
- Enhanced surveillance, and WASH services at entry points, such as increasing water access and hygiene measures at scale across its operations, to minimise the risk of contagion.
- In view of the impact of the pandemic on IOM's daily operations, including the increasing number of travel restrictions, a thorough assessment is being undertaken to ensure the continued safety of the staff, partners and all beneficiaries of the organisation. Across all of IOM's activities, priority is given to mainstreaming protection concerns within the COVID-19 response to ensure that our efforts are people-centred, inclusive and do no harm to the populations we assist. Thus far, the following actions have been taken:
  - Temporary suspension of IOM's resettlement programming, in coordination with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), except for in the most critical emergency cases.



- Scale-back and/or suspension of a number of migration health assessment programmes, visa application programmes, and operational reduction of family reunification and humanitarian visa programmes.
- Virtual counselling for migrants and virtual training sessions for migrants' associations.

As per IOM internal procedures, gender is considered a cross-cutting issue and needs to be mainstreamed in every project/programme from inception to implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

- Of the several million people who migrate regularly, women and men do so in almost equal numbers. Studies demonstrate that, although this varies by crisis and region, women and girls comprise about half of any refugee, internally displaced or stateless population.
- It is recognized that a person's sex and gender shape every stage of the migration experience, whether forced, voluntary or somewhere in between. Gender influences reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available at destinations, and relations with the country of origin. Risks, vulnerabilities and needs are also shaped in large part by one's gender, and often vary drastically for different groups. The roles, expectations, relationships and power dynamics associated with being a man, woman, boy, girl or non-binary adult or child significantly affect all aspects of the migration process and can also be affected in new ways by migration.
- It is therefore crucial to understand how gender interacts with migration and to respond accordingly. Considering gender-specific migration trends means the difference between implementing a project that successfully addresses the specific needs and capacities of all IOM beneficiaries, and one that fails to do so and thus perpetuates inequality.

## IOM GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

IOM COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot on Gender:

[https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/documents/covid-19\\_analytical\\_snapshot\\_25\\_-\\_gender.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/documents/covid-19_analytical_snapshot_25_-_gender.pdf)

IOM Multi-lingual COVID-19 information: <https://www.iom.int/iom-responds-covid-19>

IOM YouTube playlist on COVID-19:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPbTEMLeBi2kkXjBOeiUdEE5F\\_24ipt1e](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPbTEMLeBi2kkXjBOeiUdEE5F_24ipt1e)

Mobility restrictions COVID-19: <https://migration.iom.int/>

All IOM COVID-19 resources available on <https://www.iom.int/iom-responds-covid-19> and being regularly updated in line with the evolving of the situation and the impact it has on the different aspects of Migration Management.

For more information, please contact Theodora Suter, Head of Gender Coordination Unit, IOM, at [tsuter@iom.int](mailto:tsuter@iom.int) or Lee Kanthoul, Gender Specialist, IOM, at [LKanthoul@iom.int](mailto:LKanthoul@iom.int).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

Office of the High Commissioner  
for Human Rights (OHCHR)

## OHCHR KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Ensure that the sexual and reproductive health and rights and services of women and girls are not undermined or interrupted**
  - Overloaded health systems, reallocation of resources, shortages of medical supplies, and disruptions of global supply chains could particularly undermine the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, including their access to menstrual health items, contraception and antiretrovirals for HIV/AIDS and antibiotics to treat sexually transmitted infections; sexual and reproductive health and rights information and education; maternal and newborn care; safe abortion care; and effective referral pathways. In previous emergencies, resources dedicated to sexual and reproductive health were diverted to the response, which contributed to a rise in maternal mortalities and morbidities rates.
  - It is crucial to ensure safe access to medical treatment and services to all people without discrimination; ensure that women health workers have adequate access to personal protective equipment, menstrual hygiene products, psychosocial support; ensure continuity of sexual and reproductive health services, including access for everyone to maternal and newborn care, access to contraception and antiretrovirals for HIV/AIDS and antibiotics to treat STIs, treatment of STIs, safe abortion and post-abortion care, and the existence of effective updated referral pathways.
- **LGBTI people may be particularly vulnerable in the context of the pandemic.**
  - LGBTI people regularly experience stigma and discrimination while seeking health services, therefore leading to disparities in access, quality and availability of healthcare. Criminalization and lack of legal gender recognition generally exacerbate negative health outcomes for LGBTI people, as they may not access healthcare services for fear of arrest or violence. In addition, COVID-19 represents greater risk to persons living with compromised immune systems, therefore impacting particularly some persons living with HIV/AIDS, as well as older persons.
- **Women face increased risks of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic**
  - Quarantines and other measures in place restricting the movement of people to curb the spread of COVID-19 contribute to the increase in the rates of gender-based violence (GBV). Women and girls already in abusive relationships are more exposed to increased control and restrictions by their abusers, with little or no recourse to escape and seek support. There can be a de-prioritization of services needed by victims, including shelters, health care services, police and justice sector services. Therefore, it is key to declare GBV-related services as essential; expand availability of alternative accommodation to avoid confinement with abusers; put in place accessible systems to alert authorities and protect victims and inform victims about available services.



- **Women’s and girls’ lack of access to sanitation infrastructure increases their risk of infection and other risks**
  - Women and girls, particularly from population groups who are in situations of marginalisation and vulnerability, often have a lack of access to sanitation infrastructure and services (access to water, soap and sanitizers), which increases their risk of infection and other risks.
  - Women and girls in many contexts may have to travel longer distances to collect food and water for household use and/or to use latrines, exposing them to increased risk of contracting COVID-19, as well as of gender-based violence.
  - Past health emergencies have shown that women and girls face particular barriers to accessing hygiene and sanitary materials due to increased household competition for scarce hygiene resources and/or decreased household income.
  - It is key to identify measures for securing access to preventive measures, including water, soap and sanitizers, without discrimination, and address the particular barriers and risks women and girls face in accessing hygiene and sanitary materials and facilities.
  
- **Women’s and girls’ caregiver roles expose them to higher risks of infection**
  - Women and girls are expected to perform caregiver’s roles, exposing them to higher risks of infection. In addition, safe and confidential access to medical treatment and other health services can be undermined, as pre-existing barriers for women, girls and LGBTI people will be exacerbated in the health emergency.
  - Migrant domestic workers, who comprise of a vast majority of women, often face vastly unequal power relations with their employers which may put them at particular risk, particularly when travel restrictions and self-isolation is imposed. This is exacerbated in situations where they are in an irregular situation.
  
- **Women may face additional caregiving responsibilities as a result of school closures and other impacts of the pandemic**
  - Closure of schools and day-care centers will also likely have a differential impact on women parents or guardians, who, due to discriminatory gender norms, will often be expected to take on additional caregiving responsibilities with their children at home, further restricting their work and economic opportunities, including in the longer-term.
  
- **The gender digital divide may limit women’s access to work or study from home**
  - Authorities and companies have been encouraging people to use technology to work from home. The gender digital divide may limit women’s access to work. It is crucial promote equal caregiving responsibilities of all parents and guardians and flexible, family-friendly work-practices; ensure economic incentives and social safety nets are gender-sensitive and reach and empower every woman and girl (establishing or scaling up cash transfer programmes, family leave policies, paid sick leave, unemployment benefits, partial unemployment-/short time- work benefits; pensions or child grants ensuring that all vulnerable women and men are adequately protected regardless of their employment status).
  
- **Women are more likely to work in low-wage and informal sectors impacted by the pandemic**
  - In many countries women are concentrated in the low-wage and informal sectors that are highly prone to disruption (domestic workers, street vendors, women supporting family businesses, goods and cross-border traders, seasonal workers). They are more likely to not receive paid sick leave or family leave; have no health insurance or no social security. Travel



restrictions may keep women migrant workers, particularly those engaged in care and domestic work, from reaching or leaving their jobs.

- Concerns over the spread of the virus and xenophobia may limit migrant women's work opportunities, cutting off livelihood support and any social protections for them and their families.
- **The LGBTI community may face heightened economic challenges as a result of the pandemic**
  - Many in the LGBTI community may work in informal economies and lack access to paid sick leave and social security safety net, or live without health coverage. Additionally, due to discriminatory paid leave policies that do not cover all genders equally, LGBTI people who take time off from work face heightened challenges and put them more at risk on financial downturns.
  - It is key to ensure that support provided takes into account the vulnerability of LGBTI people to poverty and pays attention to those who may be more at risk and would require food security and shelter especially for LGBTI youth, people who use drugs, refugees/asylum seekers, and LGBTI sex workers.
- **Ensure that the expertise and experience of women are included in all pandemic response mechanisms**
  - The voices, expertise and experience of women have not fully been incorporated into global health security surveillance, detection, and prevention mechanisms. In past health emergencies, the lack of participation of women in such spaces has led to gaps in responses to the specific experiences, situations, challenges and requirements of women and girls. Women represent more than 70% of the health workforce, are at the frontline interaction with communities, and, given the disproportionate caregiving roles women are expected to take on - they are in a prime position to identify outbreak trends and responses at the local level and effectively influence the design and implementation of prevention activities and community engagement.
- **Ensure women's full and meaningful participation, representation and leadership in local, national and global COVID-19 policy spaces and decision-making**
  - Emergency and other security measures adopted by states to restrict movement have also had an impact on civic space, including of women human rights defenders, whose civic space is already restricted before the crisis. Emergency measures can have an impact on democracy in the medium to long-term, particularly as there will be less civic space to keep the discussion, agenda and political space for feminist and gender equality movements, threatening also gains made.
  - It is key to ensure women's full and meaningful participation, representation and leadership in local, national and global COVID-19 policy spaces and decision-making, including concerning preparedness, immediate and longer-term responses and post-crisis recovery, funding and assistance allocations, as well as in the media; ensure inclusive partnerships, engagements and support – including financial – with civil society, particularly those actors often excluded and particularly impacted by the shift in priorities, including by donors, such as those promoting the rights of women and LGBTI people, sex workers and people living with HIV, particularly at the grassroots level.
- **Sex- and age-disaggregated outbreak-related data and evidence-based gender analysis is lacking and should be prioritized**



- There is a current gap in efforts to collect and call for disaggregated outbreak-related data, including by sex and age. This gap is also extended to a lack of evidence-based gender analysis and documentation on gender-specific human rights impacts of the virus and the measures adopted in response. Yet, this would be essential to increase the effectiveness of current crisis and inform preparedness and response plans in other contexts and future health emergencies.

## OHCHR GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- OHCHR's engagement in the COVID-19 response globally focuses on five areas:
  - supporting vulnerable people;
  - supporting participation, inclusion and access to information;
  - engaging on the economic and social impacts of the crisis;
  - supporting the UN system through the integration of human rights; and
  - addressing specific human rights issues.
- OHCHR has been designated as the focal point in the UN system to take the lead on the work on the human rights impact of the COVID-19.
- OHCHR is working with Member States, UN partners, civil society and the private sector to identify human rights trends, risks and the impact of national responses, as we assess good practices and raise awareness of specific concerns.
- The Office is playing an integral role in the UN system-wide efforts to respond to the pandemic, in close cooperation with our UN partners, particularly WHO, to mainstream human rights. At the Principal level, we are participating in the UN Coordination meetings in the humanitarian, development and peace and security fields to ensure a coherence response across the UN system.
- Examples of OHCHR's work within the UN system include the development of a framework to assist the UN system in monitoring critical human rights indicators and the release of a specific guidance on the situation of persons in detention. OHCHR will continue to provide focused guidance on issues of concern, including the rights of women, LGBTI persons and migrants.
- OHCHR's field presences are advising national response strategies, undertaking monitoring of specific human rights impact of the pandemic, to facilitate targeted advocacy, interventions and support to Member States. OHCHR field teams are working in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams, contributing to the development and implementation of effective National Response plans that are grounded in human rights.
- High Commissioner Bachelet has issued three statements to date: one on the importance of having human rights at front and centre in response to the crisis; on the impact of sectoral sanctions on access to essential medicines and medical equipment; and on the need to protect the health and safety of people in detention and other closed facilities, as part of overall efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. The High Commissioner also published an article in the Telegraph jointly with Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (This article is available here [The Telegraph](#)); and a joint statement with UNHCR, IOM, OHCHR and WHO on the rights and health of refugees, migrants and stateless in COVID-19 response.
- UN Special Rapporteurs have issued statements (see for example the statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on racism, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial



Discrimination); The working group on discrimination against women will also issue a statement shortly.

## OHCHR GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

OHCHR webpage on COVID-19 and its human rights and gender dimensions:  
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/COVID19Guidance.aspx>

As part of the UN Free and Equal Campaign, OHCHR will be posting key messages on COVID-19 and the rights of LGBTI people on social media on Monday 6 April. The key messages will be available in English and Spanish. For more information please check the Campaign website <https://www.unfe.org/>

For more information, please contact Veronica Birga, Chief, Women's Human Rights and Gender Section, OHCHR at [vbirga@ohchr.org](mailto:vbirga@ohchr.org); or Beatriz Perez Mena, Gender Integration Advisor, Women's Human Rights and Gender Section, OHCHR, at [bperezmena@ohchr.org](mailto:bperezmena@ohchr.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## UN Global Compact

### UN GLOBAL COMPACT KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

To help drive responsible corporate action, the United Nations Global Compact is uniting business to respond to COVID-19 and providing guidance and support to companies everywhere. To integrate gender-equitable response measures to COVID-19, business actions should include the following:

- **Ensure women's representation and inclusion in all planning and decision making**
  - Research shows that more diverse teams take better, more sustainable decisions. In a COVID-19 era, companies should apply this guidance to crisis task forces and response teams and ensure that both women and men are represented in COVID-19-related processes. The UN Global Compact's Target Gender Equality programme supports companies in setting and reaching ambitious corporate targets for women's representation and leadership in times of crisis and beyond.
- **Ensure access to quality healthcare for all women and girls**
  - In addition to healthcare needs that may arise due to COVID-19, women might experience interrupted access to sexual and reproductive health services, including to family planning, access to pre- and post-natal health care and contraceptives, as resources are diverted to address the pandemic.
- **Provide flexible working arrangements for parents and caretakers, keeping in mind that the majority of unpaid care work falls on women**
  - With 850 million children around the world home from school due to COVID-19, and women doing three times as much unpaid care work, business must provide flexible working arrangements to employees. Among other things, companies should support safe and accessible childcare options, as well as paid sick, family and emergency leave, and offer equal maternity and paternity leave. The COVID-19 pandemic provides a chance to disrupt gender stereotypes and demonstrate that household chores and caring for and teaching children should be shared responsibilities.
- **Help address the unintended consequences of stay at home measures, including the alarming increase in domestic violence**
  - Domestic violence has increased by upwards of 25% in some countries as a result of lockdowns. Companies can play an important role in helping to direct employees to needed services, including domestic violence hotlines, to ensure women and girls at risk have the resources and support needed at this time.
- **Support employment and income protection for women across the value chain**
  - 60% of women's employment is in the informal economy with few protections against dismissal and limited access to social protection. With this sector severely cut down because of COVID-19, protecting the employment and income of women in these jobs is essential. This includes ensuring that suppliers that rely heavily on female labour receive payment for



existing orders and additional support to keep afloat and pay workers. It might also include providing leniency to women entrepreneurs, offering financial products and services to save them from bankruptcy, and deliberately building relationships with women-owned businesses as part of recovery efforts.

- **Close the gender pay gap**

- The gender pay gap is stuck at 16%, leaving women more vulnerable to economic downturn. Within the healthcare sector, the average gender pay gap is 28%, which may be exacerbated in times of crises. The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of Principles co-developed by the UN Global Compact and UN Women that offer guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. In this global crisis, implementing the WEPs in response efforts is crucial to ensuring women are protected and empowered through business responses to the COVID-19 crisis.

## UN GLOBAL COMPACT GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

The UN Global Compact is encouraging businesses to integrate a gender perspective in response measures to COVID-19, including through the following initiatives:

- **Special Academy Series: Uniting Business to Respond to COVID-19.** The UN Global Compact Academy is hosting a special series of live webinars to highlight the existing and new approaches to leadership in a time of global crisis. On 14 April, the Academy session addressed how business can support women in times of crisis. Speakers included Ann Cairns, Vice Chairman, MasterCard; H.E. Margaret Kobia, Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for the Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs; and Lise Kingo, CEO and Executive Director of the UN Global Compact. With over 1,000 participants, the session covered steps business can take to respect and support the rights and lives of women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional sessions are scheduled for the coming months.
- **Call for video submissions on CEO responses to COVID-19.** The UN Global Compact invites CEOs to record and submit a video sharing what your company is doing in response to COVID-19 giving examples of efforts to recover from, and support resiliency in the face of this global crisis. We invite you to share your ideas, advice and experience with our global community of more than 10,000 businesses and 68 Local Networks.
- **Women's Empowerment Principles: Call-to-Action for the Private Sector.** The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) call-to-action encourages businesses to champion the rights and physical and mental well-being of employees, as well as to ensure long-term, gender-equitable business recovery efforts restore economic stability.
- **Target Gender Equality COVID-19 Assessment.** This 10 question assessment draws attention to questions that business should consider, and actions that business can take to ensure a gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive response to COVID-19



## UN GLOBAL COMPACT GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

A Special Appeal from the United Nations Global Compact to Unite Businesses to Respond to COVID-19: <https://unglobalcompact.org/take-action/20th-anniversary-campaign/uniting-business-to-tackle-covid-19>

Gender Equality COVID-19 Impact Briefs: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/20th-anniversary-campaign/uniting-business-to-tackle-covid-19/genderequality>

Special Academy Session on COVID-19: How Business Can Support Women in Times of Crisis: <https://unglobalcompact.org/academy/how-business-can-support-women-in-times-of-crisis>

Women's Empowerment Principles Call-to-Action: <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/resources/documents/2020/04/covid-19-and-gender-equality-a-call-to-action-for-the-private-sector?lang=en>

Sign the Women's Empowerment Principles: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/womens-principles>

Learn more about Target Gender Equality: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/target-gender-equality>

For more information, please contact Aude Coquatrix, Senior Manager, UN Global Compact at [coquatrix@unglobalcompact.org](mailto:coquatrix@unglobalcompact.org) or Lauren Gula, Senior Manager, UN Global Compact at [gula@unglobalcompact.org](mailto:gula@unglobalcompact.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

## UN WOMEN KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **The majority of front-line health workers are women, increasing their risk of infection**
  - The majority of frontline health workers—especially nurses—are women. Women also perform the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work in homes, including caring for sick family members. Consequently, their risk of infection is higher.
  - Governments should ensure that all care-sector professionals have adequate protection against transmission. At a minimum, menstrual hygiene product must be made available for female caregivers and frontline responders as part of personal protective equipment.
  - The vast amount of unpaid and poorly paid care and domestic work that women have always done in homes and communities will also constitute the backbone of the response to COVID-19. Without adequate support, the long-term costs of stretching women's work to patch up the holes in social protection and public services provision can be enormous.
  - Long-term systemic solutions that create integrated care systems that rely less on the unpaid work and more on collective and solidarity-based solutions are needed.
- **In many countries, fewer women than men have health insurance and access to care**
  - Women and girls are less likely to have access to quality health services, essential medicines and vaccines, maternal and reproductive health care, or coverage for routine or catastrophic health costs, especially in rural and marginalized communities.
  - Governments should ensure that all citizens can access quality health-care services and can be tested for COVID-19.
- **The surge in COVID-19 cases is straining even the most advanced and best-resourced health systems to the breaking point**
  - Past experience, including the Ebola outbreak, has shown that women may find it hard to access much needed maternal health and contraceptive services during disease outbreaks given that all services are being directed to essential medical needs.
  - Governments must ensure that maternal care services continue to operate safely and that policies are in place to protect the health of pregnant women and their newborns.
- **Older women and men are at a higher health risk from COVID-19**
  - Women represent the majority of older persons around the world, especially those over the age of 80. They tend to be poorer due to lower savings or pension entitlements. They are also more likely to live alone than older men due to their greater longevity, and rely on care from outside their homes, which may be difficult to access when social distancing is in place.
  - Governments should prioritize the needs of older women living alone or in residential care.
  - Services to prevent and protect older women from any form of violence and abuse, such as domestic violence and neglect must be strengthened.
  - Governments should ensure the income security of older persons, particularly older women, through universal pension coverage and adequate entitlement levels.



- **Home is not always a safe place for women**
  - As stay-at-home orders expand to contain the spread of the virus, women with violent partners or other family members increasingly find themselves isolated from the people and resources that can help them. Emerging data shows that since the outbreak of COVID-19, reports of violence against women, and particularly domestic violence, have increased in several countries as security, health, and money worries create tensions and strains accentuated by the cramped and confined living conditions of lockdown.
  - Limitations on women's and girls' access to phones and helplines and disrupted public services like police, justice and social services mean reporting incidents of gender-based violence is more difficult, and compromises survivors' access to support services.
  - Measures must urgently be embedded in economic support and stimulus packages. Hotlines, shelters and other services for all victims of domestic abuse must be designated as "essential services" and kept open and accessible. Similarly, law enforcement must be sensitized and responsive to the needs of victims.
  - Technology-based solutions such as SMS and online tools, as well as offline community networks, can be leveraged to expand social support, including reaching women without access to phones or internet.
  - It is crucial to work with diverse partners, including media outlets and the private sector, to proactively challenge gender stereotypes and harmful masculinities accentuated under COVID-19 circumstances (e.g. increased household care work for women)
  
- **Girls are more likely to miss out on learning**
  - According to recent estimates, more than a billion students are out of school due to COVID-19 closures. Before the crisis, an estimated 32 million girls of primary school age were out of school compared to 27 million boys. Girls from poor and rural areas face an especially uphill battle, particularly those without access to online or remote teaching.
  - Governments should ensure that girls are not caring for younger siblings or other relatives while boys continue to study. Boys and girls expected to continue schooling online should have equal access to computers and education resources.
  
- **The crisis has a significant impact on women's economic empowerment**
  - Many of the industries directly affected by quarantines and lockdowns—travel, tourism, restaurants, food production—have high female labour force participation rates.
  - In both developed and developing economies, many informal jobs are mostly done by women who typically lack health insurance and have no social safety net to fall back on. Special efforts should be made to deliver social protection to informal workers.
  - The gender digital divide also risks putting women at disadvantage where government and business services are no longer accessible or require to be digitally connected.
  - Governments should develop targeted women's economic empowerment strategies, or unconditional cash transfer programming, to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis.
  - At the macroeconomic level, bailout and stimulus packages must include social protection measures that reflect an understanding of women's circumstances and recognition of the care economy. This means ensuring health insurance benefits for those most in need and paid and/or sick leave for those unable to come to work because they are taking care of children, or sick family members.
  - Sustained investments in the care economy must be at the center of efforts to 'build back better'. Investments in social protection and care services can drive economic recovery by stimulating aggregate demand, creating employment in people-centered sectors and opening up training and employment opportunities for women (and men) who have lost their jobs as



a result of the crisis. To be effective, priorities and policy options must be defined with the participation of key stakeholders, including paid and unpaid caregivers, care recipients and their respective organizations.

- **Women in poverty or without an independent source of income face greater risks**
  - Poverty heightens the exposure and impact of COVID-19 as poor people are unable to work remotely or stock-up on essentials to stay home in a pandemic. 50 million women aged 25–34 live in poverty compared to 40 million men of the same age.
  - To mitigate women’s economic dependence on men, governments should target individuals rather than households when implementing direct cash transfers.
  - Lone-mother families are more likely to be poor due to fewer income-earners in the household and women’s lower wages. Governments should consider interventions to guarantee income security and address challenges faced by single parents, the majority of whom are women.
  
- **Women should be involved at all stages of the COVID-19 response**
  - The leadership of women in pandemic preparedness and response is not being sufficiently leveraged. Despite the critical contributions made by women to address the outbreak - as front-line responders, health professionals, community volunteers, transport and logistics managers, scientists and more - the majority of key decision-makers designing and executing the pandemic response are men. Women’s leadership will be key in the development and implementation of COVID-19 response plans and budgets to avoid negative repercussions on women, and to ensure that women benefit from services and stimulus initiatives.
  - Policy-makers should leverage the capacities of women’s organizations to help disseminate and amplify messaging. Grassroots and women’s organizations and communities have played a critical role in preventing and responding to previous crises and should be supported in their current frontline role, including with longer-term core or un-earmarked funding.
  - In many countries, the crisis is transforming how institutions, political processes and information exchange function, but at the same time it is revealing opportunities for women’s leadership and participation in the response and recovery. With many of the traditional spaces of public engagement and debate limited by COVID-19 prevention, social media and the internet are growing as political forums. Internet freedoms and access are more important than ever, as is online security for women in politics and women activists who risk heightened forms of violence.
  - The restriction of movement in response to the pandemic has shut out international humanitarians and peacekeepers. The role of local peacebuilders is one of the only hopes for the maintenance of social cohesion and the prevention of further conflict and instability. Women’s organizations are expert local peacebuilders. They are producing and distributing all kinds of relevant materials and supplies in communities and healthcare facilities, finding alternative ways to shelter and support women that are being abused during the quarantines, and continuing their political and peacebuilding work.

## UN WOMEN GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

In order to mobilize resources toward the needs of women and girls, UN Women has developed a global programme proposal [Gender-Responsive Prevention and Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic: From Emergency Response to Recovery & Resilience](#). This is aligned the UN system-wide efforts, including the UNSDG Social and Economic Response Framework. The UN Women response framework focuses on five main areas:



## **1. Incidence and impact of gender-based violence (GBV) is mitigated and minimized, including through coordinated UN system support**

Examples of UN Women initiatives include:

- UN Women offices are monitoring and/or undertaking rapid assessments of violence against women and girls and COVID-19.
- UN Women offices are focused on prevention and access to essential services (health, justice and policing, social services, helplines and coordination of these services) to mitigate risks of violence against women and girls and provide support services to those who have experienced and/or witnessed violence. This includes by supporting partners to update referral pathways and service delivery protocols, including with police and justice institutions.
- Globally, through our UN Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Initiative, UN Women is working with local governments, justice/police/health sectors, and grassroots women's organizations, to deepen support across municipal departments (transportation, parks, public work spaces, sanitation, and housing) in ensuring safe public spaces for women and girls during the crisis.
- In all country offices, UN Women is supporting women's CSOs as our core partners, many of which are struggling during this time particularly with the surge in cases of GBV. The [UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women](#) is reviewing all current grants to identify funds that could be quickly reallocated to provide immediate assistance to local women's organizations. Subject to donor contributions, the UN Trust Fund will also establish a COVID-19 Funding Window to expand this support.

## **2. Social protection mechanisms and economic stimulus packages properly serve women and girls**

Examples of UN Women initiatives include:

- UN Women is assessing the gender impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods of women-owned small businesses and women employees with its private sector partners.
- Livelihoods programmes such as Cash for Work and Job Placements under UN Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection in Crisis Response (LEAP) programme, Markets for Change to support women traders, Climate-Resilient Agriculture to support women farmers, Rural Women's Economic Empowerment and Second Chance Education to develop skills among disadvantaged women will be expanded to address the impact of the economic crisis.
- Currently, UN Women is conducting social and economic assessments from a gender perspective to understand needs and tailor responses at the regional and national levels.
- UN Women is supporting women owned Small and Medium Enterprises across regions.
- UN Women is also mobilizing cash, essential supplies and food to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.
- UN Women in Asia-Pacific, ECA and LAC are engaging private sector companies that are signatories of the Women Economic Principles (WEPs) to provide effective response to support gender equality in the workplace, across the value chains and throughout communities as part of their WEPs commitments. UN Women is convening roundtables to fast-track gender-sensitive business response and recovery, and gain commitments from business leaders.
- To support women's economic recovery and empowerment, UN Women is also working with governments especially at a municipal level, on medium- to long-term investments to address the differential economic impacts of COVID-19 and attain economic efficiency by including gender equity in recovery plans and budget performance indicators.



### 3. People support and practice the equal sharing of the burden of care

Examples of UN Women initiatives include:

- In Argentina, an online survey on care and remote work was developed jointly with ILO to collect inputs for developing strategies and public policies.
- UN Women developed special subsidies to support women providing unpaid care services in response to COVID-19 in El Salvador.
- UN Women offices around the world have been conducting social mobilization to challenge social norms that support unequal distribution of care responsibilities.
  - At the global level, the [#HeForSheAtHome](#) campaign seeks to inspire men to help balance the burden in their households; and UN Women and UNICEF have partnered to produce the brief: [Promoting Positive Gender Roles in Marketing and Advertising](#).

### 4. Women and girls affected by COVID-19 lead and participate in decision making

Examples of UN Women initiatives include:

- Support to women's organizations through UN Women's [Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund](#), the Spotlight Initiative and the [Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women](#) will continue and expand, though adapting to new realities that constrain movement and access due to COVID-19.
- UN Women is advocating to include front-line women health workers in decision-making and policy spaces for improved health security surveillance, detection and prevention mechanisms.
- UN Women is establishing platforms for women living with HIV to participate in decision-making around COVID-19 responses.
- Leveraging our existing social media and advocacy networks and platforms, UN Women-led inter-agency campaigns are celebrating to the work of women on the frontlines of preparedness and response. For World Health Day on 7 April 2020 UN Women, UNFPA, and WHO launched a social media campaign to celebrate and honor the work of nurses and midwives fighting COVID-19, and advocate for nurses and midwives' access to critical supplies.

### 5. Data and coordination mechanisms include gender perspectives

Examples of UN Women initiatives include:

- UN Women is making available technical tools and resources, such as gender analysis/research in emergency contexts; rapid gender assessments tools/check lists; integrating a gender perspective into response to emerging diseases; and integrating gender equality into humanitarian action through its global and regional knowledge hubs and through leadership and participation in coordination mechanisms at regional and country levels. All regions have produced tailored policy briefs on the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data is also key, and UN Women is supporting partners to collect and use sex-disaggregated data.
- In addition to the global level advocacy and coordination, UN Women regional and country offices are establishing linkages and actively participating in UN humanitarian structures and UN agencies' COVID-19 preparedness and response plans to ensure that gender considerations are integrated within their programming.
- UN Women is producing gender data and making it widely available through a dedicated COVID-19 section in the [Women Count Data Hub](#). The emerging picture presents sex and age disaggregated data updated bi-weekly, by WHO. It also offers a data-driven policy response through a 10-point checklist for decision-makers and contains a repository of resources and an overview of UN Women's primary data collection efforts.



## UN WOMEN GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

In Focus: Gender equality matters in COVID-19 response: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response>

COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/issue-brief-covid-19-and-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls>

COVID-19: Emerging gender data and why it matters (Dashboard)  
<https://data.unwomen.org/resources/covid-19-emerging-gender-data-and-why-it-matters>

Infographic: The Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/issue-brief-covid-19-and-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-infographic-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5341>

Checklist to respond to the needs and rights of women and girls during the COVID-19 Pandemic by UN Women Deputy Executive Director Åsa Regnér:  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/news-checklist-for-covid-19-response-by-ded-regner>

COVID-19 and Implications for Inclusive Economic Empowerment in CARICOM: Policy and Programme Considerations:  
<https://caribbean.unwomen.org/en/materials/publications/2020/3/covid-19-and-implications-for-inclusive-economic-empowerment-in-caricom>

COVID-19: Women front and centre. Statement by Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director:  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/statement-ed-phumzile-covid-19-women-front-and-centre>

COVID-19: How to include marginalized and vulnerable people in risk communication and community engagement: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/COVID-19%20-%20How%20to%20include%20marginalized%20and%20vulnerable%20people%20in%20risk%20communication%20and%20community%20engagement.pdf>

COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean: How to Incorporate Women and Gender Equality in the Management of the Crisis Response:  
<https://lac.unwomen.org/es/digiteca/publicaciones/2020/03/covid-como-incorporar-a-las-mujeres-y-la-igualdad-de-genero-en-la-gestion-de-respuesta>

Ending violence against women in the context of COVID-19:  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/ending-violence-against-women-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

Gender Alert for COVID-19 OUTBREAK:  
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IASC%20Interim%20Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20-%20Gender%20Alert.pdf>



## UN WOMEN GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Gender equality starts with you: Nine ways you can keep up your activism from your couch:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/compilation-keeping-up-activism-from-your-couch-when-isolating>

In a Serbian town, survivors of domestic violence are sewing face masks for those in the front line of COVID-19 response: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/feature-serbian-survivors-of-domestic-violence-sew-face-masks-for-covid-19-response>

Op-ed: Can we turn the tide on gender equality:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/op-ed-joint-turn-the-tide-on-gender-equality>

Paying attention to women's needs and leadership will strengthen COVID19 response:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/news-womens-needs-and-leadership-in-covid-19-response>

Step it up G7: An extraordinary time requires extraordinary solidarity:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/op-ed-joint-step-it-up-g7>

The First 100 Days of the COVID-19 Outbreak in Asia and the Pacific: A Gender Lens:

<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/the-first-100-days-of-the-covid-19-outbreak-in-asia-and-the-pacific>

The COVID-19 Outbreak and Gender: Key Advocacy Points from Asia and the Pacific:

<https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/news%20and%20events/stories/2020/giha%20wg%20advocacy%20brief%20gender%20impact%20covid19.pdf?la=en&vs=5651>

Violence against women and girls: the shadow pandemic:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/statement-ed-phumzile-violence-against-women-during-pandemic>

Voices from the front lines of COVID-19:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/feature-voices-from-the-front-lines-of-covid-19>

Women and COVID-19: Five things governments can do now:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/news-women-and-covid-19-governments-actions-by-ded-bhatia>

Women's Needs and Gender Equality in Egypt's COVID-19 Response: [https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20arab%20states/attachments/publications/2020/04/unwomen\\_brief\\_covid-19\\_egypt\\_response.pdf?la=en&vs=3919](https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20arab%20states/attachments/publications/2020/04/unwomen_brief_covid-19_egypt_response.pdf?la=en&vs=3919)

Women's Needs and Gender Equality in Lebanon's Covid-19 Response: [https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/news%20and%20events/stories/2020/gender%20and%20covid\\_un%20women%20lebanon\\_march%202020.pdf?la=en&vs=4949](https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/news%20and%20events/stories/2020/gender%20and%20covid_un%20women%20lebanon_march%202020.pdf?la=en&vs=4949)

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT)

### UN-HABITAT KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Low-income areas are especially vulnerable to increased gender-based violence during the pandemic**
  - With the spike in gender-based violence in low-income settlements following the COVID-19 pandemic, necessary support needs to be given to community leaders and security personnel to handle cases of gender-based violence. Advocacy should be on the increase to encourage known or suspected abuse, especially in slum areas. Critical measures can include:
    - Relocating of mobile health care clinics closer to affected communities, and mapping health facilities for improved access to testing and treatment especially for survivors of gender-based violence.
    - Integrating gender-sensitive violence prevention strategies and responses into broad urban planning, urban management and urban governance strategies led by local governments
    - Approaching domestic violence beyond social welfare measures to address it as an inter-departmental issue cut across all line functions of local government service delivery mechanisms.
    - Establishing a robust urban monitoring system on domestic violence based on cross layering of data sets across spatial, social and economic strata to inform multi-dimensional urban safety approaches linking violence reduction measures to tenure security and natural and man-made disasters.
- **Ensure women are included in all areas and at all stages of decision-making processes related to the pandemic**
  - Women need to be included in decision making processes for outbreak preparedness and response. There is disproportionate and inadequate representation of women in national and global COVID-19 response policy spaces.
  - Efforts should be made to strengthen community resilience to natural and human shocks such as COVID-19 and reduce conflict over basic resources including water.
- **Work with local communities to improve hygiene and sanitation facilities to combat the spread of the disease**
  - Handwashing is an essential first measure to stop the spread of COVID-19, especially in low income settlements and slum areas where housing is crowded, and social distancing is a challenge. Local authorities should work with community associations, civil society and faith-based institutions in low income communities and slum settlements to improve hygiene and sanitation and offer hand washing facilities, as well as to disseminate relevant information.
- **Ensure that women in vulnerable situations and those who may face intersecting forms of discrimination receive necessary outreach and care**



- Special attention and outreach need to be given to women living in vulnerable situations such as women living in slum settlements, women with disabilities, older women and migrant women and refugees who are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19.
- **Engage with local communities to collect and use sex- and age- disaggregated data**
  - Using local communities themselves as a resource, local authorities must collect and use sex- and age-disaggregated data, for situational analysis as well as for more effective monitoring of the spread of COVID-19 in communities. Local governments must be supported to work with these communities as a priority.

## UN-HABITAT GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- UN-Habitat works closely with local governments to provide technical guidance and support in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- One billion people live in slums or informal settlements where water for basic needs is in short supply. UN-Habitat has created an emergency fund of USD \$1 million to support small-scale projects addressing the needs for prevention and preparedness in informal settlements and slums.
- UN-Habitat is implementing its plan in this time of crisis to ensure that its essential work continues and is scaled up to support cities, towns and communities, especially the most vulnerable, at this most critical juncture.
- At the local level in Kenya, UN-Habitat has engaged in handwashing stations in two of the biggest slum settlements in Nairobi Kibera and Mathare, providing basic amenities of soap and water and disseminated proper handwashing instructions.
- UN-Habitat is engaging local stakeholders in COVID-19 response, including the well networked community policing forums and neighbourhood residents associations and the network of city hospitals and health centers to raise awareness of the potential impacts that physical distancing, staying at home and other measures are likely to have on women who are subjected to violence and their children.
- UN-Habitat is raising awareness of the increased risk of violence against women during this pandemic and the need to support women subjected to violence, and divulging information about where help for survivors is available. UN-Habitat is leveraging resources through partnerships in its Global Network on Safer Cities (GNSC) to promote the use of local government and NGO services available locally (e.g. hotlines, shelters, rape crisis centers, counselling) for survivors, including opening hours, contact details and whether these can be offered remotely, and establishing referral linkages.
- Finally, UN-Habitat is developing a “Global 40 Days Safer Cities Challenge” to support cities and local governments in their social recovery measures through local governance of safety frameworks to inform actions in the informal settlements and inner cities of the municipality to prevent and mitigate domestic violence and to enhance livelihoods of these most vulnerable populations.



- UN-Habitat has developed a response strategy for the COVID-19 pandemic, with the Safer Cities Programme focusing on the recovery measures that local governments can undertake in a multisectoral approach to domestic violence and based on the principle of the co-production of safety for all.

## UN-HABITAT GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Gender and COVID-19:

[https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/05/final\\_gender\\_key\\_messages\\_on\\_covid19\\_26\\_may\\_2020.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/05/final_gender_key_messages_on_covid19_26_may_2020.pdf)

Water for handwashing in slums is critical to prevent COVID-19 spreading:

<https://unhabitat.org/water-for-handwashing-in-slums-is-critical-to-prevent-covid-19-spreading>

The United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements:

<https://unhabitat.org/united-nations-system-wide-guidelines-on-safer-cities-and-human-settlements>

Kenyan youth wash hands to keep away COVID-19 in informal settlement:

<https://unhabitat.org/kenyan-youth-wash-hands-to-keep-away-covid-19-in-informal-settlement>

Key messages on COVID-19 and informal settlements:

[https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/03/english\\_final\\_un-habitat\\_key\\_messages-covid19-informal\\_settlements.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/03/english_final_un-habitat_key_messages-covid19-informal_settlements.pdf)

For more information, please contact Angela Mwai, Gender Advisor, UN-Habitat at [angela.mwai@un.org](mailto:angela.mwai@un.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

### UNAIDS KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Ensure that national health systems include gender-responsive, integrated sexual and reproductive health care and other related services**
  - An essential package of gender-responsive, integrated sexual and reproductive health, HIV and gender-based violence services should be embedded in national health systems and address the specific sexual and reproductive health needs of women and girls living with HIV.
- **Ensure access to continued sexual and reproductive health and rights and legal protection**
  - All individuals must have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, with particular attention to women and adolescents, including those living with or at high risk of HIV.
  - Sexual and reproductive rights violations, including against women and adolescent girls living with HIV, should be penalized.
- **Ensure ongoing access to contraceptives for women and adolescent girls living with or at risk of HIV**
  - Women and adolescent girls living with or at high risk of HIV must have access to a full range of contraceptives to choose from, and to women-initiated and women-controlled methods of HIV and/or pregnancy prevention, including female condoms, emergency contraception, pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis—regardless of age or marital status.
- **Prevent coercive practices and violence against women and girls in health care settings**
  - All forms of violence and coercive practices against women and girls in health care-settings should be prevented and punished, with particular attention to violations of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including forced or coerced sterilisation and abortion, and to women and adolescent girls living with HIV, among other disadvantaged groups.
- **Ensure access to services for women who face increased risks of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic**
  - All victims/survivors of gender-based violence must have access to timely, quality services to address the physical, mental and sexual and reproductive health consequences of violence against women, including risks of acquiring HIV.
  - Particular attention should be paid to women and girls from stigmatized communities at high risk of both HIV and violence (e.g. sex workers, transgender women, women with disabilities, undocumented migrants, women who use drugs, women in detention or institutionalized).
- **COVID-19 policies and programmes should address the interlinkages of HIV and violence against women.**
- **Ensure that a human-rights based and community centered approach is followed**
  - The HIV epidemic response has generated significant experience and lessons learned on the importance of a human rights-based and community centered approach, based on evidence to ensuring effective and proportionate responses to epidemics, including the COVID-19 pandemic.



- **Ensure the meaningful participation of communities in the COVID-19 response, including women and adolescent girls living with or at high risk of HIV**
  - Participation is a fundamental principle of human rights. All government policy and action must allow for the direct and meaningful participation of communities, particularly those affected and most vulnerable, which presupposes transparency in information and decision-making. Women and adolescent girls living with, at high risk of and affected by HIV must be systematically involved at all levels of decision-making in relation to the response, alongside other women's rights, youth and civil society actors.
- **Guarantee rights to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent, including to full information on options, benefits and potential side effects of treatments and testing.**

## UNAIDS GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- UNAIDS launched a report on Human rights and COVID-19: Rights in the time of COVID-19 — Lessons from HIV for an effective, community-led response, which includes gender related aspects.
- UNAIDS together with the UNAIDS country offices did a quick assessment of the needs of people living with HIV, which include gender related aspects.



## UNAIDS GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

UNAIDS urges countries to stay focused on HIV prevention during the COVID-19 pandemic:

[https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/may/20200506\\_prevention](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/may/20200506_prevention)

Lessons from HIV prevention for preventing COVID-19 in low- and middle-income countries:

<https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2020/lessons-hiv-prevention-covid19>

Condoms and lubricants in the time of COVID-19 — Sustaining supplies and people-centred approaches to meet the need in low- and middle-income countries — A short brief on actions:

<https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2020/condoms-lubricants-covid19>

Maintaining and prioritizing HIV prevention services in the time of COVID-19:

<https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2020/maintaining-prioritizing-hiv-prevention-services-covid19>

COVID-19 responses must uphold and protect the human rights of sex workers:

[https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2020/april/20200424\\_sex-workr](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2020/april/20200424_sex-workr)

Targeting sex workers is not the answer:

[https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2020/june/20200608\\_cameroon](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2020/june/20200608_cameroon)

UNAIDS condemns misuse and abuse of emergency powers to target marginalized and vulnerable populations:

[https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/april/20200409\\_laws-covid19](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/april/20200409_laws-covid19)

UNAIDS and MPact are extremely concerned about reports that LGBTI people are being blamed and abused during the COVID-19 outbreak:

[https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/april/20200427\\_lgbti-covid](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/april/20200427_lgbti-covid)

UNAIDS speaks to REDLACTRANS regional coordinator Marcela Romero about the human rights of the LGBTI population in times of COVID-19: [https://www.unaids.org/en/20200608\\_RST\\_Redlactrans](https://www.unaids.org/en/20200608_RST_Redlactrans)

Caribbean community organizations call for decisive action to end homophobic abuse and cyberbullying: [https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2020/may/20200529\\_caribbean\\_homophobia\\_bullying](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2020/may/20200529_caribbean_homophobia_bullying)

More publications, statements and press releases can be found at the special UNAIDS COVID-19 page:

<https://www.unaids.org/en/covid19>

For more information, please contact Maria Jose Alcala Donegani, Senior Gender Equality Adviser, UNAIDS at [alcaladoneganim@unaids.org](mailto:alcaladoneganim@unaids.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)

### UNCDF KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Women entrepreneurs and informal workers should be supported**
  - Governments should prioritize a support mechanism to protect women-owned businesses, female entrepreneurs and informal workers who will be affected by COVID-19. This will include direct financing and specialized technical support to women-owned businesses and the formulation of a strategy to mitigate fall-out and potential risks for women-owned businesses.
  - The role of Central Banks, private companies and other relevant financial institutions will be crucial in this regard. This may require the creation of special assistance funds to support those women who are not able to access formal unemployment benefits. UNCDF will use the Women's Economic Empowerment Index (WEEI) to identify and fund viable gender-responsive COVID-19 initiatives.
- **Recovery and response initiatives should be needs-based, involving local partners, including women**
  - It is crucial that a bottom up gender-responsive, needs-based strategy and action plan be undertaken for COVID-19 recovery with the active engagement of local partners, including women. Utilizing existing tools such as gender-responsive local economic assessments (LEA) will allow for rapid assessments in targeted areas to analyze local economic recovery needs and to formulate an effective recovery plan at the district level.
  - Adequate financing and technical support will be required to build local response systems that will address the particular needs of women and girls, including vulnerable groups such as those affected by domestic violence and abuse. Governments will therefore need to channel additional financial resources from center to local governments for the timely provision of essential services for women and girls in affected areas.
  - The private sector must form effective coalitions to address existing market barriers that will be exacerbated by COVID-19 recovery. By pro-actively involving women in the recovery plan, it will make each economy more resilient for the next shock. This will include labor force training, financing, mentorship, and cross-collaboration.

### UNCDF GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

**UNCDF will use its broad experience in using digital innovations to support women and girls in affected countries. These include:**

- **Increasing the use and access of digital payments:** UNCDF, working with UNDP and the Better than Cash Alliance, can bring its expertise on [responsible](#) digital payments to help governments and other partners introduce the relevant technology channels to pay emergency workers and other critical crisis responders, including senior care workers and nurses that are predominately women, reliably and on time. Today, given quarantines imposed by governments in most of the affected countries, the use of digital P2P (Person-to-Person), P2B (Person-to-Business) and B2P (Business-to-Person) payments could help maintain social distancing and reduce the potential spread of COVID-19. The Better Than Cash Alliance is currently responding to multiple requests from its government and corporate members to accelerate responsible digital transfer payments to help mitigate the pandemic's consequences. In this



work, the Alliance and UNCDF are building on their experiences, including those learned from [digitizing payments to Ebola response workers](#) during that crisis.

- **Enabling E-commerce and door to door delivery systems:** During this confinement period, more and more households are trying to stock goods for longer periods without real visibility into the future. Lacking the ability to move freely, people may turn to the internet as a mainstream source to order food, goods, medicine or other needed items. E-commerce platforms can play an important role in making it easier to buy goods from home. This will be especially important for ensuring food security for women and children as well as providing important income streams for women-owned Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and women working in agricultural value chains.
- **Providing Virtual (Verified) information:** These virtual tools can help transmit information in a crisis. This is especially critical for women who tend to be both the professional and familial frontline health workers.
  - **Chatbots:** Chatbots are automated software that allow people to ask questions and receive immediate answers. Given that most people are asking the same kinds of questions about COVID-19, chatbots afford people quick, accessible information when they need it. For example, once a consumer receives a digital payment, s/he can also receive key information via a chatbot about practical measures s/he can take to prevent getting the virus. The bot could also ask people if they are symptomatic—if the answer is yes, the bot can connect them with health care providers and add them to a contact tracing database. This can be done using “low-tech” measures, including interactive voice response to address needs of low-literacy, high risk populations, especially women care workers for the ill, elderly and children.
  - **Educational Apps:** Users can also download an application to further improve knowledge, awareness, myth-busting, and recommendations for protective behaviors. It can be deployed by mobile money agents, frontline health workers, and first responders, alone or to supplement contact tracing apps. For example, UNCDF is already supporting the deployment, awareness, and dissemination of a remote screening platform called DiagnoseMe to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in Burkina Faso. These services can be tailored to target messages and awareness for the needs of women and girls.
- **Data Harmonization:** UNCDF can support the rigorous mapping and evaluation of current practices, resulting in a comprehensive set of recommendations to optimize data access, sharing, and use. UNCDF offers a variety of tools and integrations for data sharing and analytics, beginning with a series of ready-to-use reports that enable programs to monitor mobile app use, as well as more program-specific reports that can be customized and visualized for an organization’s specific needs. The application can be integrated with a government Ministry of Health’s preferred data visualization system to create dashboards for experts to track and monitor the disease’s spread. Data collection would emphasize the necessity of sex disaggregated data, which will help ensure the analysis also can specify impact on women and girls at various geographies and socio-economic levels. This will support efforts of policy and mitigation measures to be gender intentional and further scale sex-disaggregated data use in areas of financial inclusion post-COVID-19.

**Local governments are at the forefront of the COVID-19 response measures and will be critical for the recovery of local economies after the pandemic. UNCDF’s expertise in local development finance can offer immediate options to help channel necessary resources to support local government officials to**



meet the needs of the immediate crisis, as well as strengthen their capacity to deliver essential services to women and girls.

- **Fiscal transfer systems for local government finance** are very effective in delivering targeted resources at scale for specific purposes while enabling efficient delivery, cost-effective procurement, and transparent reporting. These mechanisms leverage local knowledge and capacity and avoid costly parallel project structures. UNCDF has 30 years of experience in working with governments to design and operate performance-based fiscal transfers, including in crisis situations, making available critical resources where needed most. As part of a mainstream approach, this mechanism will be deployed to address the special needs of women and girls in COVID-19 affected areas. In particular Operational Expenditure Block Grants are being considered in Bangladesh and other countries to get emergency financial assistance to LGs. These resources can be targeted for critical services that can support women, as described below (e.g. for health care workers, care providers, educational support systems, nutritional assistance).
- **Conditional grants to local health departments by central ministries and increasing the capacity of the local healthcare system:** Women are at the forefront of COVID-19 response as health care providers. Special measures will need to be put in place to safeguard women through the local authorities. This will include special arrangements for child-care, additional financial incentives for nurses and health care providers and provision of adequate resources and protective gear. Where possible, development partners should coordinate with the local agencies on specific measures for women and girls, build on their local knowledge and operational capacity, and avoid parallel systems.
- **Social Protection Measures:** Through local governments and partners, special measures such as safe accommodation will be put in place to safeguard women and girls affected by COVID-19 and specially those who are vulnerable and domestic abuse survivors. Food security and nutrition is another area where women and families are likely to require assistance, and social protection funding can be channeled to address the needs of low income and women headed households.
- **Relief measures for women in local economies:** The majority of women in least developed countries are engaged in agricultural activities and informal work, often with no social protection or safeguards. In times of crisis, these already vulnerable sectors are hit even harder, pushing women and their families deeper into poverty and vulnerability. Challenges can include supply chains for agricultural products being disrupted, and lack of access to markets resulting in economic losses. Other sectors where women are heavily employed such as garment production, handicrafts and agro-processing may also be similarly affected by economic downturns. Any relief measures for local economies will, therefore, need to take into consideration special impact for women especially those engaged in insecure and vulnerable sectors.

## UNCDF GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

UNCDF response to COVID-19: <https://www.uncdf.org/article/5452/covid-19>

For more information, contact Samina Anwar, Programme Manager, UNCDF, at [samina.anwar@uncdf.org](mailto:samina.anwar@uncdf.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

### UNCTAD KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to increase women's unpaid care work**
  - Women's unpaid work is set to increase as a result of the pandemic. Measures to contain the pandemic such as quarantines and closures of schools imply additional household work for women. Moreover, the fact that basic health care is often administered within the household implies that women's unpaid work might increase substantially.
  - While financial resources are in dire need, the reallocation of public funds should avoid any possible increase in the burden of women as principal suppliers of unpaid work.
- **Economic support packages must include relief measures for informal and seasonal workers**
  - Support measures should go beyond workers who hold formal employment and also support informal, part-time and seasonal workers, categories that include more women than men.
  - This is particularly necessary in female-dominated sectors such as in the hospitality, food, culture and tourism sectors, all of which have been brought to a standstill by the confinement measures put in place by governments.
- **Government bailouts and fiscal support measures must include support for micro and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) where women are more represented**
  - The pandemic will have a decisive impact on the survival of firms. It is essential that government bailouts and support measures include not only large and medium-sized enterprises, but also micro and small businesses where women entrepreneurs are more represented.
  - Access to credit is also of paramount importance for the survival of firms. However, women entrepreneurs are often discriminated against when attempting to access credit. Without open and favourable lines of credit, many female entrepreneurs will be forced to close their businesses, therefore, access to credit should be equally available to women and men.
- **Ensure transparency in public procurement procedures to help women's businesses**
  - More transparency and a simplification of procedures related to public procurement will help women's businesses to benefit from increased governmental intervention in the economy.
- **An evaluation of the potential gendered impact of new trade measures must be conducted**
  - An evaluation of the potential gendered impact of new trade measures put in place to react to the pandemic will avoid negative repercussions on women and conversely contribute to open new opportunities for them as wage workers, entrepreneurs and services providers.

### UNCTAD GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- UNCTAD is monitoring the effects of the global pandemic on manufacturing, trade, foreign direct investment and economic growth, and offering recommendations especially geared to supporting developing countries (<https://unctad.org/en/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>). Its work shows that in the two



months since the virus began spreading beyond China, developing countries have taken an enormous hit in terms of capital outflows, growing bond spreads, currency depreciations and lost export earnings, including from falling commodity prices and declining tourist revenues. UNCTAD has therefore proposed a four-pronged strategy that could begin to translate expressions of international solidarity to developing countries into concrete action.

- UNCTAD's work includes an analysis of the differentiated impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and men and highlights areas of intervention to avoid women carrying a disproportionately higher economic cost than men.

## UNCTAD GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Assessing the Impact of Trade Agreements on Gender Equality: Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement: <https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=2743>

Coronavirus deals severe blow to services sectors:  
<https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2327>

COVID-19 puts women working in SIDS tourism industry at risk:  
<https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2370>

COVID-19 requires gender-equal responses to save economies:  
<https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2319>

COVID-19 : Une entreprise sénégalaise de paiement électronique fait preuve de résilience en temps de crise: <https://unctad.org/fr/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2354>

Data and statistics for more gender-responsive trade policies in Africa, the Caucasus and Central Asia: <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/Gender-and-Trade/UNDA-Project-2023D-on-Trade-and-Gender.aspx>

Leveraging digital solutions to seize the potential of informal cross-border trade:  
<https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2349>

UNCTAD's gender page: <https://UNCTAD.org/gender>

What future for women small-scale and informal cross-border traders when borders close?:  
<https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2362>

For more information, please contact Simonetta Zarrilli, Chief, Trade, Gender and Development Programme, UNCTAD, at [simonetta.zarrilli@unctad.org](mailto:simonetta.zarrilli@unctad.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Department of  
Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

## UNDESA KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Ensure indigenous peoples receive culturally appropriate healthcare services**
  - States should provide access to culturally appropriate healthcare services for indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women, as their access to health care may be more limited and they may be more exposed to the virus as primary caretakers. It is important that States respect indigenous people's established norms when providing these services.
- **Acknowledge the value of paid care work performed by women**
  - Universal social protection should be used as a policy tool to combat the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in the short- and long-term. Care work performed by women and girls should be acknowledged and considered as paid work.
- **Ensure no one is left behind in policy and fiscal responses to COVID-19**
  - Emergency measures and fiscal responses to COVID-19 should be based on the universality principle, to ensure that informal workers and other groups in vulnerable situations are not left out. Policy measures need to address and remove all access barriers to ensure that they reach those most in need.
- **Address the specific economic and social needs of indigenous women**
  - States should establish specific programs for indigenous women addressing their particular needs in response to the social and economic consequences of the pandemic, as indigenous women are often dependent on informal economies.
- **Consider the role and traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous women**
  - States should recognize indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge, and in particular the significant role of indigenous women and their unique cultural and spiritual practices, when taking actions to prevent and respond to COVID-19.
  - Awareness raising and benefit provision in a variety of formats (not only reliant on modern communication technology such as the internet) and in languages accessible to all is needed.

## UNDESA GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- UNDESA is releasing a series of Policy Briefs to analyze the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, especially in connection to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in the context of the Decade of Action and Delivery for the SDGs. The pandemic is causing sickness and deaths, pushing the world economy into a recession, and resulting in loss of employment and income for many of the most vulnerable people. Its impact on progress of the SDGs will be significant and irreversible unless policy responses are adequate in scale and focus on saving lives, jobs and livelihoods.



- Women are disproportionately represented in sectors that are most severely impacted by COVID-19, including retail, hospitality, tourism and labor-intensive manufacturing. More women and youth are also in informal employment. With “stay home” orders currently affecting more than half of world’s population (4 billion out of 7), women’s care work has also increased as childcare becomes unavailable and school-age children are not in school. The majority of frontline health workers are also women.
- Gender also intersects with other vulnerabilities. Persons with disabilities, older persons, and indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable, and women among these social groups face additional challenges.
- DESA is also repurposing its capacity development activities to assist countries to cope with COVID-19.

## UNDESA GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Leaving no one behind: the covid-19 crisis through the disability and gender lens:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/news/dspd/covid-19-disability.html>

Package of Policy Briefs on social groups in vulnerable situations:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/covid-19.html>

UN DESA Policy Brief #69: Leaving no one behind: the COVID-19 crisis through the disability and gender lens: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-des-a-policy-brief-69-leaving-no-one-behind-the-covid-19-crisis-through-the-disability-and-gender-lens/>

UNDESA policy brief #70: The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-des-a-policy-brief-70-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-indigenous-peoples/>

For more information, please contact Wenyan Yang, Principle Gender Focal Point, UNDESA at [yang@un.org](mailto:yang@un.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

### UNDP KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Women are at the frontlines of the COVID-19 response**
  - Women play a key role in the COVID-19 response, including as health care workers, flight attendants and service industry workers, playing a key role in ensuring the well-being and resilience of their families and communities. These women are more exposed to the virus, increasing their risk of infection, and also face the risk of exhaustion and burn out.
- **Women face higher risk of gender-based violence**
  - The COVID-19 outbreak can worsen the already high prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) due to greater economic stress in households in times of crisis coupled with increased social isolation. 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced GBV.<sup>6</sup> This can be further compounded by more limited access to health care and other services.
- **Unpaid care work is increasing**
  - The burden of unpaid care work on many women is increasing due to school closures, aged family members at risk and other consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak. Women are often the primary caregivers at home and have greater domestic responsibilities - they do two and a half times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men. Global response to the outbreak provides an opportunity for the redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work.
- **Women face greater economic vulnerability**
  - The COVID-19 outbreak could have serious and far-reaching economic consequences for women and girls, and these impacts should be recognized, prevented and mitigated. Women face greater economic vulnerability as their labour participation is often highly informal, without social protection. Low-income women and women migrant workers are especially vulnerable.
- **Women must lead response and recovery efforts, be included in decision-making processes and leadership positions.**
- **For an effective COVID-19 response, policies, programmes and assessments must consider how gender and epidemics interact and fully integrate gender considerations.**

<sup>6</sup> World Health Organization, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, South African Medical Research Council (2013). [Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.](#)



## UNDP GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

UNDP is working to promote and implement a whole-of-society strategy that is gender-responsive to both limit the spread of the epidemic and mitigate the devastating impact it is having on economies and the progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNDP's overall gender offer to countries targets the three stages of the COVID-19 crisis: 1) Preparation or pre-surge; 2) Crisis response or surge; and 3) Recovery or post-surge. To support countries in these stages, UNDP has developed three major service lines. UNDP's gender offer within these service lines is the following:

### **Service line 1. Health systems support**

- Develop special gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response plans, including strengthen and adapt referral pathways so that expected increased number of GBV victims can access services (e.g. from violence within households and violence suffered by stay-in workers).
- Provide knowledge and skills to governmental officials to develop gender action plans for national health crisis response to COVID-19 and address the gender impact of disease outbreak considering how to address structural inequalities.
- Develop public awareness campaigns on shared domestic responsibilities and prevention of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 crisis (including home confinement and recovery phase), including a focus on redefining masculinities with behavioural insights.

### **Service line 2. Inclusive and integrated crisis management responses**

- Provide policy and technical support to governments on the gender equality dimensions of COVID-19 in non-health ministries. Conduct gender analysis that supports national and local multisectoral planning and financing for COVID-19 crisis management.
- Provide knowledge and skills to governmental officials and civil society organizations to develop systems (including digital initiatives) and strategies for women's participation and CSOs in disaster response actions and programs, and in decision-making, especially those most difficult to reach.
- Design and implement public awareness campaigns to strengthen social cohesion, solidarity and gender-equitable behavior during and post-disaster phases.

### **Service line 3. Addressing the socio-economic impact**

- Assist to integrate gender analysis while conducting macro-, meso-, micro- and socio- economic assessments, and crisis dashboards to support inter-sectoral planning during the COVID-19 response.
- Develop gender-responsive social protection strategies and robust social protection systems in the response to COVID-19, with an emphasis on 1) adapting social protection to the needs of women and men; 2) universal social protection floors; and 3) unpaid care work.
- Assist to design and implement programs for the economic recovery of women, especially for those furthest left behind, with emphasis on 1) Subsidies, relief and fiscal policies to support small-medium business of women (tax exemptions, co-payments of social protection, etc.); 2) Employment policies to informal workers and domestic workers; 3) Financial inclusion; and 4) programs for women's skills development adapted to the Future of Work (e.g. targeting professions that can be done remotely,



adapted to current and upcoming market needs and value chains constraints), with focus on those women most affected by the crisis.

- Facilitate multi-stakeholder platforms for women's economic recovery, including private sector, civil society organizations, financial systems, and national and local governments

## UNDP GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Briefing Note: The economic impacts of COVID-19 and gender inequality. Recommendations for policymakers: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/the-economic-impacts-of-covid-19-and-gender-equality.html>

Basic rapid checklist for gender-responsive COVID-19 crisis and recovery interventions: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=13vLwg63ZyoiEEGo3hIXaBXGjDbddEuSd>

Gender and COVID-19 outbreak: Communications key messages: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=13vLwg63ZyoiEEGo3hIXaBXGjDbddEuSd>

Note: How to intergrate gender in socio-economic assessments: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=13vLwg63ZyoiEEGo3hIXaBXGjDbddEuSd>

UNDP's Gender offer for gender equitable response and recovery: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13vLwg63ZyoiEEGo3hIXaBXGjDbddEuSd>

UNDP Brief: Gender-based violence and COVID-19: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/gender-based-violence-and-covid-19.html>

For more information, contact Raquel Lagunas, OiC Gender Team, at [raquel.lagunas@undp.org](mailto:raquel.lagunas@undp.org) or Brinda Gangopadhya Lundmark, Policy Analyst, UNDP, at [brinda.gangopadhya.lundmark@undp.org](mailto:brinda.gangopadhya.lundmark@undp.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## Department of Peace Operations (UNDPO)

### UNDPO KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Ensure that all response plans are gender-responsive**
  - There is a need for gender-responsive response plans particularly in light of the likely disproportionate negative impact of the virus and the response to the virus on women due to their over representation in health care roles, the informal sector, the service sector and as carers in the home.
- **Essential health services for women and girls must be protected.**
- **Women face increased protection risks, including heightened risk of gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic**
  - There is an inevitable rise in GBV, particularly domestic violence due to COVID-19 response measures.
  - It is essential that prevention and response efforts for sexual and gender-based violence be prioritized.
  - Women's protection networks are critical partners in effective risk communication and ensuring access to marginalized women and girls.
- **Economic resiliency planning and efforts to shore up peace and political processes should be gender-responsive and emphasize women's leadership and participation in the different formats and mechanisms that ongoing processes will adapt in order to continue their work.**
- **Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security expertise should be ensured in all planning and response efforts.**
- **The full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and women's organizations in COVID-19 response is essential.**
  - Engagement and partnerships with women's organizations and women leaders should be strengthened, including by purposefully re-allocating programmatic funds to them, and scaling up community mobilization.
- **Prioritize risk communication and sharing of relevant information on COVID-19 protection and services to reach and engage women and girls.**

### UNDPO GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- UNDPO immediately issued key messages through social media and with peace operations to ensure COVID-19 prevention and response efforts are gender-responsive and integrate Women, Peace and Security mandates.
- UNDPO has stressed the importance of supporting risk communication and community engagement to reach and engage women and girls and women's organizations in prevention and response efforts.



- Peace operations' gender advisors are participating in scenario and contingency planning related to their mandate implementation. They will be emphasizing steps to ensure prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, enhance women's economic resilience and meaningful and equal engagement in all ongoing peace and political processes, and strengthen partnerships with women's organizations and women leaders in all these efforts.

## UNDPO GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Community Outreach and COVID-19: [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/20200522\\_peacekeeping\\_community\\_outreach\\_and\\_covid.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/20200522_peacekeeping_community_outreach_and_covid.pdf)

COVID-19 and Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security (WPS):  
[https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/covid-19\\_and\\_wps.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/covid-19_and_wps.pdf)

COVID-19: a double burden for women in conflict settings:  
[https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/wps/2020/04/23/covid-19-a\\_double-burden-for-women-in-conflict-settings/](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/wps/2020/04/23/covid-19-a_double-burden-for-women-in-conflict-settings/)

Key messages on gender equality and COVID-19: <https://trello.com/c/a24XSIB/1-women-and-covid-19>

Les jeunes gendarmes formés pour lutter contre les violences sexuelles basées sur le genre:  
<https://minusca.unmissions.org/les-jeunes-gendarmes-form%C3%A9s-pour-lutter-contre-les-violences-sexuelles-bas%C3%A9es-sur-le-genre>

Impact of COVID-19 on UN Peacekeeping: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/impact-of-covid-19-un-peacekeeping>

Implementing WPS mandated tasks in the context of COVID-19:  
[https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/implementing\\_wps\\_mandates\\_in\\_the\\_context\\_of\\_covid-19.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/implementing_wps_mandates_in_the_context_of_covid-19.pdf)

For more information, please contact Njoki Rahab Kinyanjui, Senior Gender Adviser, UNDPO at [njoki@un.org](mailto:njoki@un.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Department  
of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (UNDPPA)

## UNDPPA KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Consider and address the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls in crises and conflicts**
  - COVID-19 prevention and response measures should be gender sensitive and context specific.
  - The Secretary-General, in his call for a global ceasefire, called on parties to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus on COVID-19 as the common threat to humanity. He launched this call during the pandemic as surging demands from COVID-19 cases are expected to overwhelm fragile health care systems in conflict-affected contexts, likely limiting access to critical healthcare for women and girls.
  - COVID-19 response measures should not further widen existing inequalities. Redirecting funding away from gender equality initiatives may undermine hard-fought gains on women's rights and efforts towards achieving inclusive peace.
  - Gendered-analysis, including sex- and age-disaggregated data, must underpin all COVID-19 policy responses.
  - Dedicated and flexible resourcing must be directed to supporting local women's civil society organizations including women peacemakers and human rights defenders.
- **Ensure women are included in all areas and at all stages of decision-making**
  - The urgent need for action in response to the pandemic should not be used as a basis for deferring inclusive decision-making and gender-responsive policy action. Women must be a part of all decision-making processes relating to the COVID-19 response including public health policy, emergency measures, and socio-economic recovery efforts. This includes in conflict-affected settings where displaced, rural, refugee, poor or otherwise marginalised and discriminated women face additional challenges.
  - Women must also be a part of all decision-making fora including on conflict prevention and peacemaking efforts in recognition that women's full, equal and meaningful participation is fundamental to achieving just, inclusive and sustainable peace.
- **Prioritize the use of new technologies and targeted resources to communicate with women**
  - Prioritization should be given to the development and utilization of innovative and accessible methods including new technologies to communicate with women during this crisis; to support and broaden the diversity of women's voices in peace processes; and to democratize representation in shaping the peaceful societies of the future.
- **Ensure that relevant prevention and medical information is distributed to women and girls in conflict-affected contexts**
  - Accurate COVID-19 prevention and medical information must be distributed in conflict-affected contexts to reach all women and girls, including those in refugee and IDP camps, and remote and rural communities.



## UNDPPA GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

The effective implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda is a priority for DPPA. DPPA is concerned about the implications for women's political participation in conflict settings and beyond, including their participation in peace processes and elections due to the current crisis. DPPA is committed to securing and supporting inclusive peace processes, and gender-responsive ceasefire and peace agreements, as fundamental to our broader goal of just, inclusive and sustainable peace.

In response to COVID-19, DPPA is embracing creative solutions through its business continuity plans which aim to ensure that its implementation of the WPS agenda continues despite restricted physical access to political leaders, civil society – including women's groups – and other interlocutors.

- DPPA's Gender, Peace and Security Unit holds dedicated bi-weekly meetings with gender advisers in special political missions to discuss relevant issues, including the impact of COVID-19 on DPPA's implementation of the WPS mandate.
- The offices of the Special Representative for the Great Lakes and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel are working with women civil society representatives in their respective regions to share information on COVID-19 and develop joint messages of solidarity as the basis for action.
- Digital and other platforms are being used to engage women – including by the Special Envoys for Syria and Yemen and the Special Representative for Colombia – to consult their respective women's advisory bodies and to ensure that women continue their participation in conflict prevention and peacemaking work. Other avenues are also being explored to encourage women with limited time, capacity and access to technology to have political and decision-making impact.

The Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire has been met positively by conflict actors in several contexts including Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Libya, Myanmar, the Philippines, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen. DPPA is looking at ways for the political will behind these responses to be directed to achieving lasting peace through inclusive peace talks with women's full, meaningful and equal participation ensured.

For more information, please contact Abigail Ruane, Political Affairs Officer, Gender, Peace and Security Section, DPPA, at [abigail.ruane@un.org](mailto:abigail.ruane@un.org); or Laura Bologna, Focal Point for Women, DPPA, at [bologna@un.org](mailto:bologna@un.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe (UNECE)

## UNECE KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Conduct a gender impact analysis of the transmission mechanisms of the economic crises at all levels and stages of designing and implementing immediate responses.**
- **Ensure that gender is mainstreamed into all short- and long-term policies with a focus on employment for women and men in the recovery, support to the public and private sectors, SMEs etc.**
- **Develop and implement gender-responsive standards in all economic activities and sectors, paying particular attention to the health sector.**
- **Support women's participation in the economic sectors and at all levels, from innovative solutions to decision-making.**
- **Collect and analyse sex-disaggregated and gender data during all stages of the COVID-19 response.**

## UNECE GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

Countries in the UNECE region, in particular Europe and North America, are at the centre of the COVID-19 pandemic which in addition to the devastating impact on lives and health, has heavy socio-economic consequences. The massive output contraction - Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the region is projected to fall by 6-7 per cent by end of the year – is already observed with a significant rise in unemployment in many countries. As a result of the severe impact on specific sectors, where women dominate in employment, gender gaps are rising and poverty among women is on the increase. To ensure a recovery that is efficient and inclusive, policies need to have a gender lens.

At the regional level UNECE is contributing to the COVID-19 response in the following three areas:

- Understanding the differentiated impacts of COVID-19 across the region, countries and communities, including on women;
- Examining inequalities within the region and its manifestation in response to addressing the crises, including its gendered impacts and exacerbated gender inequalities; and
- Strengthening regional mechanisms to address the shocks and vulnerabilities through engaging with regional financial institutions.

All of these areas are looked at from the viewpoint of the UNECE Sub-programmes in environmental policies, sustainable energy and transport, trade and economic integration, which serve as instruments of the response to COVID-19.

ECE has been working closely with the Issue-Based Coalition on Gender in Europe and Central Asia in addressing gender inequalities, including the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.



## UNECE GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Re-tooling for sustainability, session at the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development:  
<https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=53767>

For more information please contact Malinka Koparanova, Senior Social Affairs Officer and Gender Focal Point at [malinka.koparanova@un.org](mailto:malinka.koparanova@un.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

### UNEP KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Due to the division of labour between men and women, women are more likely to be in the household and charged with provision of food, water and management of family health.**
  - This may increase their vulnerability to domestic violence as tensions mount up, especially during the quarantine periods where meeting the daily requirements of the household becomes increasingly daunting.
- **The emphasis on keeping households clean with various detergents and cleaning materials may expose women and their families to chemical pollution, which is harmful to their health.**
  - Furthermore, these chemicals may pollute the environment if they are disposed of in an unsanitary manner. It is important that information of proper use of these cleaning materials is shared at household levels and that women are made a primary target for this information.
- **The collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data must continue.**
  - This will provide insight into how the impacts of COVID-19 have reshaped power relations between men and women as well as how they use and manage the environment. This will particularly assist in identifying targeted actions to enable men and women to become key actors in helping reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 on the environment both in the current and post COVID-19 era. For example, by involving men and women in waste management processes. In addition, it would be useful to understand the interplay between nature, poverty and human health; how their relationship has contributed to the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses and how these have shaped power relations at household level.
- **Understanding the overall impact of COVID-19 on the environment and emanating gender differentiated effects will require building partnerships with key stakeholders to identify common positions and strategies.**

### UNEP GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

Two key messages running through the UNEP COVID-19 response are firstly, that despite the COVID-19 crisis, the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change still constitute our best, and only, global road map for the future. Secondly, COVID-19 does not provide a 'silver lining' for the environment but lessons learned from the management of this crisis provide an opportunity to both revisit our relationship with nature and rebuild a more environmentally responsible world.

UNEP's gender based COVID-19 interventions are grounded in the overall UNEP COVID-19 response where the following key pillars have been identified:

- Medical and humanitarian emergency phase.
- Transformational change for nature and people.
- Investing to build back better.



- Modernizing global environmental governance.

The overall UNEP response seeks to ensure that environmental dimensions are adequately captured in the management of the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath. Key interventions on gender equality and COVID-19 include:

- Development of gender mainstreaming guidelines to be used by project managers to address the intersection between gender, environmental management and effects of COVID-19 whilst developing and implementing projects.
- Addressing increasing inequalities as well as protecting environmental defenders during and after the crisis. A focus will be placed on women environmental rights defenders and indigenous groups.
- Collection of sex disaggregated data and inclusion of gender analytical data to support the delivery of policy responses to zoonotic threats, including by addressing ecosystem connectivity and integrity, illegal wildlife trade and alternative livelihoods.
- Develop integrated gender sensitive/responsive environment and health methodologies, tools and policies for a better understanding of the human and environment health linkages.
- Develop gender sensitive/responsive methodologies, tools and policies aimed at enhancing proactive and sound conservation practices, ecosystem management, ecosystem restoration and sustainable use of natural resources and their biodiversity.
- To achieve transformational change that will ensure safeguarding of our environmental support systems, we need to develop gender-responsive, tools and methodologies to support the work of the secretariats of the UNEP administered Multilateral Environment Agreements, for example the secretariats of the Convention of Biodiversity, or the Secretariat of Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. In addition, support should be given to the integration of gender equality perspectives into work on climate change, climate and security, chemicals and waste management.
- Aspire to build partnerships with UN agencies and international environmental agencies and civil society provide support (where required) to UN county teams as they address the gender differentiated impacts of COVID-19.

## UNEP GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Gender and Climate Change in the Context of COVID-19: <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/images/unwomen/emp/attachments/2020/05/empower%20on%20gender%20and%20climate%20in%20the%20context%20of%20covid-19%20context%20final.pdf>

UNEP COVID-19 brochure <https://www.unenvironment.org/covid-19-updates>

For more information please contact Janet Kabeberi-Macharia, Senior Gender Advisor, UNEP at [janet.macharia@un.org](mailto:janet.macharia@un.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

## UNESCO KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Keep children and young people learning**
  - Over 1.5 billion children and youth in 180 countries are out, or have spent time out, of formal education in a global effort to contain the COVID-19 pandemic; half of them are girls and women. Once schools and other educational institutions reopen, it will be essential to ensure that these 800 million girls and women actually go back and that their health and well-being is protected.
- **Keep learners safe**
  - Instances of domestic violence and school-related online harassment and bullying are exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis that disproportionately affect women, girls and members of the LGBT community worldwide.
- **Keep women employed**

The economic impact of COVID-19 will hit women harder, as more women work in low-paying, insecure and informal jobs with no social safety net. It is predicted that women's economic independence will be a silent victim of the COVID-19 pandemic and that some women's lifetime earnings will never recover. Governments can work to ensure that social protection plans and emerging economic schemes are gender-responsive and take into account women working in the informal sector and as free-lance journalists, self-employed artists or entrepreneurs working in different sectors of the creative economy (particularly in Africa where the majority of the sector operates in the informal economy).
- **Keep listening to the voices of women**
  - Human rights are experiencing unprecedented pressures because of the pandemic. It is precisely in times of crisis like these that the power of educators, scientists, journalists and artists and their work can unite us across borders and sustain hope for the future. Women's voices, scientific knowledge and creativity as leaders in this global pandemic must be heard in all decision-making policy spaces. International standards on freedom of expression and creation must be respected.
- **Keep access to sexual and reproductive health services open**
  - Interrupted supply chains are affecting the availability of sexual and reproductive health services and commodities, including availability of contraception. This can lead to unintended pregnancy and increased rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. Like other health risks, patterns of vulnerability are gendered. Girls particularly face increased risk of sexual violence.

## UNESCO GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

By taking a transversal approach across its mandate of education, science, culture and communication, UNESCO, its Member States, public, private and civil society partners are working through three main areas



of intervention: to lead global dialogues and coalitions; provide customized policy support and expertise; and generate data and knowledge. Below are some of the main gender-responsive actions.

- Through its Global Coalition for Education, UNESCO is partnering with governments, its stakeholder networks, multilateral organizations and the private sector to deploy distance learning solutions and address the complexity of provisioning education remotely, from delivering content and supporting teachers to providing guidance to families and addressing connectivity challenges, as well as supporting education ministries in the re-opening of schools when the sanitary situation permits. A webinar was held on gender equality in education in the context of COVID-19 on 3 April; a flagship programme on gender equality is being developed.
- Research and forward-looking analysis on the implications of COVID-19 for the education sector, including gender equality in and through education as well as the collection of sex-disaggregated data on participation in learning opportunities as well as access to learning resources in different formats. The COVID-19 website on school closures now has sex-disaggregated data, and UNESCO has carried out analyses by sex/region, sex/least developed country status, and sex/humanitarian crisis status, looking at the numbers of girls in these settings in order to better understand the impact. An Issues paper [has been published](#). UNESCO also published a joint blog with Plan International on the subject on 31 March and cooperation is ongoing with girls' education actors to deepen advocacy and share UNESCO's experiences and findings.
- Providing technical guidance and setting up systems to monitor the return of learners to education institutions when they reopen to ensure girls and women re-enter formal education.
- Leading and participating in global campaigns to raise awareness, UNESCO is:
  - partnering with L'Oreal to promote women scientists working on a cure for the virus with members of its Women in Science Network and promoting the visibility of women scientists in Latin America through its social media campaigns such as #nuestracienciaresponde.
  - partnering with the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC) UNESCO launched "ResiliArt" a global movement with key industry professionals and artists to raise awareness of the far-reaching impact of the current confinement measures on the culture sector. The first global discussion took place on 15 April 2020, advocating for the rights and empowerment of women creators. It gave visibility to female creators and raised awareness of the challenges female creators are facing during this pandemic.
  - partnering with its International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), UNESCO is organizing a webinar on domestic violence and city responses. Good practices are being collected from members of the network to be shared through the webinar. UNESCO will investigate these good practices to inform public policies that address violence against women during pandemics and other emergencies.
  - UNESCO will host a Global Forum on "The World After COVID-19". The first debate will give visibility to women and how they are envisioning the future, to raise their visibility in global debates, decision-making and policy spaces on the COVID-19.
- Together with IBM and SAP, UNESCO organised the Code the Curve Hackathon to develop digital solutions to the COVID-19 crisis. 40 teams were mentored by UNESCO on how they can take gender issues into account in their digital solution and raise awareness of the challenges facing women and girls.



**IANWGE**

United Nations Inter-Agency Network on  
Women and Gender Equality



## UNESCO GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

All of UNESCO's resources are published on a common web platform: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19>

For more information, please contact Saniye Gülser Corat, Director, UNESCO at [SG.Corat@unesco.org](mailto:SG.Corat@unesco.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

### UNFCCC KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER AND COVID-19

- **The revision of global economies and health policies throughout the world post-COVID-19 must ensure the transition towards inclusion and sustainability**
  - Climate change affects many of the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter. If we want a healthier, safer world, more ambitious and gender-responsive climate action must be part of all policy discussions.
  - COVID-19 is one of the greatest challenges global economies have faced. Yet, in the midst of these challenges, a window of hope and opportunity opens. A chance to recover better by transitioning our social and economic models towards fair, inclusive, just and sustainable development.
- **We must continue to note lessons learned in this global crisis in order to reduce suffering in the future**
  - Both the climate crisis and COVID-19 are making many existing inequalities, including gender inequalities such as women's unequal care burden and exposure to gender-based violence, apparent and demonstrating how crises have exacerbating effects. Rapid assessment of how gender gaps have increased due to COVID-19 is critical to ensure climate policy and action is effective and fair.

### UNFCCC GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- As a secretariat to a Treaty UNFCCC is not involved in any national implementation. However, UNFCCC is ensuring that events, workshops and meetings are as inclusive as possible even if conducted remotely. This includes identifying opportunities to offer events regionally so that interpretation can be offered and to address time zone issues that would otherwise mean events were held in the early morning or evening.
- In addition, UNFCCC is using social media to share and amplify messages from within the UN system.

For more information, please contact Fleur Newman, Programme Officer, UNFCCC at [fnewman@unfccc.int](mailto:fnewman@unfccc.int).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

### UNFPA KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

#### **The COVID-19 pandemic puts women and girls at greater risk of gender-based violence**

- In times of crisis such as an outbreak, women and girls may be at higher risk of gender-based violence, and harmful practices.

#### **Access to sexual and reproductive services must be prioritized**

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights is a significant public health issue that requires high attention during pandemics.

#### **The full and meaningful participation in decision making at all levels is key**

- The voices of women on the front lines of the response including health care workers and those most affected by the disease must be heard, and women must be included in national and local COVID-19 policy spaces.

#### **COVID-19 impacts women differently from men, especially those who face multiple forms of discrimination**

- Consider how the impact of COVID-19 differs for women and men, particularly those most excluded such as those living in poverty, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, internally displaced persons or refugees, LGBTIQ individuals, and others who face intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination.

#### **Ensure the COVID-19 response does not reproduce or perpetuate harmful gender norms, discriminatory practices and inequalities.**

#### **Prioritize the continuation of data collection, and ensure that data is disaggregated by sex, among other factors**

- Ensure that data, surveillance and response systems include sex, age, gender, and pregnancy status disaggregation, and key data collection efforts such as census 2020 rounds are not interrupted

### UNFPA GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

UNFPA is responding to COVID-19 on numerous fronts to address the situation of women and girls affected by this pandemic. On the ground, UNFPA's priorities are:

- Sensitizing national partners to understand the intersections of gender and such outbreaks, and how to ethically and effectively address the increased risk of gender-based violence.
- Advocating that pandemics affect women and men differently – and gender norms often limit women's decision-making during such contexts, including related to SRHR
- Raising awareness about the importance of gender-responsive social protection for women and girls, the importance of shared care work, and protecting the 70% female healthcare and social sector workforce
- Ensuring women and girls have access to modern contraception (if they want it), can give birth safely, and those who face gender-based violence can receive support.
- Strengthening health systems with a strong focus on women's and girls' rights and needs.



- Ensuring essential reproductive health supplies are bought and delivered without interruption, and helping communities communicate about how to reduce the risks contracting COVID-19.
- Highlighting the barriers and risk of exclusion that women and girls with intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination face in COVID-19 response.

In all settings, UNFPA is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with the critical support of its key partners to achieve maximum impact across our three strategic priority areas. UNFPA is partnering with governments, civil society and the private sector, UN entities, international financing institutions and philanthropic organizations, to deliver more and faster towards life-saving interventions and sustainable results to the people we serve.

In China, UNFPA is supporting public health efforts, including by delivering medical supplies for front-line health workers as well as sanitary items for women, girls and vulnerable populations such as older persons.

In the Philippines, UNFPA provided handheld thermometers, surgical masks and other personal protective equipment to front-line health workers.

In the Caribbean, and many other settings, UNFPA is working with partners to develop and disseminate communication materials to support vulnerable populations and is supporting referral pathways for gender-based violence survivors and those most at-risk.

## UNFPA GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

A matter of life and death for Yemen's women and girls as funding dries up:

<https://www.unfpa.org/news/matter-life-and-death-yemens-women-and-girls-funding-dries>

Baby's first cry under lockdown: Delivering safely amid a pandemic in North Macedonia:

<https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/news/babys-first-cry-under-lockdown-delivering-safely-amid-pandemic-north-macedonia>

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic UNFPA Global Response Plan:

[https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19\\_UNFPA\\_Global\\_Response\\_Plan\\_April\\_07.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_UNFPA_Global_Response_Plan_April_07.pdf)

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Preparedness and Response UNFPA Interim Technical Brief:

<https://www.unfpa.org/resources/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-modern-contraceptives-and-other-medical-supply>

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Preparedness and Response UNFPA Interim Technical Brief:

<https://www.unfpa.org/resources/gender-equality-and-addressing-gender-based-violence-gbv-and-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Preparedness and Response UNFPA Interim Technical Brief:

<https://www.unfpa.org/resources/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-maternal-and-newborn-health-covid-19-0>

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Preparedness and Response UNFPA Interim Technical Briefs-

Adolescents and Young People: <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/adolescents-and-young-people-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Covid-19: A Gender Lens: [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19\\_A\\_Gender\\_Lens\\_Guidance\\_Note.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_A_Gender_Lens_Guidance_Note.pdf)

Dignity kits bring hygiene supplies to vulnerable communities in pandemic-affected area of the

Gambia: <https://www.unfpa.org/news/dignity-kits-bring-hygiene-supplies-vulnerable-communities-pandemic-affected-area-gambia>



## UNFPA GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

End gender inequality! End health inequities! End fistula now!: <https://www.unfpa.org/press/end-gender-inequality-end-health-inequities-end-fistula-now>

Ethiopia's midwives grapple with the COVID-19 while ensuring safe delivery:

<https://www.unfpa.org/news/ethiopias-midwives-grapple-covid-19-while-ensuring-safe-delivery>

Gender Equality and Addressing Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Prevention, Protection and Response: [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19\\_Preparedness\\_and\\_Response -](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_Preparedness_and_Response_-_UNFPA_Interim_Technical_Briefs_Gender_Equality_and_GBV_23_March_2020_.pdf)

[\\_UNFPA Interim Technical Briefs Gender Equality and GBV 23 March 2020 .pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_Preparedness_and_Response_-_UNFPA_Interim_Technical_Briefs_Gender_Equality_and_GBV_23_March_2020_.pdf)

Gender-based violence spikes amid pandemic, shelters need support:

<https://www.unfpa.org/news/gender-based-violence-spikes-amid-pandemic-shelters-need-support>

Impact of Public Health Emergencies on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights in the Arab Region: <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/publications/impact-public-health-emergencies-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-reproductive-rights>

Imprisoned, quarantined women need hygiene supplies in El Salvador:

<https://www.unfpa.org/news/imprisoned-quarantined-women-need-hygiene-supplies-el-salvador>

Italian assistance helps UNFPA protect vulnerable migrant women, youth in Sudan:

<https://www.unfpa.org/updates/italian-assistance-helps-unfpa-protect-vulnerable-migrant-women-youth-sudan>

Mothers, midwives risking their lives to bring new life into the world:

<https://www.unfpa.org/news/mothers-midwives-risking-their-lives-bring-new-life-world>

Providing free transport to mums-to-be to reach midwives in time during coronavirus lockdown:

<https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/news/providing-free-transport-mums-be-reach-midwives-time-during-coronavirus-lockdown>

Putting menstrual hygiene first in India: <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/news/putting-menstrual-hygiene-first-india>

Technical Brief for Maternity Services: <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/covid-19-technical-brief-maternity-services>

UNFPA pioneers digital solutions to sexuality education as classes move online amid COVID-19 pandemic: <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-pioneers-digital-solutions-sexuality-education-classes-move-online-amid-covid-19-pandemic>

When quarantine is unsafe: Domestic violence survivors seek help in Ukraine:

<https://www.unfpa.org/news/when-quarantine-unsafe-domestic-violence-survivors-seek-help-ukraine>

Women, girls, health workers must not be overlooked in global COVID-19 response:

<https://www.unfpa.org/press/women-girls-health-workers-must-not-be-overlooked-global-covid-19-response>

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

## UNICEF KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Women are at the forefront of all public health crises**
  - Women are at the forefront of all public health crises, as nurses, midwives and community health workers, yet their role is frequently overlooked and underpaid. Women and girls also tend to carry out most of the care for sick relatives, household chores and childcare responsibilities. UNICEF will work to provide adequate support, including childcare, health services and other social support and protections for vital frontline responders.
- **Women face increased economic vulnerabilities**
  - Women and children, especially in female-headed households, as migrant workers or recipients of remittances, will also be incredibly vulnerable to the economic impacts of the crisis.
  - Cash transfer programmes for women and girls need to be prioritized, to mitigate the impact of the outbreak, recover and build resilience for future shocks. With private and public sector partners and other UN agencies, it is vital that we also champion family-friendly policies to protect employees, reduce stress, and support improved child and family well-being.
- **Women face increased risks of gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic**
  - Gender-Based-Violence (GBV) will increase during the COVID-19 response. We can be prepared for this increase by training first responders on how to handle disclosure of GBV, including the unique approaches for and with adolescent girls.
  - All levels of health care facilities and health workers, especially at the community level, need to be prepared to take on the task of shifting responsibilities related to the caseload of GBV survivors.
  - Information about available GBV hotlines and other support mechanisms must be made available across all settings.
- **Routine health services, including maternal and child health care services, are at risk of being interrupted**
  - Evidence from past epidemics, including Ebola and Zika, indicate that efforts to contain outbreak often interrupt education services and divert resources from routine health services including maternal and child health care services and the clinical management of rape.
  - Women, adolescent girls, and all children living with HIV/AIDS are particularly vulnerable during pandemics as their continuity of care can be acutely compromised, potentially increasing morbidity, mortality and transmission of HIV. Together, we must ensure the continuity of core and quality education and health services - including alternative delivery structures - while also maintaining our long-term support for strong education and health systems to meet the holistic needs of women, and girls and boys across the age continuum.
- **Social support structures for adolescent girls must be maintained**
  - As schools transition to remote learning, the important social support structures - peers and mentors - for adolescent girls must be maintained. Through in-person and digital platforms,



these key social and community networks should also be engaged to ensure the meaningful participation of girls and women in all decision-making processes and sharing of key communications, including GBV hotlines and other services and support mechanisms. Our digital platforms, such as U-report, can be one tool to provide dialogue toward joint solutions and insights. We need to activate standby and existing partnerships with these networks to achieve quality and scale of our programme reach.

- **The collection of sex, age and disability collection and disaggregation is key**
  - If we don't ask, we will not know, and we will not do. Nothing we do is neutral. Sex, age and disability data disaggregation, as well as other key indicators, must be prioritized in all data collection, analyses and reporting. This includes surveys that analyze across the COVID-19 impact curve of public health, social and economic outcomes.

## UNICEF GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

UNICEF is working closely with WHO, local governments and other United Nations country and humanitarian team partners, to provide technical guidance and support. In line with WHO's COVID-2019 Strategic Response Plan, UNICEF will respond to the outbreak by focusing on limiting human-to-human transmission and mitigating the impact of the outbreak on the health system and affected communities. This includes response or preparedness activities that:

- Facilitate risk communication and community engagement activities, including through community-based communication, mass media and social media;
- Provide critical hygiene and medical supplies for health care and education structures;
- Ensure that children and pregnant and lactating women who are impacted by the outbreak are supported with adequate health care;
- Assess and curtail the secondary effects of the outbreak, including by facilitating continued access to education where schools may be closed or quarantines imposed; and address protection needs, including through the provision of psychosocial support to those directly or indirectly affected.

With regard to risk communication, UNICEF will draw upon its expertise in communication for development and use a multisectoral approach to protect and support families and communities and build their knowledge and capacities to protect themselves and prevent further spread. UNICEF is also engaging in social science research to better understand the social determinants of the outbreak and its consequences in communities. Working with WHO and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), UNICEF is ensuring that biomedical recommendations are adapted and can be applied at the community level. UNICEF will continue to adapt its strategy as more is discovered about the disease, the extent of the outbreak and its effects on children and pregnant women.



## UNICEF GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Women Health Care Workers on the Frontline of the COVID-19 Response:

<https://unficyp.unmissions.org/women-health-care-workers-frontline-covid-19-response>

Pregnant mothers and babies born during COVID-19 pandemic threatened by strained health systems and disruptions in services: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/pregnant-mothers-and-babies-born-during-covid-19-pandemic-threatened-strained-health>

Vaccinations and COVID-19: What parents need to know:

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/vaccinations-and-covid-19-what-parents-need-know>

Flattening the curve: Finance and the pandemic of gender-based violence:

<https://blogs.unicef.org/blog/flattening-the-curve-finance-and-the-pandemic-of-gender-based-violence/>

Launch of Global Multi-Religious Faith-in-Action Covid-19 Initiative: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/launch-global-multi-religious-faith-action-covid-19-initiative>

Urgent need to secure learning for children across South Asia: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/urgent-need-secure-learning-children-across-south-asia>

Protecting the most vulnerable children from the impact of coronavirus: An agenda for action:

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/agenda-for-action>

Five actions for gender equality in the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response UNICEF technical note:

<https://www.unicef.org/documents/five-actions-gender-equality-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-response-technical-note>

Gender-Responsive Social Protection During COVID-19: <https://www.unicef.org/documents/gender-responsive-social-protection-during-covid-19>

Not Just Hotlines and Mobile Phones: Gender-based violence service provision during COVID-19:

<https://www.unicef.org/documents/gender-based-violence-service-provision-during-covid-19>

Gender equality during COVID-19: 5 ideas for action: <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/stories/gender-equality-during-covid-19>

7 ways employers can support working parents during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak:

<https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/stories/7-ways-employers-can-support-working-parents-during-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak>

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): What parents should know: <https://www.unicef.org/stories/novel-coronavirus-outbreak-what-parents-should-know>

For more information, please contact Shreyasi Jha, Senior Gender Advisor, UNICEF at [sjha@unicef.org](mailto:sjha@unicef.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Industrial Development  
Organization (UNIDO)

## UNIDO KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Ensure the continued participation of women in the labor force**
  - As the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic unfold in different regions and countries, it is important to address the specific needs of women business owners, entrepreneurs and workers and, in responding to the socio-economic repercussions, ensure the continued participation of women in the labor force. This should also be taken into consideration when designing and targeting support measures such as tax reliefs, enhanced access to finance and affordable credit, and unemployment benefits. To this end:
    - When prioritizing sectoral support, the representation of women and men in different economic sectors should be considered to ensure that sectors with a high representation of women equally benefit from immediate and longer-term support measures.
    - In designing and implementing relief and recovery measures, it should be duly considered that women-led and women-owned micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises already face structural disadvantages and are therefore less likely to have access to sufficient economic resources such as finance, affordable credit and required collaterals.
    - Support measures are especially crucial for those employed in the informal sector, particularly in low and lower-middle income countries, where women are disproportionately represented therein,<sup>7</sup> as well as for migrant and seasonal workers.
- **Leverage the aftermath of the crisis to foster resilient, inclusive and sustainable economic recovery that benefits women and men equally**
  - The crisis will be likely to have a differentiated effect on men and women, in the manufacturing and export sectors and beyond. The aftermath of the crisis and the post-recovery phase constitutes a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to foster resilient, inclusive and sustainable economic recovery in the medium- and long-term that equally benefits women and men and transforms gender-discriminatory social norms, power relations and stereotypes. During this phase, it is thus important to focus on:
    - Reducing gender inequality and gender wage gaps through targeted capacity-building and quality job creation in sectors previously precluded to women, including new and emerging technologies.
    - Promoting infrastructure and services that facilitate redistribution of responsibilities for care and domestic work, such as electricity, labor-saving household appliances and frontier technologies.
    - Increasing the presence of women in industrial leadership and policy-making positions, including in crisis response.

<sup>7</sup> ILO 2016, [Women and Men in the Informal Economy: a Statistical Picture](#), p. 20-22.



- Using the potential of women as agents of change for reducing environmental degradation and climate change.
- **Foster gender-responsive research and expertise**
  - COVID-19 pandemic and its ensuing negative economic effect on employment, consumption and public infrastructure is likely to overall hit women harder than men. To reduce the impact on women, including in the manufacturing and export sector, it is thus crucial to collect sex-disaggregated data, build gender expertise into response teams and conduct further research.
- **An equal voice should be given to women in decision-making and women's networks in the response**

## UNIDO GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

The Director General of UNIDO has released a message to Member States on the Organization's response to COVID-19<sup>8</sup>, in which he underscores the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on women business owners and workers, as well as the repercussions on the participation of women in the labor force and especially in the manufacturing and exporting sectors, also during the recovery phase.

UNIDO supports women-owned and women-led businesses in becoming agents of change to counter the spread of the COVID-19 virus. In Armenia, UNIDO linked a women-owned and -led apparel manufacturer that has diversified into mask production with the national health authorities.<sup>9</sup>

UNIDO has also published an opinion piece calling for a gender-responsive global economic recovery from the pandemic.<sup>10</sup> The article highlights COVID-19's impact on women in the manufacturing sector and along Global Value Chains (GVCs), as well as unfavorable pre-existing trends for women in industry, to make the case for taking their needs and potential as agents of change into account to foster more inclusive and sustainable future economies and societies.

<sup>8</sup> UNIDO 2020, "Director General's message to Member States on the UNIDO response to COVID-19", <https://www.unido.org/news/director-generals-message-member-states-unido-response-covid-19>

<sup>9</sup> UNIDO 2020, "Armenian apparel manufacturer starts producing masks to help fight coronavirus", <https://www.unido.org/stories/armenian-apparel-manufacturer-starts-producing-masks-help-fight-coronavirus>

<sup>10</sup> UNIDO 2020, "Industries post-COVID-19: A gender-responsive approach to global economic recovery", <https://iap.unido.org/articles/industries-post-covid-19-gender-responsive-approach-global-economic-recovery>



## UNIDO GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Opinion piece “Industries post-COVID-19: A gender-responsive approach to global economic recovery”: <https://iap.unido.org/articles/industries-post-covid-19-gender-responsive-approach-global-economic-recovery>”

UNIDO’s dedicated web-page on COVID-19 response: <https://www.unido.org/unidos-comprehensive-response-covid-19>

Director General’s message to Member States on the UNIDO response to COVID-19:  
<https://www.unido.org/news/director-generals-message-member-states-unido-response-covid-19>

For more information, please contact Müge Dolun, Gender Coordinator ad interim, UNIDO at [gender.coordinator@unido.org](mailto:gender.coordinator@unido.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations Office on  
Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

## UNODC KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

### **Prioritize access to and continuity of essential services, including judicial services, to address violence against women**

- Governments and policy makers should prioritize resources and efforts to ensure continuity and access to essential services to address violence against women and girls (VAWG), including to prepare for an increase in demand for emergency hotlines, shelters and other essential housing options, legal aid and other essential police and justice services. Likewise, governments should make any necessary efforts to inform women and girls that access to essential services, particularly dedicated hotlines and shelters, are still available and accessible even in times of lock down measures and policies.
- Competent authorities should ensure continued and increased availability and accessibility of judicial protection for women subject to violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, by using flexibility in existing procedures and other solutions, including for example: special duty shifts for lawyers, prosecutors and judges; allowing remote applications for protection and restraining orders; automatically extending existing orders; enabling submission of statements and other evidence through electronic means; allowing, where possible, the prompt removal of perpetrators from homes; adequately involving lawyers to represent and protect victims to explore all available legal options, particularly in cases where the victim may be charged with a crime due to action taken to resist the offender that may have resulted in physical harm.
- Criminal justice officials should ensure that incidents of violence against women and children continue to be given high priority, taking into account the increased level of risk for women and children in situations of lockdown, particularly when they live with the person who victimizes them. They should take proactive measures to monitor and police high-risk neighborhoods and households, based on previous reports or incidents of gender-based violence against women and girls, with a view to increasing access to protection and support for victims and reducing opportunities for victimization
- Criminal justice institutions should issue instructions to police and other relevant officials to support victims in safety planning based on risk assessments that consider the particular risks of quarantine, home confinement and other measures to address COVID-19.

### **Avoid prison releases that may place women and children at greater risk of violence**

- While taking necessary measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in prisons and reduce prison overcrowding, relevant authorities should avoid releases or other alternative measures that may place women and children at greater risk of violence. In particular: assess and address the safety risks of victims in decisions concerning release and other non-custodial measures, such as the granting of bail, conditional release, parole or probation, especially when dealing with repeat and dangerous offenders; and ensure the right of victims to be informed of the aggressor's release from detention or imprisonment.



### **Female victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants are particularly vulnerable categories in these times**

- They are found in precarious conditions with no livelihoods and the pandemic measures increase their vulnerabilities and risks of further victimization and exploitation.<sup>11</sup> Access to shelters, health care, personal documentation, psychosocial assistance must be unhindered especially during COVID-19 times. COVID-19 responses and access to justice must be continuously monitored. Where such measures unintentionally negatively impact vulnerable groups, such as trafficking victims, adjustments must be made to minimize harm and to ensure the needs of such groups are adequately addressed. While prioritizing public health, a culture of rule of law needs to prevail. Anti-trafficking responses must continue to be based on human rights and gender-specific, while access to health care and social support without discrimination should be guaranteed.
- UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly issued a statement noting that “With COVID-19 restricting movement, diverting law enforcement resources, and reducing social and public services, human trafficking victims have even less chance of escape and finding help. As we work together to overcome the global pandemic, countries need to keep shelters and hotlines open, safeguard access to justice and prevent more vulnerable people from falling into the hands of organized crime. UNODC is supporting governments and NGO partners around the world to enable anti-trafficking units to continue doing their essential work safely and ensure that human trafficking victims can get the assistance they need.”

## **UNODC GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS**

**UNODC is working closely with UN Women, WHO and other United Nations country team partners and HQ focal points, to provide technical guidance and support on the impact of measures to address COVID-19 on gender-based violence against women and girls survivors and to promote options to ensure effective crime prevention criminal justice responses in the short and longer term. This includes in particular:**

- Public advocacy and policy support to ensure continued availability and accessibility of victim protection and other essential police and justice services for survivors of gender-based violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 emergency.
- Data collection, assessment and monitoring of the specific impact of COVID-19 and measures to curb its spread on victims and on criminal justice responses to gender-based violence against women and girls, the likelihood and magnitude of the existing and expected backlog in cases of gender-based violence against women and girls in light of the COVID-19 emergency, as well as changes in levels and trends of domestic violence cases, with a focus on gender-related killing and physical/sexual assault.
- Capacity building, both through technical support for police, prosecution services and the judiciary in reducing the backlog of cases of gender-based violence against women and girls due to or exacerbated by COVID-19, as well as through tailored training programmes for relevant criminal justice professionals (police, prosecutors, judges and magistrates, lawyers and legal aid providers, etc.) and CSOs, with a focus on the specific impact of COVID-19 and related measures on victims

<sup>11</sup> For more information please see UNODC Brief on “Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons”: [https://www.unodc.org/unodc/frontpage/2020/May/covid-19\\_unodc-warns-of-increased-risks-to-human-trafficking-victims.html](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/frontpage/2020/May/covid-19_unodc-warns-of-increased-risks-to-human-trafficking-victims.html)



and survivors of gender-based violence against women and girls and the lessons learned for gender-sensitive and child-sensitive violence prevention and response law and policy.

**Ensure continuity of essential prevention and treatment services for vulnerable and marginalized women, including women who use drugs or who are partners of persons who use drugs, sex workers, homeless women, and women living with HIV/AIDS.**

- Competent authorities should ensure continued availability and accessibility of harm reduction services for vulnerable women and prioritize efforts for a gender-sensitive response, by using flexibility and allowing for alternative delivery modalities, including for example: allowing take-home dosage or designating separate treatment centres. Likewise, governments should make all necessary efforts to inform women and girls about availability of continued access to harm reduction services even during lockdown.
- Government and policy makers should issue instructions to police and other relevant officials to allow for continued operation of the dedicated treatment centres to ensure there is no disruption in the delivery of the harm reduction services to women and girls in need.

**UNODC stresses the gender dimension of trafficking in persons and recognizes it as a form of violence against women and girls, and continuously monitors the impact on female victims, with a view to developing responses that are gender transformative.** The increased levels of domestic violence reported in many countries is a worrying indicator for the living conditions of many trafficking victims, such as those in domestic servitude or sex slavery, forms of exploitation that disproportionately affect women and girls. Lockdowns and confinement could reinforce the isolation of victims and reduce drastically any chance of them being identified and removed from abuse. During the pandemic, there are additional obstacles to accessing services, assistance and support, due to rules on confinement at home and related closure of NGOs and government offices. Isolation and social distancing can exacerbate mental health issues and disrupt any access to informal support networks.

**UNODC's Research and Trend Analysis Branch** is continuing the monitoring of femicide to understand the impact of COVID-19. While official data will become available within 1-2 years, the Office is piloting a system of web-scraping to collect real-time information globally. In addition, work is being undertaken with crime statistics focal points to have a rough picture of the impact of COVID-19 on VAWG and femicide.

**UNODC's Independent Evaluation Section (IES):** IES contributes to accountability and learning in the areas of drugs, crime and terrorism through gender-responsive evaluations. The COVID-19 pandemic requires adaptation to standard data collection techniques and evaluation methodologies. IES is working to ensure that despite any constraints, all evaluations remain gender-responsive, are conducted by evaluation teams with equal representation of women and men and include sex disaggregated data. In addition, IES is adapting current methodologies and exploring new methodologies to ensure equal representation of all stakeholders, incorporating robust stakeholder analyses to safeguarding the inclusion of the experiences of women and girls, men and boys in all evaluations.



## UNODC GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) response – UNODC Thematic Brief on gender-based violence against women and girls:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/AdvocacySection/GBVAW\\_and\\_UNODC\\_in\\_COVID19\\_final\\_7Apr\\_2020.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/AdvocacySection/GBVAW_and_UNODC_in_COVID19_final_7Apr_2020.pdf)

"Gender and Pandemic: Protecting Women in Times of COVID-19:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/pakistan//Advocacy\\_Brief\\_3\\_Gender\\_-COVID-19-Sindh.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/pakistan//Advocacy_Brief_3_Gender_-COVID-19-Sindh.pdf)

"Gender and Pandemic: Urgent call for Action:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/pakistan//Advocacy\\_Brief\\_4\\_Gender\\_-COVID-19-Punjab.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/pakistan//Advocacy_Brief_4_Gender_-COVID-19-Punjab.pdf)

Human Rights and Gender Equality: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/human-rights-and-gender.html>

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS\\_Thematic\\_Brief\\_on\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS_Thematic_Brief_on_COVID-19.pdf)

Toolkit on GENDER-RESPONSIVE non-custodial measures: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/20-01528\\_Gender\\_Toolkit\\_complete.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/20-01528_Gender_Toolkit_complete.pdf)

UNODC's Approach to Evaluation During COVID-19 Crisis:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Guidelines/IES\\_COVID-19\\_Response\\_final\\_April\\_2020.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Guidelines/IES_COVID-19_Response_final_April_2020.pdf)

UNODC, WHO, UNAIDS and OHCHR joint statement on COVID-19 in prisons and other closed settings:

[https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/may/20200513\\_joint-statement-covid19-prisons](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/may/20200513_joint-statement-covid19-prisons)

For more information, please contact Claudia Baroni, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, in the Justice Section, UNODC at [claudia.baroni@un.org](mailto:claudia.baroni@un.org); Morgane Nicot, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer in the Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section, UNODC at [morgane.nicot@un.org](mailto:morgane.nicot@un.org); or Angela Me, Chief of the Research and Trends Analysis Branch, UNODC at [angela.me@un.org](mailto:angela.me@un.org); Katherine Aston, Evaluation Officer, in the Independent Evaluation Section, UNODC at [katherine.aston@un.org](mailto:katherine.aston@un.org)

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

United Nations University (UNU)

## UNU KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Emerging research indicates that gender (and other) perspectives need to be integrated into COVID-19 response measures, including its health response, prevention measures such as lockdowns, and early recovery planning.**
- **Policies must be evidence-based and gender-responsive**
  - A one-stop repository for government policies on addressing the pandemic is needed to provide policymakers with access to information based on which to make evidence-based policy decisions related to COVID-19, including with regards to the impact of such policies on particular vulnerable groups including women.
- **COVID-19 will have an impact on the gender-responsive deliver of the and the SDGs**
  - Further analysis needs to be done to examine risk factors to see how the pandemic will impact the road to achieving the 2030 Agenda in the short-term, and if it will have further and lasting impacts on the ability of Member States to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals.

## UNU GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

UNU has a number of projects and publications related to the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls covering a range of thematic areas.

- The UNU International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH), in Malaysia, is developing an online inventory of the public health, social and community measures to address COVID-19 across all countries. This inventory was developed to fill the gap in systematic data collection of government polices implemented to contain the pandemic around the globe, and measures taken by governments to mitigate the related health and social impacts. This inventory will be a global resource available for policymakers, researchers and others involved in global and national responses to identify relevant policy options in their contexts and produce evidence of their impact.
  - In terms of gender analysis, the policy tracker will be useful for: conducting gender analyses of policies to produce recommendations for governments, particularly in the Global South; and assessing the impact of policies on particular groups, such as women, healthcare workers, the elderly, migrant workers, refugees, people living with disabilities and people living in informal settlements.
  - One of UNU-IIGH priorities for the inventory will be to analyse the effects of policies on gender equity, in particular, gender-based violence, gendered health workforce, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. To avoid duplication with other COVID-19 tracking tools, the response tracker will build from and complement existing initiatives.
- UNU-IIGH is conducting an analysis of how gender and the COVID-19 pandemic intersect across the full range of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The expected output will be a series of publications by UNU-IIGH and other UNU research institutes. Early findings indicate certain risk



factors related to the pandemic may impact genders differently (e.g. potential increase in birth rates and teenage pregnancies, impact of isolation on smoke risk factors for men and women, and factors that may impact on populations returning to work). Such risk factors may pull back gains made to date on meeting targets and impact on the future potential for countries to achieve the SDGs.

- A publication by researchers from UNU-IIGH and UNU Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute (UNU-MERIT), *Stopping coronavirus – what does the evidence say are the best measures?*, notes that as women make up the majority of the health workforce, they may be more vulnerable to the infection, and also highlights the problem of domestic violence victims being confined in the same space as their aggressors.
- Examining current responses to COVID19 and their implications for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, an article by researchers from UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), *Building resilience against biological hazards and pandemics: COVID-19 and its implications for the Sendai Framework*, outlines that countries approaching the peak of the pandemic need to develop early recovery planning, with a focus on gender and disability inclusivity.
- A number of publications and articles from UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), have highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, including women. These include:
  - [Estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty](#), 8 April 2020, which warns that the COVID-19 fallout could push half a billion people into poverty in developing countries.
  - [To die from hunger or the virus: An all too real dilemma for the poor in India \(and elsewhere\)](#), an article on the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations in India which highlights the lack of neutrality of health responses and lockdown measures, for example, where many poor, especially women, spend many hours to access water.

## UNU GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

- To die from hunger or the virus: An all too real dilemma for the poor in India (and elsewhere): <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/die-hunger-or-virus>
- Estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty: <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/Publications/Working-paper/PDF/wp2020-43.pdf>; <https://www.wider.unu.edu/news/press-release-covid-19-fallout-could-push-half-billion-people-poverty-developing-countries>
- Building resilience against biological hazards and pandemics: COVID-19 and its implications for the Sendai Framework: <https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7614/n1-s2.0-S259006172030017X-main.pdf>
- Stopping coronavirus – what does the evidence say are the best measures?: <https://theconversation.com/stopping-coronavirus-what-does-the-evidence-say-are-the-best-measures-133825>

For more information, please contact Alexandra Ivanovic, Gender Focal Point Coordinator, UNU at [ivanovic@unu.edu](mailto:ivanovic@unu.edu).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

### UNV KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Culturally sensitive and gender sensitive protection and duty of care should be ensured to all frontline workers, including UN Volunteers and community volunteers.**
- **Gender-sensitive talent outreach campaigns should be encouraged, especially in profiles that are heavily skewed to a specific gender.**
- **Flexible working conditions should be provided for all UNV staff and UN Volunteers.**

### UNV GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

UNV is working closely with UN entities to provide flexible, cost effective, UN Volunteer capacity to support rapid COVID-19 responses, including on site, online, at the international and national levels. This includes:

- Providing a global volunteer talent of onsite and online profiles for the COVID-19 response, in areas from preparedness, to response and recovery;
- Ensuring gender-neutral language in UN Volunteer Description of Assignments (DOAs) with one of the key competencies being sensitivity and respect to gender and diversity;
- Continuing to submit 50-50 gender parity in the shortlisting and submission of UN Volunteer candidates to host entities, and encourage host entities to select and deploy gender-balanced teams of UN Volunteers especially within the health sector; and
- Providing proper duty of care to all UN Volunteers with up-to-date information and administrative guidelines for COVID-19 to ensure effective management of UN Volunteers.

### UNV GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

UNV support for COVID-19 response: <https://www.unv.org/News/UN-Volunteers-join-COVID-19-response>

UNV solutions for COVID-19 response for UN Agencies:

<https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/Overview - UNV solutions for COVID-19 response - 25MAR2020.pdf>

Infographic of UNV solutions for COVID-19 response for UN Agencies:

<https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/Infographic - UNV solutions for COVID-19 response.pdf>

Information for UN Volunteers, selected candidates and host entity partners:

<https://www.unv.org/COVID-19>

Profiles of UN Volunteers needed for response: <https://www.unv.org/Volunteers-for-Novel->

For more information, please contact Hae-Yeon Alice Jeong, Special Assistant to the Executive Coordinator, UNV at [hae-yeon.jeong@unv.org](mailto:hae-yeon.jeong@unv.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

### UNWTO KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER AND COVID-19

- **Women and girls must be protected against gender-based violence.**
- **Flexible work arrangements should be made available.**
- **Governments should ensure that aid packages include informal workers.**
- **The top tables of recovery management should be gender balanced.**
- **Data should be disaggregated by sex.**

### UNWTO GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- Tourism is one of the sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. UNWTO expects a 20-30% fall in international tourist arrivals compared to 2019 figures, translating into a US\$300-450 billion loss in international tourism receipts and between five- and seven-years' worth of lost growth\*.
- UNWTO's Global Tourism Crisis Committee, convened in response to COVID-19, has released recommendations for recovery as a call for action to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and accelerate recovery.
- The recommendations highlight the adverse effect that COVID-19 will have on women and youth and recommends special protection measures, accessibility to stimulus packages and explicit inclusion in human capital strategies for women and youth.

\*As the situation is constantly evolving, UNWTO stresses that such sector-specific predictions are based on the latest available data (March 2020) and may be subject to change.

### UNWTO GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Global Report on Women in Tourism, Second Edition: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284420384>

Guidelines on an inclusive response for vulnerable groups: <https://www.unwto.org/covid-19-inclusive-response-vulnerable-groups>

Recommendations to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and accelerate the recovery of the tourism sector: [https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-04/COVID19\\_Recommendations\\_English\\_1.pdf](https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-04/COVID19_Recommendations_English_1.pdf)

Supporting Jobs and Economies through Travel and Tourism: A Call for Action to Mitigate the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 and Accelerate Recovery: [https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-04/COVID19\\_Recommendations\\_English\\_1.pdf](https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-04/COVID19_Recommendations_English_1.pdf)

For more information, please contact Marina Diotallevi, Head of Ethics Culture and Social Responsibility, UNWTO at [mdiotallewi@unwto.org](mailto:mdiotallewi@unwto.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## World Food Programme (WFP)

### WFP KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER AND COVID-19

- **The specific impacts of the responses to COVID-19 on the lives of women and men should be monitored for efficacy, equity and empowerment.**
- **All responses to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic should be tailored to target and reach women and men (and girls and boys) with relevant information and assistance.**
- **All responses to the impacts of COVID-19 should ensure that both women and men are equally included as decision-makers, at all levels and in all sectors.**
- **Both women and men should be equitably involved in all stages of the COVID-19 response and at all levels.**
- **The collection and use of sex-, gender- and age-disaggregated data during the COVID-19 response are essential.**

### WFP GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

The disruption of food systems by COVID-19 are likely to reinforce women's greater risk of being hungry and malnourished, than that of men.<sup>12</sup> And gender equality – and women's empowerment, which is what leads to gender equality – is essential to ending hunger because:

- empowerment reduces the probability of a person being food insecure;
- the links between empowerment and food security are similar for women and for men; and
- women are less empowered than men.<sup>13</sup>

Decision-making ability, financial self-sufficiency, freedom from violence, reproductive freedom, and unpaid labour are five core elements of women's empowerment that are intricately interwoven with food security and COVID-19 – its impacts and responses.

Accordingly, WFP is assessing and responding to the impacts of COVID-19 in ways that are effective and equitable, including the following:

- encouraging gender-inclusive community committees and decision-making;
- providing food and health supplies (like dignity kits);
- providing assistance as cash-based transfers, as part of gender-responsive social protection; and
- supporting the continued education of girls and boys through school feeding programmes.

<sup>12</sup> FAO Food Insecurity Experience Scale ([FIES](#)) data show higher rates of food insecurity among women, than among men.

<sup>13</sup> The link between gender equality, empowerment and food security is indicated by the quantitative data of the WFP Gender Equality for Food Security ([GE4FS](#)) measure.



## WFP GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

### WFP Gender and COVID-19 guidance

- English – <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000113724/download/>
- French – <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000113765/download/>
- Spanish – <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000113794/download/>

Individual data driving relevant responses to COVID-19: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000114021/download/>

For more information, please contact Jacqueline Paul, Senior Gender Adviser, WFP, at [jacqueline.paul@wfp.org](mailto:jacqueline.paul@wfp.org).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## World Health Organization (WHO)

### WHO KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER AND COVID-19

- **Equal access to COVID-19 protection, testing and treatment must be ensured**
  - Women are at the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. Equitable access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs to be ensured for all the health workforce.
  - Special measures for disadvantaged subpopulations and in disadvantaged areas within countries should be considered to ensure gender-sensitive, equitable, non-discriminatory access to COVID-19 testing and treatment services, and to allow women and men in inadequate living conditions to comply with sanitation and containment measures.
- **Women and girls face increased risk of gender-based violence**
  - In the context of the confinement and an increase in domestic/intimate partner violence, the health sector can take steps to mitigate the effects of this violence by offering first-line support to survivors, making available and accessible essential services to survivors and resourcing them.
- **To provide continuity of care, SRHR services should be included in the essential package of services and resources must be neither cut nor diverted.**
- **Collection and reporting of sex and age disaggregated data on infection cases and deaths is necessary at a minimum.**

### WHO GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

In the context of WHO's mandate which is to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable, WHO prioritizes and encourages all health authorities to apply a Gender, Equity and Human Rights (GER) lens to their COVID-19 response.

Women and girls, men and boys experience the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways, with women at potential greater economic and social disadvantage due to deep rooted gender inequalities and social inequalities. For example, Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence is one of the gendered aspects of COVID-19 that needs to be addressed as a number of reports reveal increases in domestic violence during periods of confinement. Thus, WHO published the [WHO guidance note](#) on "COVID-19 and Violence Against Women. What the Health Sector/System Can Do?" providing recommendations to different stakeholders to take measures and address the safety of women and children.

Gender differences also result in increased vulnerability of women who are at the forefront of the COVID-19 battle, giving care to sick patients either in health facilities, at homes or in their communities.

WHO is committed to gender equality in all its technical and programmatic work. Gender, equity and human rights are an integral part of the response to COVID-19 at all levels. WHO places a gender lens on the COVID-19 response to highlight and mitigate the risks and vulnerabilities of women and girls. The WHO



Global GER network is working together to develop material and is also working internally to promote better availability of data disaggregated by sex and age. WHO is also contributing to and supporting other agencies' products and outputs. A series of Gender and COVID-19 briefs are forthcoming as a result of partnerships with the Global Action Plan (GAP) working group, UN agencies, civil society etc.

## WHO GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

Addressing Human Rights as Key to the COVID-19 Response: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/addressing-human-rights-as-key-to-the-covid-19-response>

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 89: [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200418-sitrep-89-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=3643dd38\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200418-sitrep-89-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=3643dd38_2)

COVID-19 and Violence Against Women. What the Health Sector/System Can Do?": <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/emergencies/COVID-19-VAW-full-text.pdf>

Gender and COVID-19 Advocacy Brief: [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332080/WHO-2019-nCoV-Advocacy\\_brief-Gender-2020.1-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332080/WHO-2019-nCoV-Advocacy_brief-Gender-2020.1-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Practical considerations and recommendations for religious leaders and faith-based communities in the context of COVID-19: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/practical-considerations-and-recommendations-for-religious-leaders-and-faith-based-communities-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

Q&A on COVID-19, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-on-covid-19-pregnancy-childbirth-and-breastfeeding>

For more information, please contact Veronica Magar, Team Lead, WHO at [magarv@who.int](mailto:magarv@who.int).

# GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

## World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

### WIPO KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

- **Gender equality is instrumental to innovation and creativity.**
  - One of the main roles of Intellectual Property (IP) is to provide an incentive framework in which innovation is encouraged and given a safe passage from invention to commercial product or service, and in which creativity is rewarded and facilitated. WIPO's mission is to promote innovation and creativity through a balanced and accessible IP system for the well-being of all. WIPO values human ingenuity in all of its forms, regardless of personal characteristics. Increasing diversity and inclusion in IP is critical: humankind needs all-hands-on-deck to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Without gender equality, humanity is missing out on realizing its full potential.
- **Women's participation in the international IP system needs to be sustained and protected during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.**
  - Women are underrepresented in the international IP system. While, in 2019, international patent filing figures registered the highest-ever rate of women inventors, participation remains as low as 19%. It has taken 25 years to reach that number, from a baseline of 9.5% in 1994.
  - The measures undertaken by governments in response to the pandemic cause, as a necessary side effect, widespread economic disruption. This is likely to increase barriers to women inventors, including due to the increase in unpaid care work, economic vulnerability and the dwindling access to financing mechanisms and research support. As a result, it is likely that women's participation in the international IP system could stagnate or even be reduced.

### WIPO GENDER-RESPONSIVE COVID-19 ACTIONS

- **COVID-19 IP Policy Tracker:** WIPO has established a COVID-19 IP Policy database, which collects and collates intellectual property policy changes or other measures being implemented by member states in their response to the global pandemic. It provides information on measures adopted by IP offices, on legislative and regulatory measures for access and other voluntary actions, including from a diversity and inclusion perspective.
- **Data collection and analysis:** the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data related to filings in the international IP system is key to detect trends and formulate policies that support gender equality and the participation of women in innovation and creativity. WIPO will track the short, medium and long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international filings.
- **Gendered analysis of the barriers to women's access to the international IP system:** WIPO is undertaking a three-year project that looks at the global, regional and country specific barriers to women's participation in the international IP system. This project, together with WIPO's other interventions under its Development Agenda, will take into consideration the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the current and prospective measures put in place by IP offices to encourage and sustain



innovation by all groups, including those that are underrepresented, with a specific gender equality component.

## WIPO GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19 RESOURCES

COVID-19 IP Policy Tracker: <https://www.wipo.int/covid19-policy-tracker/#/covid19-policy-tracker/access>

For more information, please contact Sara Callegari, Gender and Diversity Specialist, WIPO at: [sara.callegari@wipo.int](mailto:sara.callegari@wipo.int).