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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Women's human rights in the changing world of work**

#### **Report of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls**

##### *Summary*

In the present report, the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls analyses the gender dimensions of major trends changing the world of work, including technological and demographic changes, accelerated globalization and the shift to sustainable economies, and underlines the need to focus on the structural and systemic discrimination already faced by women in all facets of their life, which places them at greater risk of further discrimination. The Working Group identifies challenges to and opportunities for women's enjoyment of their rights to work and at work resulting from these trends, and sets out a vision for a world of work that starts with women's human rights and transforms the current economic model through the redistribution of power and resources.



## **I. Introduction**

1. The present report covers the activities of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls from the submission of its previous report (A/HRC/41/33) in May 2019 to March 2020, and also contains a thematic analysis on women in the changing world of work, which is undergoing rapid and deep transformations. The Working Group analyses how such changes present new challenges to and opportunities for women's enjoyment of their rights to work and at work.

## **II. Activities**

### **A. Sessions**

2. During the period under review, the Working Group held sessions in Geneva, Addis Ababa and New York. At its twenty-fifth session in Geneva (10–14 June 2019), the Working Group met with representatives of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, and the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It benefited from expert consultations on surrogacy, on the human rights situation of Roma women and girls, and on women's rights in the changing world of work. It also met with Member States.

3. At its twenty-sixth session in Addis Ababa (21–25 October 2019), its first meeting in the Africa region, the Working Group met with representatives of regional United Nations entities and member States and institutions of the African Union. It benefited from consultations with women human rights defenders from Africa on sexual and reproductive health rights, the rights of girls and the changing world of work. The Working Group also engaged with Ethiopian human rights organizations and independent human rights institutions and met with the President of Ethiopia, Sahle-Work Zewde.

4. At its twenty-seventh session in New York (27–31 January 2020), the Working Group met with representatives of UN-Women and OHCHR, including the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, and held a videoconference with the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Working Group also benefited from expert consultations on girls' participation and on sexual and reproductive health rights in crisis situations.

### **B. Country visits**

5. The Working Group visited Greece from 1 to 12 April 2019 (A/HRC/44/51/Add.1) and Romania from 24 February to 6 March 2020 (the report of the visit will be presented to the Human Rights Council in June 2021). It thanks the Governments of these countries for their excellent cooperation and encourages other States to respond positively to its requests for visits.

### **C. Communications and press releases**

6. During the period under review, the Working Group addressed communications to Governments, individually or jointly with other mandate holders. The communications concerned issues falling within the Working Group's mandate, including discriminatory legislation and practices, allegations of attacks against women human rights defenders,

gender-based violence and violations of the right to sexual and reproductive health.<sup>1</sup> The Working Group also issued press releases and statements, individually or jointly with other mandate holders and regional mechanisms.<sup>2</sup>

#### D. Other activities

7. Since its previous report to the Human Rights Council, the Working Group has carried out numerous other activities, including participation in regional consultations and expert meetings and engagement with stakeholders. As a member of the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women, it contributed actively to enhancing cooperation between global and regional women's rights mechanisms, including through joint statements and the publication, *25 Years in Review of the Beijing Platform for Action*. Detailed information can be found on the website of the Working Group.

### III. Thematic analysis: women's human rights in the changing world of work

#### A. Introduction

8. Over the past few years, international organizations and experts have increasingly turned attention to how trends such as technological change, demographic change, accelerated globalization, environmental degradation and the shift towards sustainable jobs will impact the world of work. There has been limited analysis on the gender dimensions of such trends, which present significant challenges to and opportunities for women's human rights. The present report focuses on women's rights to work and at work, setting out a vision for a world of work that starts with women's human rights, taking into account the current context and the changing trends. Transforming the current economic model to one that realizes women's human rights through the redistribution of power and resources is central to realizing this vision.

9. The present report is being finalized during the rapidly evolving coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which will have significant implications for women's work. Globally, women make up 70 per cent of frontline workers in the health and social sector across a range of occupations. At the same time, women already bear a disproportionate responsibility for the care of children, the elderly and people with disabilities. The pandemic is further intensifying and increasing levels of violence against women, women's unpaid care and domestic workloads, while the economic impact will place women's livelihoods and economic security at significant risk. Women in the most vulnerable forms of informal work will be the most harshly affected.

10. The present report is based on a wealth of information elicited through various means, including regional expert consultations and responses to a questionnaire sent to Governments and other stakeholders. The Working Group wishes to express gratitude to all stakeholders for their contributions.<sup>3</sup>

Box 1  
Key definitions

<sup>1</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WGWomen/Pages/Communications.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WGWomen/Pages/Communications.aspx).

<sup>2</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/NewsSearch.aspx?MID=WG\\_Women](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/NewsSearch.aspx?MID=WG_Women).

<sup>3</sup> Owing to word limit restrictions, the present report does not contain full references. A version of the report with full references, replies to the questionnaire and other relevant information is available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WGWomen/Pages/WomenChangingWorldofWork.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WGWomen/Pages/WomenChangingWorldofWork.aspx).

This report takes an expansive view of the world of work, including formal and informal work, public and private spaces of work, the commute to and from work, work taking place online or work enabled through information and communications technology (ICT), and work-related trips and events.

Women's rights to work and at work are established by international human rights law. In particular, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights contain specific provisions guaranteeing the right to work, just and favourable conditions of work, freedom to form trade unions and the prohibition of discrimination based on sex. Furthermore, there are several International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions covering a range of areas in relation to work, such as equal remuneration and domestic workers, including, most recently, a convention on eliminating violence and harassment at work.

Drawing on international norms and standards, realizing women's rights to work includes removing legal and sociocultural barriers that prevent women from working, for example legal discrimination, harmful gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms, and women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work. Realizing women's rights to work also entails ensuring public policy support for care and the availability of decent work. It also includes securing decent conditions at work, including equal access to workplace entitlements and equal pay for work of equal value, dismantling the barriers to women's equal progression and access to leadership positions, freedom from violence, discrimination and harassment, and enabling conditions for women's collective organizing and voice in decision-making.

## B. Context

11. Women's access to decent work and an independent income lifts them and their families out of poverty, improves their decision-making power in the household and society and ensures their economic independence, including in the event of a violent and abusive relationship. Yet, women's experience in the world of work for many is marked by persistent and widespread discrimination, leading to stark inequalities in employment outcomes, pervasive harassment and violence, and exploitation. In 2018, less than half (48 per cent) of working age women globally were participating in the labour market, compared with 75 per cent of men, resulting in a gender gap of 27 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

12. Globally, women remain concentrated in the lowest paid jobs, in vulnerable forms of employment, including in the informal sector. In low-income countries, 92 per cent of women are employed informally (as compared with 87.5 per cent of men), with little access to the raft of employment and social protection rights conferred on workers who have a formal employment contract.<sup>5</sup> Particularly stark gender gaps can be seen in the proportion of those informally employed who work without any direct pay or remuneration, such as unpaid family workers in family farms and enterprises (28.1 per cent of women versus 8.7 per cent of men).<sup>6</sup> The lack of investment by governments in time-saving infrastructure and public services, and persistent funding cuts (including due to the conditionalities imposed by international financial institutions), often have the harshest impacts on informal women workers.

13. Structural discrimination, including the persistence of gender stereotypes and gendered expectations, norms and attitudes, remains a significant barrier. Pregnancy

<sup>4</sup> See [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_670542.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_670542.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> ILO, *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*, 3rd ed. (Geneva, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

discrimination remains a common experience for many women, in which they are either dismissed, moved into lower paid roles or denied advancement opportunities. Furthermore, the lack of access to sexual and reproductive rights and services deny women the opportunity to make autonomous decisions about pregnancy and childbearing, which has an impact on their employment outcomes and their unpaid care work responsibility. Globally, women do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men, reflecting discriminatory stereotypes based on sex and gender that feminize this work. Across the world, 606 million working-age women (21.7 per cent) perform unpaid care work on a full-time basis, compared with 41 million men (1.5 per cent).<sup>7</sup>

14. Despite increased female education, occupational and sectoral segregation remains deeply entrenched globally, with women remaining clustered in low paid jobs and sectors, with limited prospects for career progression. The global gender pay gap stands at an unwavering 20 per cent and is wider for women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Systemic disadvantage experienced by mothers in the workplace contributes to a larger pay gap and dramatically lower retirement savings or pension contributions, known as the “motherhood penalty”. Globally, only 27.1 per cent of managers are women, a figure that has changed very little over the past 27 years.<sup>8</sup> Such data not only reflects the persistent barriers women face, but also the low societal value ascribed to the work that women do.

15. Gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace persist at shocking levels. In recent years an unprecedented number of women have spoken out about sexual violence and harassment against women and the systems of power and domination that have silenced them for so long. While recent global data is limited, a 2014 European Union-wide study found that every second woman (55 per cent) has experienced sexual harassment at least once since the age of 15. Among those, 32 per cent identified somebody from the employment context – such as a colleague, a boss or a customer – as the perpetrator.<sup>9</sup> Women in vulnerable forms of informal work, such as domestic workers, market vendors and waste-pickers, are particularly vulnerable to harassment and violence in the course of their work.<sup>10</sup>

16. Discriminatory laws that restrict women’s rights persist in many parts of the world and progress in introducing laws to advance gender equality in work is slow. Ninety countries still have at least one legal restriction on the jobs women can hold.<sup>11</sup> Less than half of the 190 countries studied by the World Bank have legislation mandating equal remuneration for work of equal value.<sup>12</sup> Discriminatory family and personal status laws in some countries continue to have a negative impact on women’s ability to engage in paid work.

17. In order to fully understand the nature and scope of discrimination against women in the world of work, it is important to take an intersectional approach, given that there are multiple forms of discrimination at play that result in very specific vulnerabilities and differences in employment outcomes. For example, for Roma women in many parts of Europe the lack of access to education, coupled with residential segregation and discrimination, exclude them from the formal labour market, forcing them to take up

<sup>7</sup> ILO, *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality: For A Better Future of Work for All* (Geneva, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Violence against Women: an EU-wide survey – Main results* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> See [https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/migrated/publications/files/ILC\\_WIEGO\\_Briefing%20Note%20Violence%20in%20the%20workplace%20EN%20for%20web.pdf](https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/migrated/publications/files/ILC_WIEGO_Briefing%20Note%20Violence%20in%20the%20workplace%20EN%20for%20web.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> See <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32639/9781464815324.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

precarious and low paid work, creating a poverty trap.<sup>13</sup> According to information received by the Working Group, Dalit women disproportionately experience discrimination at work, even in urban settings and in skilled work. Dalit women earn half the average daily wage earned by non-Dalit castes.<sup>14</sup> Transgender women experience disproportionate levels of poverty and economic insecurity because of the discrimination they face in accessing employment.<sup>15</sup> Young women with disabilities are much more likely to be excluded from education and employment, as compared with both men with disabilities and women without disabilities (E/CN.6/2020/3, paras. 55 and 322).

18. An increasing backlash against and resistance to women's human rights is also creating new challenges to women's equal participation in economic life. The growing political influence of conservative forces in some regions has led to regressive policy and legal reforms, such as new restrictions on sexual and reproductive rights and violence against women laws, with significant implications for women's equal participation in economic life. At the same time, the rise of anti-democratic forces and "strongman politics", grounded in misogyny and xenophobia, is amplifying discriminatory and patriarchal voices and limiting the scope for feminist action to make progress. Women's human rights defenders, including labour rights activists, are at increasing risk of harassment, violence and even murder, with perpetrators enjoying impunity (A/HRC/38/46, para. 38).

### C. The changing world of work: women's human rights opportunities and challenges

19. In recent years there has been a growing focus on the future of work, with increasing attention to technological change, demographic change, accelerated globalization and the shift to sustainable economies. Important efforts have been made to reorient the future of work as a human-centred agenda that is based on investing in people's capabilities, institutions of work and decent and sustainable work.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, there has also been further deregulation to enable non-standard forms of work, such as temporary or contract work, or new arrangements such as zero-hour contracts.<sup>17</sup>

20. Although there have been some attempts to include a gender perspective, what has been missing is a focus on the systemic disadvantage already faced by women in all facets of their life, which places them at greater risk of further discrimination. The following sections identify the major shifts in the world of work and provide an overview of the opportunities for and challenges to women's human rights.

#### Technological change

21. Technological advances, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, the Internet of things, big data, automation and robotics, are expected to create massive changes across all spheres of life.

22. There are some opportunities to harness technology to advance gender equality and women's rights to work and at work. The proliferation of digital platforms and other changes associated with the digital revolution may create new possibilities to support women's employment, including more flexible work arrangements, distance learning and networking, which will better enable them to balance paid work with unpaid care work.

23. ICTs and specifically smartphones, have an important role to play in enhancing the conditions and productivity of work among women in the informal economy by providing

<sup>13</sup> See [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment_en.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> See response of International Dalit Solidarity Network to the questionnaire

<sup>15</sup> See response of Lambda Legal to the questionnaire.

<sup>16</sup> See [www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_663006/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_663006/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>17</sup> See [www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2019](http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2019).

access to information and networks, especially in the most insecure and poorly paid forms of informal work. In addition to economic inclusion, ICTs are also increasingly important for collective organizing to strengthen the political voice of women workers. Technological advances have created new spaces for mobilization and connection between women across national borders and interest groups.

24. However, the impact of digitalization on the quality of work has received less attention. Where opportunities become available to women through the gig economy, there is also a risk that this may deepen structural discrimination by reinforcing gender stereotypes and the expectation that women should only undertake paid work within the confines of the home. The online economy is not automatically going to be more inclusive of women than the offline economy. Women represent only one out of every three crowdworkers on digital platforms, with the gender balance being particularly skewed in developing countries.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, rather than being a source of decent work, the growth of digital platforms, including the gig economy, will likely contribute to increasing women's economic inequality by increasing the informalization of women's work due to gaps in existing labour regulations and a lack of access to social protection. In fact, the gig economy is an expansion of the kind of informal work which women have traditionally undertaken, for example women piece workers, but without the technology platform. As such, online platforms risk substituting the traditional "sweatshop" for a digital one.

25. Automation is likely to contribute to greater economic inequality for women, with the most vulnerable groups of women being most affected. Workers who perform more routine tasks are at greater risk of potential replacement by robots and artificial intelligence, and the data for the global North shows that women have a 13 per cent higher chance than men of being in occupations and sectors that involve more routine tasks. Workers with a lower level of education have the highest chance (40 per cent) of seeing their activities being automated, while only 5 per cent of workers with a tertiary degree face the same risk.<sup>19</sup> Given that labour markets are continuously transformed by technological innovation, automation is also likely to contribute to growing polarization in the job market, with women in richer countries having a comparative advantage over women in poorer countries because of their higher levels of education and digital literacy.<sup>20</sup>

26. A major challenge for women's employment in the context of technological change is the underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and employment. Deeply entrenched stereotypes and discrimination in education limit girls' aspirations for careers in these areas, and masculinist workplace cultures in related organizations exclude and discriminate against women, often pushing them to leave science, technology, engineering and mathematics jobs at a higher rate than men. The poor representation of women in technology also means that technology is designed to entrench a male-dominated world view, rather than being designed to be inclusive of women.

27. Much of the discussion regarding technology and work also assumes that technological developments benefit all countries equally and are equally accessed by women and men. However, the gender digital divide persists across several regions and in many parts of the world men still control women's access to ICT.

28. Technological developments have also created new risks and challenges related to inclusion, safety, privacy, accountability and transparency, including the heightened exposure of women and girls to the risk of violence and abuse in technology-enabled spaces. Increasing monitoring, surveillance and data collection from workers using new technologies risks exacerbating discrimination against women, as algorithmic management

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<sup>18</sup> ILO, *Digital Labour Platforms and the Future of Work: Towards Decent Work in the Online World* (Geneva, 2018).

<sup>19</sup> Jacques Charmes, "The human rights of women informal workers in the changing world of work: impact of technological changes", background paper, October 2019. Available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WGWomen/Pages/WomenChangingWorldofWork.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WGWomen/Pages/WomenChangingWorldofWork.aspx).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

use a one-size-fits-all model, without attention to gender dynamics and discrimination in the workplace.

### **Demographic change**

29. Major demographic trends, such as population ageing and migration, have significant implications for gender equality. By 2050, 16 per cent of the world's population will be over the age of 65, up from 9 per cent in 2019. Long-term care of the elderly is still carried out largely by women. One opportunity presented by this trend is the expansion of jobs in the care sector, which can free up women's time and provide new employment opportunities. However, there is a danger of entrenching the gender pay gap and structural discrimination unless paid care work is properly valued, with significant investments in decent work conditions. A major risk for women's rights to work in the context of population ageing is the failure to invest in affordable and high-quality care services. This will limit women's ability to engage in paid employment as their unpaid caring responsibilities increase with demographic change.

30. Recent decades have also seen increasing numbers of women migrating as workers, a trend that is likely to continue. In particular, there has been a growing demand for migrant domestic and care workers due to complex factors, including the increasing participation of women in paid work in wealthy countries and high-income groups, the demand for cheap care labour and the lack of investment in care services. This has created a phenomenon known as the "global care chain". There are 11.5 million migrant domestic workers globally and, of these, 73.4 per cent are women.<sup>21</sup> There will likely be an increased demand for migrant domestic and care workers in the context of population ageing.<sup>22</sup> However, migrant workers are often denied human rights, such as access to health care and social protection, in their country of work. Migrant domestic workers are often doubly marginalized, as migrants working in the informal sector, where they exist in precarity with heightened risks of wage theft, violence, harassment and abuse. For migrant domestic and care workers, gender-based discrimination is compounded by further discrimination, among other things, based on their legal status, ethnicity, race, class or caste identities. Migrant domestic and care workers are also vulnerable to human rights violations in their country of origin, for example exploitation by brokers.

31. Rapid urbanization, combined with the growth of urban poverty and the absence of basic infrastructure and services, also has significant implications for women's work. The lack of decent work opportunities and lack of access to resources, such as land, for women in rural areas often pushes them to migrate to cities in the hope of securing better quality work. However, the lack of decent work opportunities in urban areas often relegates women to precarious and informal work. Furthermore, the growing trend of large-scale urban development and renewal projects encourages an increasing use of evictions, confiscations and demolitions that negatively impact women who work in public spaces or run small-scale enterprises, thereby increasing their economic insecurity.

32. Another aspect of demographic change is the "youth bulge". In most of sub-Saharan Africa, and in parts of Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean, recent reductions in fertility rates have caused the working age population (25–64 years) to grow faster than other age groups, creating the opportunity for a demographic dividend (E/CN.6/2020/3, para. 22). Women's and girls' increasing educational attainment is a significant opportunity for increasing young women's access to work. However, the systematic and patriarchally rooted denial of reproductive autonomy and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services, along with harmful and discriminatory practices, such as child marriage, continue to hamper young women's access to education and employment. Even where women's educational achievements have significantly improved, the transition from school to decent work remains a challenge due to the lack of access to decent work and persistent discriminatory social norms and practices.

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<sup>21</sup> ILO, *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality*.

<sup>22</sup> See [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_534204.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_534204.pdf).



### Accelerated globalization

33. Globalization is characterized by increasing human, financial, economic and technological transactions and communications across countries and regions. Recent decades have seen the rapid growth of globalized neoliberal capitalist economic regimes and structures with the promise of more jobs and growth. However, the reality has been increasing inequality and economic disparity, often at the expense of decent work and the protection of the environment. Furthermore, neoliberal globalization has also weakened several State functions that are important for gender equality, such as the provision of quality care services, which are increasingly privatized or non-existent.

34. The specific impacts of globalization on women's access to employment opportunities have been mixed. In some contexts, increasing numbers of women have gained access to export-oriented manufacturing employment. ILO estimates that the number of jobs in global supply chains in 40 countries increased from 295 million in 1995 to 453 million in 2013.<sup>23</sup> More than one fifth of the global workforce have a job in a global supply chain. The share of women employed in global supply chains in emerging economies tends to be higher than their share in total employment.<sup>24</sup>

35. Low prices paid to suppliers exert pressure down the supply chain to reduce costs, leading to downward pressure on wages. As a result, women's employment in global supply chains is often insecure, with poor working conditions and with labour and human rights violations and human trafficking presenting a significant concern. Moreover, some Governments have sought to relax their labour and environmental regulations in an effort to attract investments from multinational corporations that engage in a "race to the bottom" – in search of countries where the requirements to ensure safe, fair and decent conditions of work are less stringent. Mass land acquisitions for global supply chains also result in the loss of work and income for rural women in the global South, and forced displacement in some contexts. Sexual harassment is rampant in many parts of the supply chains where the workers are predominantly female, such as the garment sector.<sup>25</sup>

36. Globalization is also creating new vulnerabilities for women's work due to fissuring of the workplace through increased global supply chains, subcontracting and the use of flexible forms of labour. Research conducted by the International Trade Union Confederation found that the world's 50 largest companies only employ 6 per cent of people in a direct employment relationship and rely on a hidden workforce of 94 per cent.<sup>26</sup> Increasing subcontracting and fissuring of the workplace creates significant challenges for collective organizing through trade unions and cooperatives, which is critical for securing better pay and working conditions for women workers.

37. New robotic and automation technologies are further transforming global supply chains and production processes, putting at risk many jobs typically held by women, such as sewing machine operators, hand sewers and assembly workers. Evidence shows that, as countries upgrade their industries through technological advances, women's employment generally declines, a phenomenon referred to as "defeminization". Moreover, technological advances have spurred further offshoring of production from the global North to the global South, particularly in services. Rather than increasing access to decent work in the global South, the reality is that these jobs are disaggregated into microtasks performed by contractors on platforms in low-income countries, who have no labour contracts or workplace protections and are often underpaid. As such, digitalization risks perpetuating old forms of discrimination, exploitation and informal work for women in the global South.

<sup>23</sup> See [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms\\_723274.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_723274.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> See [www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting\\_resources/brochure\\_combatting\\_sexual\\_harassment\\_garment.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/brochure_combatting_sexual_harassment_garment.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> See [www.ituc-csi.org/frontlines-report-2016-scandal](http://www.ituc-csi.org/frontlines-report-2016-scandal).

### **Increased focus on sustainability and just transitions**

38. The shift to sustainable economies and just transitions has also featured as a critical element of the changing world of work. The focus on the green economy and sustainable jobs holds potential opportunities for women's employment. For example, it is estimated that the number of jobs in the renewable energy sector could increase from 10.3 million in 2017 to nearly 29 million in 2050.<sup>27</sup> Available data indicates that women are more likely to work in the renewable energy sector, as compared with fossil fuels, signalling potential for new opportunities for women. However, the data also shows that women tend to occupy lower status and lower-paid positions, as they are more likely to be in administrative roles, rather than roles requiring science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills.

39. Beyond the growth of green jobs, the rapid acceleration and intensification of environmental crises is creating a growing sense of urgency around a new economic model based on environmental sustainability. A just transition is about ensuring that the transition from an extractive to an environmentally sustainable and regenerative economy does not create hardships for workers. Yet there has been little discussion of the gender dimensions of a just transition to date, and there has been a marked increase in reprisals against those who speak out against these crises and hardships. Marginalized women, particularly those in poor countries, are most affected by environmental degradation due to underlying structural discrimination, including women's unequal access to land and natural resources, sustainable infrastructure and public services, which jeopardizes their income and food security, health, and livelihoods. Declining access to natural resources in the context of climate change will increase already intense and heavy unpaid care and domestic workloads for the poorest women and girls.

40. At the same time, women often play an important role, particularly in developing countries, in the conservation of the natural environment. Women's participation makes forest conservation and climate interventions more effective and leads to a more equal sharing of benefits. In agriculture, women workers are already playing an important role in natural resource management, which is critical to adaptation to climate change. However, they frequently face exclusion from decision-making and lack access to decent work, and their expertise in local and traditional knowledge is often not recognized. In developing countries, women are already highly concentrated in informal work in waste collection and recycling. Their work collecting recyclables from city streets and keeping public spaces clean presents a minimal cost to public budgets, yet accounts for a significant portion of solid waste management, recycling and disposal. However, they are highly stigmatized as workers and suffer from harassment and poor wages and conditions. Furthermore, the increasing formalization of waste collection and recycling, including through the introduction of new technologies such as incinerators, is placing women's work at risk if there are no available upskilling opportunities or strategies to integrate women waste pickers within formalized systems.<sup>28</sup>

## **D. Building a world of work that starts with women's human rights: now and for the future**

41. Unless structural and systemic discrimination is specifically addressed, there is a significant risk that future work trends will deepen existing inequalities for women. The approach to date of adding women into the masculinist structure of work and the economy has failed in realizing women's human rights and will continue to do so in the changing world of work. Creating a world of work where women benefit and contribute on an equal basis with men requires reimagining the structure of work and the economy, with women's human rights placed at the centre. Looking into the future, women have strong expectations of job security, equal pay, decent work conditions, respect and freedom from violence and harassment in the workplace, access to the right skills and training, and support for their

<sup>27</sup> See [www.irena.org/publications/2019/Jan/Renewable-Energy-A-Gender-Perspective](http://www.irena.org/publications/2019/Jan/Renewable-Energy-A-Gender-Perspective).

<sup>28</sup> See [www.worldurbancampaign.org/wiego-four-strategies-integrate-waste-pickers-future-cities](http://www.worldurbancampaign.org/wiego-four-strategies-integrate-waste-pickers-future-cities).

caring responsibilities.<sup>29</sup> A world of work that realizes women's human rights will not only benefit women but will lift all.

42. Ensuring that the future trends affecting the world of work do not exacerbate discrimination against women requires targeted action in five areas, as detailed below.

#### **Ensuring freedom from violence and harassment**

43. International standards recognize sexual harassment as a form of discrimination against women and a violation of human rights. New challenges stemming from technological change and continued globalization make it more urgent than ever to ensure women's safety at work. In this respect, the adoption in 2019 of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), marks a significant advancement towards creating a world of safe and decent work for all, with a particular focus on addressing women's experiences of violence and harassment. Discrimination based on other factors, such as pregnancy, age, race, social origin, migration status, disability, maternity, family responsibilities, sexual orientation and gender identity, may also influence how, and in what ways, women are more vulnerable to violence and harassment. Furthermore, the criminalization of women in prostitution or sex work increases their vulnerability to violence and compounds their exclusion from essential services.

44. There are a growing number of laws addressing sexual harassment, but they are often limited in their coverage and application. Women do not report sexual harassment for many reasons, including fear of reprisal, or concern that the matter will be dealt with ineffectively at best or, at worst, ignored or covered up. This has resulted in a culture of impunity for perpetrators. As the world of work changes, it is critical that women in non-standard forms of work and informal work are covered under legislation addressing sexual harassment and other forms of violence in the workplace, and that all women workers have access to remedies and justice should they experience sexual harassment, regardless of their contract type. Regulatory frameworks should ensure employers have an obligation to take all measures to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, in line with international standards. In the context of increased fissuring of the workplace and subcontracting, there is a need to strengthen action and accountability for sexual harassment across global supply chains. New and emerging forms of ICT-facilitated violence and harassment against women in the workplace also requires regulation and accountability measures (see A/HRC/38/47).

45. A significant innovation of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), is its recognition that both employers and workers' organizations have a role to play in responding to domestic violence as another form of violence impacting women in the workplace. This is an important shift in perspective, as domestic violence has historically been viewed as a private matter that impacts people in their homes rather than at work. The Convention provides that workers who are experiencing domestic violence have a right to support and protection in employment, that they should not be discriminated against on the basis of being a victim of domestic violence and that employers should provide flexible work, protection and leave for victims of domestic violence. Paid domestic violence leave is emerging as a promising practice among a number of Governments and employers. However, as an increasing number of women work in the gig economy and outside formal workplace arrangements, they are increasingly dislocated from such workplace support. Furthermore, with technological advances, new forms of technology-facilitated abuse, for example monitoring and tracking women through their devices, affects women's capacity to work and their experience of work.

#### **Box 2**

#### **Promising practices**

#### **Addressing sexual harassment in global supply chains**

<sup>29</sup> See [www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/business-school/research/women-work-leadership/women-and-the-future-of-work.pdf](http://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/business-school/research/women-work-leadership/women-and-the-future-of-work.pdf).

Through the investment of global clothing brands, some garment factories in South Asia have conducted training on the prevention of violence and harassment against women and men and have established workplace harassment committees. Consequently, there has been a decrease in the number of workers who report having experienced verbal harassment, psychological abuse and physical abuse, and an increase in the number of reports of sexual abuse, attributed to an increased willingness to discuss sexual abuse and growing trust in the process.

#### **Covering non-standard workers under sexual harassment laws**

Recently, some companies that engage people in work through a digital platform have commenced granting full employee status to their workers, ensuring workers receive higher wages, pension contributions, sickness benefits and protection under labour laws, including protection from sexual harassment. Meanwhile other gig companies have ended the practice of forced arbitration agreements in situations where workers make sexual harassment claims against the company.

#### **Covering gig economy workers under domestic violence policies**

Unions in some countries are pushing for legislative amendments to broaden the definition of employee so as to capture gig economy workers and ensure that they have full access to workplace protections, including the provision of paid domestic and family violence leave provided under employment guarantees.

### **Recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work**

46. Recognizing the social and economic value of unpaid care and domestic work and reducing the time burden and redistributing it more equally between women and men and between households and society through public investments in infrastructure and services are critical for the achievement of substantive equality. Ensuring all workers have access to a comprehensive system of paid maternity, paternity and parental leave, in line with international standards, is also essential, as is providing accessible, affordable and quality care services.

47. In the context of the changing world of work, there is a need for policy reform to ensure that women engaged in non-standard forms of work, including informal work, have access to maternity and parental leave provisions, in line with international standards. The provision of care services with flexible start and finish times, intermittent care provision and drop-in care services is an important enabler of women's work. This is particularly pertinent as the world faces climate change and increasing health pandemics, for example the current COVID-19 crisis, which will significantly increase women's unpaid care workloads. Flexible working time arrangements also play an important role in supporting workers (both men and women) to balance paid work and caring responsibilities and can be facilitated through technological advances. While new forms of work offered by digital platforms often provide greater flexibility, it is important that flexibility goes hand in hand with job security and decent pay and conditions. The rapidly ageing populations in many parts of the world not only requires Governments to invest in affordable and quality aged care services, but also to provide for paid carers leave and flexibility provisions that recognize the diverse caring responsibilities that women have over their lifetime, and to put in place measures to ensure men take up more unpaid care work.

Box 3

#### **Promising practices**

##### **Extending maternity leave to informal workers**

An Asia-Pacific country offers universal maternity protection coverage, including for workers in the informal economy. While compulsory for formal employees (who receive a replacement rate of 100 per cent of their covered wage for four months), herders, self-employed persons and workers in the informal economy can join the social insurance scheme on a voluntary basis and receive maternity cash benefits for four months at a replacement rate of 70 per cent of their selected reference wage after 12 months of contributions. In addition, maternity cash benefits under the social insurance scheme are provided to all pregnant women and mothers of infants, regardless of their contribution to the scheme, their status in employment or nationality. Maternity care is provided through the universal (tax-funded) health-care system.

#### **Providing care services for garment factory workers and waste pickers**

In some South Asian countries, the law requires ready-made garment factories to provide on-site childcare services for children up to the age of 6. As a next step, the need to focus on implementation and the quality of services has been recognized. In other countries, cooperative childcare services established and run by workers in the informal economy are meeting women workers' care needs, while also helping protect their labour rights.

In a country in Latin America a cooperative of waste pickers identified their need for quality childcare services so that they could work a full day and not have to take their children with them to the recycling plants. They established a community childcare service through a combination of local government, non-governmental and philanthropic support, with opening hours reflecting the working hours of waste pickers, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

#### **Redistributing unpaid care work between men and women**

Nordic countries offer some of the most generous parental leave policies in the world – between 40 and 69 weeks, at a remuneration rate of 70 to 100 per cent of pay. Some countries earmark some of those weeks for fathers (the so-called daddy quota), which is specifically designed to redistribute caring responsibilities between women and men. Studies have shown that “use it or lose it” leave provisions are more effective in increasing the proportion of fathers taking parental leave.

#### **Disrupting patterns of “women’s” and “men’s” work: value and roles**

48. While the growth of new sectors, such as the technology and renewable energy sectors, provides an opportunity to increase women’s employment in male-dominated areas, increased participation in the labour force does not automatically guarantee a level playing field for women. The persistence of occupational segregation can be explained by gender differences in education, training and experience; discrimination; deeply ingrained social norms; and the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work. Stereotypes about gender roles and perceived differences in aptitudes also contribute to occupational segregation. Predominantly female occupations, which tend to be those with lower status and pay, have remained feminized or become more so.

49. Without targeted intervention, existing patterns of segregation will be replicated in newly emerging sectors. Targeted interventions include temporary special measures to increase women’s representation in high-growth sectors; the provision of education, skills development, on-the-job and lifelong learning for women to transition from jobs that are at risk of automation to high-growth areas; and incentives and interventions to increase women’s representation in education and employment in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Policy and regulatory frameworks can play an important role in creating obligations for employers to report on the gender composition of their enterprises or organizations by occupation, gender pay gap and women’s representation in leadership. The potential growth of the care sector, in the context of population ageing, must entail paid care work being properly valued both economically and socially through decent wages and conditions. Given the overrepresentation of women in low-paying jobs,

minimum wage legislation, alongside laws that ensure a right to equal remuneration for work of equal value, can also make a significant contribution towards reducing gender pay gaps. To disrupt occupational segregation, it is equally important to introduce incentives and measures to encourage men to take up jobs in female-dominated sectors, such as education and paid care work.

Box 4

#### **Promising practices**

##### **Increasing women's representation in renewable energy**

Internationally, women represent only 32 per cent of the renewable energy workforce. In recognition that the successful transition to a low-carbon future will depend on the ability to harness all possible talent, a group of public and private sector organizations formed a campaign to work towards equal pay, equal leadership and equal opportunities for women in the clean energy sector by 2030. The campaign asks companies and governments to endorse principles and take concrete actions to help close the gender gap, including the setting of targets and quotas.

##### **Valuing paid care and domestic work**

After a finding of historic gender-based undervaluation of the sector and following sustained campaigning by unions, workers and community organizations, wages were increased in the care sector, setting new minimum rates of pay for workers. The decision resulted in wage increases of between 19 and 41 per cent for care workers.

Spurred by the ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), by 11 countries in Latin America, efforts have been made to ensure that domestic workers are covered under minimum wage provisions equalizing domestic worker pay with other workers. Some countries in the region are also encouraging collective bargaining in the sector to improve pay and conditions.

A number of member States of the European Union have introduced incentives to encourage the formal employment of domestic workers by using income tax deductions and tax credits along with a strong regulatory framework to increase the levels of formal employment in domestic work.

##### **Increasing men's participation in female-dominated areas**

Non-profit organizations in a country in Western Europe are working to recruit men into the social care industry, particularly in housing, care for the elderly and social work with vulnerable families, through a recruitment campaign in schools and colleges, as well as targeting veterans.

#### **Ensuring all women workers can enjoy their rights, without discrimination, including informal workers**

50. A key concern for women's enjoyment of human rights in the changing world of work is the growth of non-standard forms of employment, through increased subcontracting and use of on-demand labour, platform work, temporary contracts, self-employment, variable hour contracts, zero-hour contracts and other casual work.<sup>30</sup> While new forms of work may provide women a route out of more vulnerable and arduous forms of informal work, such as family work in agriculture or street vending, job insecurity, low pay and lack of access to social protection will continue to entrench economic insecurity and structural discrimination at work for many women. Work undertaken by women at the bottom of the supply chain, for example as agricultural workers in plantations, is often hazardous, and exposes them to harmful chemicals and poor conditions. Much of this work, particularly

<sup>30</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *OECD Employment Outlook 2019: The Future of Work* (Paris, 2019).

microtask work done by women, is also often hidden and invisible, increasing the risk of exploitation.

51. Realizing women's human rights in the changing world of work requires workers in new forms of work to have access to human rights. There is an urgent need to extend rights and entitlements to all workers, with a focus on women informal workers, including paid sick leave, annual leave, working time limits and rights to health and safety at work. In some contexts, access to menstrual leave is an important enabler of women's access to decent work.

52. Paid domestic work is a very important and expanding source of wage employment for women, but the majority of it is informal and poor quality, with high risks of abuse and violence. Similarly, waste picking is an important source of income for women in some countries and contributes to environmental sustainability. However, women workers who engage in these forms of work are too often denied basic labour rights and are vulnerable to discrimination, stigma, harassment and violence. Furthermore, ensuring the rights of women informal workers in agriculture, including equal ownership of and control over land and equal access to credit and agricultural technologies, is critical as the sector changes and grows in the context of environmental change.

#### Box 5

#### **Promising practices**

##### **Extending social protection to women workers in the gig or platform economy**

In a country in Europe artists and writers can join an insurance scheme that is funded by employee social security contributions, a public subsidy and a levy upon customers of artistic services (such as publishers, theatres, libraries or private companies) proportional to their use of artists' and writers' services.

In some Nordic countries, the unemployment system gives unemployed workers approximately 80 per cent wage replacement coupled with extensive labour market stimulation measures that require unemployed workers to undergo training to upgrade their skills. The system also provides workers with job opportunities and pays for education, training, relocation and other job-related expenses. As a result, workers change jobs more frequently than elsewhere in Europe, and companies are able to automate and change workplace practices without engendering opposition from workers.

In a country in Europe, independent contractors are required to pay social security contributions, in the same way as standard employees, guaranteeing them unemployment insurance.

##### **Ensuring the rights of domestic workers**

A country in Central America passed legislation in 2019 recognizing domestic workers as formal employees with benefits and protections. Under the new law, children under 15 are prohibited from working, and teenagers over the age of 15 cannot work for more than six hours a day. The employer of a domestic worker is now required to formalize the employment with a contract and to offer the same rights as other employers, including a salary based on at least minimum wage, registration for social security and health care, holiday bonuses, days off, maternity leave and guaranteed rest periods.

##### **Improving access to technology and resources for women in agriculture**

In some countries in Africa, access by women working in agriculture to ICT has been increased to enhance productivity. For example, in one country in Africa, a non-governmental organization initiated a project to improve access to information through the use of ICTs by rural women in one part of the country. Women accessed required information on markets and improved farming methods through the use of smartphones, the Internet and radios. In another country in Africa, women have been provided with smartphones to access weather-related information. This information allows them to know when to sow their seeds and when to harvest – especially with a yield that needs to be dried.

### **Supporting women’s collective action and organizing**

53. Strong union coverage and collective bargaining is linked with lower gender pay gaps, increased access to maternity leave and the promotion of family-friendly working arrangements. However, historically, trade unions have had strong masculinist cultures, have often excluded women’s voices and have not always prioritized women’s rights issues. Collective bargaining agreements often do not adequately reflect women’s concerns. Furthermore, where there’s a gendered power imbalance within a union, women workers face discrimination and violence. In addition, recent decades have seen growing challenges for collective organizing, particularly in the context of globalization and economic liberalization. The expected growth of non-standard forms of employment and increasing fissuring of the workplace in the context of continued globalization, along with the rise of work associated with digital platforms, exacerbates these challenges. As part of the broader trends of shrinking civil society space, there are also increasing government restrictions on unions and collective organizing. In this context, there is a need for new approaches and strategies for collective action and organizing.

54. For women in informal work, collective action through cooperatives has helped women to pool resources, realize economies of scale and access markets. Savings and self-help groups have been shown to support women’s livelihoods and strengthen their agency, voice and participation in households and communities more broadly. Making work decent and more remunerative, overcoming discrimination and redefining negative social norms are among the common goals that organizations of informal workers seek to achieve through collective organizing.

55. Important lessons can be drawn from existing women’s cooperatives, which have often formed to bring women workers together to address basic and practical needs and then shifted to focus on identifying collective priorities and strategies for change. Technological advances also provide new opportunities to organize women workers across issues, sectors and borders. The complex challenge of achieving a just transition, with gender equality as a priority, also requires cross-movement solidarity between women’s, labour, environmental and indigenous movements. Strategies to increase women’s participation and leadership within trade unions is critical both as a matter of equality and to ensure that gender-specific concerns are prioritized in collective bargaining agreements and in the culture of spaces where workers unionize. Supporting women’s collective action in the changing world of work, including ensuring their freedom of association, free from violence and intimidation, is critical to realizing women’s rights to work and at work.

#### **Box 6**

#### **Promising practices**

#### **Using technology to organize women workers**

In a country in Latin America with a large domestic worker population, an app was created to empower domestic workers. The app includes salary and benefit calculators, as well as information on the rights of domestic workers and help locating the nearest union.



The #MeToo movement saw countless women share their experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace, collectively organize for change and hold perpetrators to account. The movement was facilitated through social media and technology, which allowed women to connect around the globe.

#### **Organizing women in informal work**

A trade union for poor women workers in the informal sector was founded over four decades ago in a South Asian country, organizing members across a range of jobs to focus on work security, income security, food security and social security – in addition to improving their organizational strength, collective bargaining and leadership skills. It brought together unions, the women’s movement and women’s collectives. Today the movement has spread across several countries in South Asia with members owning and managing their own institutions.

#### **Building alliances across social movements**

A movement in Latin America advancing the rights of women peasants is simultaneously focused on promoting a vision of small-scale peasant farming based on ecological conservation and food sovereignty while also calling for women’s equal access to and control over land, agricultural inputs and natural resources.

### **E. Reimagining the structure of work and the economy**

56. Realizing women’s human rights in the changing world of work requires a fundamental transformation of the structure of work and the economy. Recent decades have seen increasing labour market deregulation, increased outsourcing across global supply chains, the proliferation of short-term contracts and the growth of “just in time” management. Such trends in the structure of work have placed downward pressure on wages and conditions, thus increasing inequalities and the vulnerability of women workers. Furthermore, in many parts of the world, labour market deregulation has led to rising non-standard forms of work among women and undermined their ability to organize collectively to improve pay and conditions.<sup>31</sup> The failure of Governments to hold corporations to account for labour, human rights and environmental standards, and the ability of firms to move to other countries undermines the bargaining position of women workers, thus contributing to women being stuck in low-wage, low-skill occupations. Marginalized women are the most affected, and expected changes driven by technology and globalization present the risk that such trends will become further entrenched.

57. While there has been increasing efforts by Governments and the private sector to improve the transparency of wages and conditions within global supply chains, often due to consumer demand, the reliance on voluntary codes and agreements has done little to shift the underlying business model, which drives the poor wages and conditions of the most marginalized women workers. For example, in the aftermath of the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh, women workers reported an increasing focus on safety in the workplace but little progress on wages and other conditions of work. In a context where the labour market is increasingly globalized and fissured, in addition to compliance with existing global norms there is also a need for a legally binding global instrument that can help ensure accountability for workers’ rights in global supply chains. Indeed, some Governments are moving towards a more systematic disclosure and transparency of data related to environmental, social and governance issues. This enables monitoring of corporate performance on sustainability and social outcomes, including indicators of women’s rights at work.

<sup>31</sup> See [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_534115.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_534115.pdf).

58. A narrow focus on economic growth and profitability in dominant economic models, at the expense of human well-being, decent work and environmental sustainability, is at odds with the realization of women's human rights. Women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are particularly marginalized. Current economic models exploit and thrive on women's unpaid care and domestic work. Such work undergirds the entire economy yet remains undervalued and invisible, while depleting women's time and economic security (A/74/111, para. 228). Yet, there are policy alternatives, which require reimagining the economy to focus on redistributing power and resources, generating decent work and placing value on the well-being and care of people and the planet. Some Governments are moving in this direction by prioritizing human well-being and care in their economic policies.

59. An enabling economic policy framework for women's human rights would centre on the realization of human rights, rather than focus narrowly on gross domestic product; prioritize equitable redistribution over wealth accumulation; facilitate investments in public services and infrastructure, increase pensions and social security and raise minimum wages, instead of providing tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy; and combat the proliferation of insecure informal work by offering incentives to business to spark economic growth to generate work with decent wages and conditions. Reimagining the economy for women's human rights would involve adequately recognizing and prioritizing women's specific needs, ensuring reproductive autonomy, eliminating all discrimination and valuing and investing in care work, paid and unpaid, as a central pillar. Such investments can both stimulate employment for women and build much needed physical and social infrastructure that benefits all workers.

## **IV. Recommendations**

60. **Without urgent attention, there is a significant danger that current gender inequalities and discrimination against women will not only be replicated but will be exacerbated in the changing world of work.**

61. **The Working Group calls on all States to ratify and ensure full compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and all relevant international human rights treaties and ILO conventions that guarantee women's rights to work and at work, as well as the optional protocols to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.**

62. **The Working Group additionally recommends the adoption of concrete measures based on its analysis and taking into account promising practices identified in the present report.**

### **A. General**

63. **Among general recommendations, the Working Group recommends that States:**

(a) **Review and eliminate all discriminatory laws that create barriers to women's formal or informal employment;**

(b) **Ensure that the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex, pregnancy or parenthood and caring responsibilities is extended and enforced for women in all forms of work, including non-standard employment;**

(c) **Strengthen legislation, regulations and accountability frameworks to ensure transparency, including through sex-disaggregated data, on wages and conditions, throughout global supply chains;**

(d) **Recast economic policies and frameworks, including national budgets and tax policies, to focus on human well-being, and prioritize the redistribution of**

power and resources, the realization of human rights, environmental sustainability and the generation of decent work for all.

## **B. Freedom from violence and harassment in the changing world of work**

64. To address violence and harassment, the Working Group recommends that States:

(a) Ratify and ensure full implementation of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190);

(b) Introduce and strengthen legal frameworks to prevent and effectively respond to sexual harassment, ensuring coverage for all types of workers, particularly workers in non-standard employment, and application to all workplaces, including public spaces, transport, online and digital work platforms;

(c) Introduce and strengthen labour legislation and regulations to address intimate partner violence and domestic violence, including through the provision of paid domestic violence leave;

(d) Introduce regulations requiring employers to regularly report on their efforts towards and progress made in preventing and responding to violence and harassment of workers, and making transparent their data on sexual harassment complaints and outcomes;

(e) Strengthen regulatory frameworks for technology providers to ensure they prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls online.

## **C. Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work**

65. With regard to unpaid care and domestic work, the Working Group recommends that States:

(a) Ensure universal access to paid maternity, paternity and parental leave for all workers, including those in non-standard employment and informal work;

(b) Enable the equal sharing of paid and unpaid care work between women and men by providing universal paid parental leave for all parents and through specific interventions to increase men's uptake of parental leave, including "use it or lose it" provisions;

(c) Increase investments to ensure universal access to affordable and high quality childcare, disability and aged care services, ensuring access for both informal workers and those in non-standard forms of employment;

(d) Ensure universal access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services and information to all women and adolescent girls to enable them to exercise autonomy in decision-making about pregnancy and parenthood;

(e) Increase investments in basic infrastructure and services in urban and rural areas to free up women's time to engage in paid work;

(f) Ensure that care work is a central pillar of macroeconomic policies, in order to generate resources for and investments in care services, paid parental leave and social protection, with the aim of redistributing unpaid care and domestic work between the State and families and between women and men.

## **D. Disrupt structural patterns of "women's" and "men's" work**

66. In order to disrupt structural patterns of "women's" and "men's" work, the Working Group recommends that States:

- (a) Establish temporary special measures (quotas and targets) to ensure that women benefit from employment in high-growth areas (such as renewable energy and technology), with specific measures to ensure that women are equally represented in technical and leadership roles;
- (b) Establish temporary special measures (quotas and targets) to increase women and girls' participation in education in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics;
- (c) Establish targeted programmes for women's training and reskilling for occupations and industries that are at risk of automation;
- (d) Ensure equal access to ICTs for women;
- (e) Strengthen legal frameworks to introduce minimum wages for all workers and the legal obligation of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value;
- (f) Introduce regulations requiring employers to regularly report on their efforts towards and progress made in closing the gender pay gap, with disaggregated data on multiple grounds, including race, ethnicity and age, and on women's representation in different roles and levels of leadership;
- (g) Introduce specific measures, including education and training programmes and access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services and information, to ensure that young women transition from school to decent work opportunities and maintain their attachment to the workforce;
- (h) Introduce specific measures to increase men's participation in female-dominated sectors and women's participation in male-dominated areas.

**E. Ensure all women workers can enjoy their rights, without discrimination, including informal workers**

67. To ensure that all women workers can enjoy their rights without discrimination, the Working Group recommends that States:

- (a) Ensure informal and non-standard workers have access to workplace rights and entitlements, including access to social protection, health care, paid leave and occupational health and safety provisions, in particular providing protection in the context of economic and environmental shocks;
- (b) Ratify and implement the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families to ensure that migrant workers and domestic workers are protected against discrimination and abuse, and have access to rights and entitlements, including social protection, health care, paid leave and occupational health and safety provisions;
- (c) Remove all discrimination against migrant women workers, including in migration policies and laws, including employment laws, and introduce legal safeguards against their exploitation;
- (d) Ensure women's equal rights to own, control and access land, credit and other productive resources and the enjoyment without discrimination by peasant women and other women working in rural areas of all the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other People Working in Rural Areas, including decent employment, equal remuneration and social protection benefits, access to income-generating activities and freedom from all forms of violence.

**F. Create enabling conditions for women's collective action and organizing**

68. With a view to creating enabling conditions for women's collective action and organizing, the Working Group recommends that:

(a) Trade unions introduce specific measures to ensure women's equal representation in decision-making and the incorporation of women's specific concerns in organizing priorities and collective agreements, and establish policies to prevent and eliminate violence and harassment within unions;

(b) States ensure enabling conditions for women's collective action, including securing the right to freedom of association for all workers, not excluding those in non-standard and informal forms of work, guaranteeing protection for those organizing and claiming their rights, in accordance with the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)

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