

Concept note.

**Commemoration of the International Day of Care and Support:
Investing In Human Rights-Based Care and Support Economy in Attaining Agenda 2030**

Date: Tuesday, October 29, 2024.

Time: 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Location: Gallery Area, 3rd Floor, Building E, Palais des Nations

[Registration Link.](#)

Background

Recent health, climate change, and conflict crises unveiled the flaws and weaknesses in our care systems. Since the COVID-19 Pandemic, there has been increasing recognition among developing partners of the centrality of care and support for the well-being and prosperity of our societies and economies. Yet, the undervaluing and gendered division of care and support work, both unpaid and paid, continues to be a major driver of poverty and gender inequality. The lack of access to rights-based care and support isolates and excludes children, younger and older adults who require care and support, and deprives them of autonomy, agency and personal development in their lives. Women and girls often face gender inequality in receiving care and support, too. Being migrants, minorities, and Indigenous Peoples, people face further discrimination both in providing and requiring care and support, often due to the impact of historical inequality and deprivation.

The [2024 Gender Snapshot](#) shows that globally, women spend 2.5 times as many hours a day on unpaid care and domestic work as men.¹ This effect is felt throughout women's lifespan affecting their socio-economic rights, with data showing that 606 million women were unavailable for employment in 2018 due to unpaid care and support work compared to only 41 million men.² With just five years left to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the world is off-track to achieve gender equality targets. Recognising and valuing unpaid care and domestic work will not only contribute to the achievement of SDG 5.4, but it will also be crucial to achieve SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and contribute to the realisation of all Sustainable Goals.

One in every 12 women employees works as a domestic worker. Globally, approximately 36 per cent of domestic workers are wholly excluded from the protection of labour laws. Migrant workers are also overrepresented in home-based care and support services, yet their human rights and the rights of their family members are neglected, often owing to the design of migration pathways. More than half of the 2.4 billion children worldwide (over 1.77 billion) have no access to social protection³ and 7.1 million children are engaged in child labour in domestic work.⁴ On the other hand, more older women and older

¹ UN Women [Gender Snapshot 2024](#)

² [ILO, 2018. Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work.](#)

³ [Inclusive social protection essential for child rights, says Deputy High Commissioner | OHCHR](#) and [A/HRC/54/36](#)

⁴ ILO, [Making Decent Work a Reality for Domestic Workers: Progress and Prospects Ten Years after the Adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention](#), 2011 (No. 189).

persons with disabilities find themselves in care and support institutions, where violence, abuse and neglect are more likely to occur.⁵

Current metrics, including Gross Domestic Product (GDP), fail to recognise unpaid care and domestic work as an economic activity, rendering the value of care and support work invisible. However, the care economy holds immense economic value, enhancing human well-being, fostering more resilient societies, strengthening social ties, and driving economic dynamism and prosperity.⁶ This has been fully recognized in the recently adopted ILO [Resolution on decent work and the care economy](#) which shapes a common understanding of the care economy and care work, which includes both paid and unpaid, and direct and indirect care, its provision within and outside the household, as well as the people who provide and receive care and the employers and institutions that offer care. The resolution recognizes that the care and support economy is critical for contributing to decent work, achieving gender equality and inclusion, addressing other inequalities, promoting economic and social development, a human-centred approach to the future of work, just transition and social justice.

The Resolution also calls for urgent action to transform care and support systems, advance gender equality and chart a course to sustainable development and social justice, further calling upon all stakeholders to implement the 5R Framework for Decent Care Work recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care and support work, and rewarding and representing paid care work. It furthermore underscores the need for promoting decent work for care and support workers and guaranteeing their representation, social dialogue, and collective bargaining, as well as investment in high-quality, affordable, adequate and accessible care services, including care and support services, including childcare, health care and long-term care for all workers and support services for persons with disabilities.

The recognition of the value of care and support work is particularly crucial now even as the deficits in care and support systems persist globally and are further compounded by health, humanitarian, economic, and environmental crises – deepening already existing inequalities; perpetuating cycles of poverty, including the *feminisation of poverty*; and hinders gender equality and women’s empowerment and failing to ensure no one is left behind.

In October 2023, the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution [A/HRC/RES/54/6](#) highlighting the need to invest in the care and support economy and to create robust, resilient gender-responsive, disability-inclusive and age-sensitive care and support systems with full respect for human rights. The resolution recognized “the importance of respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of paid and unpaid caregivers and care and support recipients” and the equal distribution of care and support work and resulting distribution of time as a fundamental basis to achieve gender equality”. The expert workshop mandated by this resolution was held on 16 and 17 October 2024 to address “the human rights of women, persons with disabilities, children and older persons as caregivers, as well as receivers of care and support,

⁵ [A/HRC/54/26: Violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons](#) | OHCHR , para 18.

⁶ UN Women Policy Brief 5 – [Redistributing Unpaid Care and Sustaining Quality Care Services: A Prerequisite For Gender Equality](#) (2016).

and for their self-care from a gender equality and human rights perspective”. The workshop brought together UN entities, academics, and women’s organizations, including grass-roots women’s organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, child rights organizations, older persons and their representative organizations and representatives of employers’ and workers’ organizations. The outcome of the discussion will inform what human rights standards are to be applied in the care and support economy.

Additionally, in July 2024 [UN System Policy Guidance on Transforming Care Systems](#) was launched establishing a UN framework on care and support. Furthermore, UN Women’s latest publication on [Harnessing social protection for gender equality, resilience, and transformation](#) underscores that integrated and coordinated approaches which recognise and support women’s multiple roles as workers and caregivers are critical in responding to complex challenges posed by cascading crises, and in steering broader structural changes in economies and societies that lead towards sustainability, equality and social justice.

Member States, at the panel discussion on human rights-based and gender-responsive care and support systems at the 50th HRC Session,⁷ also stressed the need for economic justice and strong social protection systems that further address and eliminate patriarchal and gender stereotypes. By investing in comprehensive, intersectional, and gender-responsive care and support policies and social protection systems that close gender gaps and empower women, countries can get back on track to reach the SDGs, further ensuring sustainability and resilience for economies, societies, and the planet.⁸

Objectives and expected outcome.

In July 2023, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a landmark Resolution ([A/RES/77/317](#)) to observe an annual International Day of Care and Support on 29 October.

In this context, UN Women (as the lead agency for 2024) is facilitating the UN’s second observance of the International Day of Care and Support on 29 October 2024, in collaboration with the ILO, OHCHR, and other development partners. The event will bring together UN Member States, UN Agencies, actors of the labour market, CSOs, NGOs and other stakeholders in a stocktaking discussion that recognises the contributions of the care and support economy, discuss the current challenges, exchange lessons learned, and explore ambitious opportunities that will result in a significant push to transform care and support systems in attaining the 2030 SDGs.

Methodology and format of the event.

The event will be an in-person high-level commemoration event that will bring together participants from Member States, including Permanent Representatives, UN Agencies, UN Special Procedures, International Organizations, NGOs and CSOs.

⁷ Watch the Panel Discussion [here](#) and the concept note of the panel [here](#).

⁸ [Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions](#)

Agenda and Speakers

Moderator: **Ms. Adriana Quiñones**, Head, Human Rights and Development, UN Women Geneva Office

Opening Remarks:

- **Ambassador Marcos Gómez Martínez**, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva
- **Ms. Chidi King**, Branch Chief, Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (GEDI), ILO

Speakers:

- **Ambassador Tovar Da Silva Nunes**, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
- **Ms. Ilona Alexander**, Human Rights Officer on behalf of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls.
- **Ms. Afaf Abounouadar**, Executive Director, Make Mothers Matter.

Interventions from the floor

- Statements from interested delegates.

Closing Remarks:

- **Mr. Todd Howland**, Chief, Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch, OHCHR
- **Ambassador Francisca Méndez Escobar**, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva