



**Business Resilience:**  
**Boosting business in the new scenario. Opportunities for women.**

**Virtual session: August 13<sup>th</sup> 2020 – 9:30 am Lima, Peru time**

**Concept note:**

**“Win- Win: Gender Equality means Good Business”** is a programme jointly implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Women, funded by the European Union. Through the promotion of the “business case”, this programme aims to promote gender equality to strengthen women’s economic empowerment and leadership as a basis for sustainable, inclusive, and equitable growth.

The programme supports employers’ organizations, businesses, and workers in six target countries in the Americas: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and Uruguay. It focuses on the development of capacities of public and private sector actors to fully understand the economic benefits that gender equality offers. By strengthening women’s business leadership, promoting women’s participation at work and applying measures to address the gender pay gap, the programme supports women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

The Programme is implemented through different activities organized around the following three pillars:

1. Strengthen the technical and influencing capacity of employers’ organizations and their members on the business case for gender equality through evidence-based knowledge exchange, sharing of good practices and other capacity development efforts;
2. Establish cooperation networks and opportunities for dialogue among companies led by women; and
3. Find creative ways to support women-led innovation and business ventures in their efforts to access finance and build and grow their businesses.

The Programme seeks to accelerate the reduction of gender gaps in women participation in the labour market and their access to employment opportunities. Despite the considerable progress made towards realizing the business case for gender equality, the COVID-19 pandemic presents a threat to these gains. As ILO constituents navigate the current crisis, it is crucial to safeguard these gains achieved on gender equality and women's empowerment and enable businesses to support their female talent.

Epidemics and economic crises can have a disproportionate impact on specific segments of the population, which can trigger worsening inequality. Based on experience and current information on the COVID-19 pandemic and insights from previous crises, the socioeconomic impacts of this pandemic are hitting women the hardest and exacerbating existing social and economic inequalities.

Emerging numbers indicate that COVID-19 affects everyone – executives, managers, employees, and workers – in personal and professional ways, although it looks different for women and men. If we do not act on this, there is a severe risk of further reducing female labour-force participation and triggering a regression of gains made in women's equal economic participation. Moreover, considering that women are over-represented in more affected sectors (such as services, hospitality, tourism and manufacturing) and that the closure of schools or care systems exacerbates the existent unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work, businesses need to pay considerable attention to their female workforce – both from a health as well as from a productivity perspective.

More specifically, the increase care burden coupled with gendered social expectations disproportionately affect working-women. They are more heavily concentrated in direct service jobs that cannot be done remotely or are deemed non-essential, meaning women who are forced to stay home to care for children are vulnerable to losing their jobs.

It is essential to provide companies with gender analysis, data, and expertise to develop and implement gender-sensitive business response, and gain commitment from the business community and the public sector to ensure that women's empowerment are not retracted during the COVID-19 crisis.

This event is the first step to explore what actions companies have implemented in the workplace to continue their activities in COVID-19 context. Specifically, it aims to learn if companies have developed gender equality actions or initiatives, and the government measures and policies they need to enable their possibilities to do so.

During the meeting, four CEOs from Latin-American companies will share the initiatives and actions they have applied in their businesses to continue carrying out their activities, and what steps they are planning to execute when they resume their operations. Likewise, the CEOs will comment on what gender equality initiatives or policies will be useful in this new scenario.

These exchanges will be documented and enable more business owners to understand how they could enhance their resilience to the crisis and continue their activities in the new normality.

This dialogue will also provide a unique opportunity to review and collect information on these actions, as well as on lessons learned. A survey will be launched at the end of the event so more enterprises could share their responses to COVID-19.

### **Information on this exchange**

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**Date:** August 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Time:** 8:30 hs. Costa Rica

9:30 hs. de Perú, Ecuador, Colombia, Jamaica, México

10:30 hs. de Chile

11.30 hs Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay

### **Event Format**

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The ILO, UN Women, the EU and the IOE will open the exchange. Subsequently, CEOs from four Latin-American companies will share the initiatives and actions they have applied in their businesses to continue carrying out their activities, and what steps they are planning to execute when they resume their operations. Likewise, the CEOs will comment on what gender equality initiatives or policies will be useful in this new scenario.

During the panel discussion, an interactive session will be held using an online tool to measure the opinion and get feedback from the audience, which will trigger and generate questions to the CEOs on key themes that will be prompted.

Once the dialogue ends, a survey will be launched to explore what companies have done to continue their activities in the COVID-19 context. Likewise, the questionnaire will look at what enterprises are planning to do when they resume their businesses, and what measures and policies are necessary for them to implement gender equality initiatives.

The survey will be sent to participants, and companies and Employers Organisations which are part of Win-Win Programme

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the exclusive responsibility of the Win-Win Programme and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.