

Empowering Women through reducing Unpaid Work: A regional Analysis of Europe and Central Asia UNECE

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EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH REDUCING UNPAID WORK: A REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



UNECE - UN Women series:
Rethinking Care Economy and
Empowering Women for Building
Back Better

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations. Its major aim is to promote economic integration across its 56 member States located in Europe, North America and Asia. UNECE provides policy-oriented analysis, advice and capacity building to member States and cooperates with partner agencies, civil society and key actors from the private sector.

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This report is the result of a collaboration between UNECE and UN Women in the frame of the United Nations Development Account tranche 13 project: Strengthening Social Protection for Pandemic Response, in particular its workstream on strengthening care policies with a gender lens, implemented with the participation of UN regional commissions and cooperating partners, including UN Women regional offices.

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For a list of any errors or omissions found subsequent to printing please visit our website.

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Building back Better

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ACRONYMS

AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMD	Armenian Dram
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Georgian Lari
KGS	Kyrgyzstani Som
KZT	Kazakhstani Tenge
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SORS	Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
TJS	Tajikistani Somoni
UAH	Ukrainian Hryvnia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States dollars
UZS	Uzbekistani Som
WBG	World Bank Group
WHO	World Health Organization

SUMMARY

This report is part of a series of knowledge products developed to strengthen social protection for the pandemic response.¹ It is focused on rethinking the care economy and empowering women.

This report presents a thematic regional analysis of unpaid work in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) and the resulting empowerment women gain when their responsibility for such work is reduced. The report focuses on Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo,² Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Apart from three country case studies (on Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova and Serbia) the other reports in the series cover the 56 UNECE member States, including the countries of Europe and countries in North America (Canada and United States), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and Western Asia (Israel).

A key feature of the EECA region is its demographic transition from population growth to population ageing. In the 20 years between 1995-2000 and 2015-2020, the total fertility rate remained below replacement level, increasing marginally from 1.7 to 1.8 live births per woman aged 15 to 49. Over the same time period, the share of persons aged 65 years or older increased from 13 to 17 per cent. These demographic changes have significant implications for care work.

Countries in the region are very diverse, ranging from energy-exporting economies to landlocked countries. The region's variety of social welfare systems tend to have weak universal social protection systems and social benefit schemes. Notwithstanding significant commonalities, women's experiences also vary significantly among and within these countries and across age, class, ethnicity and other dimensions of inequality. Historically, some countries have had high rates of

female labour force participation and investment in universal, public childcare. However, these shrunk in the late 1980s and early 1990s during the transition to market economies and the dismantling of public services and public employment. Further, even in the context of full female labour market participation, women remained responsible for unpaid work, with housework and childcare seen as 'women's work'.

Unpaid work is recognized as a critical barrier to gender equality and women's economic and social empowerment. Formally categorized as non-market work, unpaid work is not included in gross domestic product (GDP) calculations and remains invisible to decision- and policymakers. Social and cultural gendered norms related to unpaid care work remain stubbornly entrenched.

While the 'men as breadwinners' and 'women as caregivers' model may not be universal, it is still the normative construct for gender relations in the EECA region. Similar to other regions across the world, women in the EECA region undertake the majority of unpaid work; in no country is unpaid work equally shared by women and men.

Nine countries in the EECA region have conducted at least one time use survey between 2008 and 2015.³ The surveys have shown that, on average across the region, women devote five hours per day to unpaid work. In contrast, men devote an average of two hours per day on unpaid work. This gender gap in unpaid work varies widely among countries; depending on the country, women spend from 1.5 to 4 times as much time as men do on unpaid work. Moreover, while men work longer hours in paid employment, women continue to work longer total hours than men do overall, bearing a 'double burden' or 'second shift'.

1 The UNECE - UN Women series: Rethinking Care Economy and Empowering Women for Building back Better forms part of a collaboration by wider UN Development Account tranche 13 project: Strengthening Social Protection for Pandemic Response. The project aims at strengthening national capacities to design and implement social policies for rapid recovery from COVID-19 and for increased resilience to future exogenous shocks. The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia collaborated to implement the project for the region.

2 All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

3 A time use survey is a specialized type of household survey that collects information on how people allocate their time to different tasks and activities.

This report examines four pathways that influence and shape women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work and that affect women's empowerment. These pathways are: **access to, and opportunities in, the labour market; social and cultural norms; social care infrastructure; and the legal and institutional environment (including social protection and employment rights)**. These pathways intersect with the social, political and economic context of the EECA, which shapes — and is shaped by — country-specific characteristics of countries within the region. Such characteristics include the importance of urban-rural differences, the extent of migration, the informal economy, youth unemployment, the heterogeneity of women's experiences, ethnicity and socioeconomic group.

Participation in the labour market is a key source of economic empowerment. Male labour force participation rates in the EECA region are similar to global rates. In contrast, there is considerable variation for women, even though historically their participation in paid employment has been high in some EECA countries. Central Asia had a subregional average women's labour force participation rate of 70 per cent. Eastern Europe had an average of 84 per cent, with the lowest level in the Republic of Moldova at 54 percent.

Industrial and occupational segregation by gender is a typical feature of labour markets, and the EECA labour markets are no exception. Despite increases in women's workforce participation, women are more likely to be employed in casual, poorly paid/undervalued and insecure work. Part-time employment among women in the EECA region remains low (with the exception of Azerbaijan and Armenia), which leads to many women turning to the informal sector to seek shorter employment hours.

Since the mid-1990s, all EECA countries have made progress in adopting gender equality mechanisms, including legislation and policies aimed at advancing women's empowerment and achieving greater gender equality in different spheres of social life. Particular attention has been paid to legislation and the elimination of discriminatory practices to address specific problems, such as gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. **Despite this progress, some women in the EECA region continue to face high levels of discrimination in social norms, and there remains a substantial gap between changing attitudes and gender roles in practice.** In 2018, survey research

from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia found that a majority of participants agreed that it "is a mother's responsibility to change diapers, feed and bathe children."

The gendered impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is clear both in terms of women's employment as well as in the intensification of unpaid care. Women have been affected more than men by pandemic-related unemployment, reduced working hours and the loss of wages. These effects have been more pronounced among women living in Southern and Eastern Europe than among their Western European counterparts. Similarly, the incomes of women working in the informal sector having declined dramatically. Analysis by UN Women on COVID-19 and informal workers' lost income estimates that they lost an average of 70 per cent of their income in Europe and Central Asia. Further, as the crisis unfolded in the EECA region, millions of people left cities and returned to rural areas. This had two consequences: it intensified rural women's unpaid care and domestic work burden and it exposed the reliance of wealthier countries and families on migrant women workers for social and care services.

In relation to the intensification of unpaid care work, much greater numbers of women than men have reported doing more household chores and spending more time on unpaid care work since the start of the pandemic. In the EECA region, 70 per cent of women spent more time on at least one unpaid domestic work activity, compared to 59 per cent of men, although this varies across subregions. The increase in time spent on domestic work for women has been particularly high in Kyrgyzstan and North Macedonia.

The report concludes with policy recommendations that prioritize the importance of unpaid work as a barrier to women's economic empowerment. **Removing or ameliorating this barrier will require specific interventions in three key areas: the labour market, the social care infrastructure and gender-specific social norms.** While significant progress is required across all these fronts, the most effective policy intervention to empower women through reducing unpaid work is the provision of institutionalized, high-quality, affordable childcare, especially for young children. This reduction in women's unpaid care work responsibilities will facilitate their labour force participation and will help create job opportunities.

In the labour market, greater flexibility in work patterns (e.g. part-time/reduced hours, flexible scheduling, shorter work weeks) is necessary to encourage a more equal distribution of unpaid work at the family level and to help women and men find a better work-life balance. This can be supported with paid parental leave for both women and men accompanied by non-transferable paternity leave.

There also needs to be wider investment to address labour-intensive aspects of unpaid work that thwart women's empowerment and impact on their time. For example, investing in sustainable agriculture and rural development will reduce rural-urban inequalities, rural poverty, food insecurity and will reduce the ongoing depopulation of rural areas.

Although deep-seated social and cultural norms related to gender roles are slow to change, they are not intractable. **Progress towards gender equality through the redistribution of unpaid work would allow men to benefit from new employment and family responsibility arrangements. Essential to this is revaluing and destigmatizing unpaid work, which will disrupt the current gender, racialized and class underpinnings of household and care work. Achieving these long-overdue changes will unlock the potential of women's economic empowerment.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Unpaid work is fundamental to economic life and to individual and societal well-being. Feminist scholars and activists have long identified unpaid care work as a critical barrier to gender equality and women's economic and social empowerment. Formally categorized as non-market work, countries' GDP and national accounting systems do not include or account for unpaid care work (Alonson et al., 2019). Thus, it remains invisible and taken for granted by decision- and policymakers. Considered to be a private family or household matter, social and cultural gendered norms around unpaid care work remain stubbornly persistent.

Similar to other regions across the world, women in the EECA region undertake the disproportionate majority of unpaid work. Such work evolves throughout their lives, but is particularly acute when women marry and/or become a mother. Time use survey data shows that women spend on average three times longer on unpaid work than men. This varies among countries, ranging from 1.5 times longer in North American countries to 6.7 times longer in South Asian countries; in no country is unpaid work equally shared by women and men (Ferrant and Thim, 2019).

Evidence shows that as countries get richer, the amount of time spent on unpaid work falls, particularly in relation to domestic chores due to greater access to improved household technologies and labour-saving devices. In contrast, in poorer countries, unpaid care work tends to be linked to subsistence requirements that are often much more labour-intensive and time consuming (e.g. providing food and shelter, fetching water and caring for family members (ILO, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the centrality of unpaid work to social and economic life in terms of increased care burdens for those with the virus both within the home and in hospitals, with government lockdown measures that require people to stay home and with the closure of so-called non-essential workplaces, schools and childcare settings.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having gendered effects similar to natural disasters and other health crises (Bahnet al., 2020). Rapid Gender Assessments undertaken by UN Women stress that the pandemic is leading to backsliding in gender equality; it is impacting on

women's access to health and reproductive services and their paid employment, increasing their risk of unemployment and gender-based violence, and intensifying their unpaid household and care work (UN Women, 2020).

Notwithstanding that it is amplifying existing inequalities (WBG, 2020), some commentators are suggesting that COVID-19 has the potential to disrupt gender roles, thereby presenting an opportunity to transform policy and decision-making around unpaid and paid care work (Sevilla and Smith, 2020). Policymakers and development partners who have placed women's empowerment at the top of the global agenda have explicitly recognized women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work.

In particular, unpaid work has become a critical part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Central to this has been the 3Rs framework (Elson, 2017) of advancing the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid work in order to facilitate women's empowerment and to shape analysis and policy development.

One key area that unpaid care work has a direct impact on is women's labour force participation, which in turn affects their economic and social empowerment. This manifests itself in occupational segregation, women's and men's differing job opportunities and in the creation of gender gaps in incomes and pensions (OECD, 2019).

Women are typically over-represented among the informal workforce and as paid family labourers (they often cite responsibilities for their children and a lack of childcare as a key reason for working in the informal sector). Informal work tends to provide little social protection and employment rights, such as access to sick pay and parental leave (ILO, 2018a). Although informal employment is a greater source of employment for men (28 per cent) than for women (23 per cent) in Central and Eastern Europe, women in the EECA region tend to hold the most vulnerable informal jobs.

Note, however, that a shift to formal employment is not necessarily a panacea. As more egalitarian countries show, while participation in the formal labour force is pivotal to women's social and economic empowerment,

it does not in itself reduce (or induce the redistribution of) unpaid work (ILO, 2018a).

The primary focus of this thematic analysis of unpaid work is Europe and Central Asia. The diverse countries range from energy-exporting economies to landlocked countries. Notwithstanding significant commonalities, women's experiences vary among and within countries and across age, class, ethnicity and other dimensions of inequality. Historically, some countries in the region have had high rates of female labour force participation and investment in universal, public childcare. However, these shrunk in the late 1980s and early 1990s during the transition to market economies and the dismantling of public services and public employment. Further, even in the context of full female labour market participation, women remained responsible for unpaid work, with housework and childcare seen as 'women's work'.

This report examines four pathways that affect women's empowerment and that influence and shape women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work. These pathways are: access to, and opportunities in, the labour market; social and cultural norms regarding gender roles; social care infrastructure; and the legal and institutional environment, including social protection and employment rights (see Figure 1). These areas overlap and causality runs in both directions.

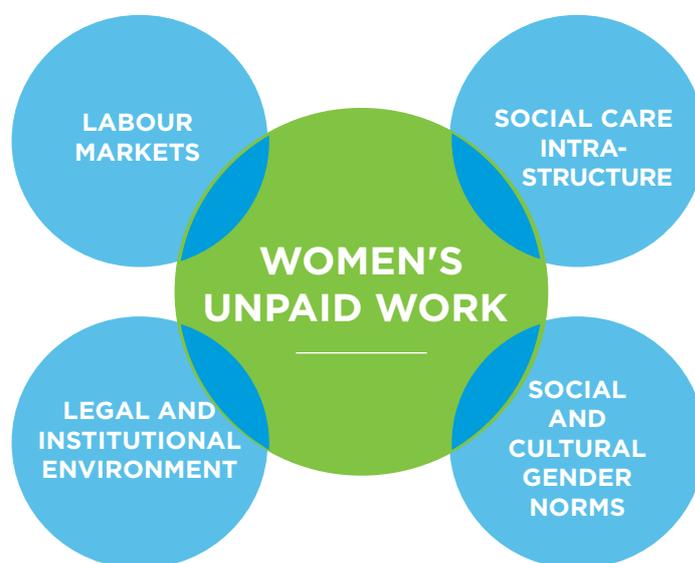
These pathways intersect with the social, political and economic context of the EECA, which shapes — and is shaped by — country-specific characteristics, including the importance of urban-rural differences, the extent of migration, informal economies and the heterogeneity of women's experiences.

Following this introduction, the report is organized into the following five sections:

- ▶ Section two focuses on defining and measuring unpaid work.
- ▶ Section three provides a brief overview of the EECA context, including regional trends in unpaid work.
- ▶ Section four explores the four pathways that influence and shape women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work and that are relevant to women's empowerment.
- ▶ Section five considers unpaid work in the context of COVID-19, with the pandemic having put the focus squarely on the centrality of care work to social and economic life. It also outlines key trends and reviews some of the key measures that governments and organizations have introduced in order to support workers and carer providers.
- ▶ Section six presents the report's recommendations across key areas, including labour markets, social care infrastructure, sociocultural norms and legal and institutional infrastructures.

FIGURE 1:

Four Pathways Influencing Women's Responsibility for Unpaid Work



2. UNPAID WORK: DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENTS

Across the world, the majority of unpaid work has traditionally been provided by the family or household, based on kinship and family relations (ILO, 2018). According to Elson (1997), unpaid work can be defined as “all non-market, non-remunerated activities including both relational work and direct care of persons, such as children or the elderly, and indirect care, such as cooking, cleaning or fetching water.”

This report follows this definition of unpaid work as constituting both care and domestic responsibilities. Such care and domestic tasks vary in physical effort and time-intensity, which in turn depend on location (often more challenging in developing countries and rural locations), socioeconomic status, age and stage in the life course, marital status and number of children (Ferrant and Thim, 2019).

SDG 5 recognizes the importance of measuring and addressing unpaid care work to advance gender equality through adoption of Target 5.4 (see Box 1). In September 2015, the United Nations Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment went further and highlighted the need to recognize, reduce and redistribute (“3Rs”) unpaid care work as one of seven key drivers of women’s economic empowerment (Elson, 1997; Ferrant Thim, 2019).

BOX 1:
SDG 5.4

Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

EECA countries are at varying stages of nationalizing and assessing their capacity to produce and use the statistics needed to monitor SDG progress and gender-responsive SDG prioritization. Although data production is relatively strong in EECA countries, only 42 per cent regularly produce statistics on unpaid work and a mere 7 per cent produce satellite accounts

of household production (UN Women, 2019a). Among the challenges is the lack of data disaggregated by sex and in terms of intersectionality (for example, migratory status, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and gender identity). This is a primary concern for all countries (UN, 2020a).

2.1

Measuring Unpaid Work

Time use surveys are the principal method for collecting data on unpaid work. They have become an important tool for shining a light on gender-based inequalities, for recognizing and estimating the contributions of women’s unpaid work to national well-being and for designing policies for women’s empowerment (OECD, 2019a). Regularly collected time-use data disaggregated by sex, age group and location is necessary for reporting on SDG Target 5.4. However, huge global gaps remain in the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data (Ferrant and Thim, 2019). Table 1 below identifies years in which time use surveys were undertaken in the EECA region. See Annex 1 for further elaboration on time use surveys.

TABLE 1:
Time Use Surveys by Country and Year in EECA

○ ALBANIA 2010-11	○ ARMENIA 2008	○ AZERBAIJAN 2008
○ BELARUS 2014-15	○ KAZAKHSTAN 2012	○ KYRGYZSTAN 2010
○ MOLDOVA 2011-12	○ SERBIA 2010-11	○ TURKEY 2006

Source: Adapted from Charmes (2019), UNECE Statistical Database <https://w3.unece.org/PXWeb2015/pjweb/en/STAT/>

2.2

The Gendered Nature of Unpaid Work

Across all societies, women undertake the majority of unpaid work; women carry out 76 per cent of the total amount of unpaid work, over three times more than men (ILO, 2018). Starting from an early age, girls are typically involved in domestic and care activities (more so than boys). In some countries, this has a negative impact on girls' ability to attend school. Women's rights advocates have long recognized unpaid work as a key dimension of gender inequality that negatively affects women's empowerment and limits the time available for paid employment, education and leisure. Further, it exacerbates gender gaps in employment outcomes, wages and pensions. ILO estimates that across the world, 606 million women, or 41 per cent of those currently inactive, are outside the labour market because of their unpaid household and care responsibilities (ILO, 2018).

Notwithstanding significant growth in female labour force participation in recent decades, there has been less progress in changing the distribution of unpaid work (referred to by Gershuny et al. (1994) as "lagged adaptation"). Thus, gender disparities in unpaid work persist.

During the last three decades, the gap between women's and men's time contributions to unpaid care work narrowed by only seven minutes per day (ILO,

2018). For the EECA region as a whole, women provide an average of about 4.5 hours of unpaid care work per day compared to just over two hours for men (ILO, 2018; Khitarishvili, 2016: 27). Moreover, while men work longer hours in paid employment, women continue to work longer total hours than men do overall, bearing a 'double burden' or 'second shift' (see Box 2). The next section of this report further discusses evidence from time use survey data relating to countries in the EECA region and the share of women's and men's unpaid work.

While the 'men as breadwinners' and 'women as caregivers' model may not be universal, it is still the normative construct for gender relations in the EECA region (ILO, 2018). Moreover, even in countries with a dual-earner paid employment model such as Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and as was the case historically in some countries in the EECA region, the association of domestic and care work still remains couched along gendered lines.

In wealthier countries, unpaid work tends to be passed on to other women (for example, migrant women, women in lower socioeconomic groups, women from ethnic minority groups) rather than more evenly distributed with men. This has made a significant contribution to more privileged women's economic

BOX 2:

Paid Hours Worked Versus Total Hours Worked in Kyrgyzstan and Serbia

In Kyrgyzstan, time use survey data from 2015 shows that while women spend 1.3 hours less each day in paid employment, they spend 2.8 hours more in unpaid work. The differences in the amount of time spent in unpaid work maintains irrespective of women's employment status or hours of paid work. For example, self-employed women work about 30 minutes more per day than men and still spend about 2 hours more than men on unpaid work.

In Serbia, women spend an average of 3.8 hours less each day in paid employment (ILOSTAT, 2020). But the 'second shift' of unpaid care work is primarily borne by women, with Serbian women spending over 50 per cent more time on unpaid activities than Serbian men. The latest time use report for Serbia reveals that regardless of employment status and education attainment, women aged 15 or older spend around 4.5 hours a day on unpaid work compared to just over 2 hours spent by men (SORS, 2016). Although the overall distribution of time spent on unpaid household activities became marginally more equitable between 2010 and 2015, the time use distribution of child care became more unequal. In the same time-frame, women spent an average of 14 minutes more per day on child care compared to men decreasing the average time spent per day by 7 minutes.

empowerment. In particular, changes associated with ageing populations — coupled with the reduction in health-care budgets and social care in many countries — have led to the emergence of global ‘care chains’. Care services thus have been transferred from poorer to richer countries, usually via female migrant labour. These in turn create ‘care drains’, resulting in women leaving their families to provide low-paid care work to others, shifting their family’s care responsibilities to other family members such as grandparents (usually grandmothers) or older female (usually sisters) children (Folbre, 2006; Ferrant and Thim, 2019).

Although typically invisible and taken for granted, unpaid work has increasingly gained recognition in mainstream economic policy discussions as a constraint to economic growth overall and to women’s economic empowerment in particular (Folbre, 2018; Sattar, 2012; Ferrant and Thim, 2019).

Historically defined as non-market work and considered to be outside the sphere of production, countries’ GDP and systems of national accounts do not include unpaid care work. Although activities such as fetching water or fuel are theoretically included, they are generally not well documented or accounted for (Folbre, 2018). Calculations indicate that 16.4 billion hours are spent on unpaid care work every day — the equivalent of 2 billion people working 8 hours per day without pay. This amounts to 9 per cent of global GDP — equivalent to US\$11 trillion (UN Women, 2020d). Table 2 sets out data relating to the value of unpaid work as a percentage of GDP for some countries within the EECA region.

TABLE 2:
Value of Unpaid Work as a Percentage of GDP by Women and Men, US\$PPP 2011

COUNTRY	WOMEN	MEN
ALBANIA	7.2	1.2
ARMENIA	9.3	1.6
KAZAKHSTAN	1.8	0.7
KYRGYZSTAN	1.5	0.6
SERBIA	10.5	4.9
TURKEY	10.6	2.7

Source: ILO (2018: 50)

Despite such costings and calculations, and the fact that socioeconomic literature and the SDGs are increasingly recognizing the value of unpaid care work as an important aspect of economic activity and as an indispensable factor contributing to the well-being of individuals, their families and societies (EIGE, 2020), the persistent devaluing of unpaid work to economies and societies continues to be a key structural factor limiting women’s empowerment.

Indeed, unpaid care work tends to remain largely taken for granted and overlooked by policy- and decision makers, as has been the case during the COVID-19 pandemic and the response and recovery measures pursued by governments (WBG, 2020).⁴

⁴ For further discussion of the COVID-19 response and recovery measures adopted by governments in the Europe and Central Asia region, see UNECE’s policy brief (2020a).

3. OVERVIEW OF THE EECA REGIONAL CONTEXT

The EECA region consists of a diverse range of countries. The onset of the 2008 Great Recession also had ramifications on countries and their partially reformed social welfare systems, which tended to be characterized by weak universal social protection systems and social benefit schemes (UN 2012).

This had profound implications for women, and particularly disadvantaged some countries (e.g. Turkey) and communities throughout the EECA (e.g. the Roma minority) (Sattar, 2012). Gender inequalities have also been shaped by differing impacts across urban and rural communities. With failing infrastructure in rural areas, a lack of basic services and unequal access to land, property and assets, rural women have been particularly vulnerable to poverty and inequality (Ramet 1999).

3.1

Demographic Changes

The EECA region is at the forefront of a global demographic transition from population growth to population ageing. In the 20 years between 1995-2000 and 2015-2020, the total fertility rate remained below replacement level, increasing marginally from 1.7 to 1.8 live births per woman aged 15 to 49, while the

share of persons aged 65 years or older increased from 13 to 17 per cent. Older persons account for around 18 per cent of the population of Western European countries without European Union membership, 19 per cent of newer European Union countries and 21 per cent of EU-15 countries. Young people aged 15 to 24 account for around 10 per cent of the population across all subregions except Central Asia (15 per cent) and South-Eastern Europe (15 per cent) (UN Women 2020a). Early pregnancies are prevalent in some countries in the region (UN Women, 2020a). Women's life expectancy has increased over the last two decades by close to four years, with women outliving men by as much as 10 years. Given women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work, such demographic changes are critical to women's empowerment across the life span.

3.2

Unpaid Work: Women and Men

In the EECA region, women devote an average of five hours per day to unpaid work. In contrast, men devote an average of two hours per day on unpaid work (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2:

Daily Time Spent on Unpaid Work and Paid Work (Hours within a 24-hour Period)

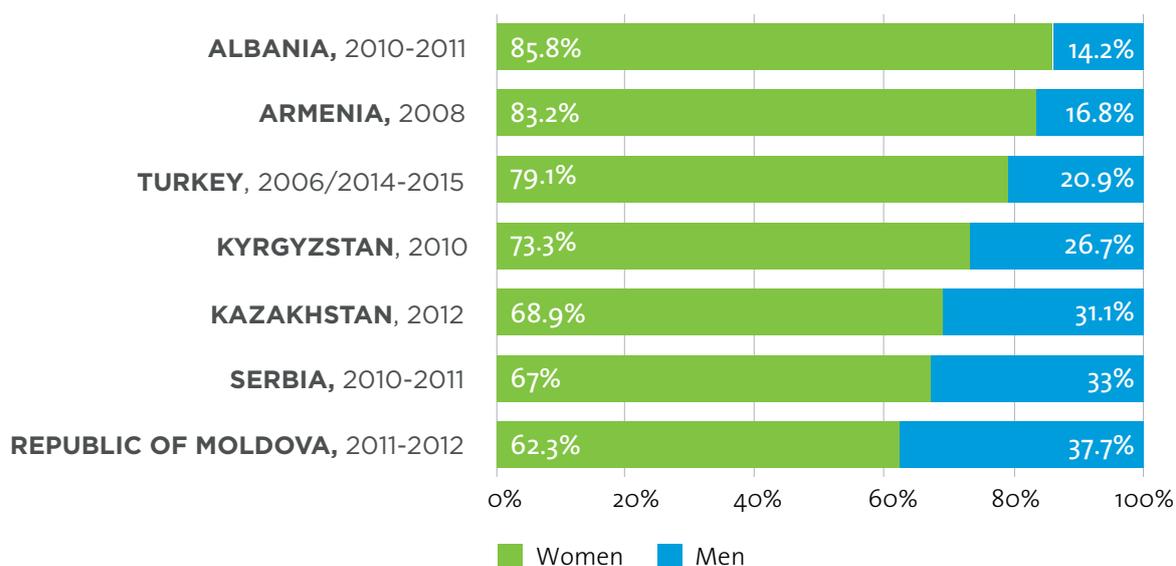
COUNTRY	TIME USE SURVEY YEAR	AGE	MEN'S PAID WORK	MEN'S UNPAID WORK	WOMEN'S PAID WORK	WOMEN'S UNPAID WORK
Albania	2010-11	10+	4.27	0.83	1.93	5.22
Armenia	2008	15-80	4.85	1.05	1.68	5.10
Azerbaijan	2008	15+	4.77	2.13	1.73	6.10
Belarus	2014-15	10+	4.63	2.52	3.20	4.87
Kazakhstan	2012	10+	3.83	1.90	2.52	4.12
Kyrgyzstan	2015	12+	3.60	2.43	2.02	4.12
Moldova	2011-12	10+	3.60	2.77	2.78	4.75
North Macedonia	2014-15	10+	3.80	1.38	2.42	4.27
Serbia	2010-11	15+	3.77	2.45	2.12	4.98
Turkey	2014-15	15+	4.40	1.52	1.27	5.52
Tajikistan	2007	-	-	-	3	4.6

Source: UN Statistical database, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/timeuse/>; UNECE Statistical Database <https://w3.unece.org/PXWeb2015/pxweb/en/STAT/>

The regional average aside, the gender gap in unpaid work varies widely across the EECA region. Depending on the country, women spend between 1.5 and 4 times as much time as men do on unpaid work. For example, women in Kyrgyzstan spend between 10 and 20 per cent more time on paid and unpaid work than men (Khitarishvili, 2016). In Kyrgyzstan, women are twice

as likely as men to work over 61 hours per week in paid employment, making women's double burden of paid and unpaid work especially acute for women who work over 40-hour weeks (UNFPA and Promundo, 2018). Figure 3 provides an illustration of the share of unpaid work in select EECA countries based on ILO (2018) data.

FIGURE 3:
Select EECA Countries — Share of Total Unpaid Work



Source: Adapted from "Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work", ILO (2018)

Factors such as marital status and the presence of children in the household affect the division of unpaid care. For example, women living in couples with children spend more than twice the daily time on care work compared to women living in couples without children (5.3 hours per day compared to 2.4 hours). The centrality of child-rearing to the distribution of unpaid care work also differs across age groups. Among the employed engaged in daily care responsibilities, the daily time spent on unpaid care is higher in the childbearing age group (25–49), especially for women, resulting in a higher gender care gap than among the other age groups.

Gender gaps in care decline with age. In the 50–64 age group, employed women spent an average of three hours per day on care work compared to 2.5 hours per day spent by employed men (Charmes, 2019; ILO,

2018). People in this age group are typically involved in caring for their grandchildren and caring for adults (partner and parents). Indeed, most elderly care provision continues to be delivered informally within families and it remains highly gendered, with women more likely both to provide and receive care. More daughters than sons become their parents' primary caregivers and daughters are more likely to take up more intensive caring activities (EIGE, 2020).

The amount of time that women and men devote to unpaid work also differs across urban and rural settings. Data indicates that in the EECA region, women and men living in rural areas spend more time on unpaid work activities than their urban counterparts. This is linked to better access in urban areas to basic infrastructure, labour-saving devices and processed food. While the gender gaps in unpaid work in rural areas

are lower, this finding does not necessarily equate to a more equitable sharing of household responsibilities (ILO, 2018a). Instead, it tends to reflect gender specialization in unpaid work activities, with women in rural areas generally spending more time on cooking, cleaning and care while men engage in house and property maintenance (Khitashvili, 2016).

In rural areas, time and physical effort is often devoted to processing food products and to fetching water and fuel (ILO, 2018). Although water quality has improved in many parts of Europe over the past 20 years, an estimated 120 million people — particularly those living in rural and remote areas of the EECA region — do not have easy, proximate access to safe drinking water or adequate sanitation. Rural women in some parts of the region bear the brunt of the lack of access to safe drinking water and have to travel long distances to water sources. These sources are often contaminated, which has ramifications for rural women in terms of illness, time off from paid work, medical expenses and care-taking for themselves and their family members (Ferrant and Thim, 2019).

In relation to childcare, there are often high disparities in coverage between urban and rural areas. In many rural areas of Serbia, for example, the provision of childcare services (with the exception of compulsory preschool), is either very limited or entirely absent. Secondary childcare (childcare undertaken while parents are primarily involved in other activities) also influences urban and rural disparities. Often, mothers in rural areas combine activities (e.g. tending to vegetable plots) with childcare (FAO, 2014).

Care needs for children, disabled persons and persons with HIV/AIDS pose specific challenges for women's unpaid care responsibilities in rural areas. These challenges are particularly acute for women from Roma communities who often face discrimination in trying to access schooling, childcare and health services (OECD 2019a). For example, while childcare coverage is low in general in Serbia, especially in the early years (0–3 years of age), the coverage of children from vulnerable groups (including Roma children) is much lower.

4. PATHWAYS INTERSECTING WITH UNPAID WORK THAT IMPACT ON WOMEN'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Having outlined the key trends in unpaid work in EECA, the report now focuses on four pathways that influence and shape women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work and that affect women's empowerment. The four pathways analysed are: access to, and opportunities in, the labour market; social and cultural norms around gender roles; social care infrastructure; and the legal and institutional environment (including social protection and employment rights).

Providing policy solutions and recommendations to support women's social and economic empowerment entails situating the understanding how these pathways intersect with the social, political and economic context of EECA (which is shaped by — and shapes — the characteristics of countries within the region). This includes, for example, urban-rural differences, the extent of migration, the informal economy, the heterogeneity of women's experiences, ethnicity and socioeconomic group (including women in the Roma community and disabled women).

4.1

Labour Force Participation: Unpaid Work and Access to, and Opportunities in, the Labour Market

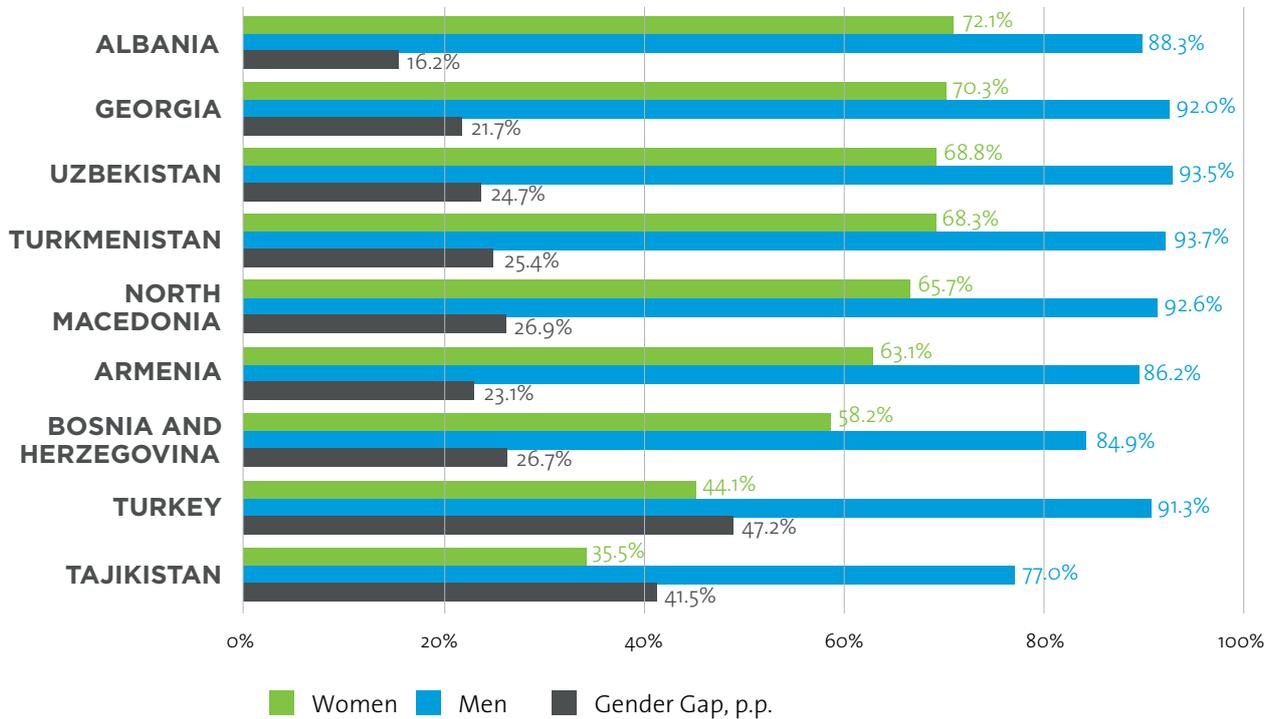
Participation in the labour market, a key source of economic empowerment, provides people with income, enhanced control over financial resources and greater decision-making power within the household. Globally, women's labour market participation has increased. In recent decades, active labour market policies have been introduced to help reconcile work and family responsibilities and narrow gender pay gaps. Nevertheless, labour markets remain profoundly gendered. Further, the use and implementation of such policies remains uneven across the world and have had unintended outcomes (e.g. increasing women's time poverty and imposing a double burden on women).

From 1995 to 2019, women's workforce participation across the world rose from 73 to 77 per cent, while men's dropped slightly (from 92 to 91 per cent). The largest workforce participation rate increase was in South-Eastern Europe (from 44 to 49 per cent), although this remains below the EU-15 average (from 69 to 80 per cent).

Male labour force participation rates in the EECA region are similar to global rates. In contrast, there is considerable variation for women, even though historically their participation in paid employment has been high in some EECA countries. Central Asia had a subregional average women's labour force participation rate of 70 per cent. Eastern Europe had an average of 84 per cent, with the lowest level in the Republic of Moldova (54 per cent) (OECD, 2019a; Khitarishvili, 2016).

FIGURE 4:

Women’s and Men’s Labour Force Participation Rates in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2019 (%)



Source: adapted from UN Women 2020a

4.1.1

Women with Children and Youth Unemployment

‘Stage in the life course’ is a factor that deeply interlinks with women’s paid employment. In some EECA countries, never-married women aged 25 to 49 were more likely to be employed than their married counterparts. In Turkey, for example, 52 per cent of never-married women (aged 25-49) were in employment compared to 34 per cent of their married counterparts. This was also the case in Armenia (57 per cent versus 48 per cent), Kyrgyzstan (76 per cent versus 56 per cent) and the Russian Federation (83 per cent versus 81 per cent) (see UN Women 2020a).

Women’s labour market participation tends to decline when women have children, which correlates with increased time spent on unpaid work. Across the world, women typically cite unpaid work as one of the main reasons for not being in paid employment or not working in the formal economy, whereas for men it is “being in education, sick or disabled” (ILO, 2018). It is estimated that 606 million women, or 41 per cent of those currently inactive, are outside the labour market because of their unpaid care responsibilities (many

of whom are mothers of young children) (ILO, 2018). Given this deep interrelation between inequalities in unpaid work and inequalities in the labour market, “no substantive progress can be made in achieving gender equality in the labour force without tackling inequalities in unpaid work” (ILO, 2018:38).

The available evidence from the Central Asia region reveals that the share of inactive women who report domestic responsibilities as the primary reason for their inactivity varies from 11 per cent in Kazakhstan to 61 per cent in Tajikistan (the much lower share in Kazakhstan is possibly due to better social infrastructure provisioning). Even when women in the region are in paid employment, they continue to face primary responsibility for domestic and care work, with higher numbers of lost working days to care for sick children or family members (Khitarihvili, 2016).

Research also finds that reconciling unpaid work responsibilities with paid employment affects women’s access to quality job opportunities and the

hours that they work. This affects women's economic empowerment and contributes to gender wage gaps and future pensions gaps. Among employed women in the EU, 60 per cent report experiencing some change in employment as a result of childcare responsibilities; only 17 per cent of employed men reported a similar change. Similarly, 18 per cent of employed women tend to reduce their working hours as a result of childcare responsibilities, while this is the case for only 3 per cent of men (EIGE, 2020).

Another factor with gender implications for unpaid work and paid employment, particularly in the Central Asia region, has been low youth labour force participation and high youth unemployment rates. The school-to-work transition is seen as key to addressing this, but there are gender-related concerns. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, young men are more likely to complete the school-to-work transition, whereas young women are more likely to withdraw from school or exit the labour force shortly after graduating to start families and take care of their households (Elder et al., 2015).

Over 40 per cent of employed youth (aged 15-24) are family workers, primarily in agriculture. Young women make up a higher share of employed youth than young men, and much higher than the 9 per cent among all working-age men and 19 per cent among all working-age women. In addition, more young workers are engaged in irregular work than they are in regular work, with sharp gender differences. In Kyrgyzstan, regular work is defined as work for pay with a contract of at least one year. Figures indicate that only 14 per cent of young women are employed in regular work (compared to 25 per cent of young men). This represents the largest gap among the former CIS countries (Elder et al., 2015).

In Serbia, youth unemployment, especially among young women, remains a key labour market issue; the unemployment rate among young people (aged 15-24) is 2.5 times that of adults. Improvements in the labour market situation over the last ten years have benefited young men more than young women.

Demographic factors, including migration, explain some of the trends. Young women's unemployment rate is 33 per cent. The main barriers to labour force participation have been identified as family responsibilities, lack of childcare and low levels of education (World Bank, 2019). Such challenges around youth employment and gender reverberate across the region with

implications for younger women's empowerment and women's ongoing responsibility for unpaid work.

4.1.2

Gender Segregation in the Labour Market

Industrial and occupational segregation by gender is a typical feature of labour markets; EECA labour markets are no exception. Despite increases in women's workforce participation, women are more likely to be employed in casual, poorly paid/undervalued and insecure work that is often stereotypically deemed 'women's work' (i.e. similar to their unpaid work responsibilities in the home). Women also tend to be employed in lower rather than senior levels.

The interrelationship between unpaid work and vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the labour market has profound implications for women's empowerment. For example, 2019 data shows that in Tajikistan, women constituted 45 per cent of total employment in education and 57 per cent of total employment in health care. In Kyrgyzstan, women constituted 72 per cent of education employment and 78 per cent of health-care employment. In Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, the female shares in education employment are 69, 74 and 64 per cent respectively; shares in health-care employment are 78, 77 and 70 per cent respectively (Khitarišvili, 2016).

In the EECA region, more than 22 per cent of women in the workforce are employed in agriculture (UN, 2020a). Excessive working hours are common in Eastern, Western and Central Asia, where close to half of men and women work long hours (ILO, 2018). Part-time employment among women in the EECA remains low, with the exception of Azerbaijan (24 per cent) and Armenia (34 per cent) (UN, 2020a), which leads to many women turning to the informal sector to seek shorter employment hours.

4.1.3

Informal Work

In many EECA countries, the prevalence of informal employment for women influences women's empowerment and responsibilities for unpaid work. Substantial numbers of women are consigned to vulnerable employment due to unpaid work, as own-account workers and due to work in the informal sector as domestic workers, in family-run businesses or family-owned farms. Such work does not offer the

social protection rights linked to formal employment. This means there is no right to maternity leave, paid sick leave or unemployment benefits.

Figures for 2019 indicate that 33 per cent of women in South-Eastern Europe and 33 per cent of women in Central Asia were engaged in vulnerable employment, yet there were diverse trends across the subregions. South-Eastern Europe tends to be characterized by women contributing as family workers (22 per cent among all employed women) and relatively large shares of female own-account workers (11 per cent). A quarter of women in Turkey (25 per cent) and over a third of women in Albania (37 per cent) contributed to family businesses (UN, 2020a).

Women in vulnerable employment in Central Asia were primarily engaged in self-employment (28 per cent of all employed women). Self-employment rates were the highest in Uzbekistan (33 per cent) and Tajikistan (38 per cent) (UN, 2020a).

BOX 3: Motherhood and Informal Work in the Republic of Moldova

In the Republic of Moldova mothers of infants (0 to 2 years old) and mothers of three and more children under 15 years of age are more likely to pursue work in the informal sector, which is typically informal own-account or unpaid family work. In Moldova, working mothers of three or more children under 15 years old are also more likely to live in rural areas and thus have limited choices, with informal work in (subsistence) agriculture often the only option to sustain their young children (World Bank Group, 2018).

4.1.4

Rural Life, Agriculture and Migration

In the EECA region, rural-urban differences can also affect women's unpaid work and labour force opportunities. The agricultural sector is the main employer in rural areas. The female share of agricultural employment is 54 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, 53 per cent in Tajikistan (FAO Gender and Land Rights Database, 2012) and 53 per cent in Uzbekistan (Alimdjanova 2009; FAO, 2012). However, women tend to be concentrated in seasonal and unskilled jobs and are underrepresented among agricultural workers responsible for decision-making and in management. For example, while women account for 58 per cent of unskilled agricultural workers in Tajikistan, they constitute less than 6 per

cent of agricultural decision-makers (FAO, 2012; World Bank Group, 2018).

Although the share of the population living in rural areas has been declining over the last two decades, close to half of the population in Central Asia still lives in rural areas. In Uzbekistan, for example, internal and external migration contributed to a decline in the per cent of the population living in rural areas from 64 per cent in 2007 to 49 per cent in 2011 (Khitashvili, 2016). Migration from and within Central Asia has transformed the labour market landscape of rural areas in particular, with complex consequences for unpaid work and the families and communities left behind.

Migration has fundamentally shifted the labour market landscape of many countries in the EECA region. When people face a lack of income-earning opportunities, they often adopt migration as a coping strategy. In Central Asia, for example, the collapse of the Soviet Union was associated with the movement of ethnic Russians out of Central Asia and forced migration triggered by military conflicts. But over the last two decades, labour migration has dominated, with the Russian Federation being the main recipient country, followed by Kazakhstan. These migration flows are linked to growing populations combined with limited employment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and shrinking populations (together with labour shortages) in some sectors of the economies of Kazakhstan and Russia.

Within countries, rural areas and regions with higher poverty tend to have higher migration rates. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, approximately 50,000 people leave the country every year to search for work. This general care deficit leaves many children (approximately 200,000) without proper care in their formative years. As a consequence, girls and young women make up the unpaid work gap, which negatively affects their empowerment while benefiting the care requirements of more privileged women (UN Women, 2019).

4.2

Social and Cultural Norms around Gender Roles

Promoting an equal distribution of unpaid work responsibilities within the household is critical for women's empowerment. Doing so calls for a strong commitment to challenge deeply entrenched discriminatory social norms in both the public and private spheres.

Social norms dictate what behaviours are deemed acceptable for women and men, which influences roles in the household and community, including the distribution of domestic and care tasks. The unequal distribution of care responsibilities is deeply embedded in social norms that view unpaid work as a female prerogative and tends to prevent men from assuming equal responsibilities (OECD, 2014). These norms hold across all regions, socioeconomic classes and cultures. While intergenerational changes are occurring, gender norms remain persistently entrenched and contribute to women’s ongoing responsibility for unpaid work and thus affect their empowerment (UNFPA and Promundo, 2018).

4.2.1

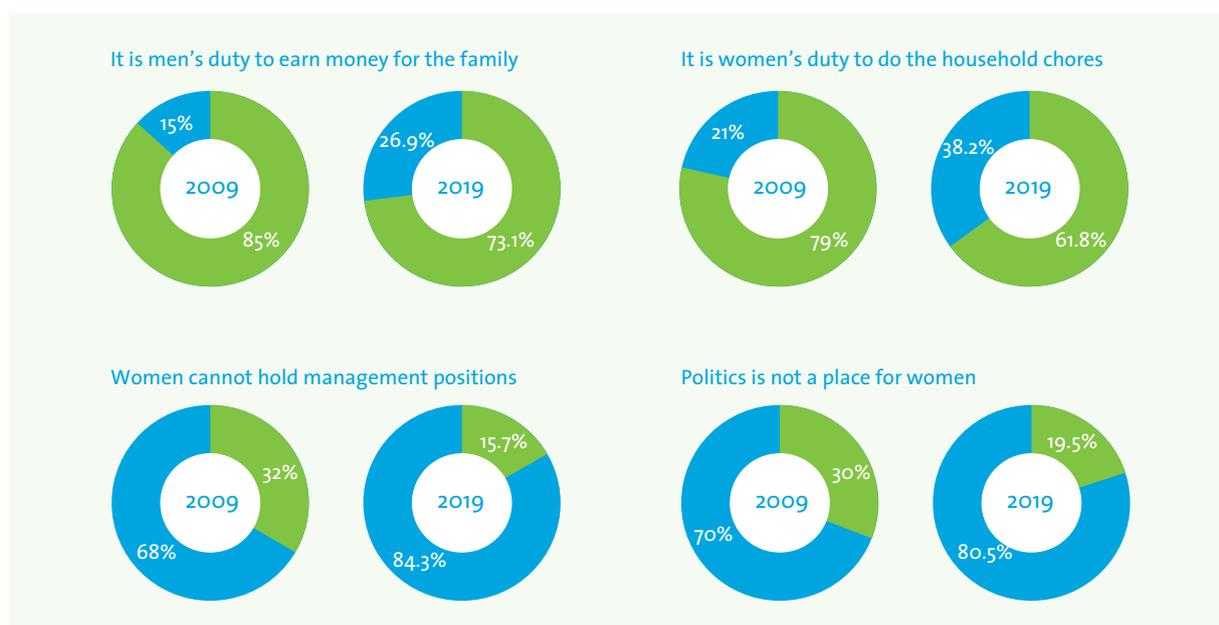
Social and Legislative Changes

In many EECA countries, women were not formally discriminated against in employment or education; many countries had high levels of women in paid employment. However, there is nevertheless a strong legacy of traditionalism in attitudes towards the family and gender roles. For example, fathers were not encouraged to share childcare responsibilities and there was no official notion of paternity leave (Funk and Mueller 1993). Furthermore, some gender equality and women’s rights issues, such as sexual harassment and domestic violence, were considered “private matters” and were absent from state and public debates (Bego and Spehar 2012; UN, 2010).

Since the mid-1990s, all EECA countries have made progress in adopting gender equality mechanisms, including legislation and policies aimed at advancing women’s empowerment and achieving greater gender equality in different spheres of social life. Particular attention has been paid to legislation and the elimination of discriminatory practices to address specific problems, such as gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace (Bego and Spehar, 2012). Despite this progress, some women in the EECA region continue to face high levels of discrimination in social norms, and there remains a gap between changing attitudes and gender roles in practice. Survey research from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia found that a majority of participants agreed that it “is a mother’s responsibility to change diapers, feed and bath children” (UNFPA and Promundo, 2018:17).

Figure 5 shows how the perceptions of traditional roles of women and men in Moldova have slightly improved over the last decade. However, there is a big difference in the speed and force of perception improvement. For example, the perception that it is a main duty to be the breadwinner for the family has decline from 85 to 73 over the decade, 2009-2019. Views on women’s participation in public life (politics and management roles) have also declined substantially whereas t Perceptions on family responsibilities however have not altered significantly over the period with gender traditional roles still firmly entrenched.

FIGURE 5:
Changing Perceptions about Gender Roles in the Republic of Moldova, %, 2009-2019



Source: Soros Foundation-Moldova; PDC: 2006-2016 Gender Barometer, 2017-2019 PDC Surveys

4.2.2

Violence against Women and Girls

Legislative frameworks guaranteeing freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes have gained global momentum. Among the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe, 45 have signed the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. This has brought in new laws, protections and services and increased access to justice. Yet gender stereotypes and discrimination continue to induce high rates of violence against women and girls. Homicides committed against women by men they know, for example, are high in the EECA region, and the World Health Organization estimates that 26 per cent of women in Eastern Europe and 23 per cent of women in Central Asia have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner (UNFPA, 2018).

4.3

Social Care Infrastructure

Access to formal childcare and social care infrastructure supports children's development, people's care needs and women's access to jobs. This infrastructure can also help reduce and redistribute unpaid work and contribute to women's empowerment. In contrast, a lack of public early childhood care and education services can exacerbate gender inequalities in employment and unpaid work and reinforce inequalities among parents and children (UN Women, 2019). UNECE emphasizes the importance of policies "to decrease the burden of care responsibilities on women," highlighting the care economy — and investment in the care economy — as essential to economic and social well-being and critical to achieving the SDGs (UNECE, 2010).

During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries adopted measures addressing paid employment and care work in their policy response packages. Such policy packages have included employment and income protections; measures addressing pay and working conditions in the paid care sector; reductions in working time; expanded access to paid family leave and paid sick leave; and childcare for essential workers. As governments move from mitigating the harshest impacts of the crisis to recovery and the longer-term imperative to 'build back better', it will be critical to ensure paid and unpaid care is central to governments' planning and decision-making processes (UNECE, 2010; UNECE, 2020a).

Although progress has been made in addressing gender-based violence in the EECA region, establishing effective multisectorial responses remains a priority. Persistent gender stereotypes and social norms often reinforce a power structure in which men are seen as breadwinners and women mainly as caretakers. Such views contribute to gender-based violence and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health care for women. They also contribute to fathers' limited involvement in child development, with men and boys having little exposure to more gender-equal attitudes (UNFPA, 2018) and thus perpetuating unpaid work as women's work, with ongoing ramifications for women's empowerment (UN Women, 2020a).

4.3.1

Childcare Infrastructure

Countries in the EECA region have historically attempted to reconcile work and home responsibilities. Prior to the late 1980s, not only was there free public day care, but workplaces made provisions for pregnant and breastfeeding women and offered generous maternity leave and pay. Because such policies and provisions were only available to women and were not framed in terms of family leave, they served to constrain women by social norms that regarded them as primarily responsible for children and the elderly. Following the dismantling of public employment and public care services in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a substantial drop in the number of childcare centres and pre-elementary nursery schools (Bego and Spehar, 2012). See box 4 in relation the decentralization of childcare in Serbia.

Data for 2011 showed that only 30 per cent of preschool-age children in Central Asia were enrolled in pre-primary education, compared to 72 per cent in Central and Eastern Europe and 85 per cent in Western Europe (Khitarishvili, 2016). In recent years, however, governments of Central Asian countries have prioritized investing in childcare infrastructure as one way of improving children's well-being and raising women's employment rates. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, investment has focused on providing childcare places for children under three years of age. In the last ten years, provision has nearly doubled for this age group from 13 per cent in 2010 to 24 per cent in 2017 (Khitarishvili, 2016).

BOX 4:**Serbia and the Decentralization of Childcare**

In Serbia, since the early 1990s, child and preschool care was left to municipalities. While care was predominantly publicly provided (with the exception of the compulsory preparatory preschool programme), it was through local municipalities rather than by the central government. This led to funding limitations and administrative capacity to support childcare and preschool education. Municipalities were clustered into groups depending on enrolment rates and average number of children per group. The level of under-development of municipalities correlated with coverage rates across all municipalities in Serbia. There has also been a lack of involvement of local organizations or grass-roots groups in wider, government discussions of childcare policies, which has had profound implications for the provision of childcare.

BOX 5:**Kyrgyz Republic**

The Government Plan 2018–2022 sets out a target enrolment rate for preschool education at 80 per cent by 2022. With the technical support of the UNICEF Country Office, Child Development Centres with trained staff in early childhood development are being piloted in eight libraries across the country.

The provision of childcare places has also increased in Georgia (from 5 per cent in 2007 to 32 per cent in 2017, Kazakhstan (from 7 per cent in 2007 to 28 per cent in 2017) and Serbia (from 11 per cent in 2007 to 23 per cent in 2016). In Kazakhstan, this has been associated with an increase in the female labour force participation rate. However, the relationship between formal childcare provision and women's labour market participation is not clear-cut. Turkmenistan, for example, has some of the lowest labour force participation rates in the EECA region yet has one of the highest enrolment rates for preschool children (Khitarishvili, 2016; UNCF, 2012).

In addition to differences among EECA countries, childcare coverage also varies subregionally and within countries. This leads to disadvantages for women in lower income groups, particularly women from the Roma community, women with lower education and women living in rural areas who struggle to access formal childcare facilities. Mothers in this category typically resort to informal support and rely upon community or family members to provide childcare.

People in rural areas continue to struggle to find available nursery care for children under the age of three. For example, in Kazakhstan, the overall coverage rate in 2010 for children aged one to six was 26 per cent.

However, the coverage rate ranged from 8 per cent in the rural Almatinskiy region to 54 per cent in the more urban Pavlodarskiy region (Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Statistics, 2011). In Kyrgyzstan, the overall coverage for one to six year-old in 2010 was 15 per cent. Coverage rates were higher in urban areas (30 per cent in 2010, rising to 34 per cent in 2017) than in rural areas (under 8 per cent in 2010, rising to 34 per cent in 2017) (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, 2019).

Some commentators (e.g. Short et al., 2002) suggested that the lack of social infrastructure in rural areas is less likely to negatively influence female involvement in the labour market because agricultural self-employment, which is the dominant form of employment in rural areas, may allow women to combine work with supervisory childcare. Nevertheless, women in rural Central Asia believe that improvements in social care infrastructure and the “creation of kindergartens would create more opportunities for them” (see Khitarishvili, 2016).

Rural areas have seen recent growth in community-based kindergartens, which require considerably less financial resources to operate (UN Women, 2019). However, greater attention still needs to be paid to the urban/rural differences within countries and how this interrelates with unpaid work, labour market participation and childcare provision.

4.3.2

Eldercare

An increasing number of women entering the workforce are facing the challenge fulfilling their responsibilities not only as parents, but as elder-carers — especially in the context of the world's population living longer. With few market-based options for eldercare across many countries in the EECA region most eldercare needs are met informally, with such

care viewed as an obligation for women and girls as well as the most appropriate way of helping (World Bank Group, 2016). Similar to childcare, intensive eldercare duties affect women's empowerment and reduces female labour market participation.

With the demand for child- and eldercare increasing across the world, government investment in the care economy is vital. Doing so will enable greater numbers of women to participate in the labour force and will lead to the creation of jobs in the coming years. It is also vital for sustainable development (WBG, 2020). However, care work across the world remains both gendered and undervalued, characterized by poor benefits and protections, low wages or non-compensation and exposure to physical, mental and, in some cases, sexual harm.

Absent a structural revaluation of unpaid and paid care work, an expansive care economy could actually increase gender segregation in the workplace and exacerbate the gender pay gap (EIGE, 2020; Sweeney, 2020). To avoid these outcomes, new solutions and policy interventions are needed to support unpaid and paid care and redistribute it more equally among women and men (ILO, 2018).

Governments are often reluctant to dedicate funding to addressing care needs, seeing these as social expenditures and not as investments with positive returns. However, empirical evidence from geographically diverse countries, including Brazil, China, Guatemala, Kenya and Mexico show the returns to such expenditures. In those countries, it was shown that subsidized access to public childcare provision led to increases in female labour force participation. This can create 'fiscal space' from increased taxation revenues for governments to reinvest in social protection programmes or other developmental priorities (OECD, 2019a).

4.4

Legal and Institutional Context: Social Protection and Employment Rights

Strong social protection systems are critical to supporting reductions in women's unpaid work and increases in women's empowerment (UN Women, 2020a). It is also essential to supplement childcare and eldercare services with labour market measures. Such measures include parental leave, flexible working arrangements and regulated workplace hours that support work-life balance (UN Women, 2019a).

4.4.1

Social Protection Systems

In a number of EECA countries, considerable strain has been put on contributory pension schemes recently, which has led to social protection systems failure to cover large parts of the region's population. In particular, the coverage of social assistance and social insurance programmes in Central Asia has been limited. Data indicates that coverage is highest in Kazakhstan, with 31 per cent of the population covered by social assistance programmes and 28 per cent covered by social insurance programmes (e.g. pensions). However, in Kyrgyzstan, these figures stand at only 9 per cent and 31 per cent, and in Tajikistan, they are 10 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively (Khitarishvili, 2016).

Such low coverage is linked to the informal and agricultural employment sectors. It is linked to the informal sector because women in the region often pursue informal work to facilitate their childcare responsibilities. It is linked to the agricultural sector because some agricultural workers are outside of the social protection system (Mikkonen-Jeanerret et al., 2016).

Kyrgyzstan achieved a modest 41 percent reduction in the poverty headcount ratio from social insurance schemes (World Bank, 2014). In contrast, impacts in Tajikistan have been small, likely due to inadequate resources and poor targeting (World Bank 2014b).

For many families in the region, migration remittances have buffered the poor state of social protection infrastructure, as have traditional informal safety nets (such as mahalla). However, these arrangements should not serve as a substitute for a formal social protection system that provides effective and targeted coverage.

Women and men in the EECA face different constraints to accessing and utilizing social protection resources. Women's pensions are affected by their unpaid work responsibilities and lower labour force participation rates. Pensions are also affected by women's involvement in low-remunerated service industries and their high participation rates in the informal sector (which rarely provide pensions), as self-employed or as contributing family workers in agriculture. Women's lower participation rates in formal wage employment limits their access to many social protection programmes (FAO 2014).

4.4.2

Employment Measures

Countries in the EECA region have adopted new legal frameworks to prohibit gender discrimination in paid employment. A variety of workplace interventions have been introduced to support preferences for work-life balance and to reconcile them with gender equality and women's empowerment (Sweeney, 2020).

Family-friendly policies such as paid parental leave, maternity and paternity leave and equal pay are crucial to reducing and redistributing unpaid work and supporting the labour market attachment of those with care responsibilities. "If men were more involved in caring and domestic work, the penalties that women face, such as discrimination against mothers and against women as potential mothers, would diminish" (Sweeney, 2020: 43).

There has been relatively weak support in the EECA region for parents to manage paid employment and caregiving responsibilities. For example, while there have been generous maternity leave provisions (126 days full paid maternity leave in Moldova, for example), there has been less focus on providing similar provisions to encourage men's share of childcare (UNFPA and Promundo, 2018). However, this is changing. Between 1994 and 2013, the region has seen some of the largest increases in paternity leave provisions, with four countries (Azerbaijan; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Kazakhstan and Serbia) introducing such entitlements in 2013. Albania and Turkey have recently introduced similar policies. While the region is still lags behind in some of the provisions that Western Europe, Australia, Japan and North America provide, similar to these countries, men are not taking up entitlements (UNFPA and Promundo, 2018). Annex 2 provides full details of paternity and parental leave policies in the EECA region.

In recent decades, academics and practitioners (charities and non-government organizations lobbying for parental rights and gender equality) have called for flexible working arrangements, such as adjusting working hours or working from home, emphasizing how these arrangements can benefit both workers and employers. Such arrangements are especially important to women's empowerment, enabling workers to balance their care and career commitments and allowing men to be more involved in caring for their children or other family members. However, research

shows that gender stereotypes tend to be reinforced rather than challenged if workplace cultures favour on-site work and long working hours and if flexible working arrangements are disproportionately used by women workers. It is important to avoid penalizing workers for making use of such arrangements, as this tends to disincentivize male workers from taking them up.

Workplace cultures that encourage and enable all employees to make use of such arrangements without detriment to their career are therefore pivotal to the success of such policies. Similarly, ensuring a broad coverage of flexible working arrangements across all employees, such as part-time workers and those in low-skilled and low-paid occupations — not just professional or managerial staff — is crucial, given that women are more prevalent in these job categories. Coverage of such supports must also include all family types and all forms of care-giving responsibilities (ILO, 2020).

Evidence shows that while policies have long been discussed and introduced in Western Europe, their implementation has been slow and often have gendered outcomes; they often reinforce the notion that reconciling work and care are women's responsibilities and not for ideal, committed 'male' workers (Teasdale, 2020). This is changing, however, with the introduction of non-transferable leave or 'daddy quotas' in countries such as Sweden. It has also changed dramatically with the COVID-19 pandemic and government measures mandating employees to work from home where possible.

Workplaces thus have a key role in reducing and redistributing deeply entrenched gendered norms, notions of men as breadwinners and ideal workers devoted to work and discriminatory practices and behaviours against women. See Figure 6 for a summary of guidance on ways to achieve this.

FIGURE 6:
Promoting work–life balance and equal sharing of care responsibilities

POLICY/ACTIONS



5. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON UNPAID WORK AND LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION

In addition to intensifying existing economic and gender inequalities, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the focus on unpaid care and domestic work, exposing the gendering of care work in health systems and households. It has reinforced and underscored the centrality of such care to social and economic life and has increased the visibility and unsustainability of its current organization especially with ageing populations

Although it has re-entrenched gendered norms, the pandemic nonetheless presents an opportunity to disrupt them (Bahn et al., 2020) through policy changes and initiatives to reorganize care infrastructure, care systems and unpaid work distribution (WBG, 2020).

The pandemic is having gendered effects similar to natural disasters and other health crises (Bahn et al., 2020). While men are more likely to die from COVID-19, women represent the majority of essential workers (women make up 70 per cent of health-care workers) and they have borne the disproportionate impact of unpaid care and household work at home (Sweeney, 2020). There has been a rising demand for care, and home-based caring labour with schools and childcare facilities closed. There have also been more people seeking and needing care, amplifying and deepening inequalities. The poorest women (including single mothers) bear the heaviest burden of care and have the most limited employment opportunities.

Women have been affected more than men by pandemic-related unemployment, reduced working hours and the loss of wages (ILO 2020). These effects have been more pronounced among women living in Southern and Eastern Europe than among their Western European counterparts. This is because of the higher share of women working in sectors that have been severely affected by the effects of COVID-19 (Fodor et al., 2020).

Some of the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic have been feminized sectors that are characterized by low pay and poor working conditions, including a lack of

basic worker protections such as paid sick and family leave. For example, the accommodation and food service sectors, in which women are over-represented, have experienced heavy job losses and declining incomes.

Similarly, the incomes of women working in the informal sector having declined dramatically. Analysis by UN Women on COVID-19 and informal workers' lost income estimates that they lost an average of 60 per cent of their income globally (81 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, 70 per cent in Europe and Central Asia and 22 per cent in Asia and the Pacific) (UN Women, 2020e). Domestic workers have been particularly at risk; despite the increased need for caregiving and cleaning services, lockdowns and quarantine measures have made it difficult to maintain pre-pandemic working arrangements, resulting in a loss of income and employment.

In other cases, employers have refused to pay wages during lockdowns unless staff agreed to shelter in place with them (UN Women, 2020e). Further, as the crisis unfolded in the EECA region, millions of people left cities (seen as epicentres for COVID-19) and returned to rural areas. This had two consequences: it intensified rural women's unpaid care and domestic work burden and it exposed the reliance of wealthier countries and families on migrant women workers for social and care services.

5.1

Intensification of Unpaid Work

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, greater numbers of women than men have reported doing more household chores and spending more time on unpaid care work. In the EECA region, 70 per cent of women spent more time on at least one unpaid domestic work activity, compared to 59 per cent of men, although this varies across subregions (UN Women, 2020c).

Available data for the region indicates that more women than men (43 per cent compared to 16 per cent) reported increases in the time they spent cooking and serving meals. Increases in these activities are particularly high in Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, where over half of women reported spending more time cooking and serving meals (67 per cent, 60 per cent and 56 per cent respectively). Women have also increased the time spent collecting water, firewood or other fuel (12 per cent of women). Such time has been highest in Kyrgyzstan (31 per cent), while relatively low in Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 per cent) and North Macedonia (5 per cent).

Similarly, over 50 per cent of the women surveyed by the UN women's Rapid Gender Assessment Survey said they spent more time on cleaning and household maintenance, compared to less than 30 per cent of men. Twenty-five per cent of women said that they were spending more time on household management, compared to 20 per cent of men. The increase in time spent on household management for women has been particularly high in Kyrgyzstan (46 per cent) and North Macedonia (50 per cent) (UN Women, 2020c).

Lockdown measures and school and day-care closings led to parents having to juggle paid employment, childcare and schooling obligations. Survey evidence shows that around 60 per cent of women reported increased time spent on at least one care activity for children and/or elderly family members. The highest burdens were reported by women in Albania (72 per cent versus 61 per cent), Georgia (62 per cent, compared to 43 per cent for men), and Kyrgyzstan (67 per cent and 26 per cent).

While women in the EECA region have taken up more care activities, men have become more involved in playing with and instructing children. In Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Turkey, women and men reported almost the same increases in time spent playing and talking with children; in Kyrgyzstan and North Macedonia, more women reported spending more time on these activities than men.

EECA regional studies also indicate that women tend to help their husbands/partners much more often with repetitive daily activities than men help their wives/partners. In Albania, Azerbaijan, Kosovo and Kyrgyzstan, there was up to a 30 percentage-point difference between partners helping one another. Sixty-six per cent of women reported that other household members, such as parents and in-laws, also

helped them with domestic and care work (typically sisters, mothers and mothers-in-law). The COVID-19 global crisis has reinforced and made starkly visible the fact that the world's formal economies and the maintenance of our daily lives are built on the invisible and unpaid labour of women and girls (UN Women, 2020b). It has also reinforced how crucial reducing, redistributing and revaluing unpaid work is to women's empowerment.

5.2

COVID-19 and Family-friendly Working Arrangements – Leave Policies and Working from Home

Family-friendly working arrangements are a key component of care-sensitive policies (see section 4.4). Flexibility in working time and location (e.g. working from home) have long been discussed as measures to increase the family-friendliness of working arrangements and support women's empowerment, but implementation has been both slow and patchy (Teasdale, 2020). However, the pandemic has dramatically changed this reality. With social distancing requirements and the closure of education and childcare institutions, there has been an unprecedented shift to flexibility in working arrangements, especially for home-working across the world.

Working from home became a reality mostly for white-collar and high-skilled occupations and mostly for people living in urban settings. Poor digital infrastructure and limited digital skills created practical obstacles to working from home for women who do not fit into these categories. Some countries relaxed existing restrictions around working conditions and occupational safety and health requirements in the home office, which will require addressing in terms of more formal and expansive regulatory frameworks (UNECE, 2020).

A common measure in many countries, particularly during the peak of the first wave of the pandemic, was to introduce or expand leave for parents in order to help reduce and redistribute the burden of unpaid care work during lockdowns and school and daycare closings. This was either an extension of pre-existing leave provisions, such as parental leave or maternity leave, or it was introduced as a new leave entitlement (see Table 3; more in-depth discussion of such measures can be found in the UNECE (2020) report).

TABLE 3:**Childcare Leave Provisions Available to Parents during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

CHILDCARE PROVISIONS	COUNTRIES
Protection against dismissal of parents who are absent for care responsibilities	Turkey
New childcare leave provisions introduced	Uzbekistan
*Extension of maternity leave (based on pre-existing schemes)	Kazakhstan, North Macedonia
Extension of paternity leave (based on pre-existing schemes)	North Macedonia
Extension of sick-child leave (extension of pre-existing schemes to include child quarantine and hospitalization)	Uzbekistan
Leave for other care responsibilities (other family members)	Turkey (unpaid)

*(and therefore time spent out of the labour force). *Source: UNECE (2020)*

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Unpaid work impacts on women's empowerment regardless of their level of education, income or the level of country development. Although some countries have made advances in line with the 5R framework (recognizing, reducing and redistributing, reward and representation), and although women's paid employment participation has increased, the largest share of unpaid work continues to fall on women — particularly vulnerable women from lower socioeconomic groups, rural areas and women from ethnic minority groups.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the importance of unpaid work to social and economic life into sharp relief. It has also brought greater recognition of who undertakes most of this work. This momentum must now be harnessed to prioritize unpaid work and care on the long-term political agenda (EIGE, 2020) and to push to revalue such work as crucial rather than burdensome work that must be fairly rewarded and equally shared between women and men.

Achieving these ends requires progress in at least five general areas:

1. Recognizing and representing unpaid work in policies and decision-making;
2. Strengthening employment rights and workplace policies;
3. Challenging social and cultural norms;
4. Investing and prioritizing social care infrastructure; and
5. Improving the legal and institutional infrastructure of social protection systems.

6.1

Recognizing and Representing Unpaid Work in Policies and Decision-making

- Recognize unpaid (and paid) care work at the national policy level and in decision-making.
- Improve data collection on unpaid work in order to help inform and shape policy and decision-making.
- Conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation to better understand the social and economic impacts

of women's unpaid care work and to support women's empowerment.

- Ensure evaluations are country- and context-appropriate in order to recognize the multiple circumstances underpinning women's unpaid work and to facilitate comparability across countries.
- Undertake gender analysis and assessments that consider the impacts of infrastructure, social protection and public service investments on women and girls' unpaid work and whether they lead to unpaid work responsibilities being transferred to other women in the household, particularly older women and girls.
- Involve a variety of actors in programme design and implementation in order to understand the local context and to create fit-for-purpose policy and programme solutions.

6.2

Strengthening Employment Rights and Workplace Policies

- Formalize paid parental leave for both women and men.
- Introduce incentives to encourage men's take-up of non-transferable paternity leave.”
- Encourage men to take on a greater share of unpaid care work.
- Advocate for employment policies that support employees sharing caregiving responsibilities.
- Incentivize the uptake of paternity leave by ensuring that it covers a high percentage — or 100 per cent — of pre-leave income.
- Improve awareness of the benefits of flexible work schedules and different types of working arrangements (e.g. part-time, reduced hours, flexible schedules, shorter working weeks) that will facilitate more equal distribution of unpaid work and that will help women and men find a better work-life balance.
- Encourage long-term monitoring of these options to ensure that men and women access them equally.

- Ensure that flexible scheduling and work arrangements do not factor into performance reviews or other employment-related decisions.
- Raise and strengthen employers' awareness of their responsibilities to help challenge gendered cultural norms and expectations of ideal workers and ideal carers.

6.3

Challenging Social and Cultural Norms

- Use outreach campaigns to facilitate changes in sociocultural gender norms and attitudes.
- Address sociocultural factors that unduly affect people's choice to avail themselves of flexible scheduling and work arrangements in support of their family responsibilities.
- Promote men's involvement in unpaid work by addressing gender segregation in the home and workplace.
- Normalize cultural expectations of fathers' equal involvement in unpaid work.
- Transform negative masculinities at the societal, community, family and individual levels.
- Create spaces for men and boys to discuss gender stereotypes.
- Initiate media campaigns to destigmatize and disrupt gendered notions of women's and men's work, norms and roles.
- Engage more men in paid childcare positions in order to advance cultural norms of men's roles in care taking.

6.4

Investing and Prioritizing Social Care Infrastructure

- Revalue domestic and care work's worth to both society and the economy.
- Formally recognize the skills gained through paid and unpaid care work.
- Support unpaid and informal carers' transition to the formal labour market.
- Ensure accessible and affordable child- and elder care public services in order to reduce women's

unpaid work responsibilities and to enable their labour force participation.

- Invest in measures to mitigate labour-intensive aspects of unpaid work that thwart women's empowerment and that impacts on their time (e.g. include gender analysis in locating new water sources).

6.5

Improving the Legal and Institutional Infrastructure of Social Protection Systems

- Design and implement social protection programmes to address legal and institutional constraints on women's access to and utilization of social protection resources.
- Expand unpaid workers' economic and social rights in social protection programmes and schemes.
- Universalize pension entitlements rather than basing them on working life and earned salaries.
- Introduce entitlements to compensate leaving employment in order to undertake unpaid care work.
- Strengthen social assistance and social insurance programmes and schemes to ensure that they enable a decent standard of living.
- Emphasize the need for social protection floors to guarantee services and transfers throughout the life cycle
- Expand social protection programmes to include for children, the economically active with insufficient income, older persons and other vulnerable groups.
- Develop social protection programmes that support unpaid caregivers and that avoid penalizing women as caregivers.
- Design unconditional cash transfer systems that minimize gender stereotypes and that avoid unintentionally creating additional care-related burdens for women.
- Expand contributory credits linked to pensions and other social protection programmes to account and compensate for time spent providing unpaid care (and therefore time spent out of the labour force).

ANNEX 1:

TIME USE SURVEY DATA COLLECTION

AND ITS LIMITATIONS

Time use survey and statistics have been gaining importance among policy makers in measuring the different dimensions of gender equality. Despite the recognition of the time use statistics relevance and utility, time use survey are yet integrated into regular production of official statistics and fewer countries conduct this survey as compared to other household-based surveys.

Time use survey covers three major components: i) information on socioeconomic characteristics of household and individuals, ii) time spent by individuals on productive and non-productive activities and iii) the context in which the activities are carried out. The national time use surveys are basically of two types: stand-alone surveys and modular surveys conducted as part of thematic household-based surveys. Time use surveys collect data through stylized questions or time-use diaries. They typically cover a 24-hour period, 1 workday and 1 weekend day, or a full week (7 days) in order to provide insight into how women and men allocate their time to different tasks and activities. The developed countries usually employ self-reported 24-hour time diary with 10-minute time slot to collect information on activities. In case of developing countries, the National Statistics Office rely on stylized questions (predefined list of activities). In EECA there is no standardised approach in time use surveys and countries from Central Asia employ mainly stylized approach in collecting data compared to Eastern Europe where NSO employed more frequently 24-hour time diary.

Time use surveys are not without limitations. For example, the scope and quality of time-use data tends to differ from one survey to another, which can make comparisons across countries and even other surveys within the same country problematic. Similarly, while some time-use surveys are nationally representative, others may be more limited and only capture, for example, rural or urban areas. The activities covered as well as the level of detail also varies between surveys (e.g. whether a time-use diary captures 15 minute or 30 minute time slots) (Ferrant and Thim, 2019), and

conceptual problems often arise in relation to how to capture and measure simultaneous activities or multitasking.

Capturing simultaneous activities or multitasking is especially important because women's time spent on paid and unpaid tasks often overlap. Research by Chopra and Zambelli (2017) in India, Nepal, Rwanda and Tanzania finds that throughout a day, women multitask over 11 hours per day on average, combining childcare with different household tasks such as cleaning and cooking and paid work. In the EECA region, a similar picture is found for women in the rural areas of Central Asia who undertake agricultural work alongside caring for their children. Such multitasking is often linked to limited public childcare provision in rural areas and traditional gender role expectations.

Since 2018, the UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office has been providing technical support for gender statistics and help for strengthening regional-level collaboration in order to better contribute to SDG monitoring at the country and regional levels. Part of the challenge is linked to the EECA's national statistical systems, which range from the more advanced and open statistical systems found in countries such as Albania, Moldova and Serbia to the relatively closed, politicized and under-resourced systems found in Kosovo, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (UN Women 2017). To respond to rapidly growing awareness of the need to collect time-use data to estimate paid and un-paid work of women and men in the economy, the UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office has been supporting to strengthen the expertise of national statistical offices across the region to collect, process and analysis time use data. In addition, Georgia and Armenia are provided with financial support to conduct first-ever full scale time use surveys in line with latest international recommendations and guidelines.

ANNEX 2:

PATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE IN THE EECA REGION

Country/ Territory	Duration of Paternity Leave	Amount of Paternity Leave: Cash Benefits	Duration of Parental Leave	Amount of Parent Leave: Cash Benefits
Albania	17 weeks	100%	Mothers only: 52 weeks	First 26 weeks (including pre-birth): 80% of net pay
Armenia	146 weeks	AMD 18000	Mothers: 156 weeks	Mothers: 104 weeks paid 52 weeks unpaid Fathers: 94 weeks paid 52 weeks unpaid Monthly cash benefit of AMD 18000 (approximately US\$37.5) fixed for working parents irrespective of salary amount
Azerbaijan	Two weeks	(US\$37.5) monthly for 104 weeks	Mothers only: 18 weeks	34.5% of annual salary
Belarus	n/a	Unpaid	Either parent: 156 weeks	First child: 156 weeks 35% of annual salary From the second child on: 40% of average salary until the child reaches 3 years
Bosnia & Herzegovina	n/a	n/a	Either parent: 52 weeks for first child Up to 79 weeks for second and third child May vary between region and administrative unit	Varies from 60% to 80% of the average salary according to region or administrative unit
Georgia	n/a	n/a	104 weeks (including 26 weeks remunerated); 28 weeks in the event of birth complications or twins	Public-sector employee: 100% salary for 26 weeks, plus GEL 1000 (approximately 390 USD) allowance allocated by the government Private-sector employee: GEL 1000 from the government; up to the employer to determine any salary reimbursement. The law does not impose any obligation on a private-sector employer.

Country/ Territory	Duration of Paternity Leave	Amount of Paternity Leave: Cash Benefits	Duration of Parental Leave	Amount of Parent Leave: Cash Benefits
Kazakhstan	n/a	n/a	Mothers only: 18 weeks (10 before birth; eight after birth) Up to 10 weeks after birth in the event of birth complications or twins Either parent: 52 weeks	Both working and not working parents, women and men receive social benefits for a child under 1 year at a fixed amount allocated monthly first child: KZT 13,069 (approximately US\$40) second child: KZT 15,452 (approximately US\$46.5) third child: KZT 17,812 (approximately US\$53.6) fourth and following child: KZT 20,194 (approximately US\$60.7) For working women and men the monthly allocation cannot exceed a total of KZT 97,836 (approximately US\$294.5) in one year. This is 40% of the minimum wage times 10, and can- not be lower than the unemployment benefit.
Kosovo	Two days for childbirth plus two weeks paternity leave	Two days fully paid; two weeks unpaid after birth or adoption within the peri- od until child reaches 3 years	Mothers only: 52 weeks	First 26 weeks: 70% of annual salary
Kyrgyzstan	The labour code does not specifi- cally mention paternity leave; its duration is established based on agreement with the employer	KGS 700 (ap proxi- mately 10 USD) as- signed in one instalment only to fathers or anyone else taking on the custody role when the mother is missing	10 weeks before birth and 18 weeks after birth 20 to 25.7 weeks in the event of birth complications or twins Upon request an employer may grant additional unpaid leave to care for a child up to 3 years of age. The leave can be provided at any time for any period, but only working women (not men) shall be granted this additional unpaid leave to care for a child up to 3 years of age. The leave can be provided at any time for any period, but only working women (not men) shall be granted this additional unpaid maternity leave until the child reaches the age of 18 to 38 months.	For working people: First 10 days – 100% of salary from the 11th day on – KGS 1000 (approximately 14.3 USD) from government budget For officially registered “unemployed” people: KGS 1000 from the government budget If unemployed but not officially registered, parents are not eligible for cash benefits

Country/ Territory	Duration of Paternity Leave	Amount of Paternity Leave: Cash Benefits	Duration of Parental Leave	Amount of Parent Leave: Cash Benefits
Moldova	Two weeks	100% of salary, paid from the social assurance public budget	Either parent: 156 weeks	Mother only: 18 weeks, 100% paid Either parent: 156 weeks, 30% paid leave until the child turns 3 Either parent: Unpaid leave until the child turns 6 years old
Serbia	One week (“family leave”) Employed fathers are entitled to five days of paid leave	100% paid	Either parent: 52 weeks for first and second child 104 weeks for third and each subsequent child	100% paid (based on the average basic salary of the employee for 12 months preceding the month in which the maternity leave starts)
Tajikistan	n/a	n/a	Mothers only: 20 weeks – 100% paid 25.7 weeks in the event of birth complications or twins – 100% paid Following 78 weeks unpaid	Government covers child-nutrition expenses only in an amount of TSZ 44/month (US\$5/month)
Turkmenistan	Paternity leave can be taken by a father only upon justification that a mother cannot take care of the child. In this case the duration of paternity leave is until the child reaches 3 years.	n/a	Mothers only: 16 weeks paid Either parent: 156 weeks unpaid	Mothers receive 16 weeks 100% paid leave. There is no payment for paternity leave.
Turkey	5 days	100% paid	Mothers only: 16 weeks paid 26 weeks unpaid	Mothers only: 16 weeks 100% paid Unpaid leave can be extended up to two years upon approval from the workplace.
Ukraine	n/a	n/a	153 weeks can be taken by any family member (e.g. father, mother, grandparent) Mothers only: 18 weeks paid Other family members: unpaid, however their job security should be ensured by the employer	Mothers only: 18 weeks paid (equivalent to paid sick leave) Plus a one-time government aid in the amount of 44.000 UAH (approximately US \$1,600) that can be claimed by either parent. Paid in small instalments over three years.
Uzbekistan	n/a	n/a		During the first 104 weeks until child reaches the age of 2, child-care allowance is paid only for families with one parent, with children with disabilities, and low-income families based on the decision of “mahalla” self-governing bodies of citizens. The amount of childcare allowance is UZS 299,550 (US\$37), equal to 200% of the minimum wage established by the law (UZS 149,775 or US\$18.5)

Source: UNFPA and Promundo, 2018

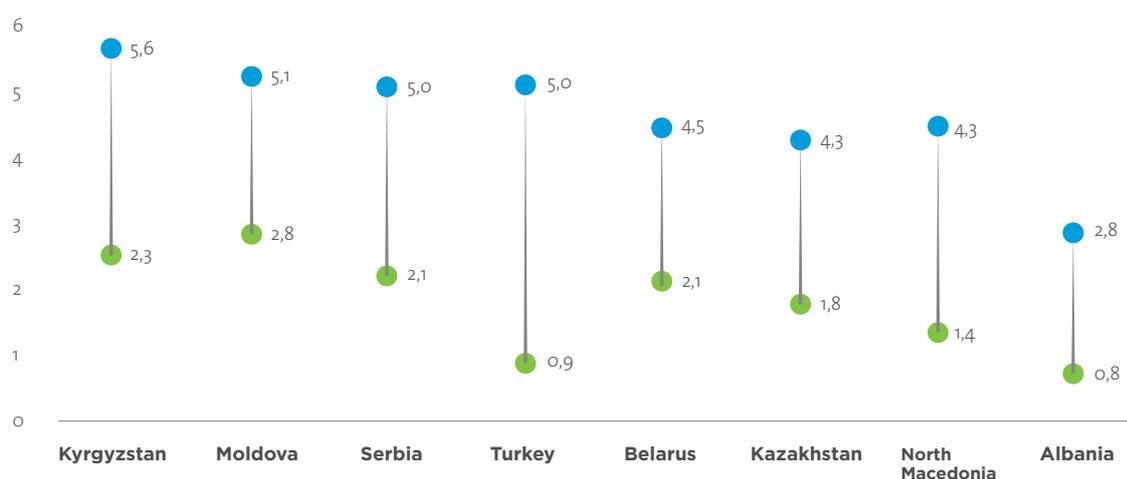
ANNEX 3: CONSEQUENCES OF THE PANDEMIC ON GENDER INEQUALITIES IN DOMESTIC AND CARE WORK AND ON ECONOMIC SECURITY IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA - WHAT DATA TELL

The gender gap in unpaid domestic and care work was wide and is now further widening due to Covid-19 (Target 5.4)

Five years into the SDGs and 25 since the Beijing Platform for Action, important gains in gender equality have been secured. Yet, a long road remains ahead towards realizing the full spectrum of SDG5 dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. Inadequate progress on gender parity hinders prospects for decent work (SDG8) and in reducing inequalities within countries (SDG10) – hindrances that are now further aggravated by Covid-19. Women and girls have been disproportionately impacted due to multiple and intersecting forms of inequality and discrimination that predated the pandemic.

Globally and across Eastern Europe and Central Asia,⁵ women disproportionately shoulder the burden of domestic and care work – work that is often invisible and unpaid, and that hinders women’s participation in the labour market. Prior to COVID-19 women already did at least double the level of domestic and care work that men did, and in some countries like North Macedonia, Albania and Turkey the level ranges from 3 to 5 times higher for women. The distribution of unpaid work gives a sense of the fact that women have fewer hours per week that they can devote to paid work, in contrast to the time men have.

FIGURE 7:
Daily time spent on unpaid domestic and care work (hours)



Source: UNECE Statistical Database https://w3.unece.org/PXWeb2015/pxweb/en/STAT/STAT_30-GE_98-GE_LifeBalance. Data for Serbia, Belarus, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan refers to 2015, Albania (2010), Republic of Moldova (2012), North Macedonia (2014) and Kazakhstan (2018).

⁵ Refers to the United Nations programme countries/territories: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo; Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia and Turkey.

Women's workforce participation has generally moved closer to men's, yet large gender differentials remain and the average gender gaps in labour force participation range between 20-35 percentage points, with a high of 47 percentage points in Turkey.⁶ In addition, 1 out of 3 women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were employed in vulnerable work, including in farming and family-run businesses. Eastern Europe countries were characterised by large share of female contributing workers (22 per cent among all employed women) and relatively large shares of female own account workers (11 per cent respectively). In contrast, women in vulnerable jobs in Central Asia were primarily engaged in self-employment (28 per cent), as opposed to contributing to family business (5 per cent)⁷.

Rapid Gender Assessments of Covid-19 impact on livelihoods in Eastern Europe and Central Asia showed that women disproportionately bear the negative socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic.⁸ Overall, over 40 per cent of women reported reductions in paid work hours. Women in the 18-34 age group reported a higher loss in paid work hours compared to other women and compared to men in the same age group. Self-employed women faced the worst burnt with a reduction in paid work hours close to a staggering 80 per cent in countries such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Resulting from loss of livelihood resources, such as remittances and farming, women in 6 out of 10 countries reported higher difficulties than before the pandemic in meeting basic needs and paying basic expenses, such as rent, utilities and food. Women with children anticipated particularly high increase with 75 to 80 per cent reporting difficulties with basic needs in countries like Albania and Georgia.⁹ Financial insecurities that have proliferated during Covid-19 are threatening the equal rights to economic resources (SDG Target 1.4) of poor women and men and those in vulnerable situations, with clear indications that building their resilience (SDG Target 1.5) might not be realized.

Women disproportionately bear the negative socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic with reductions of paid work hours and income greater among women than among men.

During the pandemic, the share of unpaid domestic and care work overwhelmingly increased both for women and men, but women are still doing the lion's share. On average, 70 per cent of women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia reported spending more time on domestic work than before the pandemic. The increase among men was 59 per cent. Similarly, more women than men reported increases in time spent on unpaid care work throughout the region. The human impact of the pandemic in the day-to-day lives of people, and especially women, has been enormous. The Rapid Gender Assessments survey data shows that women's psychological and mental health is being affected at higher rates than that of men. Notably, women from Albania (69 per cent), Turkey (54 per cent), Kazakhstan (52 per cent), and the Republic of Moldova (49 per cent) have experienced higher rates of psychological distress than men, but also than women from other countries.

Drawing on the [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#), a global database compiled by UNDP and UN Women, few governments have addressed the increased demands of unpaid care and domestic work in their COVID-19 responses. Of the 248 socioeconomic measures adopted by countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in response to the pandemic, only 82 were gender-sensitive¹⁰, of which 14 were about women's economic security and 14 addressed the increased burden of unpaid care.¹¹ For example, in recognition of the impact of increased unpaid care obligations on labour market participation in **Uzbekistan**, a working parent (only one of the two) was given paid leave for the duration of shutdown of schools without affecting their regular annual paid leave schedule. **Montenegro** announced new wage subsidy measures for businesses that include of 70 per cent of the gross minimum wage for each employee who had to stay home to care for a child under the age of 11 during April and May.

⁶ UN Women (2020). Keep the promise, accelerate the change: Taking stock of gender equality in Europe and Central Asia 25 years after Beijing, <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/10/keep-the-promise-accelerate-the-change>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ UN Women (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on women's and men's lives and livelihoods in Europe and Central Asia: Preliminary Results from a Rapid Gender Assessment, <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/the-impact-of-covid19-on-womens-and-mens-lives-and-livelihoods>

⁹ Ibid.

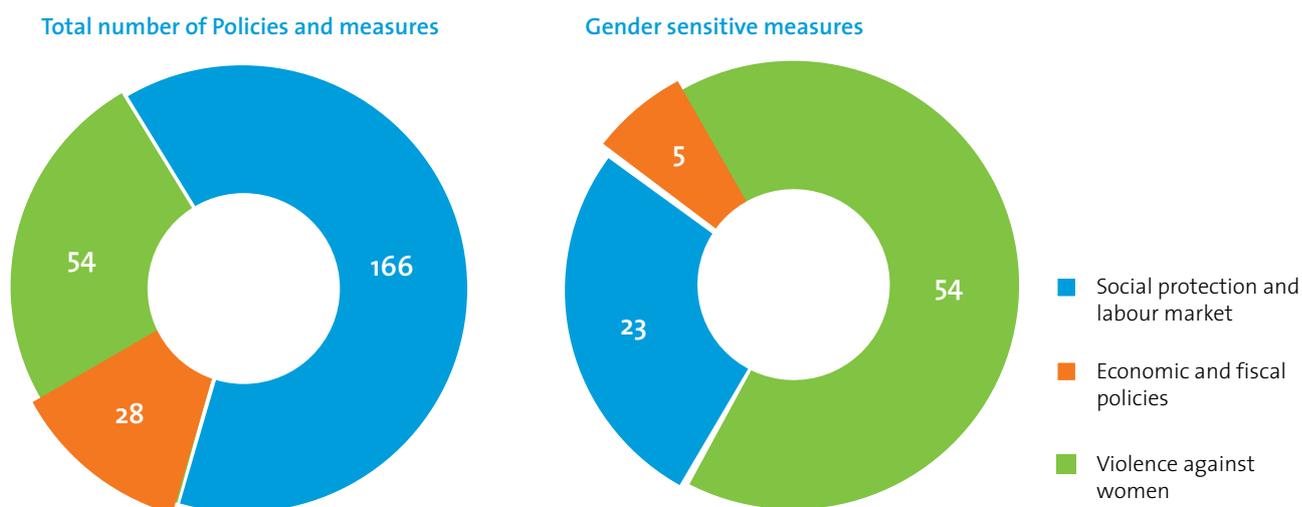
¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Moreover, of the 166 labour market and social protection measures, only 23 were gender-sensitive; and of the 28 economic and fiscal measures only 18 per cent are designed to support women-dominated sectors of the economy and aim to protect women's employment. Western Balkans and Turkey performs better than the other sub-regions on gender sensitivity of

labour market and social protection measures adopted compared to Central Asia which reports only one gender sensitive measure. This is an inadequate response in light of the severity of the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on women and its potential to exacerbate existing gender inequalities.

FIGURE 8:
Gender Equality in COVID-19 Policy Response in Eastern Europe and Central Asia



Source: UN Women, UNDP. (2020). COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker. Factsheet: Europe and Central Asia. <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/covid-19-global-gender-response-tracker-factsheet-europe-and-central-asia-december-2020>

Each of the SDGs under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, including Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, and gender equality as a cross-cutting prerequisite for sustainable development. In order to continue to make progress towards meeting SDG targets and ensure that no one is left behind in the wake of the pandemic, every COVID-19 response plan, and every recovery package and budgeting of resources, needs to address the gender impacts of this pandemic.

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