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Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Women in development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/181](#) on women in development, in the present report, the Secretary-General considers global evidence and trends and reviews measures taken at the national level, since 2022, regarding gender-responsive poverty eradication, social protection and labour market policies; women's labour and human rights and ending gender-based discrimination; women's entrepreneurship; women's and girls' unpaid care and domestic work and women's paid care work; gender-based violence and sexual harassment; access to health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health; the right to education throughout the life cycle; sustainable food systems; and climate, environmental and disaster resilience in the polycrisis.

* [A/79/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [77/181](#) on women in development, the General Assembly recognized that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the realization of their human rights, and women's full and equal participation in the economy were indispensable to eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. It noted with concern the significant gender gaps and inequalities that persisted and called upon Member States to take decisive action to address them. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of resolution [77/181](#) at its seventy-ninth session.

2. The present report is based on information submitted by 32 Member States and nine entities of the United Nations system, as well as other sources.¹ The report reviews global evidence and trends, measures taken by Governments and support provided by United Nations entities regarding: (a) gender-responsive poverty eradication, social protection and labour market policies; (b) women's labour and human rights and ending gender-based discrimination; (c) women's entrepreneurship; (d) women's and girls' unpaid care and domestic work and women's paid care work; (e) gender-based violence and sexual harassment; (f) access to health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health; (g) the right to education throughout the life cycle; (h) sustainable food systems; and (i) climate, environmental and disaster resilience. Attention is paid to the impacts of the polycrisis² – the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, climate and environment emergencies and cost-of-living, food, fuel and debt crises – on women and girls. The report concludes with recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

3. Member State commitments to gender equality and women's rights and empowerment are enshrined, inter alia, in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the agreed conclusions of the sixty-first ([E/CN.6/2017/L.5](#)), sixty-third ([E/CN.6/2021/L.3](#)), sixty-sixth ([E/CN.6/2022/L.7](#)) and sixty-eighth ([E/CN.6/2024/L.3](#)) sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women serve as guidance towards women's economic empowerment, as does the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 5 on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, Goal 8 on the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all and, crucially, integrated gender equality considerations across all the Goals.

¹ Submissions were received from Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, El Salvador, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, the United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe, as well as the following United Nations and international entities: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Tourism Organization.

² Adam Tooze, "The Last Dystopia: Historicizing the Anthropocene Debate in a Multipolar Age: Lecture II – Polycrisis", Tanner Lectures on Human Values, Columbia University (New York, 2023); World Economic Forum, *The Global Risks Report 2023* (Geneva, 2023).

II. Global evidence and trends

4. The ambitions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action have not yet been realized, despite the progress achieved in reducing gender inequalities in some areas. Women and girls are increasingly at a disadvantage as wealth and income inequalities grow in and between both developed and developing countries (E/CN.6/2020/3). The global economy faces unprecedented challenges and uncertainties as people, in particular women and girls, are pushed further behind. The world is not on track to achieve Goal 5 on gender equality by 2030, and only slightly more than half the data needed to monitor progress are available. Out of the 18 indicators for Goal 5, only two – on seats held by women in local governments and on laws on equal access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education – are close to target globally. Four others – on time spent on unpaid care and domestic work, decision-making on sexual and reproductive health, mobile phone ownership and gender-responsive budgeting – are far or very far from target.³

5. Overall, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 appears unlikely, making action on Our Common Agenda to accelerate the implementation of the Goals paramount.⁴ As such, in 2024, the Secretary-General urgently called for building on progress made in the past year on the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus of at least \$500 billion in affordable long-term financing annually for sustainable development and climate action.⁵

6. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, global poverty increased in 2020 for the first time in over three decades, with 90 million people falling into extreme poverty.⁶ In 2022, rising inflation and the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine worsened the lingering impacts of the pandemic and sluggish recovery in many countries. In 2023, overall global poverty returned to near pre-pandemic levels, but the trend has been starkly uneven. Extreme poverty in middle-income countries decreased, but is worse than before the pandemic in low-income, fragile or conflict countries, where poverty increased slightly between 2022 and 2023. Over 8.5 per cent of the world's population, or 691 million people, were projected to live in extreme poverty,⁷ including just over 10 per cent of the world's women. By 2030, some 8 per cent, or 342.4 million women and girls, most of whom are in sub-Saharan Africa, will remain in extreme poverty unless decisive action is taken.⁸

7. The capacity of developing countries to respond and recover from the impacts of cascading crises has been undermined by debt. In 2023, global public debt rose to an unprecedented \$97 trillion, growing fastest in developing countries, which owe a third of that amount. Some 3.3 billion people live in countries that spend more on interest payments than on education, health or climate action. In 2023, 59 developing countries had public debt exceeding 60 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP), up from 22 countries in 2011.⁹ Debt-related austerity measures and budget

³ Ginette Azcona and others, *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2023* (New York, UN-Women and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023).

⁴ *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023, Special edition: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet* (United Nations publication, 2023).

⁵ Sustainable Development Goal stimulus of the Secretary-General to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, February 2023.

⁶ Nishant Yonzan, Daniel Gerszon Mahler and Christophe Lakner, "Global poverty in the 2020s is on a new, worse course", World Bank blog, 14 October 2022.

⁷ Nishant Yonzan, Daniel Gerszon Mahler and Christophe Lakner, "Poverty is back to pre-COVID levels globally, but not for low-income countries", World Bank blog, 3 October 2023.

⁸ UN-Women and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

⁹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, "A world of debt report 2024: A growing burden to global prosperity" (Geneva, 2024).

cuts in public services have strongly gendered impacts, increasing women's and girls' poverty, exclusion and unpaid care and domestic work and jeopardizing their resilience.¹⁰ Moreover, burgeoning debt and shrinking fiscal space have severely limited the application of social protection measures to mitigate impacts.¹¹

8. Social protection coverage varies around the globe. The most recent available data indicate that less than half of the world is covered by at least one social protection benefit (excluding health) and less than a third of the working-age population globally is covered by comprehensive social security systems. The majority, or 4 billion people, have only partial or no social protection at all. On average, a mere 12.9 per cent of GDP is allocated to public social protection expenditure (excluding health), with wide variation among countries, from 1.1 per cent in low-income to 16.4 per cent in high-income countries, and a significant gender gap of eight percentage points between men's and women's coverage.¹²

9. Social protection measures to benefit families, parents and children are widespread but uneven. While 184 countries had some form of paid maternity leave in 2021, less than two thirds comply with the International Labour Organization (ILO) standard of 14 weeks; 117 countries had some paid paternity leave and 53 countries provided some paid parental leave. Just under 45 per cent of women with newborns worldwide receive a cash maternity benefit.¹³ Forty per cent (350 million) of children under primary school age need but do not have access to childcare, while an estimated 606 million working-age women are kept from paid employment because of unpaid care work. At the same time, at least 43 million jobs could be created in the childcare sector alone.¹⁴

10. Over three quarters of people above retirement age receive some form of old-age pension, but significant disparities exist between women and men. Because of their lower labour force participation and lower lifelong income, women are less likely than men to contribute to and receive a pension; globally, 38.7 per cent of working-age men compared with 26.3 per cent of women are covered under a pension scheme. Non-contributory pensions can help to provide some security in old age to both women and men, but benefit levels are often too low to meet basic needs.¹⁵

11. The global gender gap in labour force participation remains persistent, hovering at 30 percentage points since 1990, with men's and women's participation at around 80 and 50 per cent, respectively.¹⁶ Women's participation fell to 47 per cent in 2020 as a result of the pandemic and increased slightly, to 49 per cent, in 2023.¹⁷ In the case of prime-age men and women (25 to 54 years old) with one child under the age of six years, the gap has grown to nearly 43 percentage points; virtually all men in that age group participate in the labour force, nearly 96 per cent compared with 53 per cent of women. This "motherhood penalty" can be attributed to the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work borne by women, which increases with marriage and more so with children.¹⁸ It is the main reason working-

¹⁰ ActionAid, "The Vicious Cycle: Connections Between the Debt Crisis and Climate Crisis", Policy Brief (Johannesburg, 2023).

¹¹ Daniel Gerszon Mahler and others, "Pandemic, prices, and poverty", World Bank blog, 13 April 2022.

¹² ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2020–22: Social protection at the crossroads – in pursuit of a better future* (Geneva, 2021).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Hana Brix and others, "Expanding access to childcare helps women, children, and economies", World Bank blog, 10 October 2022; United Nations, "Transforming Care Systems in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals and *Our Common Agenda*", UN System Policy Paper (New York, 2024).

¹⁵ ILO, 2021.

¹⁶ World Bank, "Female Labour Force Participation", Gender Data Portal, 10 January 2022.

¹⁷ World Bank, "Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (modeled ILO estimate)", accessed 21 June 2024.

¹⁸ ILO, "New data shine light on gender gaps in the labour market", Spotlight on Work Statistics n°12, ILO Brief (March 2023).

aged women give for not being in the labour force.¹⁹ Women still spend nearly three times as much time per day on unpaid care and domestic work than men, and this has only intensified with the cascading crises.²⁰

12. The gender pay gap has been similarly persistent at 20 percentage points, on average, across countries.²¹ While legislation in 98 economies mandates equal pay for work of equal value, only 35 economies have adopted pay transparency and enforcement measures with the potential to reduce the gender pay gap.²²

13. Women are more food insecure than men across regions. Although the global gender gap in food insecurity widened during the COVID-19 pandemic from 1.7 to 3.8 percentage points in 2021, it narrowed to 2.4 percentage points in 2022 even as the war in Ukraine sent food, fuel and fertilizer prices spiralling. Overall, 29.6 per cent of the global population (2.4 billion people) were moderately or severely food insecure in 2022, which is 391 million more than before the pandemic in 2019.²³ If current trends continue, close to one in four women and girls will experience moderate or severe food insecurity by 2030 and as many as 236 million more women and girls (compared with 131 million more men and boys) are projected to be food insecure by 2050 under a worst-case climate scenario.²⁴

14. One in three women worldwide have experienced gender-based violence,²⁵ but recent analysis shows that women have only a third of the legal protections they need. For example, of the 190 economies analysed, 151 have laws prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace, but only 39 prohibit it in public spaces.²⁶ Gender-based violence has increased in the context of the food, fuel and water crises brought on by intensifying conflicts and accelerating climate change, especially when essential services are simply unavailable or insufficient to meet demand.²⁷ Similarly, women's physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health, has borne the brunt of the crises, owing largely to disruptions in health-care access and services and the overwhelming stresses of paid and unpaid care work.²⁸

15. Gender parity in education, specifically, primary school completion, has been achieved in most countries,²⁹ although gender gaps remain problematic in some regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, and progress has been reversed in countries such as

¹⁹ ILO, *Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work* (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2018).

²⁰ Lorena Aguilar and others, "The climate-care nexus: Addressing the linkages between climate change and women's and girls' unpaid care, domestic and communal work", UN-Women Working Paper (New York, 2023).

²¹ ILO, "The gender pay gap", 15 April 2024.

²² World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law 2024* (Washington, D.C., 2024).

²³ FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP and World Health Organization (WHO), *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023: Urbanization, agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum* (Rome, 2023); FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022: Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable* (Rome, 2022).

²⁴ UN-Women and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

²⁵ WHO, *Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018: Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women* (Geneva, 2021).

²⁶ World Bank, 2024.

²⁷ UN-Women and United Nations, "Global gendered impacts of the Ukraine crisis on energy access and food security and nutrition", 2022.

²⁸ Abiola Awofeso and others, "COVID-19 and Women and Girls' Health in Low and Middle-Income Countries: An Updated Review of the Evidence", Center for Global Development Policy Paper No. 234 (Washington, D.C., 2021).

²⁹ Raja Bentaouet Kattan and Myra Murad Khan, "Closing the gap: Tackling the remaining disparities in girls' education and women's labor market participation", World Bank blog, 9 March 2023.

Afghanistan.³⁰ Moreover, in 2022, more young women than young men aged 15 to 24 years were not in education, employment or training (32.1 per cent versus 15.4 per cent), with the greatest gender gaps being in Central and Southern Asia (48.7 per cent compared with 15.4 per cent),³¹ and 54 per cent of girls not in formal education were in crisis-affected countries.³² The share of women graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics has remained at 35 per cent for the past 10 years.³³

16. No country in the world offers women equal opportunities and outcomes. Women's full and equal participation in the economy is impeded by structural barriers and discriminatory laws, policies and social norms. In the 190 economies assessed in 2023, women have less than two thirds of the legal rights of men and only 40 per cent of countries have systems in place for their robust implementation.³⁴ The measures taken by Member States in response to the polycrisis are reviewed in section III below.

III. Measures taken by Member States and support by United Nations entities

A. Gender-responsive poverty eradication, social protection and labour market policies

17. It is increasingly evident that an inclusive and sustainable response and recovery from cascading crises is possible only if gender equality is the core of poverty eradication, social protection and labour market policies.³⁵ The United Nations system's Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions is expected to create a minimum of 400 million decent jobs in the green, digital and care economies and to expand social protection coverage.³⁶

18. Member States reported on relevant policy frameworks addressing women's poverty, social protection and employment towards realizing women's rights and empowerment (Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova and Zimbabwe). In Australia, the national strategy "Working for Women: A strategy for gender equality" (2024) outlines a 10-year vision for economic equality and security, unpaid and paid care, gender-based violence, health, leadership, representation and decision-making. In Burundi, the National Programme for Strengthening the Economic Capacities of Women (2019–2027) operationalizes the National Gender Policy (2012–2025) and fosters the equitable economic participation of women and men towards sustainable development. In 2023, Germany published the "Feminist Development Policy – For Just and Strong Societies Worldwide", which aims to address the structural causes of inequality by strengthening the rights, resources and representation of women and girls in all their diversity. In Jordan, the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2020–2025) is aimed at improving women's

³⁰ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Global education monitoring report 2022: gender report: Deepening the debate on those still left behind* (Paris, 2022).

³¹ UN-Women and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

³² *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2022* (New York, UN-Women and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022).

³³ UNESCO, *Global education monitoring report 2024: gender report: technology on her terms* (Paris, 2024).

³⁴ World Bank, 2024.

³⁵ *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024* (United Nations publication, 2024); Silke Staab and others, *Government responses to COVID-19: Lessons on gender equality for a world in turmoil* (New York, UN-Women and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2022).

³⁶ United Nations, "Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions", n.d.

participation in the labour market and economic decision-making and mainstreams gender equality considerations in government ministries and the private sector.

19. Member States also enacted labour market and employment policies to reduce gender gaps and support women workers and jobseekers in gaining skills and finding employment. In Argentina, the “Equalize” National Programme for Gender Equality in Work, Employment and Production is aimed at reducing gender gaps and segregation in the world of work from an intersectional and human rights perspective. In Armenia, more than 2,000 women and girls have been supported through the National Accelerator Platform for Women’s Economic Empowerment since 2022. In El Salvador, the Single Mothers Programme provides technical advice on finding a job and starting an enterprise and also provides direct contact with companies, in accordance with labour regulations. In Guatemala, the labour mobility programme promotes safe, orderly and regular migration and supported more than 850 women in gaining employment abroad in 2022 and 2023. Japan promotes the reskilling of women workers, with a focus on digital skills. In Kyrgyzstan, active labour market policies support unemployed persons, the majority of whom are women, in gaining employment through temporary opportunities in paid public works and vocational training in occupations that are in demand. In the Philippines, the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services programme facilitates women’s access to resources and non-traditional jobs and community activities. The visiting professional programme of the International Atomic Energy Agency, named after physicist Lise Meitner, boosts women’s early and mid-career development in the nuclear energy field.

20. Member States adopted social protection measures towards improving women’s poverty and insecurity (Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Burundi, Colombia, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Namibia, Peru, the Philippines, Qatar and Zimbabwe). In Burundi, the Social Safety Net Support project supports poor women and families through mobile cash transfers and life skills training. In Kyrgyzstan, children with HIV/AIDS and born to mothers living with HIV/AIDS receive a monthly benefit of \$70. In Mexico, people with permanent disabilities and living in poverty in Indigenous, Afro-Mexican and marginalized communities receive bimonthly social protection benefit payments of \$140. The payments benefited 561,165 women between 2019 and 2023. People over 65 years of age in situations of vulnerability are also guaranteed a basic pension; 6,801,643 women benefited from the pension between 2018 and 2023. The World Food Programme (WFP) supports cash transfers in Bangladesh, aiming to reach 6 million pregnant women and children under five years of age by 2026, and Somalia implements a shock-responsive safety net, based on the WFP early warning system, providing mobile cash transfers to more than 200,000 women as drought preparation. Such social protection measures have provided critical support and potentially increased women’s resilience to future shocks.³⁷

B. Women’s labour and human rights and ending gender-based discrimination

21. Member States reported advances in realizing women’s labour and human rights and ending gender-based discrimination at work, including by formalizing work in the informal economy. Many promulgated or strengthened anti-discrimination and affirmative action laws and measures (Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Romania and the United Arab Emirates), including quotas (Armenia, Colombia, Japan and the United Arab Emirates) and gender-responsive budgeting.

³⁷ UN-Women and UNDP, 2022.

Australia reinstated an annual women's budget statement, allowing for government transparency on gender equality in budgetary decisions. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, gender budgeting in the national budget management information system increased the gender responsiveness of government programmes. Colombia monitors national financing for women's economic autonomy, and the National Houses for Women's Dignity Programme promotes women's rights, economic autonomy and access to dignified labour conditions, closes educational and digital gaps and prevents and addresses violence against women.

22. The transition of women from informal to formal employment is key to improving the terms and conditions of employment of poor working women, including migrant women and domestic workers. In Argentina, the National Registry of Men and Women Workers in the Popular Economy recognizes, formalizes and guarantees the rights of informal workers and their access to employment, social security, training programmes, marketing networks, and credit and financial inclusion; as of March 2024, more than 58 per cent of registered workers were women, 90 per cent of whom are care and domestic workers. Furthermore, Argentina's programme "Promoting Employment" helps unemployed men and women workers to improve their job skills and access quality jobs while giving incentives to employers to provide formal employment.

23. Turning to specific measures to support women's income and equal pay for work of equal value, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency of Australia works with organizations to measure and report on gender equality indicators and the gender pay gap. Germany is preparing to transpose the European Union Pay Transparency Directive into German law by June 2026. In Greece, the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, 2021–2025 addresses the gender pay gap. The Equal Pay International Coalition, led by ILO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), with 63 members, including 25 Governments, supports Governments and workers' and employers' organizations in reducing the gender pay gap.

24. Member States are implementing commitments under the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights convened by UN-Women. This includes commitments by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania on reducing the gender digital divide and by Burundi on building the economic resilience of victims and survivors of gender-based violence. The *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality 2023* of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development provides guidance on integrating gender considerations in public governance and supporting gender balance with accountability measures.

C. Women's entrepreneurship

25. Entrepreneurship continues to be a focus for women's economic empowerment. Most States have developed or strengthened national plans and strategies for women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises (Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Greece, Kyrgyzstan, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Peru and Serbia). However, only one in five economies mandates gender-responsive public procurement, meaning that women are missing out on an annual \$10 trillion in economic opportunity.³⁸ As a result, in 2024, the International Trade Centre and UN-Women launched a global campaign for gender-responsive public procurement, supported by 14 countries and international

³⁸ World Bank, 2024.

organizations. In Kenya, the public procurement policy ensures that 30 per cent of all public procurement is allocated to women, young people and persons with disabilities.

26. Countries are supporting training, certification, and financing of women's enterprises (Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Namibia, the Philippines, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Zimbabwe). In the case of some countries, such as Argentina, this includes a focus on gender diversity. The Free and Productive Women's Fund in Colombia benefited 6,390 women during the first quarter of 2024, supporting their economic autonomy with loans and strengthening savings and credit groups. In the Republic of Moldova, the Women's Entrepreneurship Support Programme grants up to \$11,200 to women starting a business and non-refundable financial support of up to \$34,000 to enterprises managed by women. In Peru, in 2023, the National Your Enterprise Programme supported 230 women living with disabilities, including in formalizing their businesses. In the Philippines, the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Programme (SETUP 4.0) focuses on the technological needs of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises; with a \$1.33 million budget in 2023, the programme created 3,348 jobs for women.

27. The Tech as a Driver of Women's Economic Opportunity Programme of the International Telecommunication Union, delivered in Burundi, Ethiopia and Haiti and completed in 2023, evaluated the gender responsiveness of policies, strategies and regulations in the digital economy and built the digital skills of women entrepreneurs in the agriculture and textiles and apparel sectors, benefiting 2,570 individuals, over 80 per cent of whom were women.

D. Women's and girls' unpaid care and domestic work and women's paid care work

28. While the COVID-19 pandemic focused global attention on the care economy and the starkly disproportionate responsibility of women and girls for unpaid care and domestic work and of women for paid care work across the health and service sectors, interest and investment have since subsided, as reflected in Member State submissions. Less than half of Member States reported on measures related to recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work and rewarding and representing paid care work, although several innovative initiatives were highlighted.

29. Argentina is developing a national care map, an online interactive tool that displays available care spaces (currently 32,000 plus 1,000 for training) and services for children, older people and people with disabilities as well as unmet demand. A map for care was also launched in Mexico in 2023.

30. In Australia, the Child Care Subsidy makes early childhood education and care more affordable, increasing childcare subsidy rates for 96 per cent of families in 2023. Kenya and Namibia support early childhood education centres and professionals. Armenia introduced state childcare support for children under three of missing or dead servicemen and women in 2023.

31. Colombia created a national care system in 2023, and its 2024 pension reform recognizes the time women spend on unpaid care work by reducing the retirement contribution of mothers with care responsibilities. Beginning in 2023, unemployed mothers in the Republic of Moldova who are caring for children under two years of age can benefit from full health-care insurance.

32. In 2024, El Salvador established the Interinstitutional Commission on Care to implement the National Policy on Joint Responsibility for Care. In Mexico, the

“Support for Children of Working Mothers” programme improves access to and retention in work and school for single mothers, fathers or guardians who are working, seeking employment or studying but do not have childcare; from 2021 to 2023, 167,480 single mothers, fathers and guardians, and 310,175 children up to three years old, including 152,881 girls, benefited from the programme.

33. Paid maternity and parental leave are key mechanisms for women to remain in the world of work and for parents sharing care responsibilities. Australia expanded paid parental leave from 18 to 20 weeks per family in 2023 and to 26 weeks by 2026. Belarus modified the Labour Code in 2023 to provide one paid leave day per week to a parent or guardian raising a disabled child under the age of 18 years or three or more children under the age of 16 years. In 2023, Croatia mandated that employed and self-employed fathers may take 10 working days’ paternity leave within the first six months of the child’s birth. In 2023, Japan enacted policies aimed at increasing child support and the percentage of male workers taking paternity leave from the current 14 per cent to 50 per cent by 2025 and 85 per cent by 2030.

34. Countries are strengthening gender data and statistics capacity to support the valuation of unpaid care and domestic work in national accounts and inform policies through surveys on time use and distribution of unpaid care and domestic work in the household. In 2024, Serbia adopted the Rulebook on the Methodology for the Calculation of Unpaid Domestic Work, which specifies that unpaid domestic work refers to jobs with no monetary compensation, such as running households, looking after children, elderly and sick family members and working on farms. This marks a first step in considering minimum wages and health insurance for such unpaid workers.

35. The Women Count programme of UN-Women supports the production of gender statistics and time-use surveys aimed at strengthening care policies and legal reforms, as well as the overall monitoring of gender equality. In Kenya, the 2023 time-use survey report and national care needs assessment led to the passage of the National Care Policy, which includes measures to reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work through social protection, public services and shared household responsibilities. For its implementation, the Government has allocated \$2 million over five years. In Georgia, the 2022 time-use survey report has influenced private sector parental leave policies and led to a gender impact assessment of public service law to promote parental leave and work-life balance. ILO and UN-Women are supporting four countries in the Caribbean, namely, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in including time-use questions in forthcoming labour force surveys in 2024 and 2025. In 2023, Women Count supported the Southern African Development Community in developing and launching its first-ever gender statistics strategy and promoting the use of its gender monitor.

E. Gender-based violence and sexual harassment

36. Preventing and responding to violence, providing services to survivors and making public and private spaces safe for women and girls are priorities for Member States (Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Colombia, Croatia, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Japan, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Romania, Serbia, the United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe).

37. In 2022, Australia launched the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, 2022–2032, which guides government actions for prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing to support victims and survivors. It also introduced the National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence for government and non-governmental organizations involved in

responding to violence. As of 2023, all employees are entitled to 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave each year.

38. Croatia adopted the National Plan for the Suppression of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment (2022–2027) and passed a law in 2024 making femicide a specific crime. Jordan reinforced efforts to address violence against women, amending the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence to expand protection orders and introduce stricter penalties for violations. Kyrgyzstan adopted the Action Plan of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan, 2023–2024 -to prevent child and forced marriage. Namibia strengthened legislation to address gender-based violence, domestic violence and violence against children. Peru adopted legislation to protect migrants who are victims of violence and girls, boys and adolescents in situations of vulnerability.

39. In 2023, Colombia and El Salvador established protocols to prevent all forms of violence against women in the public service and against gender-based violence and discrimination in the world of work. Zimbabwe criminalized sexual harassment, developed a sexual harassment policy for the public and private sectors and defined gender-based violence and harassment in the Labour Amendment Act, 2023 to expand the protection given to employees against employers and other employees.

40. Member States initiated programmes and consolidated services on gender-based violence (Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Burundi, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Israel, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Peru, Romania and Zimbabwe). Austria conducted an information campaign in English and Ukrainian entitled “Be safe on the way” on the risks of trafficking and the availability of support services for women moving across borders. Belarus provides temporary shelters for victims and survivors of domestic violence. Croatia provides counselling centres for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence, with an emphasis on rights, shelter options, safety plans for women and children, legal representation and health care. In 2023, El Salvador pioneered the Specialized Labour Inspection Unit on Violence and Harassment of Women with 60 trained inspectors who detect and address labour discrimination and physical, psychological, sexual and domestic violence and harassment. Romania created “VENUS – Together for a Safe Life!”, a national network of 41 safe houses to provide accommodation, information, counselling and support services for women victims and survivors of domestic violence.

41. The “Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Environments” programme of the International Union for Conservation of Nature addresses gender-based violence and environment linkages in biodiversity and climate initiatives. In 2022, the World Tourism Organization hosted an online workshop in English and Spanish on eliminating sexual harassment and violence against women in the tourism sector. To date, 44 countries have ratified the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), which protects people in the world of work.³⁹

F. Access to health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health

42. Member States expanded access to health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health. Countries established laws, policies and services to promote maternal health for women and girls (Argentina, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Greece, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan and Zimbabwe); access to sexual and reproductive health (Argentina, Germany, Greece, Jordan and Zimbabwe), including for adolescents

³⁹ ILO, Ratifications of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), accessed 21 June 2024.

(Guatemala and Mexico) and LGBTIQ+ persons (Mexico); comprehensive sexuality education in primary and secondary schools (Papua New Guinea) and the community (Argentina); and mental health (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kenya).

43. In 2023, the United Arab Emirates approved the National Policy for Improving Women's Health to ensure that women enjoy the highest level of preventive, curative and rehabilitative health-care services. Bosnia and Herzegovina is developing a sustainable system of community-based mental health care, respecting the human rights and dignity of women and men with mental health disorders and their families. In Greece, the Fofi Gennimata programme for the prevention of breast cancer is directed at all women aged 50 to 69 years of age, free of charge, and uses digital technology to make examinations easier.

44. In 2022, Germany ended its ban on advertising abortions, allowing doctors to inform the public that they perform abortions, making it easier for women to access accurate information and doctors, and annulling convictions of doctors since 1990.

45. To promote access to and use of sexual and reproductive health services, Zimbabwe is implementing the Minimum Initial Service Package for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crisis Situations, developed by the Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises.

G. Right to education throughout the life cycle

46. In the face of cascading crises, investing in girls' and women's right to education is essential for sustainable development and gender equality. Over half of reporting Member States advanced women's and girls' right to education and improved the gender-responsiveness of education systems. Member States addressed gender stereotypes in school curricula and teaching that can hold back both girls and boys in different ways (Argentina, Germany and Greece), bullying and violence in schools, including cyberbullying (Australia, Greece, Guatemala, Lebanon, Mexico and the Republic of Moldova), preventing and addressing school dropouts owing to menstruation, pregnancy, disability, orphanhood, poverty and living on the streets (Burundi, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Peru and Zimbabwe), and gender disparities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines and Zimbabwe).

47. Guatemala highlighted adult literacy in its National Literacy Campaign (2023-2027), which reaches people over 15 years of age in 17 languages, including the Garifuna, Xinkan, Spanish and Mayan languages, allowing women to continue their studies after giving birth. In its first phase (2017-2022), the campaign reached 509,483 women and 199,400 men.

48. Bosnia and Herzegovina celebrated International Girls in ICT Day in 2023 under the rubric "Who runs BiH? IT Girls!". Germany initiated the Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education (2022-2025) with the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative to generate evidence, commitments and strategies for gender-transformative education around the world. Germany is working with the International Telecommunication Union through the Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age to overcome the digital gender divide through the "atingi" e-learning platform, which will provide 1 million women and girls with access to free and gender-transformative digital skills training, certification and e-mentoring by 2026. In Greece, the Greek Innovation Lab for Women, a partnership of government entities, academic and research centres and private sector organizations, was inaugurated in 2022 to end the gender digital divide.

H. Sustainable food systems

49. Member States highlighted gender-responsive policies and programmes for food security and stable employment in the context of rising food insecurity. In 2024, Mexico enacted the General Law on Adequate and Sustainable Food and Nutrition, which obliges all State authorities to promote, respect and protect the exercise of the right to adequate food, in accordance with the principles of gender and age equality and the best interests of the child.

50. In Argentina, the food benefit ensures access to food for all, with monthly payments for purchase of food and hygiene products. The benefit prioritizes mothers with children up to 14 years of age, pregnant women after the first trimester and people with disabilities in vulnerable situations and reached 2,338,757 people by July 2023.

51. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Emergency Food Production Programme was launched in 2022 for two years, with a 151.18 million euro loan from the African Development Bank and 68.14 million euros from the Japan International Cooperation Agency. The programme responds to soaring food prices by increasing the national production of rice, corn and cassava, strengthening food sovereignty and reducing dependence on food imports, and benefits more than 800,000 smallholder farmers, 30 per cent of whom are women, through the provision of certified climate-resilient, high-yield and nutritious seed varieties.

52. In Mexico, the Hydroagricultural Infrastructure Support Programme improves irrigation and rainfed infrastructure to boost agricultural production and combat poverty, with priority being given to women and Indigenous peoples. The Programme to Strengthen Indigenous Economies generates sustainable value chains, supports Indigenous cultures and promotes community production, local consumption and the marketing of agroecological and artisanal goods. To date, the programme has led to the financial inclusion of nearly 9,900 women.

53. In Zimbabwe, as of January 2024, nearly 12 million plots have been planted with maize, sorghum, groundnuts, cowpeas and sunflower under the Pfumvudza/Intwasa initiative, exceeding the 9.5 million plot target for the 2023–2024 season. The initiative uses conservation farming techniques, such as zero tillage, mulching, intensified crop production with drought-tolerant grains, improved inputs and rainwater harvesting, to achieve higher yields and climate resilience and empower smallholder farmers, especially women and young people, to participate in agricultural value chains, improve their livelihoods and attain food security and self-sufficiency. In 2023, 84 per cent of rural households participated, compared with 22 per cent of urban households, with 62 per cent involving women. In the 2023–2024 season, 2.57 million tons of maize and traditional grains were produced, exceeding the national consumption requirement of 2.2 million tons.

54. Member States embarked on or expanded school feeding programmes to support the food security of children and families. In Burundi, the national school meals programme covers more than 660,000 children and aims to reach 2.8 million by 2032. In Greece, the school feeding programme operates in 1,620 schools, leading to declining food insecurity and school dropout rates and increased social cohesion and solidarity. In Guatemala, the school feeding programme has registered some 3,000 family farmer purveyors in 2024, 40 per cent of whom are women, supporting incomes and diversified production for 25,000 farmers overall. In Kenya, the school feeding programme reached some 1.5 million children in rural drought-affected counties and expanded to Nairobi in 2023 to cover 250,000 primary schoolchildren. With support from WFP, Lebanon provides school meals for 100,000 Lebanese and Syrian refugee children. The School Meals Coalition, including 120 Member States

and partners, aims to ensure that every child can receive a healthy and nutritious meal in school by 2030.

55. Turning to employment in food systems, in Burundi, the Agropastoral Entrepreneurship and Professional Development Project for Youth and Women (2022–2027) supports vocational training and skills upgrading for women and young people through digital learning platforms, agropastoral cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprises.

56. The aim of the German project “Employment Promotion for Women for the Green Transformation in Africa” is to increase poor women’s employability and income through gender-responsive education and training opportunities in occupations traditionally dominated by men. The Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training for Women project, funded by the European Union and Germany, improves women’s agricultural employment prospects through gender-transformative skills development in six African countries.

57. In Lebanon, the Productive Sectors Development Programme, implemented by six United Nations agencies through 2023, focused on gender-responsive job creation and economic opportunities in agriculture and food systems for women and young women in disadvantaged areas. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations published the paper *Changing rural women’s lives through gender transformative social protection* in 2022, providing guidance on how social protection can support women’s and girls’ food security.

I. Climate, environmental and disaster resilience

58. The urgency for gender-responsive action to respond to the climate and environment emergencies is clear (see [E/CN.6/2022/L.7](#)). Member States have elaborated climate change, biodiversity and disaster risk reduction strategies and plans from a gender perspective. To date, 23 countries have developed climate change gender action plans, initiated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, through participatory, multi-stakeholder processes involving local women to identify gender issues in priority sectors and strengthen mitigation, adaptation and resilience for all. Bangladesh is currently reviewing and updating its climate change gender action plan, with the support of UN-Women, and action plans are under way in Belize and Rwanda.⁴⁰

59. The gender dimensions of the second round of nationally determined contributions, prepared by parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for climate change mitigation and adaptation under the Paris Agreement, have showed improvement. As of April 2024, out of 110 nationally determined contributions analysed, 106 have integrated gender equality considerations, up from 53 in the initial round, and 70 per cent refer to women or gender in specific sectors, compared with 15 per cent previously.⁴¹ Further analysis is needed to assess the integration of gender equality considerations in policy and budgetary frameworks and the impacts on women’s and girls’ resilience. The National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change in Mexico is aimed at implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation across sectors identified in the revised nationally determined contribution, with the leadership and participation of women.

60. In Argentina, the National Plan for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation by 2030 addresses the differential impact of global warming on women and LGBTIQ+ persons. In Côte d’Ivoire, the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, 2023–2030 integrates gender issues, including in 80 per cent of the indicators. Kenya launched

⁴⁰ IUCN, Climate Change Gender Action Plans, n.d.

⁴¹ UNDP, Advancing Gender Equality in NDCs: Progress and Higher Ambitions, n.d.

its third National Climate Change Action Plan (2023–2027), Long-term Low Emissions Development Strategy (2022–2050) and financing of locally led climate action and county climate resilience investment grant with \$295 million from the national treasury and development partners, decentralizing climate finance to benefit women, young people, persons with disabilities and marginalized communities. El Salvador launched the Women and Climate Change Coalition in 2023, with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and UN-Women. As part of the Gender Equality Day at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Arab Emirates presidency launched the Gender-Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Action Partnership, which was endorsed by 80 parties.

61. The most recent analysis of gender integration in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, prepared under the Convention on Biological Diversity, shows that only 56 per cent mention women or gender, an indication of the challenges ahead for many countries in integrating the gender targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the gender action plan, 2022–2030. Lack of sex-disaggregated data is the main difficulty that countries say they face in gender-responsive reporting on national biodiversity strategy and action plan targets.⁴² The Conservation for Sustainable Development Programme in Mexico promotes biodiversity conservation and sustainable use from gender and indigenous peoples' perspectives, focusing on protected areas and buffer zones.

62. The gender action plan to support the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030) was launched in March 2024. In Argentina, the “Guide for the Incorporation of Gender and Diversity Perspectives in Integrated Disaster Risk Management” calls for civil protection agencies to guarantee the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ persons in emergencies and disasters. In 2023, Guatemala initiated a degree programme, “Integrated Human Rights-Based Approach to Disability in Climate Change and Risk Management”, covering the human rights of rural, Indigenous and Garifuna women. UN-Women, in partnership with Australia, implements the Women’s Resilience to Disasters Programme in the Pacific to strengthen women’s and girls’ livelihoods, well-being and disaster resilience and contribute to sustainability in small island developing States.

63. Ireland funds the climate innovation and knowledge community, supporting women-led organizations and small-scale enterprises in developing countries in testing and scaling up climate solutions. The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) focuses on adequate and safe housing, clean water supply and sanitation, waste management, secure land tenure and climate resilience from a gender equality and human rights perspective, involving 190 cities in 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The FAO 2024 report *The unjust climate: Measuring the impacts of climate change on rural poor, women and youth* quantifies the impacts of extreme weather events and long-run climate change on the incomes of rural women.

J. Conclusions and recommendations

64. **The polycrisis has disproportionately disadvantaged women and girls across all aspects of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Since the previous report in 2022 (A/77/243), extreme poverty is on the rise in developing countries for the first time in a generation, widening the gender poverty gap. Women and girls have grappled with deepening**

⁴² Christina Supples and others, *Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment, and Leadership in National Biodiversity Planning, Monitoring and Reporting* (New York, UNDP, 2024).

economic, social, health and food insecurity, spiralling violence at home and at work, and growing unpaid care and domestic work demands. Member States have taken important steps to meet the challenges, but the response has been insufficient given the increasing inequalities between and within countries, rising debt levels and shrinking fiscal space, especially in developing countries. Renewed global solidarity and multilateralism are called for to create a sustainable, just and gender-equal present and future.

65. To achieve the full, equal and meaningful leadership and participation of women and girls in sustainable development and their economies and societies, ensure women's rights to work and at work and women's and girls' rights to health, education and a life free of violence in the spirit of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women, Member States are encouraged to consider the following measures:

(a) Take stock of the lessons and recommendations that emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen a gender-responsive recovery from cascading crises and to forestall future emergencies;

(b) Integrate gender equality considerations in national sustainable development, poverty, labour market, employment and social protection strategies and policies;

(c) Eradicate women's and girls' poverty by supporting and investing in women's jobs, incomes and livelihoods and reducing their disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work;

(d) Expand gender-responsive social protection floors and systems to reach all women and girls in all their diversity, to protect their present and future well-being and livelihoods and increase their resilience to social, economic and environmental shocks;

(e) Achieve women's equal participation in labour markets, economic decision-making and leadership by addressing structural barriers and removing discriminatory laws, social norms and practices;

(f) Ensure women's, and especially young women's, access to decent work and entrepreneurship, including by formalizing jobs and enterprises in the informal economy and investing in skills development, training, certification and financing;

(g) Invest in the care economy and take action to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's and girls' unpaid care and domestic work in the household, and between households and the State, and reward and represent women's paid work by expanding high-quality care services, jobs and infrastructure, enacting maternity and parental leave policies and providing allowances and social protection to carers and care workers;

(h) Ensure women's enjoyment of labour and human rights and eliminate gender-based discrimination at work and the gender pay gap;

(i) Ratify and implement the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201), the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206) of ILO;

(j) Enact and implement laws, policies and programmes to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and harassment in public and private spaces, create safe physical and virtual workplaces, and put in place

effective prevention and response measures, essential services and remedies for victims and survivors, complaints procedures and perpetrator accountability measures, in line with the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206) of ILO;

(k) Promote and protect women's and girls' right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights;

(l) Ensure that girls complete their education and support girls who are out of school to complete education and attain work, with targeted attention to the needs and priorities of girls and young women who are not in employment, education or training;

(m) Invest in education, training and skills development through the life course that reduces gender-based sectoral and occupational segregation and promotes women in non-traditional employment and sectors, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

(n) Eliminate laws, social norms and practices in all areas and at all levels that discriminate against women and girls, engaging national and local authorities, community leaders and men and boys;

(o) Promote and invest in gender-responsive sustainable food systems and food security for women and girls and their communities;

(p) Integrate gender perspectives in the design, funding, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes on climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity protection and environmental degradation;

(q) Address the debt crisis by supporting developing countries in need with debt relief, restructuring and cancellation; assist developing countries in avoiding unsustainable debt and implement measures to reduce risks of future debt crises; call for strengthened multilateral actions and coordination by all creditors to address the deteriorating debt situation; and acknowledge that these measures can enhance fiscal space for investments for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;

(r) Expand fiscal space and strengthen institutions to end gender inequality and women's poverty and achieve sustainable development;

(s) Improve the collection, analysis and use of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex, age, income, race, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, migration status, disability status, location and other characteristics on decent work and entrepreneurship, social protection, the informal economy, sexual and reproductive health, education, sexual and gender-based violence and the gender, climate and environment nexus.

66. The United Nations system and other international organizations are encouraged to support Member States to implement, monitor and assess the foregoing recommendations at all levels.