

## **Progress in accelerating global actions for a world without poverty and implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027): UN Women, June 2019**

National efforts to achieve economic growth can be linked to poverty reduction through policies where full employment and decent work remain the overarching goals of macroeconomic policy. Discriminatory labour practices are reinforcing labour market segmentation and gender wage gaps remain a persistent challenge. In this context, women's access to the labour market and decent work is critical in the fight against poverty. UN Women supported countries to develop and implement gender-responsive economic policies, including on decent work, social protection, unpaid care, procurement, climate-resilient agriculture, and land.

The disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women constrains their ability to fully participate in economic activity, including the labour market. Concerted efforts need to be made to promote policies to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work by positioning care as a social and collective responsibility through, among other policy measures, improving women's access to free or affordable childcare services. UN Women has taken the lead in the promotion of the care economy as a provider of needed services for families, and decent employment opportunities for women. A methodology developed by UN Women to cost investment in childcare and the positive effect on women's employment and public revenue has been used in Kyrgyzstan, FYR of Macedonia, South Africa, Turkey, and Uruguay, to make the policy case for increasing investment in social care infrastructure. While both the private and public sectors have an important role to play, emphasis should be put on the role of the public sector given the public good nature of access to childcare, and the commitment to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its underlying principle of "leaving no-one behind".

Social protection programmes across the globe have been critical in alleviating women's poverty or preventing them from falling into poverty, primarily through the provision of social safety nets, universal health care, and non-contributory pension schemes. UN Women's support to Member States in the area of social protection has focused on capacity development. In this context, UN Women, in partnership with the Government of Finland's National Institute for Health and Welfare, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the International Labour Organization (ILO) delivered a regional training on "Building and Managing Social Protection Floors in Africa", in Nakuru, Kenya, November 12-16, 2018, bringing together 25 UN Women country staff.<sup>1</sup>

UN Women prepared the Secretary General's report on the priority theme - Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls - for the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women that took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 11 to 22 March 2019 (E/CN.6/2019/3). The report's recommendations formed the basis for Member State negotiations of the Agreed Conclusions, which will inform national implementation.

UN Women's support to governments in the area of social protection went beyond normative work and capacity development and extended to policy implementation. In the Dominican Republic, for example, UN Women, in partnership with ILO and UNDP, provided integrated policy advisory services to the Government to promote the inclusion of a human rights and gender equality perspective in the national social protection system, as prescribed by the minimum guarantees identified in ILO recommendation No. 202, reaching over 100,000 women, including unemployed women and women living with disabilities.

The Joint Programme on "Accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women," implemented by UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP, has a proven track record for delivering results for rural women. The programme directly engages 50,000 rural women from Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda in improving food security and nutrition, income generation and income security, women's participation and leadership in public spheres, and is strengthening the policy environment for gender-responsive rural development. Between 2017 and 2018, targeted rural women farmers have increased their productivity by 34% while strengthening their participation in cooperatives that have seen incomes increase by approximately \$1 million dollars in total. In

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<sup>1</sup> Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

part, this progress has been realized as more women are taking up leadership and decision-making roles in their local village and district councils. Overall, programme benefits reach at least 315,000 women, men and children in the seven programme countries.

UN Women is leading the integration of climate resilience of women farmers in a changing climate by addressing gender gaps in women's land rights and tenure security, climate information and the uptake of climate-smart technologies, rural women's access to finance for climate-smart agriculture tools and practices, and enhancing the linkages between climate-smart agriculture and value chains and markets.

Access to land – and women's land rights and tenure security, in particular – has been identified in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a central element for promoting gender equality, reducing conflict, improving incomes, ending hunger, achieving food security, and supporting sustainable agriculture. UN Women has engaged governments and stakeholders in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania to establish mechanisms and minimum standards for measuring and monitoring SDG indicators 1.4.2, 5.a.1 and 5.a.2. UN Women's research and policy recommendations have created awareness around the importance of these SDG indicators for women's land rights and tenure security. As a result, governments have committed to establishing context-specific monitoring and evaluation systems that prioritize women's land rights and tenure security in their national development frameworks. The corresponding policies and programmes have the potential to secure and protect the land rights of over 108 million women and girls (World Bank, 2017) in these countries.

Since their launch in 2010, the Women's Empowerment Principles have been endorsed by over 2,250 companies [as of 7 May 2019] across the world and across industries and sectors. The seven Principles address gender equality and women's empowerment across all functions of corporations, whether small, medium, large or multinational companies. Over 20 million employees are working in signatory companies that have publicly committed to implement the Principles and drive gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community [this figure is based on the number of employees at the time of signature].

UN Women has strengthened women's entrepreneurship, with over 23,000 women (18,088 from rural areas) in 25 countries having accessed financial services and improved their businesses with UN-Women's support. UN Women engaged with financial institutions and supported capacity-building of women entrepreneurs to do so. In addition, 273 government entities, companies and international organizations adopted gender-responsive procurement policies, increasing business opportunities for women-owned or led businesses.