



**DESA**



**Global Policy  
Dialogue Series**

Version 23 November 2020

## Global Policy Dialogue Series

### “Progress towards gender equality from the Beijing Declaration to COVID-19 and beyond: a data and policy dialogue”

24 November 2020, 8:00-9:30 a.m. EST

#### Concept Note

#### Background

As we mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the latest data show that hard-earned gains in gender equality achieved over a quarter century are being challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, a crisis that affects women and men in different ways. While significant progress has been made in advancing women’s rights at the global level, no country can claim to have fully achieved the commitments made in 1995 and reaffirmed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. Indeed, Member States recognised, in Sustainable Development Goal 5, that gender equality is central to the achievement of sustainable development for all by 2030.

The United Nations Secretary-General’s newly launched flagship report, *The World’s Women 2020: Trends and Statistics*, and the accompanying data available on the report’s online platform produced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), analyze the latest situation of women compared to men worldwide and provide statistical evidence, to the extent possible, on how the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed underlying gender inequalities in various critical areas including health and economic empowerment. The study shows that women’s gains in entering the workforce have stalled and that they continue to spend more time on domestic work than men. Gender inequalities in all spheres of life are compounded by other inequalities based on factors including age, ethnicity and wealth. While the pandemic continues to threaten the global community, women make up more than 70 per cent of health care workers. Available data from 38 countries and territories reveal that women above age 20 appear to be more likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19, while men in all age groups under age 80 are more likely to die from it. As highlighted by the Secretary-General, the response to the pandemic, and to the widespread inequalities that preceded it, must be based on a New Social Contract and a New

Global Deal that respect the rights and freedoms of all and ensure that women have the same prospects and opportunities as men.<sup>1</sup>

In this challenging moment, UN DESA is holding a global data and policy online dialogue to discuss how much the world has risen to fulfill the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, and address policy actions needed to build a New Social Contract in light of the latest assessment. Panelists will be internationally renowned experts in gender data and policy (government and NGO), as well as data journalists or communication professionals who will bridge the gap with the wide audience. At the core of Sustainable Development Goal 5, the dialogue will be held in the context of the Decade of Action to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, discussions will be accompanied by strong evidence and data reported in *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics*.

Participants will be invited to submit questions online at the time of registration and in the Zoom chat during the event. The results of the discussion will be shared with UN leadership and will inform future UN DESA policy briefs on the economic and social impacts of the pandemic and the Department's support to the Decade of Action.

## Date and time

The dialogue will take place on Tuesday, 24 November 2020, from 8:00-9:30 a.m. EST

## Location

The event will be held on Zoom and streamed to UN DESA's [Facebook channel](#).

## Moderator

### **Ms. Yingqian (Lily) Chen, Phoenix TV**

Ms. Chen is a journalist from Phoenix TV, China. She recently moderated several UN events, including the SDG Media Zone during the 74th UN General Assembly in September 2019.

## Event format

- I.      Welcome:**  
**(2 minutes)**  
**Moderator**

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<sup>1</sup> Secretary-General's Nelson Mandela Lecture: "Tackling the Inequality Pandemic: A New Social Contract for a New Era." 22 July 2020.  
<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-07-18/secretary-generals-nelson-mandela-lecture-%E2%80%9Ctackling-the-inequality-pandemic-new-social-contract-for-new-era%E2%80%9D-delivered>

## **II. Introductory remarks**

**(6 minutes, 3 minutes for each)**

- **Ms. Sarah Hendriks**, Director of our Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division, UN Women
- **Ms. Nahla Valji**, Senior Gender Adviser, Executive Office of the Secretary-General

## **III. Discussion 1: Women's health and economic empowerment in the 'new normal'**

**(40 minutes: 30 minute discussion + 10 minute Q&A)**

In the first session, the moderator will drive a conversation with experts on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted women's and men's health and engagement in the labour market in different and meaningful ways, as well as on which type of gender-sensitive policy interventions are needed to ameliorate women's and men's health and economic stability in the 'new normal'. The discussion will be based on key figures and findings of *The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics*.

***Guiding questions on data:***

- Pre-COVID, what do data tell us about women's economic empowerment? Are we making progress on this critical area of concern?
- How are women in the labour force being affected by the pandemic? What about unpaid work? Do data show any significant changes in the time allocated by women in caring and domestic work during the pandemic?
- What are some of the examples of variations across regions in key gender indicators and dimensions?
- Available data from 38 countries and territories reveal that women above age 20 appear to be more likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19, while men in all age groups under age 80 are more likely to die from it. What could be the reasons behind these statistics?

***Guiding questions on policy:***

- What are some of the ways in which families can better adapt to the 'new normal' and new ways of labor participation (e.g. remote work, double shifts), in order to ensure the economic empowerment of women?
- How can we ensure that the digital gender divide will not lead to additional increases in the gender gap in labor force participation?
- How can countries ensure that the role of women in the workplace and in decision-making is central to efforts in rebuilding economies in the post-COVID-19 era?

- How should policy and statistics work together?

*Speakers (tbc):*

- **Ms. Martha Chen** (USA), Lecturer in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School; Senior Advisor of the global research-policy-action network Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)
- **Ms. Jayati Ghosh** (India), Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- **Ms. Francesca Grum**, Chief of the Social and Gender Statistics Section, UN DESA Statistics Division and lead author of *The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics*
- **Ms. Manuela Tomei**, Director of WorkQuality Department, International Labour Organization

#### IV. Discussion 2: Regional analyses and perspectives on progress towards gender equality since 1995 (30 minutes)

The second discussion will draw on some of the country or regional stories from *The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics*, highlighting both successful cases over the years, the unique obstacles to the regions and countries to achieve the promises of the Beijing Declaration and the 2030 Agenda, and the policy responses implemented or needed.

***Guiding questions on data:***

- What would be a salient instance of gender inequality in your country or region that is supported by available data?
- How can regional organizations help strengthen national capacities to ensure better statistical monitoring of gender equality progress at the country level?

***Guiding questions on policy:***

- What are some of the unique challenges in the region to address gender equality, especially in terms of economic empowerment? (e.g. legal rights, social norms)
- Are there any country-level success stories in overcoming these challenges? What have been some of the defining factors and practices that led to this success?
- How should policy and statistics work together?

*Speakers (tbc):*

- **Ms. Ana Güezmes García**, Director, Division for Gender Affairs, ECLAC
- **Ms. Tomoko Hayashi**, Director-General, Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, Japan
- **Ms. Aurelia Spataru**, Deputy General Director of the National Bureau of Statistics, Moldova

**V. Concluding remarks**  
**(5 minutes)**

**Mr. Jeffrey Sachs**, Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, member of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs, and SDG Advocate