



## **Item 5: Interventions**

### **Closing the gender gaps: Effective economic and social policies in the UNECE region**

**UNECE Regional Review Meeting  
29 October 2019**

Thank you chair.

My name is Marieke Koning, I represent the global unions representing 85 million women workers and today I'm speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

#### **Recommendations:**

In order to realize gender equality and women's empowerment in our economies, governments will need to shape a new economic model based on caring for people and the planet, which addresses the current persistent gender gaps in pay and social protection including the huge pension gap for women.

Women take up more than three times as much unpaid care work compared to men. In addition, factors from a feminist perspective on the future of work, including the digital platform work coupled with the deregulation of the employment relationship, is transforming the very nature of work which requires new policies to adequately protect women's labour rights in all their diversity and other marginalized gender identities from precarious livelihoods.

**We ask governments to invest in care to promote gender equality and avert a global care crisis and commit to:**

- A minimum of 2% of national income to investment in quality public care services,

- Adopting gender-responsive macro-economic policies that are free from gender bias, including through recognising and valuing unpaid care and domestic work in the System of National Accounts
- Close the gender pay gap and invest in gender-responsive social protection systems that guarantee universal access to essential health care, access to basic pensions and guaranteed minimum unemployment benefits; Unpaid care work should be factored in social protection and labour policies, in order to ensure that women are not penalized for providing this essential work outside the paid economy.
- Ensure that all data are fully disaggregated by age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, geographic location and other discriminating intersections in 5 year cohorts from the cradle to the grave – and using this data for legislation, policies and programmes.
- Ensure the realization of the right to access quality public services in rural areas, the right to financial inclusion, to land, property, productive and natural resources, as well as access to markets and information technologies.
- Governments must adopt and enforce legislation and policies which explicitly protect LGBTQI and GNC women and people from all forms of discrimination.

### **And we ask governments**

- To eliminate gender-based violence and discrimination in the world of work including through the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the world of work and its accompanying Recommendation 206.

## **Second intervention**

Thank you honourable chair. My name is Asel Dunganaeva, I am from Kyrgyz Republic, rural women's organization 'Alga', and I am a rural woman myself. I am speaking on behalf of the WMG.

I would like to share with you the key messages from the Civil Society Forum's thematic working group on rural women and economic empowerment.

- Rural women need social investment and services, as well as investment in structural institutions to tackle isolation.
- Laws that protect women's rights to productive resources, financial services, technology and innovation, to inherit land and secure land tenure.

- Address data gaps on rural women through research and urban-rural communication.
- Create a national prize to honor rural women who have advanced the quality of life in rural areas.

Respectful governments and civil society, listen to rural women and invest in our existence. If rural women stop feeding the world, nothing else matters.

Thank you.

## **Third intervention**

Thank you Chair. My name is Gea Meijers, I am talking on behalf of WIDE+, also representing the perspectives of the CSO Forum working group on 'structural economic barriers'.

If we want to eradicate the gender pay gap, we have to restructure our economic system. We call for a new economic order that is about 'people, planet and care'. This calls for a systemic overhaul in which we halt extractive capitalism with its priority to create profit, keep on growing beyond our natural resources while being measured with a broken indicator such as GDP.

How can we achieve this? In our envisioned alternative economy the goals of a sustainable well-being economy are translated into indicators, in which progress is rewarded and harmful practices punished.

In this region we women have been negatively impacted in their income through major austerity programmes. If these programmes continue and are not reversed, the positive impacts of Gender pay gap proposals will remain to be limited.

### **Concretely we need:**

- Targeted policy measures to be in coherence with macroeconomic policies of States coordinated to international agreements, trade policy, tax policy and social protection policy.

Thank you.

## Fourth intervention

My name is Valerie Bichelmeier I was also present of the same working group on structural barriers. I work for an organization called 'Make Mothers Matter'. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the Motherhood wage gap.

A 2016 ILO report clearly shows that wage gaps exist not only between men and women, but also between mothers and women who do not have children.

This Motherhood wage gap is significant to the gender pay gap issue because studies found that employed mothers are the women that account for most of the gender wage gap. Research shows that hourly wages of mothers are approximately 5% lower (per child) than the wages of women without children.

It has been suggested that mothers earn less than childless women because they are less productive. In fact, they are penalized for going on maternity leave, for possibly not putting in as much 'face time' at work as their childless peers, for having to turn down jobs that require overtime, and for daring to ask for part-time work. They are simply victims of the perception/stereotype that women with children are not as much 'into' their jobs as others because they are distracted by the caring and nurturing requirements of their households

We are therefore calling on governments to recognize this motherhood penalty, collect data on the motherhood wage gap and take it into account when addressing the Gender Pay Gap.