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## Commission on the Status of Women

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**Statement submitted by Education International, International Federation of Building and Wood Workers, International Federation of Journalists, International Trade Union Confederation, International Transport Workers’ Federation, International Union of Food Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations, and Public Services International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **Global Unions call to action for a gender-transformative and inclusive just transition for a green and caring world**

The climate emergency is here, and the science is clear: we need to act now to shape a low-carbon, green economy to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees. The current increase of climate related disasters, including heat waves, floods, storms, droughts, changing rainfall patterns and rising sea levels already deeply impact on our lives. The people most affected, and those predicted to bear the brunt of future climate consequences, are living and working in poverty, the vast majority of whom are women, many belonging to marginalized groups and working in the informal economy and in precarious jobs.

Member States need to act now by adopting ambitious Just Transition plans to preserve our planet and adequately address the profound inequalities and inequities in the world of work. These plans are fundamental for building resilient, sustainable and just societies, equipped to respond to the climate emergency, and to meet the targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The root causes of inequality and inequity are the historical social, economic, cultural, political and institutional barriers to access decent work and the exposure to discrimination, violence and harassment on the basis of multiple and intersecting identities. The health and care crisis revealed and exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic has deepened these persistent inequalities and offers a disconcerting preview of the anticipated asymmetric impact of the impending climate crisis. The pandemic made hyper visible the low wages, poor working conditions, lack of adequate health and safety measures for care and health workers, 70 per cent of whom are women, and many are migrants and people of colour. In addition, women have lost jobs and income in disproportionate numbers since they are over-represented in the sectors hardest hit by the health crisis. These include hospitality, tourism, retail, food services and the manufacturing sector, as well in the informal economy, where 60 per cent of workers are women. Data from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) show that at least 13 million fewer women were in employment in 2021 compared to 2019. In contrast, men's employment recovered to 2019 levels. Pre-pandemic, women already performed three times as much unpaid care work as men; this increased exponentially during the pandemic. There has also been a steep pandemic-related increase in violence against women and girls, including domestic violence.

The climate emergency is already having severe impacts on human life, disproportionately affecting women and marginalised groups who risk greater job and income loss. For instance, the income and wellbeing of women living in rural areas who are threatened by the immediate and devastating impacts of climate change, including loss of habitats, soil erosion and desertification, all of which affects food security and incomes. Climate change affects gender-roles, health, reproductive justice, quality of life and food accessibility, and leads to forced displacements and labour migration, which will increase socio-economic vulnerability and the risk of gender-based violence among migrant and forcibly displaced women. To leave no one behind, a gender-transformative and inclusive response to the climate emergency is critical.

Women are on the front lines of the response to both the pandemic and the climate emergencies: young women are leading climate change movements; women workers provide essential services, and trade unions, feminist and Indigenous women leaders advocate for inclusive and gender-responsive climate actions. Despite these efforts, they are not at the decision-making table and most climate plans are not

inclusive or gender-responsive. This contradicts the ambition of the Paris Agreement, which calls for gender-responsive adaptation action, including consultation with Indigenous Peoples. The Gender Action Plan (GAP), adopted at COP25, calls for enhanced implementation of gender-responsive climate action at all levels and to preserve local, Indigenous and traditional knowledge and practices in different sectors. It takes into account human rights, Just Transition and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, who are conservers of more than 30 per cent of the world's land and play a vital leading role as stewards of natural resources and in the global response to climate change.

It is a critical moment to intervene in the climate emergency, as outlined in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on the scientific basis of climate change. World leaders need to massively scale up the implementation of national climate mitigation and adaptation measures and provide climate finance, in order to reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. It is essential for governments to raise their ambitions for gender responsive and inclusive Just Transition policies, adopt and implement national climate plans (“Nationally Determined Contributions”, NDCs) and achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda, including SDG8 on economic growth and decent work, so as to remove the link between GDP growth and environmental degradation.

The Paris Agreement enshrines the imperatives of a Just Transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work, which highlights the critical role of trade unions, social dialogue and collective bargaining. Just Transition holistically addresses environmental, social and economic perspectives through social protection, health and safety policies, sectorial and active labour market policies and skills and development policies. Just Transition shifts high carbon producing sectors in energy, transport, construction and food towards low carbon producing alternatives, and creating millions of climate-friendly, decent, quality jobs, including care jobs. Some fifty countries committed to the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative in 2019 at the UN Climate Action Summit.

Adequate and increased investments in a Just Transition towards a gender responsive and inclusive green and caring economy is critical. This requires guarantees to provide decent work for all, including the formalization of informal work and universal access to social protection. Universal access to public quality care, health and education services, including transport services, overcoming sectoral and occupational segregation, realizing equal pay for work of equal value, eradicating wage and skills gaps and providing occupational health and safety are also central tenets of a Just Transition. In addition, education must be transformed to support the fight against climate change and to support a Just Transition. Students have a right to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to sustain our world for present and future generations, and to receive an education that prepares them for the world of work in a green economy. Supporting quality journalism is critical to providing adequate information to people on the climate emergency and to the fight against misinformation around climate change denial.

As part of Generation Equality commitments, a number of Member States committed to reaching key targets by 2026 related to increased investments in care and the creation of 80 million decent care jobs, as well inclusive formalization of informal jobs, the ratification of ILO Convention 190 and extending social protection to women. UN Secretary General, António Guterres, has called for accelerated action on the eradication of poverty and a sustainable recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, which includes Just Transition targets to create 400 million jobs in the green and care economies by 2030, and to extend social protection floors to four billion people by 2025. This is in alignment with the ILO resolution adopted in June 2021 (ILC.109/Resolution III), which contains a framework for action towards universal,

adequate, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems backed by the establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund.

Global unions, representing 80 million women workers worldwide, call on Member States at the UNCSW66 to act by stepping up their ambitions and prioritising plans for a gender transformative and inclusive Just Transition towards a green and caring economy.

We call on Member States to engage in social dialogue with workers and their trade unions and to adopt ambitious national Just Transition plans that:

- Keep global warming below 1.5 degrees and include Just Transition policies and measures in new and enhanced NDCs;
- Deliver the climate finance commitment of US\$ 100 Billion per year to change the global development model and decarbonise the Global South. Enlarge fiscal space through progressive tax policies and an end to tax havens to ensure that the wealthiest companies and countries contribute the most. Integrate an inclusive and gender responsive perspective in all climate finance instruments;
- Apply the ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all, including by investing public funds in low carbon jobs and public procurement incentives, shifting towards environmentally sustainable goods and services, and facilitating a Just Transition in the energy, construction, food and transport sectors;
- Integrate climate change education into curricula as a compulsory subject at all levels of education, including early childhood education, technical and vocational education, further and higher education, and adult education;
- Fund trusted news on climate change to fully inform citizens.

Ensure a gender transformative and inclusive Just Transition and world of work by:

- Creating 575 million decent, climate friendly and care jobs, including jobs for women – particularly young women - in Sciences Technology Engineering and Math sectors;
- Implementing sustainable industrial policies guided by social dialogue to create decent work for all based on minimum living wages and inclusive formalisation of informal jobs, underpinned by international labour rights. These rights include freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining (ILO Conventions 87 and 98) the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment (ILO Convention C190 and Recommendation 206), equal pay for work of equal value across all sectors (ILO Convention 100);
- Guaranteeing occupational health and safety as a fundamental right at work; applying gender-specific ILO Conventions (C111, C156, C183 and C189) and ensuring human rights due diligence in business operations and along global supply chains;
- Ensuring universal social protection for all, supported by a Global Social Protection Fund in support of countries in the Global South; and recognising the value of unpaid care work within contributory social security schemes;
- Improving women's access to public quality vocational education and training and to sectors with gender-based occupational segregation;

Increasing public investments in care, rebuilding the social organization of care and recognizing the human right to care by:

- Creating 269 million care jobs in the health and care sectors by 2030 (when the need for care will have risen to 2.3 billion from 1.9 billion people in 2015);
- Guaranteeing decent work for all care workers – including domestic workers – with living wages and dignified working conditions, through the transition of precarious, informal care and health jobs into decent jobs and the fair recruitment of migrant health and care workers, irrespective of legal status;
- Ensuring equitable and affordable access to gender transformative quality public care and social, health and transport services;
- Adopting laws and policies to facilitate the reconciliation of work and private life, including the redistribution of unpaid care responsibilities.
- Designing cities around low-carbon infrastructure for sustainable public transport systems, with routes and services that efficiently cater to the mobility needs of women workers in all their diversity and on which women can rely to access economic, health, reproductive and education rights.

Ensure effective and meaningful participation and representation of women, in all their diversity and at all levels, which is critical for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to effectively respond to the current health and care crisis and climate emergency.

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