



General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 August 2019

Original: English

Seventy-fourth session

Item 22 (b) of the provisional agenda*

Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Women in development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/234](#) on women in development, in the present report, the Secretary-General underscores measures taken at the national level to incorporate a gender perspective into national sustainable development policies and strategies; promote sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth strategies that benefit women and active labour market policies on full and productive employment and decent work for women; eliminate gender-based occupational segregation and gender wage gaps; accelerate the transition of women from informal to formal employment; prevent and eliminate all forms of violence, discrimination and sexual harassment against women at work; and promote the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities.

* [A/74/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [72/234](#) on women in development, the General Assembly recognized the links between gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, human rights, poverty eradication and inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The Assembly reaffirmed the importance of full and productive employment, decent work and social protection for all and urged States to scale up efforts to accelerate the transition of women from informal to formal employment. The Assembly also strongly condemned the persistence and pervasiveness of violence against women and girls, stressing the need to eliminate all forms of violence in public and private spaces and encouraged Member States to adopt specific preventive measures to protect women and girls from any form of abuse, including sexual abuse, exploitation and violence. It further urged Member States to recognize, value, reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work done by women.

2. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of resolution [72/234](#) at its seventy-fourth session. The present report is based on contributions by 27 Member States and 4 entities of the United Nations system,¹ as well as other sources. In the report, the Secretary-General reviews measures taken by Governments and support provided by United Nations entities to address issues relevant to the resolution. The Secretary-General also offers an assessment of national efforts to: (a) incorporate a gender perspective into national sustainable development strategies; (b) promote inclusive growth strategies and active labour market and social protection policies; (c) eliminate gender-based discrimination in labour markets, occupational segregation and gender pay gaps; (d) improve education, training and skills development; (e) accelerate the transition of women from informal to formal employment; (f) prevent and eliminate violence and sexual harassment against women at work; and (g) increase investment in the care economy. The report concludes with recommendations for consideration by the 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, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the agreed conclusions of the sixty-first ([E/2017/27-E/CN.6/2017/21](#)) and sixty-third ([E/2019/27-E/CN.6/2019/19](#)) sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women provide road maps on women's economic empowerment, as does the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 5 on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and Goal 8 on the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

¹ Contributions were received from Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Cyprus, Czechia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mauritania, Mexico, Myanmar, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine and Uruguay, as well as the following United Nations entities: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

II. Global and regional evidence and trends

4. Despite women's increasingly visible participation in the economy, notable gender gaps remain in labour markets both in developing and developed countries. Globally, fewer women are in paid employment than men, and women frequently earn less for similar work and tend to be clustered in more precarious, lower-paid, part-time and informal employment. Significant gaps remain in women's labour force participation worldwide, although in some regions these gaps appear to be narrowing, with the exception of South Asia and East Asia. Gender gaps in participation rates are lowest in sub-Saharan Africa, where women's labour force participation rates are among the highest. Men and women in sub-Saharan Africa both have high levels of participation in the labour market, including in self-employment and own-account work, and the difference between their participation rates is the least globally. Gender gaps in men and women's participation rates are particularly striking among Arab States and in North Africa and South Asia, where they exceed 50 percentage points. Those three regions also have the lowest female participation rates (less than 30 per cent, compared with the global average of 49 per cent) and defy the general trend worldwide of women's increasing participation in the labour force.²

5. Women typically work fewer hours than men in paid employment, but when paid work and unpaid care and domestic work are taken into account, they work more hours than men overall. In countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), women spend 2.6 times more of their time on unpaid care and domestic work per day than men, whereas they spend 0.7 times the amount of time on paid work each day than men spend.³

6. Education plays a key role in explaining women's labour force participation rates. The education levels of girls and young women have risen dramatically in many developing countries in recent decades. This reflects, in part, commitments to the Millennium Development Goals and concerted public sector investment to close gender gaps in education. While globally, women with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in labour markets, women in poorer countries with the lowest level of education are the most likely to participate in subsistence activities and informal employment.⁴ Nevertheless, education alone is insufficient for increasing the labour force participation of women. Structural barriers, such as institutionalized discrimination and occupational segregation, continue to perpetuate gender gaps.

7. Disproportionate numbers of women are in informal employment in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and in most low- and lower-middle-income countries. Although globally, rates of informal employment are higher for men than for women (63 per cent compared with 58.1 per cent), the proportion of women in informal employment exceeds that of men in a larger number of countries (55.5 per cent). The youngest and oldest workers are disproportionately affected by informal employment, while people in rural areas are almost twice as likely to be in informal employment (80 per cent) than those in urban areas (43.7 per cent). The highest level of informal employment is in agriculture (93.6 per cent), while industrial (57.2 per cent) and service (47.2 per cent) sectors relatively have lower, but still substantial, levels.⁵ A disproportionate number of the working poor are in the informal economy,

² International Labour Organization (ILO), *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2017* (Geneva, 2017). See also data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FM.ZS.

³ Available at stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=TIME_USE.

⁴ Rachel Heath and Seema Jayachandran, "The causes and consequences of increased female education and labor force participation in developing countries", National Bureau of Economic Research working paper No. 22766, 2017.

⁵ ILO, *Women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture* (third edition) (Geneva, 2018).

but over half of them are wage and salaried workers, mostly women in emerging economies or in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.⁶

8. At the global level, the gender gap in unemployment rates has generally remained the same, albeit with considerable variation by regional and national income group. Women are more likely to find themselves unemployed than men (6.2 per cent in 2017 compared with 5.5 per cent for men, a difference of 0.7 percentage points). In emerging economies, the gap has widened from 0.5 points in 2007 to 0.7 points in 2017. By contrast, the gender gap has decreased to 1.8 points in developing countries and 0.5 points in developed countries.⁷

9. Technology and automation are changing the employment landscape both in developed and developing countries. Digital innovations, cellular technology and Internet access have created new opportunities for linking people and mobilizing social capital, mediating access to employment and financial markets and services and stimulating technical and vocational education and training learning platforms and health-care services. Mobile money and digital wage payments have allowed remote rural populations to make electronic payments and transfers, spurred the creation of new mechanisms through which women can earn and save their money more securely, facilitated the transfer of remittances to remote areas, contributed to the formalization of work for women and opened new markets for women entrepreneurs.⁸

10. Despite significant investment in mobile platforms and some prominent success stories in the digitization of payments and transfers, access to mobile telecommunication services is unequal and women face barriers to accessing and using digital platforms and financial services.⁹ Since digital platforms and financial services typically rely on mobile communications networks, access to mobile technology and the ability to use it however and whenever desired are critical factors in determining inclusion in digital financial services. Indeed, globally women are 14 per cent less likely than men to own a mobile phone. The gender gap in mobile phone ownership is wider in some areas of the world, such as South Asia, where women are 38 per cent less likely to own a phone than men.¹⁰ Moreover, despite the opportunities that these platforms afford for generating and organizing work, they may contribute to the informalization of employment by obscuring the identity of the employer and disempowering workers.¹¹

III. Drivers and constraints

11. Global economic growth rates have been in decline since the 2008 global recession; they have only recently recovered but growth remains lacklustre at around 3 per cent.¹² Many developing and emerging economies continue to experience

⁶ ILO, *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2017* (Geneva, 2017).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ United Nations, “Leave no one behind: taking action for transformational change on women’s economic empowerment”, report of the Secretary-General’s high-level panel on women’s economic empowerment, New York, 2017; Tavneet Suri and William Jack, “The long-run poverty and gender impacts of mobile money”, *Science*, vol. 354, No. 6317 (December 2016), pp. 1288–1292.

⁹ ITU, “ICT facts and figures”. Available at www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2017.pdf.

¹⁰ GSM Association (GSMA), “Women and mobile money: insights from Kenya” (London, 2015); GSMA, *The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2018* (London, 2018).

¹¹ ILO, *Digital labour platforms and the future of work: Towards decent work in the online world*, Geneva, 2018; Abigail Hunt and Emma Samman, “Gender and the gig economy: critical steps for evidence-based policy”, working paper No. 546 (London, 2019).

¹² Available at data.worldbank.org/indicator/ny.gdp.mktp.kd.zg.

declining growth of gross domestic product.¹³ Growth is, however, very uneven as some regions, including South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific, continue to report growth rates of over 5 per cent, while others, notably Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, report rates of under 3 per cent. Emerging barriers to trade and the breakdown of existing trade agreements could potentially exacerbate the economic slowdown in some regions.¹⁴ When growth slows, job creation slows with it, and women's unemployment rates then typically rise.

12. Discriminatory laws and gender norms continue to hinder women's full and equal participation in economies worldwide.¹⁵ Formal and informal laws, and attitudes and practices that restrict women's and girls' access to justice and employment opportunities, greatly constrain women's and girls' ability to participate in the economy and to exercise their human rights. Discrimination in family law and restrictions in civil liberties, physical integrity and access to productive and financial resources are highest in the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.¹⁶

13. Gender pay gaps are enduring and appear to be widening in some parts of the world. Although the gap appears to have narrowed over the past decade in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia and the Pacific, it is broadening in Europe, Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The gender pay gap stands at less than 10 per cent in East Asia and the Pacific, while the widest gaps are in South Asia (around 30 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (20 per cent).¹⁷ In addition, global wage growth is declining and gender pay gaps are likely to increase as the slowdown continues.

14. Globally, men and women tend to be clustered in specific occupations and sectors, resulting in significant job segregation by gender. In most regions of the world, with the exception of South Asia, women are less likely than men to work in manufacturing but more likely to work in services. The gender distribution in agriculture is mixed: women are more likely to work in agriculture than men in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, equally likely in East Asia, the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa, and less likely in other regions.¹⁸

15. Violence inflicted by intimate partners and gender-based violence in the private and public spheres threaten women's well-being and their enjoyment of their rights. At least 2 billion women, or 75 per cent of women worldwide aged 18 years and over, have experienced sexual harassment. Violence and harassment against women in the world of work happens in all jobs, occupations and sectors of the economy and all countries. This violence and harassment may happen in the workplace, including public and private spaces used as a place of work, journeys to and from work, or work locations made possible through information and communications technologies (ICT).¹⁹ In June 2019, increasing awareness of the impact of violence and harassment in the workplace prompted the adoption of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 106).²⁰

16. Unequal power relations between women and men in the household and society are root causes of gender inequality and continue to undermine women's economic

¹³ Available at www.imf.org/external/datamapper/datasets/WEO/1.

¹⁴ Available at www.oecd.org/economy/economic-outlook/.

¹⁵ World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law 2018* (Washington D.C., 2018).

¹⁶ OECD, Social institutions and gender index database. Available at www.genderindex.org/.

¹⁷ ILO, *Global Wage Report 2018/19: What Lies Behind Gender Pay Gaps?* (Geneva, 2018).

¹⁸ ILO, *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2017*.

¹⁹ UN-Women and ILO, *Handbook Addressing Violence and Harassment Against Women in the World of Work* (New York, 2019).

²⁰ Provisional record of the International Labour Conference, 108th session, Geneva, June 2019.

empowerment.²¹ Where women have lower bargaining power or status in the household, their ability to control income, determine the amount of money to save and invest, spend money on health and nutrition and even to negotiate their own fertility is greatly diminished.²²

17. Unpaid care and domestic work continues to be disproportionately done by women and girls. Globally, women spend three times more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men, and in Asia and the Pacific, four times more.²³ Gender gaps in unpaid care and domestic work tend to be higher in countries with poor infrastructure and less well-developed education and social protection systems.²⁴ Gender gaps are also higher in countries with more discriminatory social institutions that place normative and legal restrictions on women's economic and social rights and mobility.²⁵ Women's responsibilities with regard to care work and domestic work leave them time-poor, limit their engagement in labour markets, reduce their productivity, exacerbate gender gaps in labour force participation, increase labour market segmentation and lead to the concentration of women in low-paid, insecure, informal, part-time and home-based work as a means of reconciling their responsibilities with paid employment.²⁶

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

A. Integration of a gender perspective in national sustainable development strategies

18. Many Member States are integrating a gender perspective into national sustainable development strategies and policies in order to promote gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination. Most of those States have competent authorities or national gender equality mechanisms, such as a ministry of women and social development, gender equality commissions and secretariats charged with defining and enforcing gender equality legislation and practice and mainstreaming gender in national sustainable development strategies. Member States have reported that they are adjusting their national legal and policy frameworks to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda (E/CN.6/2019/4). Twenty United Nations system entities reported supporting national machineries for the advancement of women and promoting norms and standards in the context of the 2030 Agenda as a way of mainstreaming gender equality (E/2019/54). Andorra, Australia, Austria, Argentina, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Cyprus, Czechia, Germany, Mauritania, Myanmar, Portugal, Peru, Slovenia, Spain and Uruguay have all defined

²¹ UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015–2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* (New York, 2015); Jean-Marie Baland and Roberta Ziparo, "Intrahousehold bargaining in poor countries", World Institute for Development Economics Research working paper No. 2017/108 (United Nations University, 2017).

²² Ibid.; Cruz Caridad Bueno and Errol A. Henderson, "Bargaining or backlash? Evidence on intimate partner violence from the Dominican Republic", *Feminist Economics*, vol. 23, issue 4 (2017), pp. 90–116.

²³ ILO, *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work* (Geneva, 2018).

²⁴ Asian Development Bank, *Balancing the Burden? Desk Review of Women's Time Poverty and Infrastructure in Asia and the Pacific*, Philippines, 2015; Sarah Gammage, "Labour market institutions and gender inequality" in Janine Berg (ed.), *Labour Market Institutions: an ILO Primer* (Geneva, 2015).

²⁵ UN-Women, "Redistributing unpaid care and sustaining quality care services: a prerequisite for gender equality", policy brief No. 5 (New York, 2016).

²⁶ UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2019–2020: Families in a Changing World*, (New York, 2019).

gender equality plans and sought to mainstream gender perspectives in national policies and programmes.

19. In its sustainable development plan 2018–2030, for example, Myanmar considers gender a cross-cutting theme that is mainstreamed into all aspects of the plan’s implementation, including corresponding gender responsive budgeting. In Burkina Faso, the national plan for economic and social development 2016–2020 similarly features gender equality. The Government has invested in mainstreaming gender perspectives in sectoral policies and in tools for gender analysis and gender integration in plans, programmes and projects at the local and national levels. In Mauritania, the strategy for accelerated growth and shared prosperity, approved in 2018, was developed as part of a participatory and inclusive process in alignment with the country’s national gender institutionalization strategy. In its national development plan 2018–2022, Colombia calls for the strengthening of inter-institutional and intersectoral coordination on gender issues, including the establishment of the national women’s system to promote and protect women’s rights and advance gender mainstreaming. In Cambodia, the first national gender policy is being formulated as a longer-term policy framework for gender equality, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

20. Slovenia has developed a resolution on the national programme for equal opportunities for women and men, which is a strategic document defining objectives, measures and key policies in support of gender equality for the period ending 2020. Priorities in the national programme include the elimination of gender imbalances and gender segregation in employment and the tackling of unemployment; the removal of obstacles to the reconciliation of work, private and family life; the reduction of the gender gap and gender segregation in education; the elimination of inequalities in science and higher education; and the promotion of a zero-tolerance policy with regard to violence against women.

21. Uruguay has been working for the past two years to develop a long-term sustainable development strategy. The “National Development Strategy, Uruguay 2050” will create pathways for sustainable development by improving the equality of rights and opportunities for men and women, with a focus on women’s economic empowerment and addressing gender stereotypes and social norms.

B. Inclusive growth strategies and active labour market and social protection policies

22. Inclusive economic growth strategies and active labour market and social protection policies are being pursued and coordinated by many Member States. Austria, Australia, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Mexico, Peru, Saudi Arabia and Slovenia are making concerted efforts to ensure that women benefit from active labour market programmes that help workers find jobs and support employer and employee matching, retraining and support for women wishing to re-enter the labour market. Austria provides support for professional reintegration, in particular for women returning to work after parental leave or leave to care for dependents. Those who seek to return to work are counselled and offered special information sessions by qualified employment counsellors from all regional offices of the labour market service. Some 4,500 women take part each year.

23. Several Member States have extended social protection platforms and revalued pensions and transfers with the specific aim of improving the lives and livelihoods of women. This has been part of ongoing initiatives to ensure universal pensions and transfers for the elderly in Azerbaijan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana,

Brazil, China, Cambodia, Georgia, Kosovo, Lesotho, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, South Africa, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine and the United Republic of Tanzania.²⁷ Czechia is upholding its commitments to adopt and strengthen legislation on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. For example, legislation to ensure that social insurance and pensions are adequate, which entered into force on 1 January 2019, has raised the value of the lowest pensions, thereby improving the situation of women and men who were at the greatest risk of income poverty.

24. Cambodia has developed and implemented the comprehensive social protection policy framework 2016–2025, which partly focuses on gender equality. The Government is implementing a food reserve programme, a school feeding programme as well as a scholarship programme for poor students, under which 60 per cent of funds are allocated to girls. The Government also provides cash support for pregnant women and children of poor families and has established a health equity fund; expanded the national social security on health care and occupational risks for workers and employees under the Labour Law; rolled out a health insurance scheme for civil servants, retirees and veterans; and established the Persons with Disabilities Foundation.

25. To build the capacity of social protection systems to address gender inequalities in rural contexts, FAO has developed a toolkit promoting gender-sensitive social protection programmes to combat rural poverty and hunger. The toolkit is designed to enhance the technical capacity of social protection practitioners to integrate gender equality issues into the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of social protection programmes in rural areas.

26. UNIDO, in cooperation with UN-Women and the Economic Commission for Africa and with funding provided by Finland, has developed and piloted a regional training programme on gender-sensitive statistics in inclusive and sustainable industrial development. In October 2018, to better inform and enable gender-responsive industrial policy formulation and implementation, national statisticians from 10 East African countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Sudan, the Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) received training in Addis Ababa on the systematic collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated and gender statistics and data.

C. Elimination of gender-based discrimination in labour markets, occupational segregation and gender pay gaps

27. Higher-, middle- and lower-income countries have made efforts to eliminate gender-based discrimination in labour markets and overcome occupational segregation and gender pay gaps (E/CN.6/2017/3). Some of the initiatives to address occupational segregation have focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for girls and on breaking down gender stereotypes within an educational system that result in girls and boys specializing in different academic and vocational tracks (for example, in Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Cambodia, Colombia, Cyprus, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Uruguay). Australia has recently released the “Advancing Women in STEM” strategy, in which the Government affirms its commitment to improving gender equality and the participation of women in STEM, including through additional funding. In Germany, the “National Pact for Women in STEM Careers” is designed to increase the number of young women in scientific and technical careers

²⁷ ILO and World Bank, *Universal Social Protection: Country Cases*, the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection (USP2030) (Washington D.C., 2016).

by creating networks and mobilizing over 200 partners to support and advise young women.

28. In Turkey, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services and the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, have invested in the “Engineer Girls of Turkey” project that offers training, scholarships, internships and outreach to schools. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the national plan for the empowerment of women through technology targeted 50 villages in 2018 and 270 villages in 2019. In Norway, the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise and the Norwegian Society of Engineers and Technologists run a project entitled “Girls and Technology”, which aims to raise the percentage of girls participating in scientific subjects at all levels, including through engagement with role models and businesses to inspire girls about the possibilities open to them from studying science and engineering at university.

29. Austria is promoting diversified career choices for girls and women and eliminating gender-based stereotypes in educational and vocational training both by building a cadre of informed and aware teachers through the University Colleges of Teacher Education, and through the resources, goals and performance plans for the Boards of Education. It has set up the *meine Technik* platform, which provides information about career tracks and educational options in STEM, with a focus on girls, young women, teachers, companies and parents.

30. Bahrain is conducting surveys to measure the participation of women in the field of financial technology and identify the obstacles they face. It is also conducting surveys of financial and banking institutions, in cooperation with the Central Bank of Bahrain, to measure the progress achieved in closing gender gaps in the financial and banking sector, the effect of policies and plans to increase the participation of women, and women’s access to financial and banking services.

31. International Girls in ICT Day, an initiative by ITU, is a global campaign to empower and encourage girls and young women to consider studies and careers in information and communications technologies. Its aims include to address the underrepresentation of women in STEM careers, which are typically better paid and highly skilled. Between 2011 and 2018, the campaign reached 357,000 girls in 171 countries. The #GirlsInICT hashtag has reached 93 million Twitter accounts, while the Girls in ICT portal has received over 1 million page views, helping to raise the visibility of the issue of attracting more women and girls to ICT studies and careers.

32. The African Girls Can Code initiative, a joint initiative of ITU and UN-Women, motivates girls to take up studies and careers in ICT and equips them with digital, coding, entrepreneurship and personal development skills through coding camps. Thirty-four African countries were represented at the first coding camp, held in Ethiopia in August 2018. The initiative also helps African countries to mainstream gender-sensitive ICT and coding curricula at all levels of formal education. Learning ICT skills should transform girls from solely being digital consumers to becoming creators, developers and active global citizens who can reap the benefits of the global digital boom.

33. In pursuit of inclusive and sustainable industrial development, UNIDO helps Member States to reduce gender-based occupational and sector-specific segregation and gender pay gaps. Its Learning and Knowledge Development Facility provides young people in developing countries and in economies in transition with industrial skills. In Morocco, Uruguay, Ethiopia, Liberia, South Africa, Iraq and Zambia, the facility promotes the enrolment of female students in male-dominated technical and vocational courses, makes success stories of female students more visible so that they can become role models on social media and produces gender-sensitive communication campaigns.

34. Another initiative to overcome occupational segregation by gender is the establishment of quotas for women in leadership positions and on boards. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a presidential decree in force until 2022 ensures that public and private sector entities commit to ensure that 30 per cent of management positions are held by women. To address the underrepresentation of women at the highest levels of management in the public service in Austria, the Council of Ministers imposed a quota of 35 per cent on the number of women in such positions. This was gradually applied to federally appointed members of the supervisory boards of State-owned or State-affiliated companies with a public share of at least 50 per cent or more in 2011. Annual reviews assess whether the quota has been reached. In 2017, 289 supervisory board members were appointed in 54 such companies, 135 of whom were women, and the representation of women has reached between 25 and 35 per cent in 17 companies.

35. Commitments to foster gender equality in the workplace through equal pay for work of equal value are being upheld in a number of countries, notably Austria, Iceland, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, by requiring firms to report pay by gender in different job categories. In Norway, all public sector entities, regardless of size, as well as private sector entities that employ more than 50 persons, are required to investigate whether there is a risk of discrimination or other barriers to gender equality; analyse the causes of any risks identified; implement measures to counteract discrimination and promote greater equality and diversity in the workplace; and evaluate the results of efforts made. This legal obligation applies to all aspects of pay and working conditions, and findings and evaluations are included in an annual report to the Government.

36. In Austria, a requirement for companies to produce publicly available income parity reports was introduced in 2011 and was applied to all companies with more than 150 employees in 2014. A project was introduced to heighten awareness about fair wages and increase pay transparency in companies, and a tool was designed for developing, analysing and using income parity reports. In response to these measures and efforts, the Austrian Government reports that the gender pay gap decreased from 25.5 per cent in 2007 to 19.9 per cent in 2017.

37. In Cyprus, the Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training convened a forum on equal pay for work of equal value with the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, the Office of the Ombudsman and key stakeholders from the public sector, the private sector and workers' organizations. This has increased the number of complaints raised about pay equity. The Government of Spain has developed a self-diagnostic tool for analysing the gender pay gap. The "Job Assessment System with a Gender Perspective" offers companies the possibility of designing their own job evaluation system and of using the software to determine a system of compensation in the event that gender pay gaps emerge.

D. Education, training and skills development

38. Commitments to education, training and skills development have been fulfilled through a range of initiatives carried out by Member States (Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cambodia, Colombia, Cyprus, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Uruguay) to ensure that women and girls have access to the capabilities they need to thrive.

39. In Azerbaijan, the Baku Business Training Centre under the Ministry of Economy conducted 1,227 training sessions, workshops, round tables and other events between 2015 and 2018 to train women, among other things, in entrepreneurship, financial literacy and starting and developing a business.

40. Bahrain, in cooperation with UNIDO, conducted a training programme in October 2017 for policymakers from 24 African and Arab countries to build their capacity to formulate gender-responsive industrial development policies and support the achievement of related Sustainable Development Goals and targets. A second training programme for the Middle East and North Africa region will be conducted in November 2019.

41. Turkey and Cambodia are investing in the cooperative sector through targeted training and capacity-building, as a way of strengthening women's enterprises and cooperatives and reinforcing their governance. Cooperatives offer a legally recognized way of providing structure and protection for what may begin as loosely formed or unincorporated associations of workers. They can be powerful legal vehicles for association in the informal economy, where women are frequently overrepresented.²⁸ Cooperatives are often the preferred choice of economic organization for many groups of workers in the informal economy, from street vendors and waste pickers to transport and home-based workers.²⁹

42. To further support and enable women's cooperatives, ILO has developed Think.COOP, a tool that supports the formation and functioning of cooperatives and serves as a low-cost, easy-to-use training module for those interested in establishing or joining a cooperative.³⁰

43. ITU published the Digital Skills Toolkit in 2018 to help policymakers and other stakeholders to develop a national digital skills development strategy that is both inclusive and gender-responsive. The toolkit conforms to the commitment by ITU under the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth to tackle youth unemployment. ITU, together with ILO, leads the Digital Skills for Jobs campaign, which aims to increase young people's employability and address skills shortages in the digital economy through digital skills training, including through programmes designed specifically for girls and young women. The goal of the campaign is to equip 5 million young people with job-ready, transferable digital skills by 2030.

E. Transition of women from informal to formal employment

44. Accelerating the transition of women from informal to formal employment is in many countries an important policy area for improving the terms and conditions of employment of poor working women. Some Member States, notably Argentina, Cambodia, Mexico and Peru, have focused on improving the terms and conditions of particularly vulnerable job categories which are frequently informal, such as domestic work. Mexico, for example, has committed to setting a minimum wage for domestic workers, which it is estimated will benefit 2.3 million domestic workers. To address ongoing concerns about the terms and conditions of employment in this sector and engage broad support for commitments to formalize domestic work, the Government has convened consultations with key stakeholders, such as representatives of academia, social organizations, trade unions, international organizations and the public sector.

45. In Cambodia, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, with support from UN-Women and ILO, conducted a number of sessions to raise awareness among stakeholders about the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the

²⁸ ILO, "Cooperatives and the world of work No.1: leveraging the cooperative advantage for women's empowerment and gender equality" (Geneva, 2018).

²⁹ UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015–2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* (New York, 2015).

³⁰ ILO, "Think.COOP – an orientation on the cooperative business model" (Bangkok, ILO Enterprises Department, no date).

Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201). Tripartite consultations were held with Governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations to develop a roadmap identifying priority actions for implementing the Convention. Building on these consultations, in April 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training issued regulation No. 235 on working conditions for domestic workers in Cambodia. The regulation sets out what constitutes domestic work, including a description of tasks and responsibilities, imposes a minimum age (18 years, or 15 years for light duties) and requires that written contracts, days off and paid public holidays comply with labour law and that domestic workers are registered with the National Social Security Fund.

46. With the aim of formalizing domestic work and ensuring that domestic workers are registered in the social security system, Argentina enacted Law No. 26,844 on special provisions for contractual work by persons in private houses, which granted domestic workers the same economic, social and labour rights as any other worker. Argentina ratified the ILO Domestic Workers Convention and made it compulsory for employers to pay for occupational risk insurance for all domestic employees.

47. In Burkina Faso, finance and technical assistance has enabled more than 825 businesses owned by women to be formally registered between 2014 and 2019.

F. Prevention and elimination of violence and sexual harassment against women at work and provision of support services

48. Member States and actors throughout the United Nations system are focusing on policies and programmes relating to the prevention and elimination of violence and sexual harassment against women at work. Following discussion at the International Labour Conference regarding the establishment of an instrument to address violence and harassment in the world of work,³¹ a number of Member States, including Australia, Cyprus, Mauritania and Mexico, have stepped up their efforts to tackle sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. Mexico has renewed its efforts in that regard by enforcing a 2012 law in which sexual harassment in the workplace is recognized as a form of violence. It has also extended access to legal defence services through the Federal Prosecutor's Office for the Defence of Workers.

49. In Australia, the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Sex Discrimination Commissioner have key roles in promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls, including with regard to sexual harassment. The Human Rights Commission regularly produces a sexual harassment survey (previously in 2003, 2008, 2012 and 2018) on the prevalence of sexual harassment in Australian workplaces. The Government of Australia is also supporting action on violence and discrimination by undertaking a national inquiry into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces. The inquiry is being led by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner and will examine the nature and prevalence of sexual harassment in Australian workplaces, the drivers of this harassment and measures to address it. Building on the outcomes of the sexual harassment survey, the inquiry will recommend practical actions to address sexual harassment at work and will publicize its report in the second half of 2019.

50. The Government of Cyprus has developed several publications and media campaigns on sexual harassment at work, while the Gender Equality Committee is actively conducting training and disseminating information on the definition of sexual harassment and on laws and regulations pertaining to sexual harassment in the workplace. Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Labour and Social

³¹ Provisional record of the International Labour Conference, 107th session, Geneva, May–June 2018.

Development is developing a law to prohibit discrimination and violence in all its forms and to put controls in place that will guarantee a safe working environment for all men and women workers. Moreover, the Ministry has drawn up a charter against harassment in the workplace that states that the Ministry is responsible for creating a healthy and safe working environment characterized by respect for all.

51. In Portugal, the national strategy for equality and non-discrimination 2018–2030 prioritizes a plan of action on violence against women, gender-based violence and domestic violence. The aims of the strategy are to promote a culture of non-violence and to prevent and overcome social tolerance of violence against women.

52. Commitments to ending trafficking and forced labour have been strengthened in a number of countries, including Bahrain, Cambodia and Greece. Greece has embarked on large-scale campaigns and partnerships with the private sector to reduce the demand for services or products produced by trafficking victims. The Break the chain public awareness campaign is the result of a broad partnership coordinated by the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and comprises multiple stakeholders. Greece has also put in place a formal national identification and referral system for victims and presumed victims of trafficking in persons. The mechanism operates as a hub for coordinating action and building partnerships, bringing together a wide range of actors, such as State agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, and is designed to help the different sectors to screen for trafficking victims and channel assistance to them, particularly migration services, labour inspectors, health providers and local administrative authorities.

53. Bahrain opened the Expat Protection Centre in 2015, the first comprehensive centre of its kind to contain a shelter for victims of trafficking and to also provide integrated services for expatriate workers. The centre is still in operation and can shelter around 120 men and women, although there is the possibility of increasing this to 200 when necessary. The centre provides various integrated services, including protection and primary medical services, psychological services as well as legal advice and assistance on reaching settlements and filing lawsuits.

54. Cambodian women migrate primarily to Thailand and Malaysia to work in manufacturing, hospitality, domestic work and agriculture. Cambodia is implementing a series of regulations to supplement the implementation of subdecree No. 190 on the management of Cambodian workers sent abroad by private recruitment agencies. These regulations aim to increase the Government's effectiveness in the management of labour migration and the processing and resolution of complaints. They define legal requirements for establishing and operating private recruitment agencies, including minimum standards, penalties, rewards and responsibilities towards migrant workers, the complaints mechanism and agency inspection standards.

G. Investment in the care economy

55. Expansion of access to affordable and high-quality care services and the enactment of legislation to extend parental leave addresses needs for care services and enhances women's economic empowerment.³² Several Member States, notably Austria, Burkina Faso, Czechia, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Turkey and Ukraine, have made commitments to expand access to care services in order to make it easier to reconcile work and family life. In Ukraine, a woman public sector employee who has

³² UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2019–2020: Families in a Changing World* (New York, 2019).

children who are under 14 years of age, has guardianship of a child with a disability, or cares for a sick family member, can negotiate part-time work or a part-time workweek with her employer. In Turkey, the “Mom’s Job” programme ensures that workers in industrial zones in four provinces have access to nurseries. In Norway, all children between the ages of 1 and 5 are entitled to attend preschool. Attendance has increased in recent years from 90 per cent in 2013 to 92 per cent in 2018. To encourage attendance, the Government has made preschool affordable for low-income households through income-differentiated fees and sibling discounts.

56. Similarly, countries such as Andorra offer subsidized childcare with extended hours for working parents. In Peru, a national childcare system has been developed for children under 3 that provides support for children living in poverty and extreme poverty. Child day-care services are provided from Monday to Friday for eight hours a day in day-care centres and private homes. In 2018, 3,407 centres or homes offered day care in 750 locations throughout the country.

57. Paid maternity and parental leave are key mechanisms for enabling women to continue participating in the world of work and for sharing care responsibilities between parents. Spain has consistently increased the allowance of paternity leave since 2014: from two to four weeks in 2016 and from four to five weeks in 2018. Royal Decree-Law 6/2019 on the extension of paternity leave will also progressively equalize the rights of both parents by 2021. Since April 2019, paternity leave has been for eight weeks and will be extended to 12 weeks in 2020 and 16 weeks in 2021. Spain has also redefined the obligatory nature of parental leave for any parent other than the mother, making leave for the first two uninterrupted weeks after delivery compulsory as of April 2019, the first four weeks as of 2020, and the first six weeks as of 2021. Subsequent weeks of leave can be distributed, accumulated or interrupted, during the first 12 months after birth.

58. Austria, Slovenia and Uruguay have addressed the redistribution of unpaid care responsibilities between households and the State and between men and women. In 2016, the Ministry of Labour, Family Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of Slovenia launched the “Active. All” project with funding from the European Union. The project seeks to address and reduce gender stereotypes in order to promote the equal participation of women and men in care and housework. In addition, a national media campaign has been launched to support gender equality through the balanced participation and representation of women and men in politics and in business and the reconciliation of work and family life.

59. Austria is increasing the availability of childcare for children under three by ensuring longer opening hours in childcare centres, creating flexible care options for workers with dependents, supporting qualified childminders and fostering intermunicipal and intergenerational childcare projects. Through 2022, the federal and regional governments will expand infant care facilities, increase school hours and promote full-time schools in order to increase children’s opportunities to learn and development and improve the work-life balance of working parents. Those who take care leave or work part time to care for a dependent have the right to a carer allowance, free health and pension insurance and supplementary benefit for dependent children. This also applies to family hospice leave for the terminal care of close relatives or seriously ill children.

60. Australia is committed to reducing gender inequality in unpaid care work. Measures taken to meet this objective include a time-use survey to gather better data on women’s performance of unpaid care and domestic work. The “Time Use Survey” conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics is intended to help the Government design policies and programmes that reconcile work and family life, especially in cases where childbirth has disrupted employment patterns. The survey also aims to

ensure better service delivery and facilitate monitoring and evaluation of public policy and programmes.

61. UN-Women, with support from the Government of Switzerland and in partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa, the Statistical Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, is building capacities and promoting the compilation of gender statistics in Africa. A workshop in September 2018 introduced the regional component of the UN-Women “Making every woman and girl count” programme, bringing together 80 experts in policy analysis and statistics to renew and initiate efforts to gather sex-disaggregated data, including on time use and unpaid care and domestic work.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

62. **Globally, economic recovery has been slow and growth remains sluggish in many countries and regions. Commitments to ensure a sustained and inclusive economic recovery for all workers will need to be reinforced by active labour market policies that link women workers to jobs and seek to break down gender-based discrimination and occupational segregation in labour markets. These policies can also support greater participation by women in the labour force, particularly if implemented in tandem with increased access to care services and infrastructure and with greater attention paid to the redistribution of care responsibilities between households and the State and between men and women through parental leave and the right to negotiate more flexible working time with employers (E/CN.6/2017/3 and E/CN.6/2019/3).**

63. **Member States are embarking on a number of initiatives to promote decent work and safe workplaces free from harassment and violence, extend and expand social protection, formalize informal work and support skills and capacity-building for women workers and entrepreneurs. These measures could be particularly useful if they target vulnerable sectors such as domestic and agricultural work.**

64. **Addressing gender inequality in the labour market will also require concerted efforts to reconcile family and work responsibilities by reducing women’s disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of services, such as affordable and high-quality childcare; extending paid maternity and parental leave; and building on commitments to redistribute care between men and women and between households and the State.**

65. **In order to promote the full participation of women in sustainable development, ensure decent work and social protection for women, foster women’s entrepreneurship, formalize their informal work, reduce gender pay gaps and effectively recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the agreed conclusions of the sixty-first (E/2017/27-E/CN.6/2017/21) and sixty-third (E/2019/27-E/CN.6/2019/19) sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, Member States are encouraged to consider the following measures:**

(a) **Incorporate gender equality considerations into national sustainable development strategies and policies and strengthen the authority and capacity of national gender equality mechanisms;**

(b) **Eliminate occupational segregation by addressing structural barriers, gender stereotypes and negative social norms, as well as promoting women’s equal access to and participation in labour markets;**

(c) **Extend social protection platforms and revalue pensions and transfers to improve the lives and livelihoods of women in both the formal and informal economies and facilitate the transition from informal to formal work, including for domestic workers;**

(d) **Eliminate the gender pay gap and discrimination at work by adopting and implementing legislation on equal pay for work of equal value and fair pay policies and practices to increase the transparency and accountability of pay scales and remuneration, including through the publication of data on gender wage gaps and the number of women in management and on boards;**

(e) **Ensure that more women are hired, retained and promoted in the labour market and increase women's representation in management, on boards and in economic decision-making forums, including through quotas and other temporary special measures;**

(f) **Invest in educational and vocational skills development that reduces sectoral and occupational segregation by gender and promotes women in non-traditional employment and sectors, especially STEM education and careers;**

(g) **Enact legislation and policies that require public and private sector entities to eliminate violence and harassment in the workplace; create safe workplaces by ensuring that all workers, managers and employers understand the definition of sexual harassment and have the information and capacity to report harassment and violence; put in place effective prevention activities, human resource policies, procedures, practices, complaints procedures, remedies and support for victims, and perpetrator accountability measures in line with the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 106);**

(h) **Assess and address the impact of ICT, digitization and digital platforms on the quality and terms and conditions of women's employment, in order to ensure decent work and social protection for workers and to protect workers and consumers using digital platforms;**

(i) **Redistribute unpaid care and domestic work between men and women and households and the State by expanding access to high-quality care services and infrastructure, enacting maternity and parental leave policies that allow more men and women to care for infants and young children, provide allowances and social protection to carers and promote flexible work arrangements for workers with dependents;**

(j) **Improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on women's employment, entrepreneurship and access to decent work and social protection, particularly for vulnerable sectors, including domestic and agricultural work, and populations, including workers in the informal economy.**

66. The United Nations system and other international organizations are encouraged to support Member States to:

(a) **Incorporate gender equality perspectives and targets in national sustainable development policies and strategies and their implementation;**

(b) **Offer workforce development and vocational skills training that breaks down occupational silos and contributes to reducing segregation by gender in labour markets;**

(c) **Develop policies to extend social protection platforms and floors, formalize informal work and expand access to productive resources and training for women workers and entrepreneurs;**

(d) **Assess and respond to the impact of digital platforms and technologies on the quality and terms and conditions of work for women;**

(e) **Ratify and implement the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201), the Violence and Harassment Convention and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation;**

(f) **Collect, analyse and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on women workers and entrepreneurs and their access to decent work and social protection.**
