



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
29 March 2022

Original: English

---

## Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-sixth session

14–25 March 2022

Agenda item 3

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Interactive dialogue on the emerging issue of harnessing the coronavirus disease pandemic recovery for gender equality and a sustainable future**

#### **Chair’s summary**

1. On 24 March 2022, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive dialogue on harnessing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic recovery for gender equality and a sustainable future.
2. The Vice-Chair of the Commission (Asia and Pacific States group), Hye Ryoung Song (Republic of Korea), chaired the session and made an introductory statement. The Vice-Chair moderated the dialogue with six invited speakers. Government officials from nine Member States, one observer and three representatives of non-governmental organizations exchanged good practices and recommendations to harness COVID-19 recovery measures to build a greener and more just future. The Vice-Chair of the Commission made concluding remarks.

#### **Intersectional dimensions of the coronavirus disease pandemic response and recovery**

3. Speakers stressed the disproportionate effect that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on women and girls, especially those facing multiple forms of discrimination such as rural women, refugees, migrants, older women, women in conflict contexts, those living with disabilities, indigenous women and gender-diverse people.
4. Participants provided examples of areas in which the pandemic has uncovered and exacerbated existing structural gender inequalities:
  - (a) Participants expressed concern over the intensification of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, as survivors often found themselves unable to leave the abusive environment;



(b) Speakers noted the deterioration of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including increases in maternal mortality, child marriage and early pregnancy as a result of the pandemic;

(c) Participants highlighted the increasing demands of unpaid care and domestic work that were disproportionately borne by women as default family and community caregivers, with negative ripple effects on their economic security, health and well-being;

(d) Speakers also noted the increase in extreme poverty among women and girls in the face of large-scale job loss and limited access to social protection.

5. Speakers highlighted the leading role women have played in COVID-19 response and recovery, including as the majority of health and other frontline workers.

6. Participants emphasized the interconnectedness of different crises, including health, climate, conflict and gender-based violence, and the need to address these challenges in tandem to achieve a sustainable and gender-just recovery.

### **Progress and lessons learned at the regional, national and local levels**

7. Participants shared positive experiences in mitigating the immediate negative impacts on women and girls and stressed the medium- and long-term benefits of addressing the structural inequalities that the pandemic exposed and deepened.

8. Speakers provided examples of progress made on laws, policies and national plans aimed at addressing critical gender issues, including violence against women and girls, harmful practices, physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health, equal access to jobs and resources, and investments in the care economy. They also highlighted measures to promote women's participation and leadership in national and local recovery efforts, and their growing presence in political office.

9. Representatives of Member States shared their experiences in mainstreaming gender in green recovery measures, including through gender-sensitive climate change mitigation and adaptation and the engagement of women in the implementation of measures aimed at promoting environmental sustainability. They reported gender mainstreaming efforts in job recovery plans with a focus on closing gender gaps in employment, achieving equal pay, including for female frontline workers, and promoting women's entry and retainment in strategic, male-dominated sectors, including the information and communications technology and energy sectors, through tax incentives, training and improvement of working conditions for women.

10. Participants provided examples of how they had ensured equal access to health services for women during the pandemic, from meeting the urgent need for COVID-19 vaccines and treatments to distributing medical and hygiene kits and from mental health support to the provision of health services for families and communities. Speakers also noted global efforts for health resource mobilization.

11. To address rising unpaid care demands, Member States reported emergency support measures, including leave and cash transfers, as well as the strengthening of local support systems and increased investments in care infrastructure. To respond to the "shadow pandemic" of violence against women and girls, Member States reported increased safety initiatives, especially during lockdowns, and underlined the contributions of global cooperation mechanisms, such as the Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls.

12. Speakers shared positive experiences in enhancing communication strategies in which women played critical roles, including via media campaigns to share critical information and raise awareness about the pandemic and available services.

13. Participants also provided examples of lessons they had drawn from experience of previous crises to better respond to the pandemic, including gender-responsive recovery measures in response to natural disasters, and underscored the continued importance of protecting women's rights under the dual impact of the pandemic and humanitarian emergencies.

**Seizing the momentum for gender-responsive change in socioeconomic systems for a green and gender-just future**

14. Speakers acknowledged that many challenges remain and that the COVID-19 response and recovery measures must be seized as an opportunity to build a more sustainable and just future with the full and meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity.

15. Speakers advocated for an intersectional feminist approach that places women and girls at its centre, ensures that all socioeconomic and political institutions are responsive to their rights and diverse needs, and amplifies the voices of the most marginalized by involving grass-roots and community-based women's rights organizations. They also emphasized the contribution of women and girls as innovative and effective leaders, spearheading successful response and recovery efforts at the national, regional and international levels. Speakers advocated for policies that promote the participation of women and girls in male-dominated sectors, including energy, transportation and science, technology, engineering and mathematics, alongside greater engagement of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work.

16. Participants recognized that the pandemic has drawn attention to the intersections between care, livelihoods and the environment and proposed to address these intersections by harnessing synergies, including through investments in green jobs for women via public employment; the creation of low-carbon jobs in the care and human services sector; improvements in pay and working conditions for care workers; enhanced social infrastructure, including through the use and repurposing of vacant facilities for essential services; harnessing financial instruments, including green energy loans, to stimulate entrepreneurship; and protecting women's businesses against disasters.

17. Drawing attention to gender differences in energy use and household waste management, speakers suggested to follow existing guidelines for gender-responsive climate action.

---