



Global Day of Action for Care: Unions and civil society mobilising to demand investments in care for building more inclusive, accessible, resilient, and caring economies.

Joint Statement by ITUC, UNI Global Union, Public Services International, Education International, International Domestic Workers Federation and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

Urgent action is needed to address the devastating social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As representatives and supporters of health and care workers worldwide, we demand government action to build more inclusive, accessible, resilient, and caring economies. This can be achieved by adequate investments in care that are directly connected to worker and patient outcomes. Policy initiatives and sectoral bargaining need to be linked as this is the only way to ensure fair wages and decent working conditions for workers across the health and care sectors, and guarantee access to quality public health and care services for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the pre-existing frailty of our economies and has deepened structural inequalities across gender, class, and racial lines.

Chronic public under-investment in public health and care systems, a systematic undervaluing of health and care work – predominantly performed by women, and in particular migrant women and women of colour - and failure to invest in professionalisation and training for workers across the health and care sectors are some of the signs of an economic system that has put little value on caring for too long.

The pandemic has underlined the centrality of health and care to our well-being and existence. The need for adequate investment in equitable, quality public health and care systems is more apparent and urgent than ever.

Workers across the health and care sector, informal and formal, in public and private, whether working in hospitals, hospices, care homes, private homes or schools, have been on the frontline of this pandemic and have continued to provide care under the most challenging of circumstances. They deserve decent working conditions and fair pay that reflects their enormous contributions to our societies.

This 29 October, we call on governments to shape a caring economy:

- Invest in gender-responsive, quality public health and care – including mental health, childcare, early childhood education, elderly care and other social care services that serve

everyone

- Ensure decent pay and working conditions, including equal pay for work of equal value, training opportunities for all workers and policy to close gender gaps in labour force participation
- Improve staffing levels across health and care systems to protect both workers and care recipients
- Ensure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), paid sick leave and access to vaccines for all health and care workers
- Ensure equity and non-discrimination in recruitment, retention, access to training and promotion opportunities for workers across the health and care sectors
- Ensure that the rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining are respected for all workers in the health and care sectors, whether in the formal or informal economy, and wherever possible sectoral bargaining is established
- Fund universal, gender-responsive social protection accessible by all workers regardless of employment status or migrant status, race, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, and inclusive of workers in the informal economy
- Ensure equitable access to quality public health and care services, including refugees and migrants, regardless of status.