

4th ITUC World Women's Conference 2022

OUTCOME DOCUMENT



CLIMATE-FRIENDLY JOBS
WAGES
RIGHTS
SOCIAL PROTECTION
EQUALITY
INCLUSION

A New Social Contract



Contents

Introduction	3
A New Social Contract rooted in a gender-transformative agenda	3
Building a care economy	5
Eradicating gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work	7
Upholding gender equality and inclusion for peace and democracy	8
Realising equal pay for work of equal value for all	9
Towards universal gender-responsive social protection systems	11
Ensure a gender-transformative just transition	13
Equitable access to skills development, training and life-long learning	15
Building women's transformational leadership	17

Introduction

The 4th ITUC World Women's Conference takes place at a crucial time for workers and the trade union movement. The world is still navigating a global health pandemic that continues to claim lives, cause serious illness and affect people's livelihoods. The current socio-economic crisis brings along an unprecedented loss of jobs and income. An estimated 8.8 per cent of total working hours were lost for the whole of 2020, the equivalent of the hours worked in one year by 255 million full-time workers. This is approximately four times greater than the number lost during the 2009 global financial crisis.

While this is a crisis that affects us all, not all are affected in the same way, nor to the same degree. The effects of COVID-19 pandemic are not gender neutral. The pandemic has exposed the unequal impact of the crisis in terms of women's position in the labour market and the distribution of care work. Understanding the gendered impacts of the current crisis is crucial to shaping the most effective, efficient and fair responses for a gender-equitable recovery with resilience.

A New Social Contract rooted in a gender-transformative agenda

We know that the world entered the current crisis with an equality deficit, particularly related to women in the labour market: the global gender gap in labour force participation was still estimated at 27 percentage points in 2019; the gender pay gap persists at around 20 per cent globally; and 60 per cent of the world's people cannot count on the security of full social protection, women being the most left behind.

Women have lost around US\$800 billion in income during the pandemic – the combined GDP of some 98 countries. Young women, racialised women, women migrant workers, Indigenous women,

women in the informal economy – including domestic workers – as well as disabled women, who were highly vulnerable even before the current crisis, have been particularly hit hard by the pandemic due to inadequate levels of labour protections.

Women already performed three times as much unpaid care work as men. With the crisis, the unequal distribution of increased care demands keeps affecting women disproportionately. In addition to the care dimension, we have also witnessed a surge in domestic violence, particularly due to confinement measures,

as well as rising incidents of gender-based violence and harassment against workers in frontline sectors, such as food, retail, health and care services, education, and cleaning. The increase in teleworking carries with it the risk of a corresponding increase in “cyberbullying”.

Globally, women have been disproportionately hit in terms of job losses: between 2019 and 2020, women’s employment declined by 4.2 per cent, representing a drop of 54 million jobs, while men’s employment declined by 3 per cent, or 60 million jobs. Additionally, following the most recent ILO estimates, there were 13 million fewer women in employment in 2021 compared to 2019 (while men’s employment recovered to 2019 levels). If the observed data in 2022 confirm these estimates, only 43.2 per cent of the world’s working-age women were employed in 2021, compared to 68.6 per cent of working-age men, which means that in 2021 women were 25.4 percentage points less likely to be in employment than men.¹ This scenario suggests that women’s working lives are likely to be disrupted over an extended period unless appropriate measures are adopted.

Therefore, we need both urgent and long-term gender-responsive policies, pushing back the waves of austerity from governments concerned about deficit and debt sustainability. These policies include **pro-employment and gender-responsive macroeconomic frameworks, including fiscal, monetary, industrial, sectoral, and inclusive labour market policies.**

Domestic resource mobilisation through progressive taxation, as well as enhanced multilateral cooperation, with debt relief and cooperation on taxation (combatting tax avoidance and evasion), will be key to enabling countries to put these policies in place² and to step up investment capacities.

Workers demand globally a **New Social Contract**, rooted in a gender-transformative agenda, for recovery and resilience:

1. **Jobs:** climate-friendly jobs with just transition. Investments in the care economy are crucial in this respect, creating millions of new jobs, decent jobs, and offering the opportunity to formalise current informal care jobs.
2. **Rights:** the promise of the ILO Centenary Declaration of rights and protections for all workers, irrespective of employment arrangements and including occupational health and safety.
3. **Wages:** minimum living wages, established through statutory processes or collective bargaining, as set out in the ILO Centenary Declaration.
4. **Universal social protection:** social protection for all, with a global social protection fund for the poorest countries.
5. **Equality:** equality of incomes – with minimum income for those not in employment – and equality of gender and race. The elimination of gender-based violence and harassment is nonnegotiable in the context of achieving a gender-equal labour market.
6. **Inclusion:** a peaceful world and a just, rights-based development model realised through the promise of the SDGs and multilateral reform.

¹ See ILO, *Building Forward Fairer: Women’s rights to work and at work at the core of the COVID-19 recovery*, July 2021: https://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/WCMS_814499/lang--en/index.htm.

² See ITUC, *Financing Recovery and Building the Economy of the Future*, April 2021: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/financing-recovery-report>.

The implementation of all these demands is crucial for the realisation of the SDGs. **This is what SDG 8 and SDG 5 are telling us³, and strong labour market institutions, with social dialogue and collective bargaining, are pivotal** in this respect.

The 4th ITUC World Women's Conference calls for:

1. A **New Social Contract**, rooted in a gender-transformative and inclusive agenda for recovery and resilience, in line with **SDG 8** and **SDG 5** and based on **strong labour market institutions along with social dialogue and collective bargaining**.
2. The adoption of **pro-employment and gender-responsive macroeconomic frameworks, including fiscal, monetary, industrial, sectoral, and inclusive labour market policies**. Enhanced multilateral cooperation, with debt relief and cooperation on taxation, is key to enabling countries to put these in place.
3. An **intersectional approach to recovery** to dismantle traditional and persistent structural barriers at the intersections of class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and migrant, Indigenous and disability status and to address the needs of those already left behind.

Building a care economy

The workers' demands for a New Social Contract set a global target for the creation of 575 million new jobs by 2030 and formalisation of at least one billion informal workers, representing half of the total global informal economy.⁴

Investments in the care economy are at the heart of these demands for job creation, including formalisation of care workers in the informal economy. As pointed out by the United Nations

secretary-general, around 269 million new jobs could be created by 2030 if investments in education, health and social work were doubled.⁵ As demographics shift, with many countries facing aging populations, the demand for care is expected to grow exponentially. Almost 40 per cent of all projected job opportunities in emerging professions will be created in the care sector between 2020 and 2023.⁶ Since women are often the primary caregivers for both children and aging

³ See ITUC, *SDG 8 as a New Social Contract for a job-rich recovery and resilience*, July 2021: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/sdg8-as-a-new-social-contract-for-a-job-rich-recovery-and-resilience>.

⁴ See ITUC, *Just Jobs campaign brief - Creating jobs: what can governments do?*: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/just-jobs-campaign-brief-creating>.

⁵ See the UN secretary-general's policy brief *Investing in Jobs and Social Protection for Poverty Eradication and a Sustainable Recovery*: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_on_jobs_and_social_protection_sept_2021.pdf. See ILO, *Greater investment in care could create almost 300 million jobs*: https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_838469/lang--en/index.htm.

⁶ World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/05/care-economy-emerging-job-opportunities/>.

relatives, **building a robust care economy through adequate public investments in care services and adoption of family-friendly policies can enable women's effective labour-force participation while promoting a more equitable sharing of unpaid care responsibilities.**

Investing in care – health, education, child and aged care and other social care services – can create millions of new decent jobs for women and also enable women's effective participation in the broader economy.⁷ **Quality public health, care and education services should be available and accessible if we are to build fairer, more inclusive, and dignified societies.**

Trade unions call for public investments by allocating increased levels of national GDP in the care economy.

A solid care economy and women's full and equal economic participation can only be realised if based on **strong public policies, active labour market policies leading to more equitable sharing of family responsibilities and other care responsibilities, and flexible working arrangements on a gender-neutral basis. This should be supported by strong gender-inclusive collective bargaining at national, sectoral and workplace level, where women should have a more prominent role.** Awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives are also crucial in this respect to fight patriarchy and address gender norms and stereotypes.

Too many care workers – two-thirds of the global care workforce are women – are still trapped in underpaid, precarious, and informal jobs. **Care jobs need to be decent, with safe working conditions, and adequately remunerated – including equal pay for work of equal value and covered by social protection.**

The pandemic has exponentially aggravated the situations of care workers, who were already disadvantaged by systemic discrimination and occupational segregation. **Ensuring a well-regulated care sector is of the essence:** uphold labour and trade union rights of care workers who, in the case of domestic work, for example, are often migrant women and from black and minority ethnic communities; ensure formalisation of informal care work; revalue care work to ensure that it is paid according to its value, promoting professionalisation; and avoid de-skilling.

Organising care workers is of paramount importance to ensure decent jobs in care: trade unions need to prioritise this in their political agendas and operational plans.

The 4th ITUC World Women's Conference calls for:

4. The implementation of comprehensive care economy frameworks⁸ based on the **recognition, reduction** and **redistribution** of unpaid care work with income; rewards for care work and more and decent jobs; and ensuring **representation** of care workers through collective bargaining and social dialogue.
5. **Public investments of adequate levels of national GDP in the care economy**, creating millions of new decent jobs for women, enabling women's effective participation in the broader economy, and ensuring universal access to quality public health, care and education services.
6. The adoption of **strong gender-responsive public policies and active labour market policies, as well as family-friendly workplace policies, incentivising a more equitable sharing of family responsibilities**

⁷ "Given the gender composition of care employment, care services expansion creates new jobs, particularly in female-dominated occupations and sectors." Moreover, "given the substantially higher labour intensity of care work, each dollar spent on the care sector has the potential to generate two to three times more jobs than if the same dollar was to be spent on other sectors such as physical infrastructure and construction." See UN-Women and ILO, *A Guide to Public Investments in the Care Economy*, March 2021: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Policy-tool-Care-economy-en.pdf>

⁸ See ILO, *Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work*, 2018: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_633166.pdf

and other care responsibilities and promoting flexible working arrangements on a gender-neutral basis. To this end, awareness-raising campaigns are necessary to fight patriarchy and address gender norms and stereotypes.

- 7. A well-regulated care economy to fight systemic discrimination and occupational segregation:** care jobs need to be formal and decent, with safe working conditions, free from gender-based violence and harassment, and adequately remunerated, including equal pay for work of equal value, and covered by social protection.

Measures need to be put in place to revalue care work and recognise its social and economic contribution by promoting professionalisation and avoiding de-skilling.

- 8. A stronger role for women** in collective bargaining, reflected in the participation of women in collective bargaining teams and the inclusion of gender equality provisions/ clauses in collective bargaining agreements.
- 9. Organising care workers** as a priority within trade union political agendas and operational plans.

Eradicating gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work

Since the 3rd ITUC World Women's Conference in 2017, we celebrated the historical adoption of ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 in June 2019. These instruments enshrine the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. The adoption of these ILO instruments is the result of many years of lobby, advocacy and campaigning by women in unions, supported by allied civil society organisations.

The pandemic and its related emergency measures triggered a surge in gender-based violence and

harassment, including domestic violence, in the form of physical, psychological and economic abuse. This has devastating impacts on women's lives, and it also brings about adverse economic consequences for women's livelihoods (hampering their ability to access, maintain and evolve in paid work). Therefore, not addressing violence and harassment in the world of work implies economic costs too.⁹

The ratification and effective implementation of C190 and its accompanying R206 is more urgent than ever.¹⁰ As shown by experiences in

⁹ An increase in violence against women by one percentage point is associated with a nine per cent lower level of economic activity – see IMF, *How Domestic Violence is a Threat to Economic Development*, 2021: https://blogs.imf.org/2021/11/24/how-domestic-violence-is-a-threat-to-economic-development/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

¹⁰ To date, ten governments have ratified C190 – Argentina, Namibia, Somalia, Ecuador, Mauritius, Greece, Italy, Uruguay, Fiji and South Africa – and over 20 governments are in the process of doing so.

many countries, awareness raising, lobbying and advocacy campaigns, and strategic alliances with civil society organisations, women's rights organisations and feminist movements are instrumental for trade unions to make progress on ratifications. However, ratification without effective implementation is worthless. **The provisions of C190 and R206 need to be implemented into national legislation and regulations, and the engagement of social partners in this process is equally fundamental.**

Collective bargaining agreements between social partners at sector and workplace level are also crucial in this respect and sometimes can pave the way to the actual ratification.

The 4th ITUC World Women's Conference calls for:

10. The ratification and effective implementation of C190 and R206.

The ITUC and its affiliates reaffirm their engagement in campaigning for the wide ratification of C190, reforms in national law and policies, the adoption of workplace policies and the inclusion of relevant measures in collective bargaining agreements, in line with the provisions in C190 and R206.

11. An intersectional approach in the implementation of C190 and R206.

Upholding gender equality and inclusion for peace and democracy

Equality and inclusion are at the heart of peace, democracy and the workers' call for a New Social Contract.

People and workers across the globe continue to experience attacks on their human and labour rights. In extreme situations, such as in countries at risk, women even face threats against their lives simply because of the fact of being women. Trade union international solidarity is crucial to supporting sister organisations all over the world, supporting union organising, making clear the responsibilities of governments to the international community,

and contributing to a truly inclusive multilateral system where women have a crucial role for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.¹¹

It must be pointed out that countries where democracies are in place are not immune to autocratic tendencies that threaten people's and workers' rights. Populist right-wing political forces have gained traction in many countries. Moreover, the pandemic has aggravated existing racism, xenophobia, and discrimination and exploitation against migrant workers, LGBTQI+ persons, Indigenous peoples and persons of colour.

¹¹ See UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1325>.

Trade unions must remain vigilant in the face of these threats and reaffirm their commitment to defending fundamental rights and freedoms and to fighting discrimination, extremism, violence and intolerance everywhere.¹²

The 4th ITUC World Women's Conference:

- 12.** reaffirms the commitment of trade unions to shaping a **world free of all forms of discrimination based on gender, class, race, ethnicity, ideology, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, or other grounds, and the intersection of those;**
- 13.** demands universal ratification and effective implementation of **ILO Convention 111;**

- 14.** reaffirms the centrality of **trade union international solidarity** and engagement for a **rights-based development model** with a **renewed multilateral system;**
- 15.** urges trade union organisations to ensure the **inclusive nature of their own structures, agendas, and processes** and to achieve equal and equitable **representation of women in the leadership of trade unions;**
- 16.** insists that trade union organisations ensure women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, including in peace negotiations and peace processes.

Realising equal pay for work of equal value for all

The lack of equal pay for work of equal value is one of the main factors hampering equitable and inclusive labour markets, with a **gender pay gap persisting at around 20 per cent globally.**¹³

SDG 8 enshrines equal pay amongst its targets, underscoring that **an equitable and inclusive world of work is a precondition to gender equality and societal progress overall** (SDG 5).

Women's lower pay – combined with their greater concentration in part-time, informal, and precarious

work as well as career breaks or job loss due to their disproportional share in taking up unpaid care work – leads to **women's higher risk of poverty**, especially true nowadays in a crisis scenario. Women's lower pay also contributes to their lower social security contributions, and in turn **inadequate or even inexistent social security entitlements**, leaving them especially vulnerable in old age.¹⁴

Gender pay gaps depend on many reasons and factors, including occupational **sectoral**

¹² See ITUC General Council Resolution on Extreme-Right Attempts to Subvert Trade Unions, November 2021.

¹³ International Labour Organization, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work – Updated estimates and analysis, Fifth edition: 2020*. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_749399.pdf.

¹⁴ See *ITUC Economic and Social Policy Brief: The Gender Wage Gap*: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/brief-wage-gap#:~:text=Across%20the%20globe%2C%20women%20earn,men%20for%20each%20hour%20worked.>

segregation (overrepresentation in sectors and jobs that pay less being the major cause of vulnerability to the crisis) and **work-life balance deficiencies** with gendered differences in the division of family responsibilities (affecting women's career progression, their opportunities to access paid work, and their pay prospects), which can also be the cause of the **underrepresentation of women in managerial positions**. The share of women in managerial positions worldwide has increased only slightly over the past two decades, namely from 25.3 per cent in 2000 to 28.3 per cent in 2019. It remained unchanged from 2019 to 2020, which was the first year without an increase since 2013. According to the ILO, **it will take more than 140 years to achieve gender parity in managerial positions at the current rate of progress**.¹⁵ Finally, **gender discrimination**, both direct as well as indirect, remains a pervasive problem and major contributor to the gender wage gap.

Intersectional discrimination further exacerbates the pay gap for women who are members of disadvantaged groups, such as migrant women, ethnic minority women, women with a disability, older women and women of colour.¹⁶

The commitment to gender equality at work has never been more stringent. A range of measures are possible depending on where pay gaps are: at the bottom, in the middle or at the top of the wage distribution. **Inclusive labour market policies**, measures to formalise informal work and **measures tackling occupational segregation and discrimination** have proven right in reducing gender pay gaps, as have the adoption of living minimum wages.¹⁷

Statutory **minimum living wages**, with collective bargaining, are essential to fighting poverty, together with **universal social protection systems**

and floors in line with international labour standards.

Minimum living wages and income are key to lifting women from the informal economy.

The 4th ITUC World Women's Conference calls for:

1. A global target for the creation of **575 million new decent jobs by 2030 and formalisation of one billion informal workers**, among whom women are the majority.
2. **Equal pay and anti-discrimination legislation, with effective implementation** and access to remedy, in line with international labour standards such as ILO Conventions 100 and 111, to ensure equal treatment to excluded groups of workers, such as migrant and Indigenous women, women of colour and disabled women – groups among whom pay gaps are higher.
3. **Pay transparency** legislation along with measures and accessible data on wage levels for all categories of employment disaggregated by gender.
4. **Quotas and/or targeted initiatives** to train, recruit and retain women in underrepresented sectors and jobs (such as STEM)¹⁸ in order to tackle both horizontal and vertical gender-based occupational segregation across sectors and job categories.
5. Elimination of gender-based violence and harassment at work and the **ratification and effective implementation of ILO C190 and R206**.¹⁹

¹⁵ <https://ilostat.ilo.org/covid-19-and-the-sustainable-development-goals-reversing-progress-towards-decent-work-for-all/>.

¹⁶ See *ITUC Economic and Social Policy Brief: The Gender Wage Gap*: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/brief-wage-gap#:~:text=Across%20the%20globe%2C%20women%20earn,men%20for%20each%20hour%20worked.>

¹⁷ Minimum living wages can help to reduce pay disparities, particularly for low-income countries.

¹⁸ Science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

¹⁹ See relevant section in this document.

6. Increased **public investments in the care sector** and adoption of **family-friendly policies** to support the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities.²⁰
7. **Minimum living wages**, established through statutory processes or collective bargaining, as set out in the ILO Centenary Declaration.
8. Adequate **universal social protection systems and floors** in line with ILO Convention 102 and Recommendation 202.²¹
9. The centrality of **collective bargaining and social dialogue** to put an end to the gender pay gap.

Towards universal gender-responsive social protection systems

According to the ILO²², only 46.9 per cent of the global population is effectively covered by at least one social protection benefit, while the remaining 53.1 per cent – as many as **4.1 billion people – are left wholly unprotected**. Only 30.6 per cent of the working-age population are legally covered by comprehensive social security systems that include a full range of benefits, from child and family benefits to old-age pensions.

The pandemic has dramatically shown the **gender gaps in terms of social protection coverage**, with women's coverage lagging behind men's by a substantial eight percentage points.²³ In addition to women's lower social protection coverage, **gender gaps in benefit levels are extremely high in some countries**. Gender gaps in social protection tend

to be especially acute after the retirement age, putting women at a substantially greater risk of poverty than men.

The gender gap in social protection coverage is related to both labour market inequalities and to the gender-biased design of social protection systems.²⁴ Women tend to have lower contributions because they are **underrepresented in the labour market and in jobs with higher wages**, and are overrepresented in **more precarious and informal employment** (with lower wages). Furthermore, women still assume the total **responsibility for unpaid care tasks** within households, which directly limits their employment opportunities, hence their access to social protection entitlements.

²⁰ See section on building a care economy in this document.

²¹ See section on universal gender-responsive social protection systems in this document.

²² ILO, *World Social Protection Report, 2020-22*, January 2022: https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_817572/lang--en/index.htm.

²³ ILO, *World Social Protection Report, 2020-22*, January 2022: https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_817572/lang--en/index.htm.

²⁴ ITUC, *Gender Gaps in Social Protection*, August 2018: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/brief-gender-gaps>. In many countries, social protection schemes have been designed around a male breadwinner model. This penalises women, who are more likely to experience different contribution histories than those of men and who tend to have lower total accumulated contributions.

In order to close the gender gaps in social protection, persistent barriers to women's participation in the labour market need to be removed through massive **public investments in the care economy**, as well as through policies **supporting the transition to the formal economy**. Adequate public investments in public care services and the adoption of family-friendly policies can enable women's effective labour force participation while promoting a more equitable sharing of unpaid care responsibilities. In this sense, the implementation of the **UN Global Accelerator for jobs and social protection**²⁵ is key, given its ambitious targets on decent jobs creation in the care economy and on the setting up of social protection floors for all by 2030.

Moreover, **paid maternity, parental and family leave and flexible working arrangements** are key in alignment with the **ILO Convention 156** on workers with family responsibilities and ILO Convention 183 on maternity protection. **Closing the gender pay gap** will also help to ensure decent livelihoods for working women and address part of the balance in women and men's social security contributions.

To expand women's access to social protection, adequate public **non-contributory social protection schemes** should be ensured, such as basic pensions and guaranteed minimum unemployment benefits, in line with **ILO Recommendation 202 on social protection floors**.

Building **permanent, universal and gender-responsive social protection systems** is a must to advance towards the SDGs, especially SDG 8, with its targets on employment and decent work, providing strong leverage for the achievement of SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (fighting inequalities), as well as for eradicating poverty and hunger (SDG 1 and 2)²⁶

The planning and implementation of universal social protection systems must be based on **social dialogue**, and the disastrous experiences from the privatisation of state pension and social security schemes must not be repeated.

The 4th ITUC World Women's Conference calls for:

1. **Sustainable and gender-responsive social protection systems** to achieve adequate social protection for all, including social protection floors, in line with **the ILO Standards²⁷ and the ILO Centenary Declaration**.
2. Specific **policies to close the gender gap in social protection**, such as:
 - public investments in the care economy and the promotion of decent jobs;
 - recognition of adequate credit care periods in contributory social protection systems in order to maintain contribution levels;
 - provision of paid maternity and parental leave, the latter allowing a more equal division of care responsibilities between parents;
 - the development of national social protection floors, including basic pensions and minimum unemployment benefits, with universal coverage, including for women in precarious and informal work;
 - specific policies to support and facilitate the transition to the formal economy in line with ILO Recommendation 204;
 - a range of policies to close the gender pay gap, including pay transparency, minimum living wages and strong anti-discrimination legislation, as well as the promotion of collective bargaining.

²⁵ UN, *Policy Brief Investing in Jobs and Social Protection for Poverty Eradication and a Sustainable Recovery*, September 2021: https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_821167/lang-en/index.htm.

²⁶ UN Commission on Social Development, *Resolution of the 60th session*, February 2022: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N22/254/84/PDF/N2225484.pdf?OpenElement>.

²⁷ ILO instruments which will further close the gender gaps in social protection: Convention 102 and Recommendation 202, C156, C183, C100 and C189 and C190, ILO C189 on Domestic Workers and ILO C177 on Home Work.

3. The establishment of a **global social protection fund** for the least wealthy countries,²⁸ in line with the 2021 ILO ILC Conclusions on Social Security and the UN Our Common Agenda Report.
4. **Social dialogue** in the establishment and implementation of gender-transformative social protection schemes.
5. Adequate **funding of gender-responsive social protection reforms** through progressive national tax systems, tax reform measures (including a global minimum corporate tax rate, financial transaction taxes, wealth taxes and a crackdown on tax avoidance by corporations and the wealthy) and debt relief.²⁹

Ensure a gender-transformative just transition

The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)³⁰ depicts the bleakest picture yet of the climate emergency, which will affect disproportionately billions of people living and working in poverty. **Too many countries are still failing to meet the Paris Agreement, the SDG ambitions and their obligations under nationally determined contributions (NDCs)** on emissions reductions³¹ and climate adaptation.

More international cooperation is needed. Developed countries must work with low-income, developing, and emerging economies to pave the way toward a zero-carbon future. This means delivering sufficient funding, enabling developing countries to invest in climate-change mitigation and sustainable economic growth. Overall, Africa is the

region with the biggest climate funding gap. Unless this changes soon, clean energy will account for only 10 per cent of new power generated in Africa in 2030.³²

Together with governments, the **business sector bears key responsibility for climate and environmental sustainability**, and the call for due diligence and private sector accountability has never been so stringent.

The climate emergency will further exacerbate gender inequalities and inequities in the world of work due to job and income losses; lack of essentials, such as food and energy; and inaccessibility to social protection, health and care services, and safe transport – all this posing

²⁸ ITUC, *A Global Social Protection Fund is possible*, June 2020: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/global-social-protection-fund>.

²⁹ See ITUC, *Financing Recovery and Building the Economy of the Future*, April 2021: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/financing-recovery-report>.

³⁰ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/?msdynamtrid=ttaiGKqZiCeScE5L_fZMYF8RJGCfu6fCv7NAqX2j7v0.

³¹ Keep global warming below 1.5 degrees.

³² Sharon Ikeazor, Nigeria's minister of state for environment: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/africa-climate-change-funding-gap-by-sharon-ikeazor-2021-04>

risks for a surge in gender-based violence in the world of work. **Women will particularly bear the brunt of the climate emergency and are at risk of encountering a further deepening of the already persistent inequalities in the labour market.**

Trade unions have put the climate emergency at the forefront of their call for a New Social Contract, demanding investments for the creation of **climate-friendly jobs along with just transition measures to underpin industrial transformations.** While economic transformations to a clean economy are an imperative, these cannot happen to the detriment of workers' futures. Sustainable strategies should be shaped by linking industrial policies to employment, labour market policies and decent work.³³

Just transition requires gender-transformative investments and policies to ensure equitable outcomes in response to the climate emergency.

The care economy represents a key sector in this respect that requires solid public investments for the creation of almost 300 million new decent and climate-friendly jobs in education, health and social services.³⁴

Increased investments in green infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and renewables are equally crucial.³⁵ Renewable energy could employ millions of people by 2050, improving energy efficiency and bringing along an improved gender balance in the future energy sector. This represents an opportunity for women, as employment is more inclusive in the renewable energy, with better

gender balance (32% women in the renewables workforce compared to 21% in fossil fuels).³⁶ Transformative policies are also needed to overcome sectoral and occupational segregation, including through equitable access to STEM³⁷-related education and jobs.

The Paris Agreement enshrines the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce,³⁸ the creation of decent work and the critical role of trade unions and social dialogue. Only 64 out of 190 NDCs to climate goals refer to women.³⁹ This must be reversed. Just transition plans must happen with the equitable participation and representation of women workers, in their diversity, in decision-making at all levels.

The 4th ITUC World Women's Conference calls for:

1. The creation of **575 million new jobs – decent and climate-friendly jobs – by 2030** and the **formalisation of at least one billion informal workers**, representing half of the total global informal economy.⁴⁰
2. The adoption and implementation of **gender-transformative just transition plans**,⁴¹ in line with the ILO guidelines for a just transition⁴²; increasing public investments in the care economy, in green infrastructure, and in sustainable agriculture and renewables; and ensuring young women's access to STEM-related education and jobs.

³³ Just transition measures include social protection, income support with reskilling and redeployment support, support of local capabilities, and entrepreneurship development, especially for women and youth.

³⁴ See ILO, *Greater investment in care could create almost 300 million jobs*: https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_838469/lang-en/index.htm. And see the section on care in this document.

³⁵ See ITUC: https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/just_jobs_campaign_brief.pdf.

³⁶ See IRENA, *Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2020*: <https://www.irena.org/publications/2020/Sep/Renewable-Energy-and-Jobs-Annual-Review-2020>.

³⁷ Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

³⁸ The Paris Agreement: https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf and the UN page providing further guidance on the agreement: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/paris-agreement>.

³⁹ See UN Women, *The Gender Snapshot, Progress on SDGs, 2021*: <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/UN%20Women%20presentation-7Mar.pdf>.

⁴⁰ See ITUC, *Just Jobs campaign brief - Creating jobs: what can governments do?* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/just-jobs-campaign-brief-creating>.

⁴¹ See ITUC, *Just Transition Expert paper*: https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/66/EGM/Expert%20Papers/Samantha%20SMITH_CS66%20Expert%20Paper.pdf and Global Unions UNCSW66 statement, *Global Unions call to action for a gender-transformative and inclusive just transition for a green and caring world*: https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/unsw66_global_unions_statement_final.pdf.

⁴² See ILO, *ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf.

3. Ensuring the **equitable participation and representation of women workers, in their diversity, in decision-making at all levels** and in social dialogue, and supporting (young) women workers leading on climate.⁴³
4. Ensuring **environmental and human rights due diligence in business operations** and along global supply chains.
5. A **gender-transformative climate finance**, including the commitment of US\$100 billion per year to decarbonise the Global South, the enlargement of fiscal space through progressive tax policies, and putting an end to tax havens so as to ensure that the wealthiest companies and countries contribute the most.
6. Mobilisation of carbon-related revenues through the collection of carbon taxes in a progressive manner that can also serve carbon reduction ambitions.⁴⁴

Equitable access to skills development, training and life-long learning

Although progress towards achieving gender equality in education has been made, poverty, early marriage, gender-based violence, the burden of unpaid domestic work on young girls, as well as migration and refugee status, continue to be major obstacles. Before COVID, there were approximately 258 million children and young people out of school, and two thirds of all children who have never been to school are girls.⁴⁵ One of the most worrying and long-lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is the school dropout: remote learning remains out of reach for at least 500 million

students.⁴⁶ Moreover, it is estimated that 101 million additional children and young people (from grades 1 to 8) fell below the minimum reading proficiency level in 2020 owing to the consequences of the pandemic, which wiped out the education gains achieved over the past 20 years.⁴⁷

As basic education is often a prerequisite for further skills development, this educational disadvantage will accumulate throughout women's lives. Access for all to basic education, along with the elimination of child labour, is crucially important.

⁴³ Only 24 per cent of seats on COVID-19 policy taskforces worldwide are held by women, limiting the effectiveness of crisis planning and response. See UN Women, *Beyond COVID-19: A feminist plan for sustainability and social justice*: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Feminist-plan-Key-messages-en.pdf>.

⁴⁴ See ITUC, *Financing Recovery and Building the Economy of the Future*, April 2021: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/financing-recovery-report>.

⁴⁵ See ITUC, *The crucial role of trade unions in the implementation of the Beijing platform for action - Beijing +25*, 2020: https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/beijing_25_report_en.pdf.

⁴⁶ See https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/E_Infographic_04.pdf.

⁴⁷ See <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

Lifelong learning requires investment at all levels, from pre-school through to higher education. Equal access for girls and women at all these levels is vital, as is the development and recognition of qualification pathways to enable workers to increase their knowledge and move between jobs.

Unequal access to education and training is one of the many factors hindering women's effective participation in the labour market. As a result, women enter the labour market on an unequal footing compared to men, with women facing more difficulties finding decent and secure employment. For women at work, even before the current crisis, occupational segregation and gender stereotypes kept women confined to lower-pay and lower-status jobs – with little or no social protection and with lack of access to education and training. These include jobs in the care sector, such as education, health and care services; in hospitality, clerical, shop and sales work; and in light manufacturing in global supply chains.

The crisis has further exposed the low pay and poor working conditions of women workers in jobs and sectors that were deemed “essential”, such as food, retail, health and care services, education, and cleaning. These jobs have consistently been undervalued and underpaid simply because they are performed by women. Over 70 per cent of the world's social and health care workforce is comprised of women⁴⁸ whilst the percentage of women employed in services, including domestic work and food, retail and cleaning services, stands at over 58 per cent. Women in these sectors, especially those in the informal economy, often lack the skills to perform their jobs efficiently and in safety. And when women have acquired the necessary skills to perform their jobs, these are often not properly recognised and adequately reflected in their pay.⁴⁹

Education and training strategies, with active labour market policies for skilling, reskilling and upskilling, are key to just transition plans in the context of climate and technological shifts.

However, the gender divide in women's access to skills development remains wide due to a range of factors: barriers to education and training, especially in rural and informal economies; sociocultural and economic constraints; gender biases in occupational choices; and low representation of women in STEM subjects.⁵⁰

Gender disparities persist in access to technical vocational education and training (TVET), formal and non-formal education and training, as well as apprenticeships and traineeships.

Women also face barriers in accessing digital skills that are essential, especially in sectors that have shifted to teleworking during the pandemic, such as the education and services sectors.

Yet women's access to skills development does not always lead to an increase in women's labour force participation rates or more opportunities for professional development; this is due to persisting structural, economic, social and cultural barriers – such as lack of access to public (child) care services, paid maternity leave and other family-friendly provisions at work – and also due to gender-based discrimination.

Social dialogue, collective bargaining and the role of unions is fundamental for conceiving and delivering lifelong learning schemes and skills development pathways. Many unions also organise and deliver learning as part of the services they provide.

⁴⁸ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_741060/lang--en/index.htm.

⁴⁹ There is an element of skills mismatch in regional labour markets. Recent ILO research shows that, in OECD countries, the incidence of over-education tends to be higher for women than for men. In several countries in the Arab region and in North Africa, high unemployment rates among female university graduates suggest that women are at a disadvantage in gaining work appropriate to their education and skills. See p. 6. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_244380.pdf

⁵⁰ ILO, Policy Brief: *The gender divide in skills development: Progress, challenges and policy options for empowering women*, August 2020: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_244380.pdf

The 4th ITUC World Women's Conference calls for:

1. Ensuring inclusive and gender-responsive strategies on skills and lifelong learning in line with the SDGs.
2. Ensuring equitable access to skills development, training and lifelong learning for all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, migration, disability or LGBTI+ status.
3. Access to free and quality education as a prerequisite to lifelong learning; increased public investments in public education and training.
4. Targeted measures to close the gender digital divide as part of gender-responsive lifelong learning initiatives.
5. Targeted initiatives to train, recruit and retain women in underrepresented sectors and jobs (such as STEM).⁵¹
6. Gender quotas in apprenticeship or traineeship programmes and measures to ensure equality in qualifications recognition across occupations.
7. Engagement in social dialogue and collective bargaining to forge and implement lifelong learning and skills development policies.
8. Support to trade union organisations to build and/or strengthen awareness-raising campaigns aimed at addressing gender-based discrimination and gender stereotypes at work and in society that contribute to occupational segregation.

Building women's transformational leadership

Although significant progress has been made in recent years, women and other equity-seeking groups of workers, such as racialised, migrant, disabled and LGBTQI+ workers, remain heavily underrepresented in leadership positions within our movement. While women's participation in trade

unions has increased – with the average women's membership rates in ITUC affiliates standing at 42 per cent in 2018 – this has not been adequately reflected in the leadership of trade unions. Since 2014, the ITUC's "Count Us In!" campaign has sought to achieve at least 30 per cent

⁵¹ See also *Realising equal pay for work of equal value for all*, part of this document.

representation of women in the decision-making bodies of ITUC affiliates. By 2018, the average representation of women in the highest decision-making bodies of ITUC affiliates was 28 per cent, with just seven per cent of top leadership posts held by women. Yet it is increasingly the activism of women, in all their diversity, that is driving forward the trade union movement.

The ITUC, at its last World Congresses in 2014 and 2018, confirmed the “Count Us In!” campaign, urges affiliates to increase representation of women in leadership whilst refocusing efforts to address key structural issues impeding women’s advancement in the labour market, with a particular focus on the role of the care economy and gender-based violence and harassment.

Building women’s transformational leadership in our movement is especially crucial now at a time when progressive economic, social and labour market policies as well as gains on gender equality are threatened by the current health and socio-economic crisis and by a hostile political climate, characterised by aggressive nationalism, racism, xenophobia, misogyny, shrinking democratic space, and attacks on civil rights and liberties.

It is also critical to the future of our movement to ensure that its leadership, at every level – from the global to the local, and across decision-making structures – is reflective, representative and inclusive of its current and future membership and base. This will ensure that the vision, agenda and priorities of our movement incorporate new perspectives, strategies and solutions to shape the world of work in a manner that benefits workers, in all their diversity. This will also help ensure that our movement can rise to the increasingly stark challenges of today and tomorrow.

The 4th ITUC World Women’s Conference calls for:

- 9.** Trade union organisations to ensure the inclusive nature of their own structures, agendas, and processes and achieve equal and equitable representation of women in the leadership of trade unions.
- 10.** Trade unions to enhance efforts towards organising women in all their diversity as well as other equity-seeking groups of workers, including racialised, migrant, disabled and LGBTQI+ workers.
- 11.** Trade union organisations to support the development of programmes, campaigns and initiatives to foster women’s transformational leadership within trade unions as well as mentorship programmes and initiatives for young women.
- 12.** The strengthening and expanding of women’s (cross-union) networks and structures that are driving a gender-transformative agenda within trade unions.
- 13.** By the next 6th ITUC World Congress, Trade unions to commit to a minimum of 50 per cent women’s representation in the decision-making bodies of all ITUC affiliates, following the example of ITUC affiliates that have already achieved gender parity.
- 14.** Trade unions to ensure gender parity at all levels of decision-making, including in collective bargaining and social dialogue teams and structures.

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