



INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

COVID-19 and women: the gendered impact of the crisis

RightOn – 29 April 2020

Moderated by Ms Anniken Enersen, Ms Charlotte Marres and Ms Nataša Perućica

Ms Michelle Bachelet - United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights:

The OHCHR issued **recommendations to address gender-based violence**. Everywhere in the world, task forces created to respond to COVID19 are heavily **man-dominated**. There is also a concerning low number of **women in parliaments**, showing decades of discrimination against women. It is critical that women are consulted and have a voice in decisions and implementation of responses to COVID19 crisis.

Women leaders from several countries have given some of the best responses to crisis, showing solidarity, compassion, building trust and systems that are models for the rest of the world. This is an opportunity to **deconstruct stereotypes**.

We need to use the crisis as an **opportunity to transform societies** and make them more equal and just. We must acknowledge the critical contribution to society of women leaders, recognise gender gap and give women **equal voice in shaping responses**.

Mr Mohammad Naciri - Regional Director of UN Women for Asia and the Pacific:

We must have **discussions about new models** that include women. This crisis showed us stark inequalities that exist within our societies.

Redistributing wealth is not easy. After the crisis we need a serious discussion on more **equal economic models**. The harsh truth is that most workers, in particular women have no security net. We need to **re-evaluate social contract** and the role of the State.

Ms Dubravka Šimonović - United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women:

Women are facing different challenges if they are locked down. **Homes should be the safe place** for women, not the opposite. **Gender-based violence** against women is present in all parts of the world. States have human rights responsibilities to protect women's rights during pandemic and need to protect these rights through **prevention measures and by providing services** such as help lines and other innovative measures.

Ms Monica Ferro - Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Geneva:

We know that **diseases affect men and women differently** and increase inequalities. We therefore need a gender lens that reveals intersectional vulnerabilities such as **gender-based discriminations**.

Yesterday we released a projection: if the COVID spread, 47 million women will not be able to access to **contraceptive means**, which would lead to **7 million undesired pregnancy**. Disruption of programs to fight Feminine Genital Mutilations could lead to **2 million new cases of FGM** in the next decade, that could have been prevented, we may also see **13 million child marriage** that could have been prevented.

Ms Socorro Flores Liera - Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations in Geneva:

2020 was intended to celebrate the **Beijing Declaration** and forum of action. COVID19 may represent a **roll back** on the progress made, unless action is undertaken.

Conservative forces are taking the opportunity of the crisis to weaken women's rights. **Multilateral discussions in Human Rights Council** and UN General Assembly need to be part of the COVID19 response, giving special attention to specific needs of women and girls. These problems need to be addressed in coordinated and timely manner. The UN General Assembly has already taken steps with **resolutions**.