



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls

#HRC59 • 24-25 June 2025



PRESENTATION OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

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The Chair presents the thematic report prepared by the WG shedding light on the **gendered dimensions of care and support systems**. At the heart of this report lies a simple truth. Care and support sustain life and we all depend on them. They are the foundation of our families, communities and economies. Although care and support should be collective responsibilities, in reality they continue to fall overwhelmingly on women and girls. This imbalance is not only unjust. It is a violation of human rights and a barrier to achieving gender equality.

Women perform more than 76% of all unpaid care work globally. They are the majority in the health and care systems, yet they remain underpaid, undervalued and under protected. The COVID-19 pandemic reviewed how fragile our care and support systems were and how women and girls suffered from excessive unpaid care and support work. But this crisis is not new. It is structural, rooted **in patriarchal norms** and economic systems that treat care and support as a private, female responsibility rather than a public good. If paid, unpaid child care and housework would equal at least **9% of GDP** and this should be counted in. If a minimum wage were paid, the

total value of unpaid care work would be three times the financial value of the global tech industry.

The report details how the **unequal distribution** of unpaid care and support work undermines women's and girls' human rights, including right to education, right to employment, right to health, social security and political participation. In paid care and support work, women also face discrimination and gender inequality. Women dominate the care sector, comprising 67% of the global health and care workforce, yet they are concentrated in lower paid, lower status roles. This **occupational segregation** contributes a substantial gender pay gap, 25 to 26% in the health sector alone. In agriculture, rural women perform essential care related tasks, but they remain undervalued and underpaid. These disparities are exacerbated by intersecting factors such as race, migration status and disability.

The report also analyses the **global care chain**, the flow of care and support labour from poorer to wealthier countries. Migrant women leave their own families to care for others, often under exploitative conditions. This system is sustained by **global inequalities** and must be addressed through fair labour laws, social protections and ethical recruitment practises. Despite providing most of the unpaid and paid care and support work, women and girls do not receive the care and support they need due to poverty, social isolation, multiple forms of discrimination, poor access to housing, lack of health care and social services, violence and a lack of opportunities to participate actively in society. Excessive unpaid care and support work leads to time poverty, stress and poor mental and physical health.

This report links self-care to human rights such as rest, leisure, bodily autonomy and health. It also highlights the importance of **collective care**, community-based support systems that promote mutual well-being. Ensuring time, space and resources for **self-care** is not luxury, but a necessity for dignified care relationships and the fulfilment of human rights. The thematic report refers to the **CREATE framework** introduced in the WG's latest guidance document on substantive gender equality. The WG prepared a graphic for this framework as a **comprehensive roadmap** for achieving transformative gender equality.

- Letter **C** stands for counter harmful social norms.
- Letter **R** stands for redress socio-economic disadvantages.
- Letter **E** stands for eliminate legal and structural barriers.
- Letter **A** stands for adopt proactive laws and policies.
- Letter **T** stands for transform institutionalised patriarchal power structures.
- Letter **E** stands for enhance the participation and the agency of women and girls.

This framework is not theoretical. It is actionable. It urges states and stakeholders to move beyond rhetoric and implement systematic change. Despite the challenges, the report highlights **promising practises** from around the world. For example, **Ecuador** recognises care work in its constitution. **China, Mexico, Norway, and Canada** have expanded child care services and parental leave. **Tunisia** has extended social security to unpaid caregivers. **Bogotá's** Manzanitas del Ciudad offers integrated care services that free up women's time for education and employment. Community-based models in **Uganda, Mozambique and Sri Lanka** support survivors of gender-

based violence. These examples show that change is possible when care is prioritised in policy and practise.

The WG emphasizes the need for a **paradigm shift**, one that places **care at the centre of our economies**, our policies and our values. We must move from a world that exploits care to one that honours it. From systems that marginalise caregivers to ones that empower them. From rhetoric to responsibility. This report concludes with a set of recommendations, starting with the basic request to recognise care and support as a public good; to fully appreciate their economic and social value; to invest in affordable and high-quality care and support services; and to transform social norms to encourage men and boys equally participating in care and support work. Finally, **care and support are not charity**. They are the foundation of human rights, economic development and ecological sustainability. States must act now to protect care providers and care receivers alike, to build a future where care and support are shared, supported and valued.

PRESENTATION OF COUNTRY VISIT REPORTS

The WG presents the report of its official visit to the **Dominican Republic** carried out from 22 to 31 July 2024. The WG reiterates its gratitude to the Dominican Republic for its invitation and cooperation, stressing that the country has made progress in several aspects of gender equality and respect for human rights, as well as in its normative and institutional architecture, and in connection with efforts to ensure that a gender perspective cuts across all sector-specific policies. There have been improvements in relation to the gap in the poverty rate, adolescent pregnancy and the number of women elected to office in the most recent elections. Even so, there are still alarming levels of violence against women and girls, entrenched gender stereotypes, poverty and unequal socio-economic development, and abuses and human rights violations in the migration system, including with regard to the latest migration measures adopted and the number of pregnant and breastfeeding women being detained and deported to Haiti.

In addition, legal vacuums in sexual and reproductive health rights continue to be a source of dismay, with the country having one of the world's most restrictive abortion laws. It remains crucial to bring abortion law in line with international human rights standards. It is also urgent to adopt a comprehensive law which addresses all forms of violence against women and girls, as well as a law on equality and non-discrimination. In the spirit of cooperation, the WG has identified challenges and formulated recommendations in the hope that they will assist the government in their efforts toward gender equality.

The WG introduces the report of its official visit to **Thailand** carried out from 2 to 13 December 2024. While reiterating its appreciation to the government of Thailand for facilitating the visit, the WG regrets that confidential interviews with women deprived of liberty could not be granted in one prison visit. Thailand has made significant progress in advancing the rights of women and girls, particularly in education, health and economic empowerment. It has largely achieved gender parity in school enrolment, successfully reduced teenage pregnancy and increased protections for domestic workers.



However, more work is critically needed to promote women's equal participation in political life and prevent gender-based violence, both online and offline. Furthermore, many women and girls facing intersectional forms of discrimination, such as refugees, migrants, stateless persons, indigenous peoples, women and girls with disabilities, LBTQI+ women and girls, and those from the southern border provinces, face significant challenges in enjoying their human rights. The WG urges the government of Thailand to adopt and amend key legislation such as the Domestic Violence Victim Protection Act, the Gender Equality Act, and the Sexual Harassment Act. Furthermore, the WG encourages Thailand to embrace women and girls in all their diversity and celebrate their contributions to society, amplifying their trailblazing work defending civic space, environmental justice, and the rights of marginalised women and girls. In closing, the WG hopes that its findings and recommendations will support the country's efforts towards gender equality.

Turning to future country visits, the Chair of the WG seizes the opportunity to sincerely thank the governments of **Zimbabwe and Armenia** for their invitation to undertake a visit to their countries this year and notes with regret that the visit to Armenia had to be postponed due to liquidity crisis.

REPLIES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Chair of the WG commends the states that have adopted policies grounded in an intersectional, feminist, and human rights-based approach and who have shared **promising practises** that can serve as inspiration for others. Through states' submissions, consultations and listening, change is possible. While not everything can be improved overnight, there are **quick measures** states can take immediately to **accelerate progress** towards substantive gender equality.

In the context of **care and support**, for example, states can extend parental leave to men and you will see positive impacts of caregiving on them, such as deeper family bonds, emotional well-being, and more equitable relationships. States can also eliminate laws that discriminate against women and girls. States can involve those who receive care, as well as those who provide care and support, and women's organisations in decision-making processes. States can recognise care and support work as essential to the economy and society and use surveys to quantify the time spent on these activities to assign a monetary value. These are some of the quick measures states asked about, yet the journey towards **substantive gender equality** will be a long one.

Transforming harmful **gender stereotypes** that reinforce restrictive roles and contribute to discrimination against women and girls must be addressed through education, public awareness programmes, and active interventions. This year we are commemorating Beijing Plus 30, and while there is progress to celebrate, the world is also facing an ever-increasing **gender backlash**. With ageing populations and declining birth rates, many governments today promote pronatalist and family-orientated policies. However, tasking women with reproducing the nation threatens their hard-won rights, including sexual and reproductive health rights and efforts to combat gender-based violence. The WG recalls that article 1 UDHR is clear that human rights are granted to born people.

We must all stand firm in upholding the rights of women and girls and working to **accelerate the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda**. Spaces such as the UNHRC and the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence Against Women help these efforts by



facilitating the exchange of good practises and enhancing cooperation. **Women and girls in conflict settings** are disproportionately affected. People do not die only from bombings. They also die from the lack of care and support. It is therefore vital to uphold international humanitarian law to ensure that civilians are protected, that health care workers, humanitarian personnel, and civilian care infrastructure are not targeted in armed conflicts. The WG calls for a **shift in public spending away from militarisation** and towards building societies rooted in human rights and ecological sustainability. Protecting those who **care for people and the planet** should be our utmost priority.

Women human rights defenders deserve credit and care and support, not punishment. The WG approaches care and support from an intersectional feminist perspective. Due to gender inequality, uneven development, and the legacy of colonialism, slavery, racism, and environmental destruction, **women in rural areas**, especially Indigenous women, have been excluded from meaningful access to health, education, and employment opportunities. Yet they can serve as an inspiration for promoting interesting alternative models for protection, self-care, and safety, particularly in relation to collective care. These models deserve to be explored and shared, and the WG plans to engage on this topic further this July through consultations in Latin America.

It is high time to realise substantive gender equality in care and support. **Care and support are the backbone of every society**, yet they remain invisible, undervalued, and disproportionately shouldered by women and girls. When the state and market shift the responsibility of care onto families, it deepens gender inequality and reinforces discrimination. We must invest in care and support as a public good through inclusive, gender-responsive, and rights-based systems. Care and support are not private issues. They are a public responsibility. Recognising care and support work as essential to our economies and communities is not just a smart policy. It is a human rights obligation. In closing, the WG calls for a transformation of care and support systems to achieve real substantive gender equality. The time to act is now. The WG stands ready to support states' efforts in implementing human rights obligations and ensuring gender equality.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Concerned Countries

The delegation of the **Dominican Republic** extends its gratitude to the WG and welcomes its recommendations which are a roadmap for continued progress towards eradication of all forms of discrimination against women and girls in the country. The Dominican Constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender and instructs the State to take measures to achieve de facto equality, promote balanced participation by men and women in public administration, eradicate violence against women, and encourage shared responsibility in child-rearing and domestic and care work.

This constitutional mandate has translated into key legal reforms noted by the WG including law 121 which prohibits the loopholes that had allowed child marriage; law 2023 which establishes the gender quota for elections and punishes political violence against women; law 8803 on safe houses and refuges for women victims of gender-based violence; law 2497 against discrimination and gender-based violence; and law 48808 which promotes participation by businesswomen in



public contracts. These laws are accompanied by public policies such as the National Plan for Gender Equality, the Strategic Plan for a Life Free of Violence for Women and the Policy to Prevent and Address Early Marriage and Teen Pregnancy. Through implementation of these policies, the country has made progress including a sustained reduction in teen pregnancies, a rise in women's participation in the legislature and the judiciary, and a rise in credits attributed to micro-businesses and smaller medium-sized enterprises headed by women as well as an expansion in the system of safe houses.

The Dominican Republic welcomes the fact that the report recognises this progress as well as the pending challenges such as high rates of teen pregnancy and femicide, feminisation of poverty which although it has shown a sustained reduction continues to be a challenge and the need for legislative reforms to address new forms of violence, broaden protection against discrimination and guarantee sexual and reproductive rights. In particular, the Dominican Republic welcomes the mention of the piloting of the National Care Policy designed to redistribute and value care work traditionally assigned to women. In its design the Women's Ministry gave priority to the gender approach and to transformation of stereotypes that had perpetuated the gender-based division of care work.

Furthermore, the Dominican Republic welcomes the thematic report exploring the gender dimension in the care and support systems and note its recommendations. The country is convinced that transforming inequality requires political will sufficient and sustained investment and social and gender-based justice as well as a profound structural and cultural transformation to eliminate gender inequalities in all areas of society.

Reiterating its gratitude to the WG for its recommendations, the Dominican Republic expresses interest in continuing to cooperate with the mandate and receive technical assistance for the effective implementation of the recommendations made. In closing, the country reaffirms its commitment to gender equality and to the eradication of all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence.

The delegation of **Thailand** expresses its sincere appreciation to the WG for its official visit to Thailand in December 2024. The visit took place as part of Thailand's standing invitation to Special Procedures, thereby reaffirming its strong commitment to promoting constructive engagement with relevant human rights mechanisms. In fulfilling its obligation under the three bodies, Thailand concludes an oral presentation to the eighth periodic report under CEDAW last week. Thailand welcomes the WG's acknowledgement of the progress made in promoting gender equality including enactment of the Equality Act and the Anti-Discrimination Act together with an accelerated pathway for acquiring permanent residencies and nationality for stateless populations which also benefits women and girls.

Thailand further appreciates the recognition of the effort to strengthen women's economic empowerment to legal protection for equal payers and domestic workers, promote gender parity and excellence in education, particularly in science and technology, expanding access to universal health care and sexual and reproductive health services. Thailand has continued to make significant strides in tracking legal and practical gender discrimination across various

spheres. The draft Act on the Protection and Promotion of the Way of Life of the Ethnic Group seeks to strengthen legal recognition and social inclusion of culturally diverse communities.

Thailand also prioritises efforts to address emerging forms of gender-based violence, especially in digital contexts, to various collaborative initiatives. Political participation remains a focus with increasing representation of women, both at national and provincial levels. Thailand will continue to do more in this area. Ongoing efforts are also addressing long-term structural challenges. As mentioned in the WG, the Five-Times-Five Policy to overcome the demographic crisis and address challenges of the ageing society, integrating gender consideration into strategy of employment, social protection, family well-being, health services and lifelong learning.

Thailand is also promoting the participation of women with disabilities in policy-making and expanding inclusive education. In southern border provinces, a comprehensive five-year strategy is implemented with one of the goals to address the specific needs of women and girls. The National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change also includes gender as a cross-cutting priority, promoting women's leadership in climate resilience and sustainable development. Thailand is committed to protecting and empowering all women and girls, including those in vulnerable situations.

While not being a state party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and therefore not using the term refugee in its national context, Thailand long provided humanitarian assistance and protection to people fleeing conflict and seeking refuge in Thailand, taking into consideration also specific needs of the displaced women and girls. Thailand attaches importance to effective coordination and open communication as they are contributing to successful visits and positive working relations. Thailand appreciates the working WG's independence and intention to conduct proactive work. At the same time, it highlights that, in facilitating visits to certain official premises, such as correctional facilities where there are applicable national laws and procedures, full details of specific requests are expected to be conveyed well in advance, as spontaneous requests for private interviews with the inmates on the site could have been avoided and managed if there had been clear communication and prior authorisation.

At the international level, Thailand continues to be a strong support of the Bangkok Rules or the UN Rule for Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders. As this year marks the 15th anniversary of the Rules, Thailand, together with the co-sponsors, proposed resolutions which were adopted at the CCPCJ last month to re-emphasise the importance of addressing the needs of women in the justice system. Looking ahead, Thailand remains committed to continue constructive engagement with the working group and taking forward their useful and practical recommendations. Thailand views this dialogue as part of its broader journey towards ensuring that all women and girls in the country live their lives with dignity and equality so that they can reach their fullest potential and try as they participate in or contribute to a diverse, inclusive society.

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Albania notes with concern the immense and disproportionate burden of care work carried out by women. 76% of unpaid care work worldwide is performed by women. This burden seriously impacts their economic, educational, political and health rights, despite their fundamental role



in the economic and social well-being of our societies. Albania has made notable progress towards equal pay. In the World Economic Forum's 2025 annual ranking of gender equality in the workplace, Albania ranks first globally for the sub-indicator equal pay for similar work, thanks to the legislative reforms, non-discrimination policies and greater commitment to women's economic empowerment. Albania calls for collective actions to ensure universal access to quality care services, to protect female care workers and to value their essential contribution to our societies. Albania further expresses support for the WG's call to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to protect and fulfil the economic, social and cultural rights of women and girls, both nationally and internationally.

Argentina reiterates its commitment to the UDHR, which provides that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and endowed with reason and conscience, and that they should engage in a spirit of brotherhood. Said equality and dignity and rights should be particularly guaranteed in two phases in which the vulnerability of women is particularly striking, that of unborn girls and that of elderly women, particularly elderly women in the final stages of life. Unborn girls, those who are in their mother's womb, are confronted with threats such as abortion, whether that be voluntary or selective. In such cases, two lives are at stake. One woman depends for her life on the other. These girls have no voice. They deserve our protection, and it is up to decision-makers and leaders to defend their equal dignity and their rights. Equally urgent is the situation and plight of elderly women, who, in a context of low birth rate, fragmented family structures and family breakdown, and struggling pension systems, are confronted with isolation in those years in which they stand in most need of care and support. In both cases, our need for action is clear to protect the equality, affirm the dignity and guarantee the protection of all women and girls without any discrimination whatsoever.

Armenia fully supports the report's emphasis on the urgent need to transform care and support systems to ensure equal participation and elimination of harmful gender stereotypes. Armenia has taken tangible steps to develop a more inclusive and gender-responsive care infrastructure. Through the universal preschool education programme, Armenia has prioritised equitable access to quality services, enabling more women, especially mothers, to engage in paid employment and community life. In parallel, parental leave policies have been revised to promote shared responsibility between women and men, supporting a gradual shift in social norms around caregiving. Armenia also highlights the ongoing efforts to formalise and support the care workforce, including through skilling, training and improvement of labour protections, recognising the value and essential nature of this work. Armenia is looking forward to welcoming the country visit of the WG, which it views as a valuable opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue, share good practises and receive recommendations to further advance gender equality.

Belgium on behalf of a cross-regional group of 60+ countries states that throughout history, women and girls have played pivotal roles in driving change and leading advancement in human rights. However, the increasing influence of movements, policies and actors opposing gender equality has contributed to a more challenging environment. The threats they face include online and offline gender-based violence, gender disinformation and smear campaigns, harassment and discrimination. These threats are intensified by the intersection with other forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Care and support systems are crucial for women human rights defenders to continue their work. States, regional organisations, the UN and civil society



have a role to play in supporting such systems. Creating and maintaining a safe and enabling environment is also essential. This includes prioritising their safety, including online, as well as providing long-term core support and capacity building while promoting collaboration among women human rights defenders (WHRDs), civil society and governments to build a stronger support network. It also includes measures to create opportunities for the participation of WHRDs in decision-making processes. On the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, this statement pays tribute to the numerous achievements and meaningful progress made by WHRDs and emphasises the continued need for their voices to be heard and supported.

Benin commends the WG on its high-quality report. In light of Benin's society and culture, most tasks done by housewives is care and assistance work, even if it is often not called that. The National Women's Institute threw the cat amongst the pigeons by fostering a national debate last year to raise awareness, recognise and reward domestic work undertaken by women. The reactions showed the need to overhaul cultural stereotypes. The Institute then organised a national forum on housewives' economic well-being with the support of the African Network of Women Leaders, which brought together civil society as well as line ministries and development partners. This meeting led to ways of exploring the social models and economic issues of housewives so we can adopt support and remuneration policies. Benin believes that we must change mindsets of young men so that they take their share of the burden.

Bolivia highlights the central role played by care and support for the benefit of all societies. Most societies are organised in different ways. No one on their own can provide for their own survival. Everyone needs a certain amount of care and protection at some point in their lives. Nevertheless, the patriarchal systems means that these tasks are disproportionately assigned to women and girls. Not only are they not remunerated, but it is also one of the reasons for gender inequality and discrimination against women. The Bolivian constitution recognises the economic value of domestic work as a source of wealth and it must be quantified in public accounts. Bolivia has adopted a law on remunerated domestic work as well as a law which ensures that domestic workers are affiliated to the social security system; that the right to organise for workers' associations is guaranteed; and that the latter can participate in the work of the ILO.

Brazil stresses that its national care policy recognises care as a universal right and a shared responsibility among the state, families, the private sector and civil society. It sets out guidelines for a national care plan with an intersectoral, territorial and equity-based approach, including a focus on reducing gender, racial and class inequalities. The Brazilian experience shows that it is possible to translate diagnosis into legal frameworks. However, as the report rightly highlights, recognising the value of care is not enough. The unequal division of care work, both paid and unpaid, is not neutral. It reproduces a deepened gender inequality. Care must be fairly redistributed within households, labour markets and public institutions. Therefore, in debating this report, Brazil reaffirms that care policies are not only a matter of social protection, but of addressing one of the most entrenched and invisible forms of gender-based discrimination. Advancing human rights-based and gender-responsive care systems is a prerequisite for a truly just and inclusive society.

Burkina Faso welcomes the convening of this dialogue and congratulates the WG for the high quality of their report, which strongly underscores the importance of healthcare and care



systems at large for the collective wellbeing of society, whilst also making the point that the care systems writ large are marked by high levels of gender inequality. Burkina has taken measures to correct the unequal burden of care which falls upon women and girls as well as steps on training for officials in the healthcare sector and in the judicial sector to focus on issues such as the identification of gender-based violence. Burkina Faso has done this via upholding the principles of respect for human rights and equity. The national healthcare system has a gender action plan which guarantees disaggregated data collection and the drafting of policies that are carefully tailored to the needs of women and girls specifically. Moreover, mobile healthcare programmes and clinics have allowed the country to vastly improve access to primary healthcare, particularly for rural populations. Burkina Faso also commends the efforts of civil society in the country, particularly the feminist network of community assistants and caregivers who play a central role in the transformation of social models and approaches when it comes to the gendered approach to caregiving. Burkina Faso reiterates its commitment to continuing such efforts to forge a care-based system which is based on robust human rights and which is gender-sensitive where all people, men and women alike.

Chile commends the WG on its report and on its 15-year anniversary. The WG has been an vital reference for raising awareness about the many inequalities faced by women and girls around the world, thereby putting a human face on structural discrimination and giving a voice to those who are often not listened to. As part of the core group of the resolution, Chile reiterates its full support for renewing and strengthening the mandate. It is not just a political position, but a deeply held conviction. Real equality will only be achieved once broken down all the invisible barriers restricting rights, opportunities and empowerment of women and girls. This has fallen on the shoulders of women. Recognizing the human right of shared responsibility is being vital towards a fairer society. A solid care system opens true paths towards health, education and participation. From its feminist foreign policy, Chile reiterates that when fostering care, we are fostering dignity, equality and welfare.

Colombia states that discrimination against women and girls is deeply entrenched in a patriarchal society which assigns them care work almost exclusively. This interrupts their life projects and perpetuates poverty and exclusion. Colombia recognises care work as being vital for resilient societies. For this reason, Colombia has a public care policy and created the national care system, which aims to redistribute, represent, and reward care work through a model of sharing responsibility between the state, private sector, civil society, families, and communities, promoting equality between men and women. Bogotá has piloted infrastructure projects providing support to care workers, mainly women, and also support for the autonomy of those they care for. Colombia recognises care as a pillar of development and we must ensure that there are development opportunities for those who provide care work.

Denmark gives the floor to a Danish Youth Delegate who presents his simple vision - a world where women and girls are completely free to choose when, how and if they want to have children. Today nearly half of the pregnancies are unintended and most of these women and girls do not have access to modern contraception or safe abortion. Many governments are encouraging young women to have children because of declining birth rates, tradition and religion. But young women should not be responsible for solving the reproductive crisis. As wars and conflicts continue to escalate these last couple of days the sexual and reproductive health



and rights of girls and women are increasingly threatened because instability so often amplifies deeper discrimination and inequality. UN member states should take responsibility and help the governments with a holistic approach to address these issues so they can move to a society where parents share equal responsibility for raising their children and where women do not have to choose between having a career or children. Where having children is a choice of desire.

Ecuador agrees with the WG on the importance of respecting, protecting and rendering tangible the rights of caregivers and care recipients and support. Ecuador fully recognises their dignity, empowerment and capacity for action. Since 2008, Ecuador has recognised care and work as a productive activity, including non-remunerated care work. In 2023, Ecuador took a further important step forward with the adoption of the organic law on the right to human care, which establishes the conditions for the exercise of this right. It also regulates remunerated and non-remunerated caregiver licences and promotes shared responsibility in the workplace and in the family setting. Alongside this, Ecuador has also adopted the organic law to promote the ‘purple economy’, which is focused on eliminating institutional barriers which perpetuate gender discrimination in the workplace. As part of this drive, Ecuador points out the creation of the Centros Violeta, which are holistic care spaces which provide protection, legal advice and psychosocial services to vulnerable women, girls, boys and adolescents. Ecuador’s commitment to these goals is also reflected in policies such as the national plan to prevent and eradicate violence against women 2020-2030, as well as the femicide support voucher for children who have been orphaned as a result of the violent deaths of their mothers, amongst other initiatives that the country is undertaking.

El Salvador is aware that substantive equality cannot be achieved unless transforming those structures which historically have excluded and undermined the rights of women and girls. Against this backdrop, El Salvador has undertaken comprehensive and sustained reforms, focused on justice and human rights and access thereto, with the purpose of ensuring the full exercise of the rights of children, girls, women and teenagers from birth until the end of life. El Salvador highlights, for example, Law 700, which prioritises early childhood and provides for a comprehensive care system, guaranteeing a coordinated approach to education, health care, protection and participation, focused in particular on the needs of young girls and teenagers. The eradication of discrimination requires intersectoral and sustained efforts, as well as robust and respectful international cooperation, which is focused on boosting national capacities to achieve gender equality.

Ethiopia recognises that care and support systems are essential for sustainable development and gender equality. Commending the WG’s emphasis on the disproportionate care burden borne by women and girls and support its call for urgent action, Ethiopia is committed to addressing these inequalities, and it has expanded primary health care, including maternal and child services, through our health extension programme largely led by women. Ethiopia is also investing in rural infrastructure, education and community child care to ease unpaid care burdens. Its policies promote girls’ education, equitable labour standards and support for women with disabilities, older women and displaced people. Ethiopia emphasises inclusive participation and work closely with civil societies to ensure care systems reflect diverse needs. Despite challenges from conflict, displacement and climate change, Ethiopia continues to prioritise gender-sponsored care systems, and supports the report’s recommendations,

especially the Five R's framework and the call for international cooperation, financing and protection of care infrastructure in conflict zones. Ethiopia reaffirms this commitment to care economy rooted in equality, dignity and shared responsibility.

Gabon agrees with the WG that despite the vital role that they play in society, care and support work is often the subject of gender-based discrimination and not valued to the degree it should be, which is to the detriment of the human rights of caregivers and beneficiaries of care. Gabon has established an ambitious economic and social policy in terms of gender equality, and alongside that it has enacted certain measures to promote professional inclusion. In addition to the ratification of several international conventions linked to labour rights, Gabon has also crafted a legal arsenal which prohibits all forms of discrimination in the workplace and guarantees equitable treatment in terms of salary and remuneration. The interests of women working in the paid care sector, for example midwives, are clearly protected by law. Domestic workers are also protected by strict legal obligations in terms of social security payments that should be made by the employers. Despite such efforts, challenges remain, particularly with regard to activities exercised in the family and private domain. Gabon is of the view that a holistic approach is necessary to guarantee human rights for those working in care and assistance.

Georgia fully shares the SR's view that care and support continue to fall disproportionately on women and girls and often at the cost of their human rights. The development of care systems based on human rights is an integral part of the health and social policy of Georgia. The latter is determined to foster a legislative environment that values care work and empowers women through providing social services and supporting gender pay gap decrease. Georgia's social protection system includes different cash assistance programmes for various vulnerable groups. The government is also working on the further development of family-friendly policies in order to support employment opportunities for families with children, including maternity leave and other alternative care services such as nurseries and kindergartens. In parallel with assistance programmes, one of the priority directions is to promote gender equality and women's participation in the labour market and entrepreneurship. In the last decade, Georgian legislation regarding labour and employment has also been improved. Due to Russia's occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, the government is deprived of the possibility to implement the forced measures therein, where conflict-affected women and girls are unable to enjoy their human rights and have to endure non-exhaustive infringements of their rights.

Ghana on behalf of the African group notes with deep concern that despite legal advances, the empowerment and non-discrimination of women and girls are far from being achieved. Furthermore, war conflicts combined with economic and environmental challenges have further reinforced inequalities between men and women in several regions of the world. Despite these challenges, the African group, in accordance with the African Union Convention Against Violence Against Women and Girls and the Maputo Protocol, reaffirms the commitment of the African continent to promoting equality between women and men as a universal value and as a sustainable development goal. With just a few years to go before the end of the year 2030 Agenda, Africa launches an urgent call for concrete and innovative action to accelerate the empowerment, education, and quality training for women and girls while working towards their full participation in the economic and political life of societies.



Ghana welcomes the WG's report and appreciates the relevance of its analysis which highlights the urgent need to address gender inequalities in care and support systems. Ghana remains concerned over the disproportionate burden these systems have on women and girls that undermine their right to education, health and economic participation, and that further increase the unequal share of unpaid care and support and human rights violations for women and girls. Ghana is committed to gender equality through its National Gender Policy and Labour Act reforms which extend protections to domestic workers, prioritising the expansion of social protection programmes such as the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty, aimed at reducing care burden on women, fostering infrastructure, and skills training for women in the care economy, while advocating for men's shared responsibility in caregiving through public awareness campaigns. Ghana urges states to invest in gender-responsive care policies that seek to entrench human rights-based transformation of care and support systems. Ghana stands ready to collaborate with states to meaningfully transform care and support systems for women and girls.

Guatemala reiterates its commitment to the promotion of gender equality, to the empowerment of women, and to the guaranteeing of their rights, all of which steps are vital for sustainable and inclusive development. Guatemala recognises the importance of transforming and overhauling care systems as an essential step that needs to be taken to bring about a fairer and more equal society. To that end, the Ministry of Social Development, in close coordination with other state entities and with the support of the UNDP, is spearheading an inter-institutional process for the crafting of a national care policy. As part of this, Guatemala has set up a strategic care board, which is a space for dialogue between public institutions and feminist organisations. Its purpose is to build consensus and lay the foundations for a national care system which recognises, redistributes, and remunerates care work, thus reducing gender inequalities. The delegation is pleased to share that the WG will carry out an official visit to Guatemala from 22 to 31 July 2026. Guatemala is firmly committed to building a dignified, equitable, and respectful future for all persons.

Iran, as representative of 45 million women and girls in Iran, stresses that the rights of women and girls matter everywhere, equally and with same priority. Traumatized women and girls of Iran that, for 12 consequent days, were under unstopped, blind, and indiscriminate attacks, including those reckless attacks to nuclear facilities, are not exception at all. The destructive impact of recent imposed war on their right to development, peaceful technologies, and independence that were already endangered by unilateral coercive measures must be considered seriously. The silence of European countries on Israel's act of aggression on 13 June and its consequences on Iranian women and girls is sickening. Local support needs to be accompanied with strong actions to stop occupying regime from its savagery in Middle East. At the same time, human rights activists supporting Palestine and those women and children who sacrificed all their life for freedom from occupation must be further protected. In this regard, Iran expresses great concern on the situation of Ms. Mahdiah Esfandiari, a university professor and Palestinian activist that is imprisoned in France for nearly four months without due cause or transparency. Iran urges the French authorities to immediately release of her and respecting her right to a fair trial.

Ireland emphasizes the achievement of gender equality is a core policy priority for the country. Eradicating discrimination against women and girls is a necessary step to achieve a more equal,

peaceful and sustainable world. Ireland is concerned that ongoing efforts to regress gains made in gender equality may further increase the unequal share of unpaid care and support carried out by women and girls. This is also the case with respect to human rights violations and abuses which are disproportionately experienced by women and girls, including in relation to their rights to equality and non-discrimination, education, health, employment, social security and economic and political participation. Ireland is conscious that women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including on the basis of poverty, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity or other forms of marginalisation, will feel these impacts more intensely. Ireland echoes the call for an intersectional feminist and human rights-based approach to care and support, and we call for states to challenge the root causes of gender stereotypes that are perpetrating this divide.

Italy underlines that the fight against all forms of discrimination against women and girls remains a long-standing priority for the country. Italy believes that economic empowerment and equal opportunities in access to education, training and career advancement are key elements in this direction. One of the most pressing challenges in this fight is the disproportional impact of care and support work on women and girls. Such a heavy burden often does not allow them to pursue personal and professional growth. Along with ensuring accessibility to public care services and social protection, promoting a fair distribution between women and men of care work within the family and the household is a crucial step towards gender equality. This also entails removing the stereotype and cultural barriers still preventing women and girls to the access to all fields of studies and work, including science, technology and finance, as well as supporting women's entrepreneurship and leadership position in policy-making processes.

Japan stresses that the WG's report refers to a need to engage men and boys in a caregiving role and foster shared responsibility for care within households. Japan promotes parental leave for men. Further, it can take two separate periods of parental leave of up to four weeks within eight weeks of the birth of the child, in addition to the regular child care leave, which can be taken until the child reaches one year old. Furthermore, the government requires businesses with over 300 employees to disclose men's child care leave uptake late annually. Japan also takes note of the WG's concern over disruption and lack of care and support infrastructure due to wars and armed conflicts. Japan provides mobile clinic services and mobile health teams through UNFPA in occupied Palestine, Tehran and Sudan to offer integrated services supporting sexual and reproductive health and addressing gender-based violence from the perspective of the women, peace and security agenda. Japan's dedication to eradicating discrimination against women and girls remains unwavering, and it will continue to contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Japan and throughout the international community.

Kenya recognises that women and girls continue to bear disproportionate burden of unpaid and underpaid care work, often at the expense of their health, education and economic opportunities. Kenya has taken steps to address these inequalities, including the adoption of a national care policy to promote shared responsibility and expand access to quality care services. However, Acknowledging that entrenched gender norms and insufficient investment remain significant barriers, Kenya shares the report's call for urgent public investment in care infrastructure and the need to transform cultural attitudes so that men and boys participate equally in care work. Kenya is also committed to addressing the compounded challenges, ensuring that its policies address



the needs of the most vulnerable, including those affected by poverty, disability and rural residents. As Africa faces growing care needs due to demographic and health challenges, Kenya urges the international community to support efforts to build resilient, gender responsive care systems. In closing, Kenya reaffirms its commitment to advancing gender equality and human rights through transformative action.

Kuwait reaffirms its commitment to gender equality and the protection of women's rights in line with our international obligations and national legislation. Kuwait is pursuing its efforts to empower women. Among its recent measures, Kuwait has ensured that women can be included in the army and it has also repealed a number of legislative acts which were discriminatory. However, women and girls constitute 70% of the victims of armed conflict, which requires us to redouble efforts to protect women and girls during crises and conflicts.

Liechtenstein shares the WG's concern on the deficits of care and support systems and their possible negative effect on women's human rights. Women's access to adequate care and support systems is an important prerequisite for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls as well as the empowerment of women. The report underscores the importance of care and support work while emphasising that it remains systematically invisible, undervalued and overwhelmingly shouldered by women and girls. This disproportionate burden with women performing over 75% of unpaid care work not only entrenches gender inequality but undermines a number of human rights of women and girls. The intersecting nature of discrimination compounds the human rights deficit that women and girls have to experience, inter alia, the disproportionate impact on women and girls of poverty, armed conflicts and racial discrimination. Liechtenstein thanks the WG for highlighting some good examples of how states can send the right incentives in relation to care and support systems.

Lithuania on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic states thanks the WG for its report which highlights the vital role of care and support work which remains largely unrecognised, underpaid and disproportionately carried out by women and girls. Over 76% of unpaid care work globally and face heightened risks, especially in conflict zones of sexual and gender-based violence, lack of legal protections, limited access to health and sexual and reproductive health and rights services and social security. They face systematic barriers to leadership, fair wages and promotions. In conflict settings, women and girls are often responsible for sustaining life amid destruction, isolated and displaced without recognition and protection. Their resilience must be matched by our commitment to ensure their safety and human rights. Women with disabilities, migrant women and girls bear an even heavier burden, often without access to the care they themselves need, including sexual and reproductive health services. We must challenge gender stereotypes and achieve equal sharing of unpaid care work. The increased participation of men and boys not only promotes gender equality, but also strengthens women's economic empowerment and well-being of society.

The **Maldives** commends the working group for its continued efforts to highlight systemic and emerging challenges faced by women and girls worldwide. Promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is a guiding principle of the current administration. The focus of the government is not women's development alone, but women-led development through initiatives such as amendments to the Decentralisation Act to increase the quota for women on local



councils, measures to ensure equal pay, adopt a gender-balanced approach to recruitment, and introduction to loan facilities for women entrepreneurs. The Maldives appreciates the WG's emphasis on strengthening legal protections, investing in gender data, challenging social norms, and empowering women in informal care work. These are recommendations the Maldives is committed to implementing through its national gender equality plan. The Maldives believes that discrimination against women and girls is not just a violation of human rights but a barrier to peace, sustainable development, and inclusive societies. The gendered nature of care and support work is a human rights issue that impacts the well-being of entire communities. Encouraging all states to redouble their efforts to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, the Maldives is committed to work with the international community towards making gender equality a reality.

The **Marshall Islands** emphasizes that the report rightfully points out the persistent structural inequalities that place a great burden of care and support on women and girls, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes. It also highlights how climate change is expected to intensify this phenomenon. Today, the Marshall Islands, as a large ocean nation, is severely exposed to the adverse effects of climate change, which have undoubtedly exacerbated the care and support burden on Marshallese women and girls. In order to address this concern, the Marshall Islands has engaged in initiatives to promote gender equality. For instance, as outlined in its National Adaptation Plan, the Marshall Islands is working on a family development plan addressing several issues such as shared decision making and roles in children's upbringing. As a regional level, the Marshall Islands hosted a 2024-15 triennial conference of Pacific women and the eighth women's ministerial meeting, which provided guidelines for implementing a more gender responsive climate justice. The Marshall Islands joins the WG in urging member states to build on a national level, gender inclusive and responsive care and support systems through culturally appropriate and sensitive approaches in order to eliminate gender discrimination and tackle gender stereotypes.

Mauritius is a welfare state, providing wide support to a large segment of the population, including free health care to all without discrimination, free education to all without discrimination until the age of 16, and also pensions for elderly widows and orphans. Mauritius endorses a gender responsive approach with its Equal Opportunities Act and framework for anti-discrimination. Women represent half of the population. As stated by the country's Prime Minister in the recent budget, when women thrive, the entire society prospers. A number of measures have been taken in the budget. One, flexible work arrangements for women to make the job market more accessible, loans at preferential rates to enable women to start businesses, access to a wide range of support like mentorship, marketing assistance, and opportunities for networks for women entrepreneurs. Mauritius remains steadfast in fostering women's rights, and looks forward to its continued interaction with the WG.

Mexico is delighted to be commemorating the 15th anniversary of the WG, a mandate that has been vital for working towards more inclusive, equitable and fairer societies. One shall not get trapped in the past when we have seen the incredible social models which force women and girls to bear the brunt of care and support work both in the home and beyond. Mexico's national development plan plans to establish a progressive national care system with the aim of redistributing care work amongst state, society and families. Mexico is going to build the first child

education and care centres in the province because it's one of the most needy municipalities because so many women there work in the garments industry.

Moldova regrets the continued backlash against gender equality. More than 75% of all unpaid work is performed by women. This results in serious consequences including disrupting girls' education, negative impact on women's employment and economic and political participation. It is also troubling that despite all their efforts, as reported, women and girls do not receive the care and support they deserve. Moldova reaffirms its commitment to gender equality, as reflected in the Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum, where Moldova is in the top ten positions this year. At the national level, Moldova deploys efforts to raise awareness about the importance of sharing domestic responsibilities. The country has also amended national legislation to include the option for sharing child care leave between spouses and for extended paid paternity leave, as well as to provide provisions for development of alternative child care services for children under three years. While challenges remain, Moldova is committed to promoting women's rights within international fora, this being one of the domestic main priorities during Moldova's presidency at the Council of Europe.

Nepal points out that the report rightly calls upon states and stakeholders to take action under the CREATE framework to end discrimination and achieve gender equality. The harmful gender stereotypes and cultural norms must be transformed. Women in paid care, especially healthcare and domestic works, including migrant women, are at high risk of gender-based discrimination and violence at workplace. While caring for others must be promoted as the fundamental value, care responsibility continues to fall disproportionately on women, primarily due to entrenched gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms.

New Zealand jointly with Canada and Australia stress that care and support, paid and unpaid, are fundamental to the well-being and prosperity of all people. The three countries share the WG's concern that women and girls, including older women, face inequalities when providing and requiring care and support. Care and support systems must uphold all women and girls' human rights and fundamental freedoms. This includes ensuring their safety and ensuring the availability, inclusivity and accessibility of health services, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health. The three countries also concerned that young women and girls who are required to provide unpaid and paid care work disproportionately experience barriers to accessing and staying in formal education and gaining qualifications towards decent work. The provision of care and support must not see care recipients as passive dependents, an approach that addresses the needs of all care recipients, including women and girls with disabilities, must ensure the meaningful participation and leadership of those providing and requiring care and support and decisions about that care and support. The three countries support the WG's call to transform care and support systems to enable all women and girls to participate in society with dignity and autonomy and with the full enjoyment of their human rights.

The **Republic of Korea on behalf of the MIKTA group** composed of Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey, Australia) notes that although this year marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA), the world remains off track in achieving SDG 5 by 2030. Efforts must be redoubled to ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and girls at all levels and full implementation of the BDPA. In particular, the MIKTA group



recognises the disproportionate role of women in paid and unpaid care and support work, which still remains undervalued and not paid. In light of ageing populations and intensifying backlash against gender equality, the group stresses that existing care and support policies are inadequate and unsustainable, preventing many women and girls from enjoying their basic human rights. In this context, the group highlight the WG's call to build a gender-responsive and inclusive care and support system with full respect for human rights. The MIKTA group remains fully committed to advancing gender equality and enabling empowerment of all women and girls through the work of the Council and its mechanism.

Romania stresses that care and support systems carry significant gender implications, often embedded in traditional societal and cultural stereotypes, making care work disproportionately shouldered by women. The WG accurately points out in its report the unfair negative impact unpaid care and support work has on women's and girls' rights, the right to education, employment, public and political participation or health. Romania's legal framework mandates the promotion of equal opportunities and treatment, aiming to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in all national policies and programmes. Provisions that tackle maternity leave, parental leave, carers leave, provide legal frameworks that support caregivers. However, it is still often assumed that it will be women the primary beneficiaries, reinforcing the perception that care is mostly a woman's job. To address the gender dimensions of care, Romania is working to strengthen its public care infrastructure, such as elder care services, and encourage a more balanced sharing of care responsibilities, aware that policies must go beyond legal equality and tackle the root causes of gender inequality and societal perceptions and expectations.

Rwanda joins the call for urgent public investment and transformation of curriculum to ensure boys and men's equal participation in care work. Rwanda has established several concrete framework measures to ensure that the care and support work of women is formally and legally recognised and protected and remains a collective responsibility that benefits everyone. In Rwanda, responsive national gender initiatives like the parental reforms and the 'National Men Engage' transformative strategy for gender equality have been established to normalise men's involvement in care and support work, transform negative social and gender norms and promote shared responsibility. Rwanda reiterates its unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Sao Tomé and Príncipe on behalf of Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) emphasizes that gender equality is one of the founding principles of their community. Their common goal is to eradicate all violations against women and girls. The CPLP recognises that men and boys also benefit from gender equality. They are strategic allies and partners in promoting it. In addition to gender equality perspective in development projects among the CPLP countries, this is one of their priorities. The CPLP is developing its legal frameworks in this regard and promotes women's participation in all public spheres, including in the economic, social and political lives of the respective countries. The CPLP reiterates its commitment to continue contributing to collective efforts to promote gender equality and to implement the strategic plan on gender equality and women's empowerment within their community.

Slovakia notes that discrimination against women and girls sadly remains in many different areas of society. Women and girls are exposed to a stigma, hatred, and discrimination, which might

further lead to their systematic and systemic exclusion and inequality. Socioeconomic, political, or humanitarian crises even exacerbate their position and full enjoyment of their rights and freedoms. Slovakia agrees with the WG's findings that especially in the care sector, where women and girls are overrepresented as a healthcare or domestic workers, they experience much higher risk of gender-based discrimination and violence. Advancing gender equality in this area is thus more than urgent. Slovakia believes there are various measures to be taken in this regard, for example, to design and implement a comprehensive strategy aimed at eliminating discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and girls. This need to be coupled with awareness-raising campaigns and education initiatives. In conclusion, Slovakia expresses its full commitment to continue with its support to advance all policies designed to combat the discrimination against women and girls in all spheres of their life.

Slovenia appreciates the WG's report which demonstrates the far-reaching scope that unpaid care and support work has a realisation of women's and girls' rights, among other the rights to equality, non-discrimination, education, employment, health, social security, and participation in political and public life. Especially affected are women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalisation, such as older women, women and girls with disabilities, and migrant women and girls. Slovenia welcomes all positive developments towards recognition, reduction, and redistribution of unpaid care work, highlighted in the report. However, these individual promising advances fall short amid the unprecedented and growing pushback women's and girls' rights face. In our time, accepting or ignoring the fact that women and girls provide three quarters of all unpaid care globally is unacceptable. Bolstered efforts are needed at all levels to transform care and support systems in order to eliminate discrimination against women and girls and achieve substantive gender equality. Existing policies must be improved to fully engage men and boys in caregiving roles, including by challenging entrenched gender stereotypes and transforming gender roles.

Spain appreciates the WG's report which makes it clearly evident how care systems perpetuate gender equality at the structural level, focussing on factors such as the low visibility of care work, its economic value, which is relegated to the margins of our economies, and gender stereotypes which often surround the allocation of these care tasks. Spain agrees with the WG's finding that a fair and equitable redistribution of care tasks requires urgent, comprehensive and transformative political responses. To that end, Spain is applying public care policies via a feminist lens, the purpose of which is to consolidate care as a right via the drive towards gender equality. Such policies include the expansion of parental leave and equal parental leave for both parents, the expansion of the early childhood education system and access to professional care for families with young early children, and the creation of quality employment in the care sector amongst other measures. At the multilateral level, Spain is committed to the role of the UNHRC in order to anchor care systems and support respect for human rights, and contributions such as this mandate are valuable to that end.

Tunisia has undertaken measures to ensure gender equality by strengthening their rights, protecting women and girls from all forms of violence and discrimination. Tunisia supports their active participation in public affairs. Since its independence, Tunisia has bolstered gender equality and the rights of women and girls in particular through its national and measures to promote women's rights in particular in education, reproductive health care and in women's



empowerment and participation in public life. Furthermore, Tunisia has deployed efforts to tackle discrimination and has established a Ministry on Gender Equality in 2019. It also promoted Law 59 in 2017 to eliminate gender-based violence, a process was bolstered by its constitution which ensures priority for protecting women's rights and which guarantees equality between men and women. Equality is supported in all sectors.

Ukraine depicts a bleak everyday reality since the full-scale Russian invasion has not only devastated critical civil infrastructure but has deliberately targeted hospitals, schools and care facilities, dismantling the very foundations of care and support. As Ukrainian women and girls take on immense burden as caregivers amidst war, displacement and trauma their under-recognised work has multiplied threatening their health, education pregnant women, older persons and persons with disabilities in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine are among the most affected, struggling to access care, dignity and safety. Despite all this, Ukrainian civil society and institutions continue to respond with strength. The Ukrainian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the Platform for Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusion in Recovery, Place, Care, Equality and Resilience are at the very heart of rebuilding. Ukraine echoes the WG's call to place efforts on building gender-responsive right-based care systems and reminds the UNHRC that justice must begin with accountability. Russia's systematic destruction of care infrastructure and disproportionate impact on women and girls must be recognised and prosecuted as war crimes.

Venezuela explains that that article 88 of the Venezuelan constitution provides that the state shall guarantee gender equality and equity in the exercise of the right to work. As part of this, the state shall recognise work at home as an economic activity which creates added value and produces social wealth and well-being. Home workers have the right to social security in line with the law. Venezuela highlights its new government action plan 2025-2031, the seven transformation plans, and focus in particular on the fourth pillar relative to the social protection development, which provides for the creation and implementation of public policies aimed at promoting burden sharing in care tasks. However, the imposition of unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) has a serious adverse impact on the human rights of the people who are victims of such measures, in particular women and girls. For this reason, Venezuela calls upon the working group to condemn and call for the full eradication of such unilateral coercive measures. To conclude, Venezuela calls on the WG to join the call for the liberation of the 253 Venezuelan migrants who have been abducted and held in El Salvador. Women, girls and family members in Venezuela have been calling for justice as we mark 100 days since the enforced disappearance of their relatives.

Zimbabwe emphasizes that its national care and support systems exhibit strong gender dimensions, with women disproportionately shouldering the burden of unpaid care work. This unequal distribution of care responsibilities often hinders women's economic empowerment and participation in other spheres of life. Zimbabwe reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and in transforming the care and support systems through a strengthened legal and institutional framework. Recent amendments to the Marriages Act, the Domestic Violence Act, Criminal Court, Public Entities Corporate Governance Act, and Cyber and Data Protection Act have been enacted to counter discriminatory practises, promote gender equality, and enhance protection for women and girls. The National Gender Policy continues to provide a strategic foundation for gender mainstreaming

across all sectors, aligning national development priorities with constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination. Its implementation is supported by enhanced human financial and technical resources. Complementing these efforts, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission plays a pivotal role in promoting gender equality through public education, investigations, and compliance monitoring. Zimbabwe remains steadfast.

Views Expressed by Intergovernmental Organizations and UN Entities

The **European Union** welcomes the SR's report, in which the SR concludes that emerging demographic and political trends are likely to further increase the unequal share of unpaid care and support and also human rights violations for all women and girls, especially those experiencing poverty and marginalisation. In light of the increased global pushback against gender equality, the EU continues and will continue to champion gender equality and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by all women and girls and their empowerment in line with international commitments. It is crucial to challenge traditional gender norms, sexism, including in relation to care, as well as negative social norms on a broader scale. Tackling entrenched gender stereotypes, sexism and discriminatory social norms is a first step in redistributing and achieving equal sharing of responsibilities for care and housework within households. Other steps are also necessary, and the EU is committed to continue working in this direction.

The **FAO** share with the WG concern that women and girls shoulder a disproportionate share of unpaid care work, and this at great cost to their own rights and opportunities. In rural communities, these responsibilities limit the time that women have available for education, paid work, participation, and leadership. Such unpaid care work, which is often undervalued and invisible, undermines progress towards women's food security and their right to food. Gender equality is central to the FAO's mandate to end hunger. The FAO's policy on gender equality calls for reducing women's work burdens and promoting equitable sharing of responsibilities, including those within households. The CFS voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment urge the recognition, redistribution, and reduction of unpaid care and domestic work. The FAO joins the call for a rights-based approach to care, with greater investment in childcare, social protection, support systems, and labour-saving infrastructure, including in rural areas. All of this is essential to ensure gender equality. The FAO stands ready to work with all partners to value care work, empower rural women, and ensure that no one is left behind in our efforts.

UNAIDS welcomes the WG's report and the recognition of the intersections of gender inequalities and the exasperated stigma and discrimination women experience as caregivers for people living with HIV, while many live with HIV themselves. Unpaid care within the HIV response reflects broader social norms that undervalue caregiving roles and assign them disproportionately to women, girls, and marginalised groups. The consequences of unpaid HIV care work can be severe, including interruption of education, economic vulnerability, social isolation, and health issues, including disruption of treatment. UNAIDS supported a survey on the impact of unpaid domestic work on the health of women living with HIV. It found that rural women in particular struggle to access and monitor HIV treatment due to family responsibilities compounded by discriminatory attitudes of health care providers. UNAIDS supports the activities and movement-building efforts of networks of women and girls living with HIV and from key populations. UNAIDS

advocates for recognition, redistribution, and remuneration of the essential work carried out by inclusive feminist networks at global, regional, and national levels. The work of these networks, though often unpaid and unrecognised, is critical, providing day-to-day holistic care and support while serving as leaders within the HIV response. UNAIDS takes this opportunity to note and thank the working group for their critical work, which continues to be invaluable in relation to a human rights-based and gender-transformative HIV response.

UNFPA welcomes the report of the WG on discrimination against women and girls and strongly echoes its goal to recognise care and support as fundamental to the recognition of human rights in societies and economies. Despite their critical importance, the care and support system remains chronically underfunded and fragmented. Unpaid and underpaid care work continues to fail disproportionately on women and girls, reinforcing gender inequality and limiting access to education, decent employment, social protection and sexual and reproductive health and rights. As highlighted in UNFPA's most recent report, contributing not only to women's underrepresentation in the workforce, but also influencing key life choices. It is increasingly difficult for women to balance work and caregiving responsibilities, often forcing them to reduce employment or put their reproductive choices on hold. The burden is particularly heavy in low-income settings when institutional support, such as paid parental leave and affordable child care, is often limited or non-existent. This is also the case for public and private sector gender-responsive family policies that encourage shared caregiving responsibilities while supporting women's career and family aspirations, family-friendly workplace and parental leave policies and public child care. Investing in the care economy is not only a smart policy, it is a human rights imperative.

UNICEF welcomes the WG's report and its focus on care and support systems that are essential for the realisation of the rights of every child and the achievement of gender equality. Unpaid care work, predominantly carried out by women and girls, sustains societies but remains unrecognised and unremunerated. Women perform five times more unpaid work than men, and girls spend a collective 160 million more hours on unpaid care than boys each day. These gendered expectations intensify in humanitarian settings and through adolescence, perpetuating gender inequality and intergenerational cycles of discrimination. Millions of children, especially the most vulnerable, are denied adequate care and support. Globally, 40% of children below primary school age do not have access to child care, and children with disabilities are up to 30 times more likely to be placed in institutional care away from their families. UNICEF joins the WG in calling on states to build age- and gender-responsive, inclusive, rights-based and sustainable care and support systems, working with all partners, including the private sector, to ensure that services are accessible, non-judgemental and non-discriminatory, including for caregivers in the informal economy and adolescent mothers. Advancing the care and support agenda is a human rights imperative and foundational to social justice and sustainable development.

Views Expressed by National Human Rights Institutions

The **Human Rights Commission of Zimbabwe** notes that the national constitution enshrines women's rights in section 80 and the prevention of discrimination on grounds including sex and gender in section 52. However, the Commission notes with concern that the statistics for gender-based violence continue to be high with recent statistics showing one in three Zimbabwean



women having experienced gender-based violence. Of concern are also the high levels of dropout rates in schools. In 2023, the Ministry of Education noted that 10,000 girls dropped out of school in 2023 and the rate of maternal mortality continues to be a disturbingly 462 deaths per 100,000 women. The Commission therefore welcomes the visit this year of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women and Girls and recommends that the government takes all measures to allocate a budget to enforcing and fulfilling the rights of women, especially the rights to health care and education in Zimbabwe so that the rights are realised.

The **Independent National Commission for Human Rights of Burundi** appreciates that the law on gender in Burundi recognises the equality of rights of spouses and we deplore the fact that rights of inheritance, marriage are still coming under customary law. Relevant domestic legislation, including UNSC Resolution 1325, takes the principle of equality into account. The Commission commends the implementation of mechanisms relative to this, including the minimal quota of 30% of women in decision-making bodies, which has now been expanded to the judiciary. The Commission encourages Burundi to highlight and enshrine cultural values which support female leadership; observe the quota of women's participation in local authorities; strengthen policies for schooling of girls and to reintegrate girls after they have had a child outside wedlock; align the code of the persons and of the family with the code on nationality; and strengthen women's empowerment economically.

The Chair of the **National Human Rights Commission of Mauritania** highlights some legislative and institutional measures which have been undertaken by Mauritania in terms of protection and promotion of the rights of women, such as the ratification of CEDAW in 1991; the adoption of Law No. 2020-17, which criminalises violence against women; the creation of a political quota for women as 33% of candidates must be women; a growing schooling of girls in particular in urban areas; the creation of centres for women who are victims of violence; and the growing role of the Human Rights Commission and civil society. Despite this progress, the Commission highlights the need to work further in certain areas, including on the lack of protection against domestic violence, FGM and early marriage, the lack of a law which is specific to gender equality. Mauritania should also ratify instruments on women's rights and harmonise domestic law with CEDAW and its provisions and adopt a comprehensive law on gender-based violence. It should also strengthen complaints mechanisms. In closing, the Commission points out that despite notable efforts, structural and legal discrimination against women persists in Mauritania

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

Stichting CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality emphasizes that care has long underpinned human societies across the globe, yet its value remains unappreciated, hidden and uncompensated, disproportionately affecting all women and girls. Women comprise 70% of the global health workforce but hold only 25% of senior positions. Caregiving obligations limit women's civic and political participation. Voluntary community support roles remain gendered and girls still bear the bulk of household chores. Despite UN efforts, most states have not yet woven care into economic planning. Without legal recognition of care's remunerable labour, without social protection for caregivers and without gender-responsive budgets for care infrastructure, caregivers' rights go unmet and progress stalls. Adequately and properly valuing care can spark transformative change, especially for diverse youth. Embedding youth-led initiatives, peer



counselling, community health outreach, intergenerational mentorship can challenge harmful gender norms and open care pathways for young, diverse people. The NGO therefore urges states and international institutions to establish gender-responsive budgeting units within finance ministries to monitor and adjust care-related expenditures, integrate care work, paid and unpaid into labour laws, ensuring protections regardless of gender, age, migration status, race, sexual orientation or any other identities, adopt and fully implement legal frameworks recognising, regulating and remunerating care work by ILO Conventions No. 189 and 190 with accountability mechanisms, decent working conditions, social protection and violence prevention, mandate youth and caregiver representation in local and national care policy consultations.

The **United Nations Association of China** states that in Gaza, the US fused genocide by arming Israel with weapons of mass destruction, enabling slaughter of over 40,000 Palestinians, of which 70% are women and children. Yet Washington has repeatedly vetoed ceasefire resolutions at the UNSC, causing what the International Court of Justice calls plausible genocide. In Iran, the US provides diplomatic cover and military backing for Israel's atrocities, cruelly tightening its illegal sanctions on Iran and deliberately blocking access to life-saving medicines and food supplies already amount to a blatant act of collective punishment against humanity and international law. While the US continues to hypocritically lecture the world on human rights, the era of American exceptionalism is over. The UN Association of China calls for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the lifting of sanctions. We ought not let another generation grow up asking, what is the war for? The credibility of the UNHRC depends on our ability to uphold its fundamental principles without exception. The women and children in Iran and in Gaza deserve nothing less than our full commitment to their protection and dignity.

Plan International gives the floor to a cohort of youth advocates supported by She Leads Consortium. As young women advocates following gender justice issues, they have been struck by international reports documenting how adolescent girls are disproportionately burdened with unpaid care and domestic responsibilities. In many cases, girls are expected to leave or limit their education in order to care for family members, not by choice but because of gender norms assigned them that role. According to Plan International's 2023 report, girls aged 10 to 17 in low- and middle-class income countries are spent twice as much time as boys on unpaid care and domestic work. These are serious consequences for their education, well-being and mental health. Plan International calls on the United States to formally recognise girls' unpaid care work and ensure it does not hinder their right to education, design gender-responsive care systems that are shared with meaningful participation of girls, invest in alternatives such as community child care centres to reduce the disproportionate burden on girls. We need systems that support girls, not systems that rely on their unpaid labour.

AKAHATÁ on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI) welcomes the thematic report, especially its emphasis on the gender dimensions. The report thoroughly analyses how gender stereotypes and inequalities are at the root of the burden that care and support work places on women and girls. It also details the impacts on women and girls' health, autonomy and overall enjoyment of all their human rights. It is particularly timely in shedding light on the situation of poor and migrant women care workers from the Global South who are facing growing racism and xenophobia. SRI appreciates the fact that the report recognises the contribution that care and support work makes to the global economy. To talk seriously about care is to talk about money. SRI supports the



report's assertion that care and support systems must be grounded in an intersectional feminist and human rights-based approach and that the work of those who provide care must be decent, formalised and well-paid. SRI emphasises states' obligations in this matter and the need to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work. In closing, SRI highlights the importance of incorporating environmental care as a key component in efforts, as well as making explicit the gendered impact of environmental degradation. It is urgent to shift away from profit-centred societies and economies, including from the military-industrial complex, and shift instead towards societies and economies that are centred on care and that are socially and environmentally sustainable.

The **International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development - VIDES** WG's report on the gender dimensions of care and support systems, calling on states to address structural injustices and inequalities by investing in gender-responsive, inclusive and human rights-based approaches. VIDES is extremely concerned that the unequal burden of unpaid care work remains a major barrier to both gender equality and the right to education. In its work with girls and young women across over 40 countries, VIDES sees how many girls are forced to drop out of school or struggle to combine caregiving with their studies, often with severe consequences for their mental health, development and future opportunities. Once again, we are leaving women and girls behind. Therefore, VIDES urges countries to provide gender-responsive and universal basic care and support systems, including health care, education and social protection, and invest in public care services that reduce girls' caregiving burden so they can continue their education without having to choose between school and their family's well-being; promote the equal participation of boys and men in unpaid and paid care by integrating care education into school curricula and launching awareness campaigns that challenge gender stereotypes and engage male caregivers; and integrate care and support policies into national gender equality strategies with specific attention to the needs of girls and ensure they are responsive to intersecting factors like poverty, displacement and disability.

The **Advocates for Human Rights** welcomes the WG's report on its visit to Thailand and thanks it for drawing attention to the fact that Thailand has one of the world's highest incarceration rates for women and that 94% of women in Thailand who received a death sentence were convicted of drug-related offences compared with 58% of their male counterparts. The report highlights that women's involvement in these offences reflects a broader pattern of intersectional discrimination in which systemic patriarchy exploits particularly poorer and marginalised women. 'From Poverty to Punishment', a recent report by Women Beyond Walls and Penal Reform International, demonstrates that poverty and discriminatory laws are key drivers behind women's contact with the criminal legal system, including women on death row. The Advocates underscore the importance of ensuring that sentencing judges in all countries that retain the death penalty take into consideration gender-informed mitigating factors in all capital cases including a history of gender-based violence, trauma, poverty, care responsibilities and coercive control relationships with co-defendants or victims. Accordingly, Thailand's judiciary should publish its confidential mandatory sentencing guidelines and should engage in consultations with civil society organisations specialising in gender-based violence to revise those guidelines. Further, Thailand should abolish the death penalty for all crimes, including for drug-related offences which do not meet the most serious threshold under international law.



Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie Van Homoseksualiteit - COC Nederland

welcomes the report's dedicated attention to human rights challenges faced by LGBTIQ+, women and girls including discrimination in employment, education, housing and healthcare, and thanks the WG for consulting with civil society during their visit to Thailand. The country has made significant progress towards gender equality especially with the enactment of the Gender Equality Act of 2015. However, important gaps remain. Queer youth continue facing discrimination stemming from rigid gender binary norms such as haircut and uniform policies within schools, universities and the workplace. Thailand has moved forward towards equal rights by enacting the Marriage Equality Act. Yet, transgender and gender-diverse individuals remain without legal gender recognition and experience discrimination and harassment. In the education sector, LGBTIQ students experience high levels of bullying from both teachers and peers resulting in mental health challenges such as depression or anxiety. Therefore, COC Nederland welcomes the WG's recommendations including the adoption of the pending Gender Recognition Act, the need to combat discrimination based on gender expression and identity and the call for effective investigation of discrimination, harassment and hate speech targeting LGBTIQ+, women and girls. COC Nederland looks forward to continuing our engagement with the WG and stands ready to cooperate with the Government of Thailand in the implementation of these recommendations.

The **Al-Basher Foundation for Development** denounces there is systematic discrimination against Sahrawi women in lands controlled by Morocco in Western Sahara. This is a kind of violence on the basis of gender and is part of protracted occupation. Sahrawi women defenders face various kinds of targeting, including monitoring sexual violence and social violence. Reports on the field show that this is a methodical and systemic policy to silence those calling for the rights of Sahrawis for self-determination by eliminating women from public sphere. Social traditions is a stigma and is weaponised to prevent women from social protection, further exacerbating the situation and make them more marginalised. Lack of UN mechanism to monitor human rights in Western Sahara and Morocco refusal for special rapporteurs, particularly those related to women discrimination, this entrenches impunity. Therefore, the Foundation calls upon the WG to make women, the rights of Western Sahrawi women a priority and shed the light in its next report on the multi-structural violence facing them. The UN should have access to the Western Sahara, including field visits by Special Rapporteurs. The WG should, in its recommendation, focus on the gender party, including the part of the rights in Western Sahara.

The **Inclusivity Project** states that in Niger, the Wahaya practise is one of those forms of insidious and misunderstood slavery. It has an impact on young women and girls who must live in entire subjection and submission to their so-called masters. They are marginalised and deprived of all their rights. The Inclusivity Project brings the testimony of a Wahaya woman - *'I was bought when I was 13 years old, sold to a trader, to a man. I had to do everything. I had to cook, I had to do the housework, and I had to share his bed, and I never had the right to say no.'* Studies have shown that the Wahaya practise is intersectional. It has the major impact on young girls and women from communities that are already the victims of discrimination as a result of ethnicity. A recent decision by the African Court of Peoples and Human Rights recognises the need to protect all of these communities, and this is a major step forward. However, the harmful impacts of this

phenomenon, which is based on social discrimination and ethnic background, are often overlooked, far too often, in fact.

The **Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women** (ARROW) states that unpaid and underpaid care work and support work remains a major source of gender inequality in the Asian region. Women and girls disproportionately shoulder caregiving responsibilities, including productive and reproductive care burden, often without recognition or support. A care-responsive, rights-based approach to sexual and reproductive health and rights must go hand in hand with efforts to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, especially in post-pandemic recovery and social protection systems. ARROW is deeply alarmed by the accelerating global backlash against SRHR, including rollbacks on hard-won rights, attacks on comprehensive sexual education, contraception and abortion, and criminalisation of SRH services. ARROW echoes the WG's call for transformative change and urge member states to ensure the full realisation and access to SRHR for women and girls in all their diversity, free from discrimination, coercion, and violence within universal health coverage packages, remove all legal and policy barriers, and integrate SRHR within care and support systems, ensuring public investment in SRH services, such as contraception, maternal health, gender-affirming care, and services for survivors of gender-based violence as core components of gender-responsive care economies.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

45 State Delegations

4 Inter-Governmental Organizations and UN Entities

3 National Human Rights Institutions

10 Non-Governmental Organizations