



A QUANTUM LEAP FOR GENDER EQUALITY

For a Better Future
of Work For All



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1919, the ILO adopted the first Conventions on women and work. A century later, women are a force in the labour market, breaking boundaries that at one time would have been considered impossible. While significant advances have taken place for women at work over the past century, there is no room for complacency.

Progress in closing gender gaps has stalled, and in some cases is reversing. The gender gaps with respect to key labour market indicators have not narrowed in any meaningful way for over 20 years. This situation should give rise to concern. Unless the present trajectory is changed, unless policy choices are made that put gender equality at their core, the situation is likely to deteriorate further as work becomes more fragmented and the future remains uncertain.

MINDING THE GENDER GAPS

WOMEN WANT TO WORK BUT ARE STILL NOT GETTING THE JOBS

It can no longer credibly be claimed, in any region or for any income group, that the employment gap between women and men is due to the fact that women do not want to work outside their home. Based on a representative global sample, about 70 per cent of the women interviewed said that they would prefer to be in paid work, and 66.5 per cent of men agreed that they should be. However, in 2018 only 45.3 per cent of women had a job, which equates to a gap of almost 25 percentage points between the desired and the actual employment rate for women (figure 1).

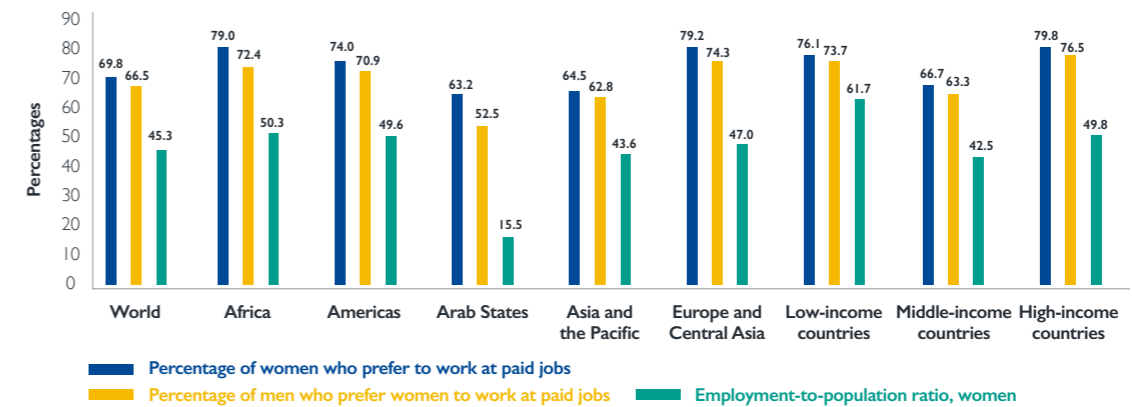
Over the past 27 years, the gender employment gap has shrunk by less than 2 percentage points. Both women's and men's employment rates have declined globally, but men's have declined at a faster rate (figure 2). In 2018, 1.3 billion women were in employment

compared to 2.0 billion men, which means that there were still over 700 million fewer women in employment than men. In other words, women were still 26.0 percentage points less likely to be employed than men. Not surprisingly, gross enrolment ratios for secondary and tertiary education have increased for both women and men and gender gaps in enrolment rates had almost closed in 2017. However, 21.2 per cent of youth are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET), and a high proportion of those (69.1 per cent) are women.

In 2018, women were more likely to be employed in occupations that are considered to be low-skilled and to face worse working conditions than men. In fact, women are more exposed than men to informal employment in over 90 per cent of sub-Saharan African countries, 89 per cent of countries in Southern Asia and almost 75 per cent of Latin American countries. In addition, women are also often found in occupations that are the most vulnerable to decent work deficits, such as in domestic, home-based or contributing family work. Migration status, ethnicity, disability and HIV status are some of the characteristics which, when intersecting with gender, further exacerbate the likelihood of women experiencing unfavourable working conditions and might increase informality rates.

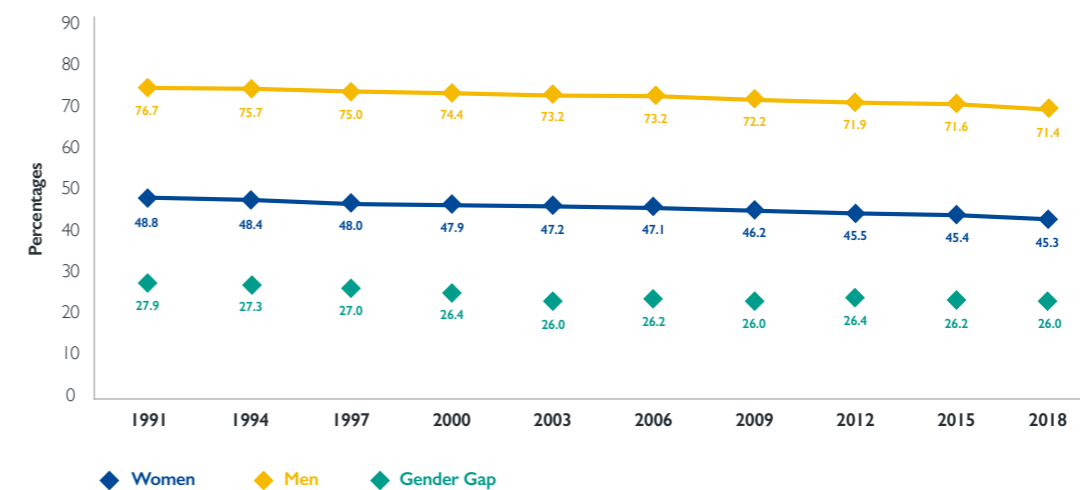


Figure 1. Preference of women to work at paid jobs and employment-to-population ratio, latest year



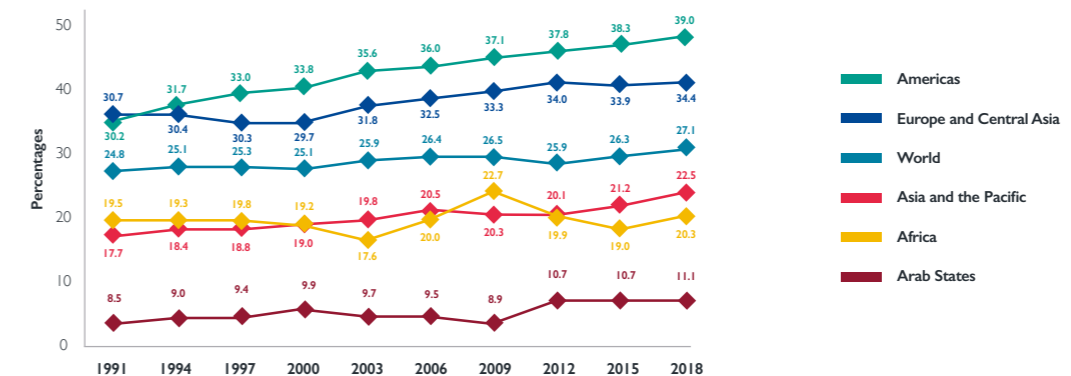
Note: See Chapter 1, figure 1.1. Age group 15 years and above.
Source: ILO calculations based on ILO-Gallup (2017) and ILO modelled estimates, November 2018.

Figure 2. Global, employment-to-population ratios by sex, 1991–2018



Note: The employment-to-population ratio is the ratio of the labour force currently employed to the working-age population.
Source: ILO modelled estimates, November 2018.

Figure 3. Share of women in managerial positions by region, 1991–2018



Source: ILO modelled estimates, November 2018.

Women are also under-represented in managerial and leadership positions. Globally, only 27.1 per cent of managers and leaders are women, a figure that has changed very little over the past 27 years (figure 3). However, while few women make it to the top, those who do, get there faster than men. Across the world, women managers and leaders are almost one year younger than men. This difference in age shrinks as the national income increases. Women managers are also more likely to have a higher level of education than men managers. Globally, 44.3 per cent of women managers have an advanced university degree compared with 38.3 per cent of men managers.

AN ACCUMULATION OF FACTORS STILL HINDERS WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND QUALITY OF THEIR JOBS:

Education matters, but it is not the main reason

The higher the level of women's and men's education, the higher their employment rates. But women do not get the same employment dividends as men for their education. While 41.5 per cent of adult women with a university degree are either unemployed or outside the labour force, the same is true for only 17.2 per cent of men in the same situation. Education alone is unlikely to close gender gaps in the labour market and other factors also need to be addressed.



Caregiving plays the biggest role

Traditionally, women have been portrayed as the "caregivers", and society and labour markets continue to function largely on this assumption. Unpaid care work is the main reason why women are outside the labour force. Across the world, 606 million working-age women (or 21.7 per cent) perform unpaid care work on a full-time basis, compared to 41 million men (or 1.5 per cent). Between 1997 and 2012, the time that women devoted to housework and caregiving diminished by only 15 minutes per day, while for men it increased by just eight minutes per day. At this pace, it is estimated that the gender gap in time spent in unpaid care work would not

be closed until 2228; in other words, closing the gap would take 209 years.

Motherhood penalties remain significant

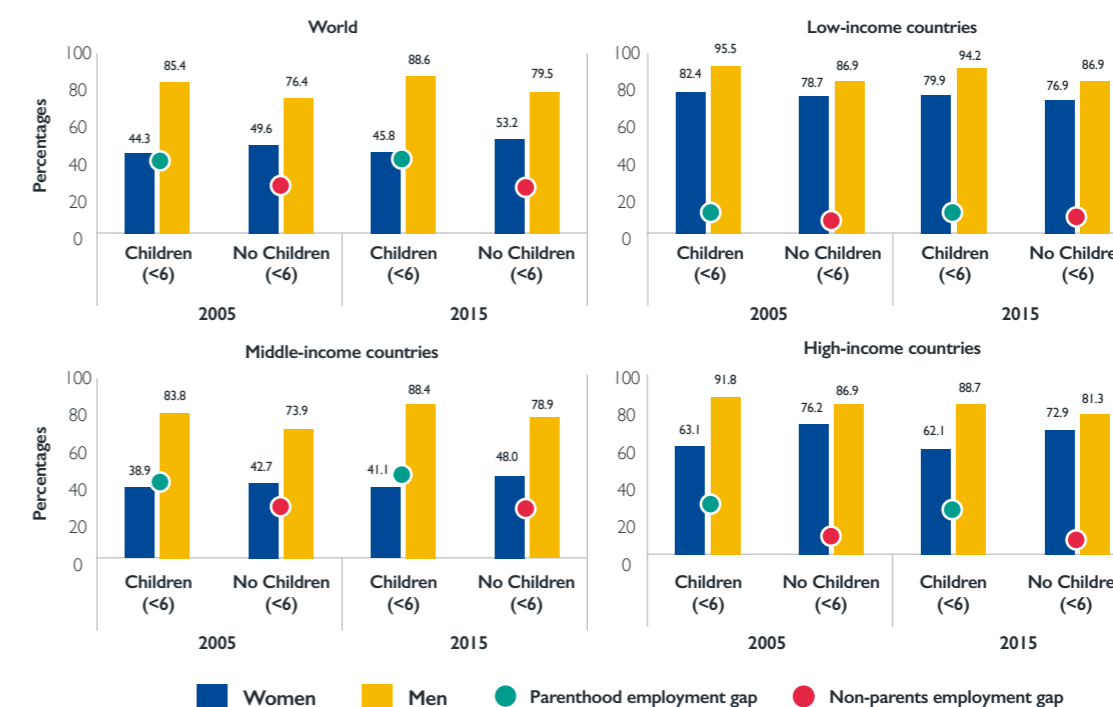
In 2015, estimates for 51 countries showed that 45.8 per cent of mothers of young children (i.e. aged 0–5 years) were in employment compared to 53.2 per cent of women without children of that age. This suggests the existence of a *motherhood employment penalty* (figure 4). This penalty has worsened compared both to women without young children, whose employment rates have grown much faster, and to fathers. Between 2005 and 2015, the *motherhood employment penalty* has increased by 38.4 percentage points. The "parenthood employment gap" has also increased from 41.1 percentage points to 42.8 percentage points.

Mothers also tend to experience a *motherhood wage penalty* that can persist across their working life, while the status of fatherhood is associated with a wage premium. As long as social pressure continues to compel women to be the main caregivers and men to work longer hours for pay as the main breadwinners, women will not be able to reduce their workload at home, or increase their hours of paid work. An absence of working-time autonomy for both women and men remains a considerable obstacle to gender equality and decent work.

Mothers of young children also experience a *motherhood leadership penalty*. They have the lowest participation rates in managerial and leadership positions (only 25.1 per cent of managers with children under six years of age are women) compared with their male counterparts (74.9 per cent of managers with children under six years of age are men). For women and men without young children, 31.4 per cent of managers without children are women and 68.6 per cent are men (figure 5). However, where men share unpaid care work more equally with women, more women are found in managerial positions.

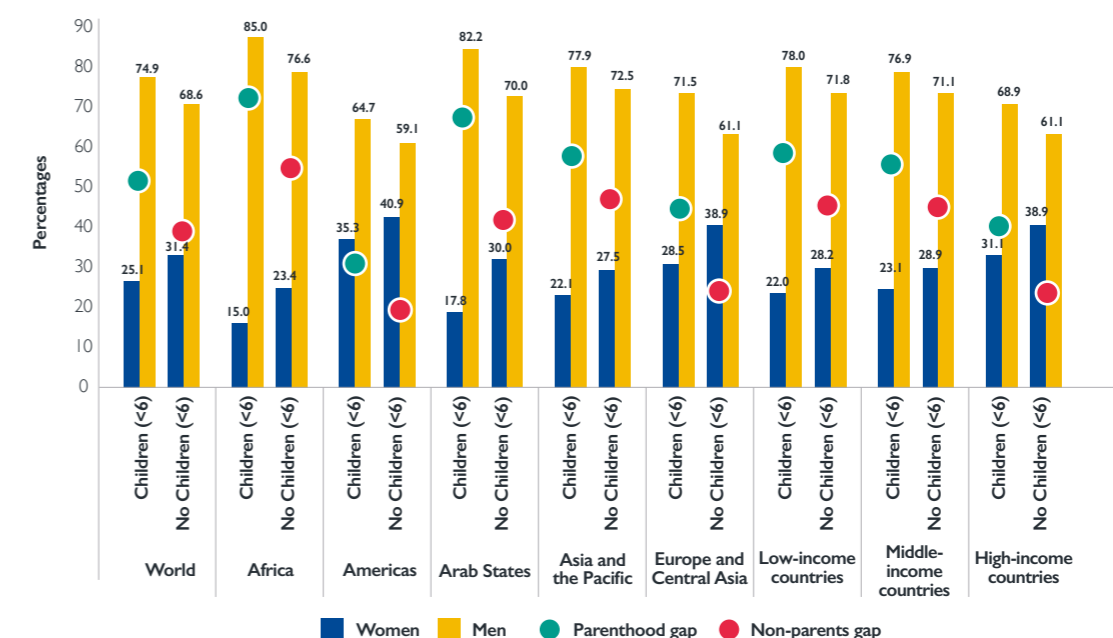


Figure 4. Employment-to-population ratios of women and men with and without children under 6 years of age, 2005 and 2015



Note: See Chapter 1, figure 1.17. The age group for high-income countries is 25–54 years, for middle- and low-income countries 18–54 years (51 countries). Source: ILO calculations based on labour force and household surveys.

Figure 5. Share of managers with and without children under 6 years of age, by sex, latest year



Note: See Chapter 1, figure 1.17. The age group for high-income countries is 25–54 years, for middle- and low-income countries 18–54 years (72 countries). Source: ILO calculations based on labour force and household surveys.

Lower and unequal pay

The gender wage gap is still an average of 20 per cent (18.8 per cent) throughout the world. Gender pay gaps derive from a host of factors, including lower returns to women’s education. Women working in the same occupation as men are systematically paid less, even if their educational levels equal or exceed those of their male counterparts. Other factors, such as occupational segregation and the gender composition of the workforce, significantly influence the gender pay gap. For example, in some countries, working in an enterprise with a predominantly female workforce can give rise to a 14.7 per cent wage penalty. Research and data from a joint ILO and LinkedIn initiative have also shown that women are less likely to have digital skills, which are currently a requirement for the most in-demand and highest paying jobs in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Overall, much of the pay gap remains unexplained, particularly in high-income countries. Work predominantly done by women is frequently undervalued because it mirrors work which has traditionally been carried out by women in the home without pay, or simply because it is work performed by women.

Violence and harassment in the world of work

Violence and harassment have a detrimental impact on women’s participation in employment and the quality of their work. It impacts women in the fields and in the boardrooms, in every country and sector, public and private, formal and informal. It can affect women selling products in the markets as well as start-up founders. From one side, cyber-bullying and cyber-intimidation through technology exacerbate the risk of violence and harassment, from the other side, new apps and secure social networks are emerging to help victims report and address sexual harassment and assaults.

The many faces of technology

Women’s employment opportunities and quality of their jobs are also affected by the current technological and digital revolution. For example, 73 per cent of activities in the accommodation and restaurants sector, which employs a large proportion of women,

are susceptible to automation. Conversely, education and health and social work, which are highly feminized sectors, exhibit the lowest risk of automation due to the personal interaction component that is embedded in such care-related work (figure 0.6). Increasing robotization of production in high-income economies and partial reshoring of production from middle- to high-income countries is also threatening women’s jobs in middle-income countries. There is a significant risk that, if these transitions are not managed properly, the gender gaps in employment will widen even further in these countries.

Weak voice and representation

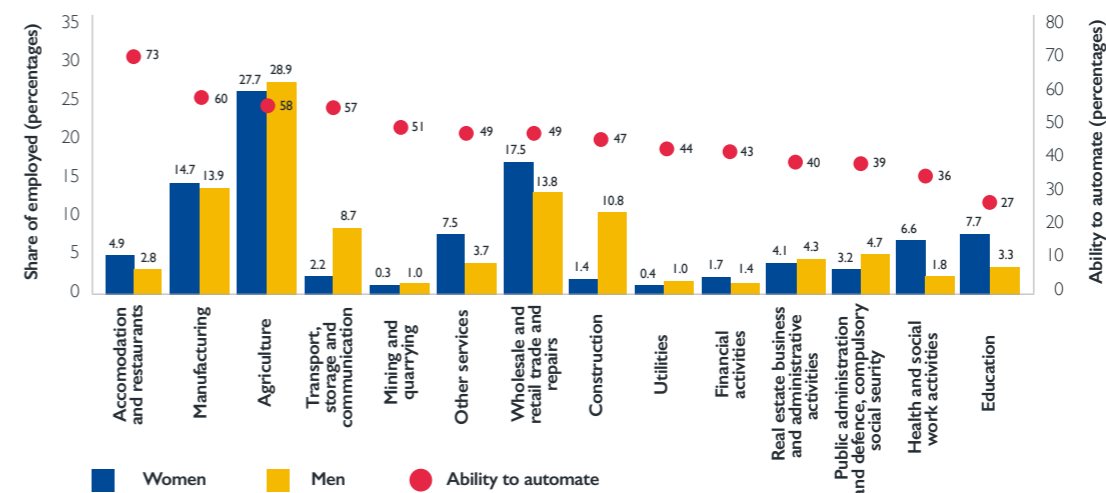
Women are under-represented in trade unions and employers’ organizations. Furthermore, despite evidence suggesting that the presence of women in the collective bargaining process is important to achieving outcomes that benefit women, under-representation of women is a reality in national social dialogue institutions, such as economic and social councils, tripartite commissions and labour advisory boards. Available data for 2018 show that female membership in national social dialogue institutions only ranged from 20 to 35 per cent.



PATHS TO GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK

A better future of work for women can only be realized by redressing discrimination and disadvantage and overcoming entrenched stereotypes relating to women in society, the value of their work and their position in the labour market. Achieving this goal requires simultaneous action on four different and mutually reinforcing paths.

Figure 6. Global share of employment by sex, sector and sector’s ability to automate, latest year



Note: See Chapter 1, figure 1.28.
Source: ILO calculations based on ILO modelled estimates, November 2018 and McKinsey Global Institute, 2017.

I. THE PATH OF RIGHTS FOR A FUTURE WITH GENDER EQUALITY AT WORK

A future of work where women and men have equal opportunities

Laws to establish that women and men have equal rights are the basis for demanding and achieving substantive equality in practice. Achieving gender equality in the world of work is possible if laws that discriminate against women and girls prior to entry into the labour market are repealed, as well as provisions preventing women from working at night or underground, or entering and progressing in a specific sector or occupation altogether. Evidence shows that lifting such barriers has a positive effect on the participation of women in the labour market. Laws that actively promote equality also have a significant impact, and are needed to further accelerate progress.

“A better future of work for women can only be realized by redressing discrimination and disadvantage and overcoming entrenched stereotypes relating to women in society, the value of their work and their position in the labour market.”



MINDING THE GENDER GAPS

WOMEN WANT TO WORK AND MEN AGREE

69.8%
of women prefer to be in paid work



66.5%
of men prefer women to be in paid work



45.3%



71.4%

45.3% of women are employed compared to 71.4% of men

27.1%

Only 27.1% of managers and leaders are women



WOMEN CLIMB UP THE MANAGERIAL LADDER A YEAR FASTER THAN MEN

44.3% / 38.3%

44.3% of women managers have an advanced university degree compared with 38.3% of men managers



WHAT HINDERS WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES?



41.5% / 17.2%



41.5% of women with a university degree are either unemployed or outside the labour force, while only 17.2% of men are in a similar situation

21.7% of women perform unpaid care work on a full-time basis compared to 1.5% of men

21.7% / 1.5%

**4H 25M WOMEN
1H 23M MEN**

Women spend on average 4 hours and 25 minutes per day doing unpaid care work while men only 1 hour and 23 minutes per day



209 YEARS

209 years needed to close the gender gap in time spent in unpaid care work at the current pace



38.4%

The motherhood employment penalty has increased by 38.4% between 2005 and 2015

45.8% / 53.2%

45.8% of mothers of young children are employed compared to 53.2% of women without children of that age

25.1%



74.9%

Mothers of young children have the lowest chance of being a manager while fathers of young children the highest: 25.1% of people in managerial positions with young children (aged 0–5 years) are women and 74.9% are men.

31.4%



68.6%

31.4% of people in managerial positions without young children (aged 0–5 years) are women and 68.6% are men.

20% GENDER PAY GAP



ONLY 130 COUNTRIES HAVE LAWS PROHIBITING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN EMPLOYMENT



A future of work free from discrimination, violence and harassment

Discriminatory practices in the world of work continue to extend to all aspects of employment and occupation, including remuneration, career advancement, and social security provisions and coverage. Unfair treatment, which includes abuse, harassment and discrimination, is among the top three challenges facing working women, especially young women between the ages of 15 and 29. A world of work free from violence and harassment is essential if there is to be a future of work with gender equality. Collective agreements and workplace measures can be important vehicles for addressing violence and harassment in the world of work, both to improve the scope and coverage of legislation when such exists, and to fill the gap when legislation is non-existent.

A future of work where work done by women is recognized and valued

Legal provisions mandating equal pay for work of equal value have long been in place in many countries. Since the gender pay gap stubbornly persists, additional measures, such as wage transparency, have been put in place to accelerate action and close the gap. However, unless such measures are compulsory, their application remains very limited. Other measures that can lead to positive outcomes in reducing gender pay gaps include minimum wage setting mechanisms and collective bargaining that pay attention to gender equality. When well-designed, minimum wages are effective in addressing inequalities at the low end of the wage distribution, as they serve as an effective wage floor.

A future of work with more women leading the way

The cumulative effect of the many forms and layers of discrimination before and after entering the labour market impact women's career prospects. This is especially true for the social norms dictating women's responsibility for unpaid care work. Over the past decades, proactive measures to mitigate motherhood penalties and redistribute unpaid care work have been

introduced at both the national and the workplace level. These include quotas and voluntary targets, mentoring and training specifically for women, as well as flexible working-time arrangements. All these measures have resulted in an acceleration of the pace of women's participation in managerial and leadership positions.

A future of work with inclusive maternity, paternity and parental leave

A comprehensive system of legislation providing paid family and care leave for both women and men is vital to securing women's access to and progress in the labour market. A growing number of countries have increased their maternity leave schemes and some have taken steps to cover women working in the informal economy. Paternity and parental leave policies are also an integral component in advancing women's positions in the labour markets. However, very few fathers benefit from such entitlements and evidence shows that fathers' uptake increases when the entitlement is conceived as a mandatory individual right that cannot be transferred to the other parent. Collective agreements can be instrumental in improving family leave policies.

A future of work with time to care

Since "having time" is one of the essential elements required to enable the redistribution of care responsibilities, greater time sovereignty is needed to allow workers to exercise more choice and control over their working hours. This would be particularly beneficial for workers with family responsibilities. Harnessing technology to achieve a balance between work and personal life can help workers to gain greater autonomy over their working-time. For instance, working remotely can help workers balance work and family responsibilities. However, such flexible working-time arrangements could reinforce gender roles, particularly if only women make use of them, with a view to continuing to shoulder the majority of unpaid care work.

2. THE PATH OF ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND PUBLIC CARE SERVICES TO TRANSFORM THE FUTURE OF WORK FOR WOMEN

Infrastructure, social protection and public care services, when intelligently designed and sufficiently financed, have a positive impact on redistributing unpaid care work and freeing women's time. The provision of infrastructure, such as clean water, safe cooking fuel, electricity, secure transportation, schools, health facilities, and information and communication technology, can also be a source of decent jobs for women. All such initiatives have a better chance of being effective when their design, planning and implementation is based on accurate gender analysis informed by sex disaggregated data and consultations with the beneficiaries of the infrastructure and services.

Care services for a future where everybody cares more

Childcare and long-term care policies and services are essential factors in achieving gender equality. Evidence confirms that the employment rates of women aged 18–54 years with families tend to be higher in countries that have a higher share of GDP invested in public expenditure on pre-primary education, long-term care services and benefits, and maternity, disability, sickness and employment injury benefits. Employment in the care economy provides a significant source of income, especially for women. The combination of an expanding population and rapidly ageing societies is driving an increased demand for care work, although there will be significant deficits in coverage unless there is further investment in public care services. It is predicted that an increase in investment in care services to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would create 120 million more jobs in the care economy and 149 million indirect jobs in non-care sectors by the year 2030. This confirms that investing in the care economy would result in job creation across many sectors. The "5R Framework for Decent Care Work" proposed by the ILO – recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work, and reward and represent care workers – offers a successful recipe



“No substantial progress will be made towards achieving gender equality, especially in the world of work, until unpaid care work is recognized, reduced and redistributed – both between women and men, and between families and the State.”



of legislative and policy measures to achieve decent work. This will also be essential for attracting more workers, women and men, to the care sector.

Universal social protection for women's future at work

The future of women at work will also depend on the degree to which women have effective access to adequate social protection throughout the course of their lives. Gender-responsive social protection systems, including floors, need to be fair, inclusive and sustainable, provide adequate protection to the entire population, and allow for a sufficiently large degree of redistribution. These systems should also be financed in a sustainable and equitable way, usually by a combination of taxes and contributions. Some recent policy innovations demonstrate the capacity of social protection systems to adapt to changing circumstances.

A sound macroeconomic framework to finance infrastructure, social protection and public care services

Public investment in infrastructure, social protection and care services are some of the key investments required to close gender gaps in the labour market. Current levels of public and private investment (proportionate to GDP) in the care sectors need to be doubled in order to ensure that these goals are achieved, along with the creation of decent work for paid care workers. To this end, fiscal space must be expanded in order to invest in care provision, services and infrastructure. Creating fiscal space is feasible, even in low-income countries. Effective macroeconomic policies are needed to ensure that national budgets respond to women's priorities, as assessed by women themselves. Gender-responsive budgeting is an important tool for more effectively prioritizing gender equality in the overall set of national policies.

3. THE PATH OF ENGAGING AND SUPPORTING WOMEN THROUGH WORK TRANSITIONS

The global transformations currently under way – relating to technology, demographics and climate change – require greater efforts to engage and support women during work transitions.

Lifelong learning so that no one is left behind

The fast-changing pace at which the world of work is transforming requires an approach that allows workers to keep up with demands for new skills. Lifelong learning can be instrumental in helping to prevent people, women in particular, from being left behind during social and economic development. Proactive measures encouraging young women to engage in STEM studies and occupational trajectories are increasing, as are training programmes aimed at facilitating the return to work for women and men either after childbirth, following a period of parental leave, or as a result of long-term unemployment due to unpaid family care responsibilities. Closing the digital gender divide must also be a focus of gender-responsive lifelong learning initiatives.

An enabling environment for women entrepreneurs

Initiatives promoting women's entrepreneurship development are prioritized by many countries. Steps to create a more favourable environment in this regard are increasingly being taken, including in the context of technology, innovation, finance and public procurement. Trends also indicate more integrated approaches to entrepreneurship policies and their implementation. In the future, greater attention should be paid to providing incentives to support women in transitioning to formalized enterprises, including through cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy units.

4. THE PATH OF WOMEN'S VOICE AND REPRESENTATION

To be effective, all paths discussed so far need to function in tandem with the path of women's voice and representation. Proactive measures have helped to increase women's participation and representation in the internal governance structures of trade unions and employers' organizations. Collective representation and social dialogue, including collective bargaining, that embrace gender diversity are better positioned to navigate future of work transitions and to more swiftly pursue all the paths that lead to a better future for women at work. It is not a matter of "fixing" women but rather ensuring

that the environment is receptive to women's voice and that barriers are removed to allow women to participate in enterprise, national and international social dialogue processes.

TOWARDS A TRANSFORMATIVE AND MEASURABLE AGENDA FOR GENDER EQUALITY

A QUANTUM LEAP FOR GENDER EQUALITY

In the current organization of societies, women and girls still perform the greatest share of unpaid care work, even though men and boys of the twenty-first century are increasingly aware of the need to share this work and eager to shoulder part of the responsibility. A shift in mindsets can be accelerated if economies and societies recognize not only that they depend on care work to survive and thrive, but also that work and care are closely interconnected. This mutual dependence is even more apparent in the context of the current transition towards a digital and green economy.

Reconciling the worlds of "work" and "care" is one the key challenges to actively promoting gender equality. Decreasing fertility rates, increasing migrant movements and ageing populations, and the rising number of women in employment are today's reality. Accelerating a new equilibrium requires bold policies and measures that end violence, harassment and discrimination against women with the underpinning aim to better distribute care responsibilities across genders. Reliable gender-disaggregated data are essential to designing such policies and monitoring outcomes to establish what works for women. Meeting these challenges also requires placing emphasis not only on individual agency, but also on collective action through solidarity, building strategic alliances and promoting social mobilization, all of which relies on greater participation of women in decision-making.



“Tripartism, which is embedded in the structure of the ILO, is a dynamic force to upscale efforts and achieve gender equality in the world of work.”



DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS & DISSEMINATION MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY

Establish frequent data collection and production of statistics on paid work, unpaid care work, earnings, take-up rates for paternity and paternal leave for fathers, gross enrolment ratios in early childhood education and development, in line with the latest statistical standards.



ADVOCACY & AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS



ENHANCING WOMEN'S VOICE & REPRESENTATION



CARE WORK

**RECOGNIZE
REDUCE
REDISTRIBUTE
REWARD
REPRESENT**
(5R FRAMEWORK)



RESPECT & AFFORD EQUAL RIGHTS

- Ratify and implement the ILO fundamental Conventions and other ILO Conventions on gender equality
- Prevent and protect against violence and harassment in the world of work
- Ensure full application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in laws and practices (i.e. wage transparency at company level; low-cost and user-friendly tools to trace and measure unequal pay)
- Remove discriminatory legal provisions restricting women's access to certain sectors and occupations
- Make maternity protection, paternity and parental leave a reality for all
- Facilitate time sovereignty for all
- Promote an enabling environment for women's career progression



INFRASTRUCTURE, SOCIAL PROTECTION & PUBLIC CARE SERVICES

- Provide infrastructure, including ICT
- Implement universal social protection
- Supply quality and affordable childcare and long-term care services and facilities
- Invest in the care economy
- Promote the 5R Framework for decent care work for all, including, domestic workers and home-based workers
- Develop sound, gender-responsive macroeconomic policies



ENGAGE & SUPPORT WOMEN THROUGH WORK TRANSITIONS

- Harness technology for gender equality
- Promote lifelong learning (including STEM and digital skills for women and girls)
- Create an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs
- Help workers to move from the informal to the formal economy



SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK



In 1919, the ILO adopted the first Conventions on women and work. A century later, women are a force in the labour market, breaking boundaries that at one time would have been considered impossible. While significant advances have taken place for women at work over the past century, there is no room for complacency. Progress in closing gender gaps has stalled, and in some cases is reversing. But a better future of work for women is possible, with an ecosystem of reinforcing measures and an unwavering commitment to gender equality. The paths to gender equality, with a view to implementing a transformative and measurable agenda for gender equality, are explored in this report.

This report is the culmination of the extensive and often groundbreaking work undertaken in the context of the ILO's Women at Work Centenary Initiative. The findings and recommendations of the Initiative resonate with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. The realization of the 2030 Agenda depends on the achievement of gender equality in the world of work.

This report highlights key gender gaps and obstacles to decent work for women. It explores the structural barriers, including unpaid care work, that shape the nature and extent of women's engagement in paid employment, and how laws, policies and practices in some countries have addressed them. This report reinforces the need for a multifaceted approach and provides a direction regarding the measures that can, and should, be taken to seize the opportunities presented by the changing world of work.

The ILO's centenary provides a privileged opportunity to change the trajectory and accelerate efforts to ensure that the future delivers decent work for all women and men, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda.



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