



**ISCTBL 2020**

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

Универзитет „Гоце Делчев“ –  
Штип

Goce Delchev University  
Shtip

Факултет за туризам и бизнис  
логистика

Faculty of Tourism and  
Business Logistics

**Трета Меѓународна Научна Конференција  
Third International Scientific Conference**

**ПРЕДИЗВИЦИТЕ ВО ТУРИЗМОТ И БИЗНИС  
ЛОГИСТИКАТА ВО 21 ВЕК**

**CHALLENGES OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS  
LOGISTICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

**ЗБОРНИК НА ТРУДОВИ  
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Милан Здравковиќ, извршен директор на операторот на дистрибутивниот систем во Ј.П.Србијагас, Белград, Србија – „*Supply of natural gas in COVID-19 conditions - experience and expectations*“

Проф. д-р Мишко Цидров, професор и проректор за настава и студенти, Универзитет „Гоце Делчев“ - Штип – „*УГД во време на пандемија*“

Проф. д-р Татјана Бошков, професор и декан на Факултетот за туризам и бизнис логистика – „*The impact of coronavirus on global growth and global supply chain shifts*“

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### **Plenary session**

Prof. Gligor Bishev, University Professor and Chairman of the Board, Sparkasse Bank-Skopje – “*The impact of the pandemic on economic developments*”

Peter Tabak, Executive Director, Leading Regional Economist for Economics, Policy and Governance in the Western Balkans Vice-President for Policy and Partnerships, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development - “*Economic outlook for the Western Balkans during and after the epidemic*”

Milan Zdravkovic, Executive Director of the Distribution System Operator in J.P Srbijagas, Belgrade, Serbia – “*Supply of natural gas in COVID-19 conditions - experience and expectations*”

Prof. Misko Dzidrov, University Professor and Vice-rector for Teaching and Students, Goce Delcev University of Stip – “*UGD in a time of pandemic*”

Prof. Tatjana Boskov, University Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, Goce Delcev University of Stip – “*The impact of coronavirus on global growth and global supply chain shifts*”

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**GOCE DELCEV UNIVERSITY OF STIP**

**ФАКУЛТЕТ ЗА ТУРИЗАМ И БИЗНИС ЛОГИСТИКА**  
**FACULTY OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS LOGISTICS**

**ТРЕТА МЕЃУНАРОДНА НАУЧНА**  
**КОНФЕРЕНЦИЈА**

**THIRD INTERNATIONAL**  
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13 ноември, 2020, Штип / Shtip, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## ПРЕДГОВОР

Факултетот за туризам и бизнис логистика при Универзитетот „Гоце Делчев“ во Штип, беше организатор на Третата меѓународна научна конференција „Предизвици на туризмот и бизнис логистика во 21 век“. Конференцијата се одржа на 13 ноември 2020 година на платформата Microsoft Teams, со повеќе од 90 учесници од матичната земја и странство. Оваа година Меѓународниот научен комитет брои еминентни професори од нашата земја и над 15 странски земји како Израел, Шпанија, Франција, Молдавија, Италија, Грција, Египет, Полска, Турција, Романија, Бугарија, Србија, Хрватска, Босна и Херцеговина и Словенија.

Целта на оваа конференција е да промовира поголемо разбирање на бизнис администрација, логистиката, туризмот и угостителство во однос на управувањето, економијата, образованието и претприемништвото. Ова подразбира дека фокусот на учесниците го насочивме кон најновите трендови и предизвици во врска со развојот на туризмот, менаџирањето со компаниите, пазарот на труд, можностите за придобивки и профит, изгледите за подобра конкурентност на меѓународниот пазар, што пак е императив за финансиската стабилност на нашата земја во целина.

Имено, со пристигнатите трудови и авторските истражувања се оствари целта на конференцијата - а тоа е оценувањето на тековната состојба и идните изгледи за развој на микро план што се однесува на домашниот пазар, како и движењата на глобалната економија, подготвувајќи ја бизнис заедницата за предизвиците со кои ќе се соочуваат при остварувањето на нивните цели, што де факто влијае врз одржувањето на финансиите особено во времето кое го живееме под притисокот на пандемијата.

Препораките кои се пренесоа се однесуваат како да се зајакнува капацитетот на компаниите како и промените во регулативите кои го диктираат нашиот пат кон ЕУ. Дискусиите во текот на конференцијата беа одговор на тоа како реагираа и се позиционираа менаџерите на финансиски средства во услови на голем пазарен ризик, пазарни шокови и турбуленции и како треба да се подготвуваат инвеститорите во поедини сектори. Трудовите прикажаа изгледи и кон идната интеграција на земјите од Западен Балкан, со осврт на досегашните постигнувања и идните предизвици пред овие економии како и размена на искуства на сите учесници кои сме денес присутни од повеќе земји.

Токму овие препораки треба да бидат двигател на процесите на реформата во насока на подигање на квалитетот на образованието заради поголема продуктивност на трудот, конкурентност на економијата и намалување на неусогласеноста на понудата на вештини и компетенции како и побарувачката на пазарот на труд.

Постигнувањето на овие цели е заедничка задача на сите оние што се во позиција да го дадат својот придонес за имплементација на реформите во општеството. Токму тие реформи, тие промени во начинот на пристап, методологија на работа и организација, не треба да ги правиме само за да станеме дел од економскиот блок, туку да бидат во насока да постигнеме нешто друго, многу позначајно, односно сите напори што ги правиме да бидат за остварување на повисок степен на благосостојбата на нашите граѓани, за создавање на достоинствени услови за живот и работа.

Во регионот, меѓутоа и пошироко, во Европа, искуствата се најразлични. Наидуваме на успешни, и на не толку успешни модели. Токму ваквите научните конференции, дебатите што се развиваат тука, се најдобриот начин за размена на искуства, за идентификација на предизвиците и перспективите, за споредување на моделите и третирањето на нивните недостатоци или предности, меѓутоа и презентирање

на можните нови комбинирани модели. Едукацијата на новите генерации кои ќе бидат подготвени да се соочат со предизвиците што ги носи глобализацијата, е заеднички предизвик на Универзитетите, на бизнис заедницата, но и на централната и локалната власт.

Штип,  
13 Ноември 2020

Главен уредник  
Проф. д-р Татјана Бошков, *Декан*

## PREFACE

The Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics in Gevgelia, part of the University Goce Delchev from Shtip, hosted the Third International Scientific Conference, "Challenges of Tourism and Business Logistics in the 21st Century". The conference was held on 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 on the platform Microsoft Teams, with more than 90 participants from the country and abroad. This year the International scientific committee included eminent professors from our country and more than 15 from foreign countries, such as Israel, Spain, France, Moldova, Italy, Greece, Egypt, Poland, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia.

The aim of this conference is promoting a greater understanding of the business administration, logistics, tourism and hospitality in terms of management, economics, education and entrepreneurship. In that context, the focus of our participants was on the latest trends and challenges related to tourism development, company management, labour market, opportunities for gain and profit, opportunities for better competitiveness in the international market, which is imperative for the financial stability of our country entirely.

Furthermore, the conference papers and authors' researches fulfilled the aim of the conference, the assessment of the current situation and future prospects for the development of the micro plan in terms of the domestic market, as well as the global economy changes, prepared the business community for the challenges that will they face during their goal achievement, which de facto affects the maintenance of finances especially in the time we live under the pandemic pressure.

The detection of the conditions that have been presented is a real mirror of where we are, where we have been, and what is even more difficult, to answer the question what next? Achieving these goals is a common task of all those who are in a position to contribute to the implementation of reforms in society. Exactly those reforms, those changes in the way of approach, methodology of work and organization, we should not make only to become part of the economic block, but to be in the direction of achieving something else, something much more significant - efforts for achieving a higher degree of well-being of our citizens, for creating dignified living and working conditions.

In the region, but also beyond, in Europe, the experiences are diverse. We come across successful and not so successful models. Exactly such scientific conferences, debates that develop here, are the best way to exchange experiences, to identify challenges and perspectives, to compare models and how to treat their disadvantages or advantages, but also to present possible new combined models. The education of the new generations that will be ready to face the challenges posed by globalization is a common challenge of the Universities, the business community, but also of the central and local government.

Shtip,  
November, 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Editor  
Tatjana Boshkov, Ph.D. *Dean*

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## EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MODERN WORLD

*Aneta Stojanovska-Stefanova<sup>1</sup>; Marija Magdinceva-Sopova<sup>2</sup>; Hristina Runcheva Tasev<sup>3</sup>*

### Abstract

*The paper will give an informative overview of the importance of gender equality as a pillar of global development and overview of the empowerment of women in the modern world. The article will also make analysis about the biggest challenge facing women internationally today. Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is integral of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to each of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by world leaders in 2015. According to UN there has been progress over the last decades: more girls are going to school, fewer girls are forced into early marriage, more women are serving in parliament and positions of leadership, and laws are being reformed to advance gender equality. Despite these gains many [challenges](#) remain.*

*Authors conclude that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. The gender discrimination still holding too many women back, holds our world back too. Only by ensuring the rights of women and girls across all the goals will we get to justice and inclusion, economies that work for all, and sustaining our shared environment now and for future generations.*

Key words: *gender equality, gender discrimination, development goals, human rights, justice and inclusion*

JEL classification: *K38; D63; F53; Z18;*

### Introduction

Empowerment of women has become a global phenomenon. Since the United Nations Organization was founded, the issue of women's development has attracted the attention of the scholars worldwide, and the concept has come in the political agenda of a large number of countries. At present, the term "empowerment" has replaced the erstwhile term "development". Though the term 'empowerment' had become a 'buzzword' in the sixties, it was not discussed so extensively in literature until the eighties. It took about twenty-five years for the United Nations to proclaim the year 2001 as the 'International Year for Women's Empowerment' after declaring the 'Women's Decade' in 1975<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Keshab, C. M. (2013). „Concept and Types of Women Empowerment“, In: *International Forum of Teaching and Studies*, 9(2).

Empowerment includes women's sense of self-worth, the right to have and determine choices, the right to control their own lives, the right to have access to opportunities, as well as the action of rising the status of women through education, raising awareness, literacy and training. Women's empowerment is all about equipping and allowing women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society. However, empowerment of women now can be categorized into five main parts: social, educational, economic, political and psychological.

According to CIDA<sup>1</sup> Report "Gender Equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic social and cultural development and benefit equally from the results. Attaining gender equality demands recognition that current social, economic, cultural, and political systems are gendered; that women's equal status is systematic and that is necessary to incorporate women's specificity priorities and values into all major social institutions." Gender equality is the process of being fair to women and men. It is a goal in its own right but also a key factor for sustainable social development, economic growth and environmental sustainability. A sustainable path of development can be achieved to ensure that women's and men's interests are both taken into account in the allocation of resources through providing the same opportunities to men and women. Basically, equality between women and men should be promoted in ways that are appropriate to each particular context. Both men and women have a stake building a more just society where all people are equally valued for their contributions. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environmental Development (UNCED) made important provisions for the recognition of women's contribution and their full participation in sustainable development. The United Nations has accepted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with specific targets to achieve within stipulated time. The common goal of SDGs that no one will be left behind is a move towards equitable and inclusive society for all. It is only for to end the poverty and ensure that people enjoy with fruitful peace and prosper<sup>2</sup>. Women empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in [development](#) and [economics](#). It can also point to the approaches regarding other trivialized [genders](#) in a particular political or social context, Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the [sustainable development](#) of the country. Many world leaders and scholars have argued that sustainable development is impossible without gender equality and women's empowerment.

### **Gender equality as a human right and developmental goal**

Gender equality is a right. Fulfilling this right is the best chance we have in meeting some of the most pressing challenges of our time - from economic crisis and lack of health care, to climate change, violence against women and escalating conflicts. Women are not only more affected by these problems, but also possess ideas and leadership to solve them. The gender discrimination still holding too many women back, holds our world back too. The historic agreement among world's leaders at the United Nations in 2015 on a universal 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development committed all countries to pursue a set of 17 Sustainable

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<sup>1</sup> CIDA, In: *Gender Equality and women empowerment to achieve sustainable development goal*, <http://southasiajournal.net/gender-equality-and-women-empowerment-to-achieve-sustainable-development-goal/>, <http://southasiajournal.net/gender-equality-and-women-empowerment-to-achieve-sustainable-development-goal/>, (August 25, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Satyajit, S., „*Gender Equality and women empowerment to achieve sustainable development goal*“, <http://southasiajournal.net/gender-equality-and-women-empowerment-to-achieve-sustainable-development-goal/>, (August 25, 2020).

Development Goals (SDGs) that would lead to a better future for all. The bold agenda sets out a global framework to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and fix climate changes until 2030<sup>1</sup>.

Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is integral to each of the 17 goals. Only by ensuring the rights of women and girls across all the goals will we get to justice and inclusion, economies that work for all, and sustaining our shared environment now and for future generations.

The new development agenda is the most ambitious to date and the 17 goals are a universal call to action to eradicate poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The goals are interconnected- often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another<sup>2</sup>.

This editorial package showcases UN Women's 2018 flagship report, „Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda“. It features data, stories, videos and publications that illustrate how and why gender equality matters across all the Sustainable Development Goals, and how the goals affect the real lives of women and girls everywhere<sup>3</sup>.

At this year's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, during the 74<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted that the 2030 Agenda now is truly coming to life. Governments have begun integrating the goals into national plans; the private sector is coming to understand that sustainable business is good business; cities, civil society, young people and more are stepping up and taking action.

The commitment to the 2030 agenda is stronger than ever-and the world is making progress. But as the Secretary-General also made clear, we are far from where we need to be. We are, in his words, off track. Across the SDGs spectrum, progress is uneven. And nowhere is this more the case than for the most central issue of all: gender equality. We know well around the world that progress is being achieved. Women are stepping up as leaders. Education rates for women are higher than ever. More girls are growing up with confidence in their abilities. But in the words of the Secretary General, no country is on track to meet the goal of gender equality – without which, none of the other SDGs will be met. 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action<sup>4</sup>, the most visionary agenda on women's empowerment to date.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>5</sup> is calling on governments and institutions to use a new generation of policies to change these discriminatory beliefs and practices through education, and by raising awareness and changing incentives. For instance, by using taxes to incentivize fairly sharing child-care responsibilities, or by encouraging women and girls to enter traditionally male-dominated sectors such as the armed forces and information technology.

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<sup>1</sup> Stojanovska-Stefanova, A. et al., (2019). „The significant role of the tourism in achieving the United Nations sustainable development goals“. *International Journal Knowledge Vol.34 - from XXII International Scientific Conference "The power of knowledge"*, 11-13 October 2019, Kavala, Greece;

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> UN Woman, „*Women and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*“, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs>, (August 26, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing Declaration*, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm>, (17.08.2020).

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Almost 90% of Men/Women Globally Are Biased Against Women*, [https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/newscentre/news/2020/Gender\\_Social\\_Norms\\_Index\\_2020.html](https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/newscentre/news/2020/Gender_Social_Norms_Index_2020.html), (10.09.2020).

At UNDP they are also committed to advancing gender equality within their own house and in the regions and countries they serve<sup>1</sup>. They see three key areas<sup>2</sup> of action which they are keen to advance in support of women and along with partners:

1. Women's economic empowerment;
2. Political participation and
3. Gender Justice.

Gender inequalities are still deep-rooted in every society. Women suffer from lack of access to decent work and face occupational segregation and gender wage gaps. In many situations, they are denied access to basic education and health care and are victims of violence and discrimination. They are under-represented in political and economic decision-making processes.

With the aim of better addressing these challenges and to identify a single recognized driver to lead and coordinate UN activities on gender equality issues, UN Women was established in 2010.

UN Women works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, empowerment of women, and achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security<sup>3</sup>. Nowadays, women make up half the human population — and can act as key drivers of global growth and national security. Therefore, USAID<sup>4</sup>, also believe that investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can help eradicate extreme poverty, build vibrant economies, and unlock human potential on a transformational scale.

### **Challenges and opportunities for the women in a modern world**

On 30 April, 2020, the Pew Research Center published Survey<sup>5</sup>, that highlighted that in many countries, women place more importance on gender equality than men do. The Report explores cross-national perceptions of gender equality, including the opportunities available to men and women and the power they wield in family decisions.

In most of the 34 countries<sup>6</sup> surveyed, women are more likely than men to say men have a better life in their country. Gender differences are particularly large on this question in Greece

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP Arab States, „*Women's Empowerment and the Sustainable Development Goals*“, <https://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2019/sarah-poole-statement-at-9th-kuwait-womens-conference.html>, (July 26 2020).

<sup>2</sup>UNDP Arab States, „*Women's Empowerment and the Sustainable Development Goals*“, <https://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2019/sarah-poole-statement-at-9th-kuwait-womens-conference.html>, (July 26 2020).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, „*Gender equality and women empowerment*“, <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment>, (01.09.2020).

<sup>4</sup> USAID, „*Realizing Women's Economic Potential*“, <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment/womens-economic-empowerment>, (07.09.2020).

<sup>5</sup> Pew Research Center, „*Worldwide Optimism About Future of Gender Equality, Even as Many See Advantages for Men*“, [file:///C:/Users/Riste/Downloads/PG\\_2020.04.30\\_Global-Gender-Equality\\_FINAL.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Riste/Downloads/PG_2020.04.30_Global-Gender-Equality_FINAL.pdf), (26.08.2020).

<sup>6</sup> More info: The Pew Survey examines expectations for the future of gender equality across countries. For the report, Pew Research Center used data from a survey conducted across 34 countries from May 13 to Oct. 2, 2019, totaling 38,426 respondents. The surveys were conducted face-to-face across Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, and on the phone in United States and Canada. In the Asia-Pacific region, face-to-face surveys were

(women are 27 percentage points more likely to say this), Slovakia (25 points), Italy (25), Canada (20), Brazil (20), Hungary (19) and Turkey (18).

However, women are less optimistic than men that women in their countries will achieve equality in the future, and they are more likely to say men have better lives than women. While publics around the world embrace the idea of gender equality, at least four-in-ten think men generally have more opportunities than women in their country when it comes to getting high-paying jobs (a median of 54% across the 34 countries surveyed) and being leaders in their community (44%). Publics see more equity in access to a good education – a median of 81% believe men and women in their country generally have the same opportunities in this area – and expressing their political views (63% say men and women have the same opportunities). No more than 6% say women have more opportunities than men in any of these realms<sup>1</sup>.

The Pew Research Center's Report highlighted that men tend to be more optimistic than women about prospects for gender equality, with gender differences of at least 10 percentage points in 10 countries and smaller but significant differences in 11 others. For example, 77% of men in Japan – compared with 58% of women – say it's likely that women in their country will eventually attain or already have the same rights as men. Nigeria and the Philippines are the only countries surveyed where a larger share of women than men are optimistic about gender equality. When it comes to family life, the Pew Research Center's Survey, sense is that men and women have about the same influence in making important decisions in their households. A 34-country median of 55% say both have roughly equal influence when it comes to important decisions about household finances, 56% say this about how to raise children and 62% say this of decisions about a family's religious practices. To the extent that people see a difference, however, men are generally seen as having more of an influence than women when it comes to decisions about household finances, while women are generally seen as having more influence when it comes to decisions about raising children.

In addition to viewing gender equality as important, most people are optimistic that women will eventually have the same rights as men in their country. Majorities in 30 of the 34 countries surveyed hold this view, including roughly 90% in the Netherlands, India, the Philippines and Mexico. In the U.S., 75% believe gender equality is likely. An additional 14% volunteer the response that women already have the same rights as men. One-in-ten or more in most Central and Eastern European nations, as well as Ukraine, Greece, Italy, Russia, Israel and Tunisia, agree that women and men already have equal rights. Despite widespread optimism globally, substantive shares in some of the countries surveyed say it is unlikely that women will eventually have the same rights as men in their country.

According to Principle 20, Rio Declaration<sup>2</sup>: “Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.”

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conducted in India, Indonesia and the Philippines, while phone surveys were administered in Australia, Japan and South Korea. Across Europe, the survey was conducted over the phone in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK, but face-to-face in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine.

<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center, „*Worldwide Optimism about Future of Gender Equality, Even as Many See Advantages for Men*“, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/04/30/worldwide-optimism-about-future-of-gender-equality-even-as-many-see-advantages-for-men/>, (28.08. 2020).

<sup>2</sup>Convention on Biological Diversity, *Rio Declaration*, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/ref/rio-declaration.shtml>, (August 29, 2020).

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. There has been [progress](#) over the last decades: More girls are going to school, fewer girls are forced into early marriage, more women are serving in parliament and positions of leadership, and laws are being reformed to advance gender equality<sup>1</sup>.

Despite these gains, many [challenges](#) remain: discriminatory laws and social norms remain pervasive, women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of political leadership, and 1 in 5 women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 report experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within a 12-month period<sup>2</sup>.

Achieving change requires policy and programme actions that will improve women's access to secure livelihoods and economic resources, alleviate their extreme responsibilities with regard to housework, remove legal impediments to their participation in public life, and raise social awareness through effective programmes of education and mass communication. In addition, improving the status of women also enhances their decision-making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life, especially in the area of sexuality and reproduction. This, in turn, is essential for the long-term success of population programmes. Experience shows that population and development programmes are most effective when steps have simultaneously been taken to improve the status of women<sup>3</sup>. Economic empowerment is central to women's ability to overcome poverty, cope with shocks and improve their well-being. When women realize their economic goals, whether it's growing a business, improving their home or investing in training or education, they're more resilient and able to provide for themselves and their families. Yet, globally, women continue to trail men in formal labor force participation, land and property ownership, and access to financial services, like credit and savings<sup>4</sup>. For example, PCI's global Women Empowered (WE) program supports the social and economic empowerment of women through community-based savings groups that help members save money, access credit, develop financial literacy and invest in income-generating activities. Over the last decade, PCI has supported more than 1.3 million women with savings groups programming in 13 countries across Africa, the Americas and Asia. In India, PCI partnered with the Government of Bihar to create "The Parivartan Project".

Efforts are needed to ensure women's equal access to full employment and decent work. Legislative and policy measures should address discrimination and inequalities such as horizontal and vertical occupational segregation and gender wage gaps. Specific measures are required to target the constraints women face through their disproportionate representation in the informal sector, including measures to ensure that work in the informal sector is covered by labor regulation and social protection. Stronger measures are required to protect the rights of, and ensure decent work conditions for, domestic workers, including migrant women, in relation to working hours, conditions and wages, access to health-care services, and other social and economic benefits, as well as to eliminate sexual exploitation and violence. Support to women

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<sup>1</sup>UN Sustainable Development Goal, "Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", see more at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>, (August 5, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>United Nations Population Fund, *Issue 7: Women Empowerment*, <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/issue-7-women-empowerment>, (18.08.2020).

<sup>4</sup> PCI (Project Concern International), *PCI's global Women Empowered, Women's, Empowerment Can Change the World*,

[https://www.pciglobal.org/empowering-women/?matchtype=b&network=g&device=c&adposition=&keyword=ways%20to%20empower%20women&clid=EAAlaIQobChMI07G26Z-j6wIVvSB7Ch3UXQVrEAAAYASAAEgKmmfD\\_BwE](https://www.pciglobal.org/empowering-women/?matchtype=b&network=g&device=c&adposition=&keyword=ways%20to%20empower%20women&clid=EAAlaIQobChMI07G26Z-j6wIVvSB7Ch3UXQVrEAAAYASAAEgKmmfD_BwE), (18.08.2020).

entrepreneurs, and particularly to successful women entrepreneurs wishing to expand their businesses, should be increased, including through greater access to formal financial instruments, training and advisory services, access to markets and facilitation of networking and exchanges<sup>1</sup>.

On February 7, 2019, the White House launched the [Women's Global Development and Prosperity \(W-GDP\) Initiative](#)<sup>2</sup>, to bring women's economic empowerment to the forefront of the U.S. Government's development agenda. W-GDP establishes an innovative new fund at USAID to enable women to succeed in the economy in the developing world.

The initiative focuses on three pillars:

1. *Pillar One:* Advancing workforce development and vocational education to ensure women have the skills and training necessary to secure jobs.
2. *Pillar Two:* Promoting women's entrepreneurship and providing women with access to capital, markets, technical assistance and networks.
3. *Pillar Three:* Striving to remove the legal, regulatory and cultural barriers that constrain women from being able to fully and freely participate in the economy.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)<sup>3</sup> awarded \$2 million in grant funding through the W-GDP [WomenConnect Challenge \(WCC\) \(link is external\)](#). This Challenge was launched in support of the [Women's Global Development and Prosperity \(W-GDP\) Initiative](#), a whole-of-U.S. Government effort that aims to reach 50 million women in the developing world by 2025.

When women are economically empowered, they invest back into their families and communities, producing a multiplier effect that spurs growth and stability. The W-GDP WomenConnect Challenge seeks to bridge the gender digital divide so that women can fully participate in the global economy.

### **The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on women**

Covid-19 is not only a challenge for global health systems, but also a test of our human spirit. Recovery must lead to a more equal world that is more resilient to future crises. Fiscal stimulus packages and emergency measures to address public health gaps have been put in place in many countries to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19<sup>4</sup>.

The year 2020, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, was intended to be ground-breaking for gender equality. Instead, with the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic even the limited gains made in the past decades are at risk of being rolled back. The pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic.

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<sup>1</sup> UN, „Achieving gender equality, women's empowerment and strengthening development cooperation“, [https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/pdfs/1050143\\_\(e\)\\_\(desa\)dialogues\\_ecosoc\\_achieving\\_gender\\_equality\\_women\\_empowerment.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/pdfs/1050143_(e)_(desa)dialogues_ecosoc_achieving_gender_equality_women_empowerment.pdf), (August 15, 2020).

<sup>2</sup>White House, [Women's Global Development and Prosperity \(W-GDP\) Initiative](#), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wgdp/>, (09.09.2020).

<sup>3</sup> USAID, *WomenConnect Challenge*, link: <https://www.usaid.gov/wcc>, (10.09.2020).

<sup>4</sup>DESA Policy Brief #58, „COVID-19: Addressing the social crisis through fiscal stimulus plans“, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-58-covid-19-addressing-the-social-crisis-through-fiscal-stimulus-plans/>, (August 16, 2020).

Across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection, the impacts of Covid-19 are exacerbated for women and girls simply by virtue of their sex:

- Compounded economic impacts are felt especially by women and girls who are generally earning less, saving less, and holding insecure jobs or living close to poverty.
- While early reports reveal more men are dying as a result of Covid-19, the health of women generally is adversely impacted through the reallocation of resources and priorities, including sexual and reproductive health services.
- Unpaid care work has increased, with children out-of-school, heightened care needs of older persons and overwhelmed health services.
- As the Covid-19 pandemic deepens economic and social stress coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures, gender-based violence is increasing exponentially. Many women are being forced to ‘lockdown’ at home with their abusers at the same time that services to support survivors are being<sup>1</sup>.

It is critical that all national responses place women and girls, their inclusion, representation, rights, social and economic outcomes, equality and protection - at their centre if they are to have the necessary impacts. This is not just about rectifying long-standing inequalities but also about building a more just and resilient world. It is in the interests of not only women and girls but also boys and men. Women will be the hardest hit by this pandemic but they will also be the backbone of recovery in communities. Every policy response that recognizes this will be the more impactful for it.

To achieve this, the Policy brief emphasizes three cross-cutting priorities:

- 1) Ensure Women’s equal representation in all Covid-19 response planning and decision-making;
- 2) Drive transformative change for equality by addressing the care economy, paid and unpaid and
- 3) Target women and girls in all efforts to address the socio-economic impact of Covid-19.

These three cross-cutting priorities reflect the Secretary-General’s recent Call to Action on Human Rights, which singled out measures that, if pursued, would have meaningful impact on the rights of women and girls. These measures have become more vital in the context of the pandemic<sup>2</sup>.

The effects of [the Covid-19 pandemic could reverse the limited progress](#) that has been made on gender equality and women’s rights. The coronavirus outbreak [exacerbates existing inequalities](#)<sup>3</sup> for women and girls across every sphere – from health and the economy, to security and social protection. Women play a disproportionate role in responding to the virus, including as frontline healthcare workers and carers at home. Women’s unpaid care work has increased significantly as a result of school closures and the increased needs of older people. Women are also harder hit by the economic impacts of Covid-19, as they disproportionately

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<sup>1</sup>UN, “Policy brief: The impact of Covid-19 on women”, [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy\\_brief\\_on\\_covid\\_impact\\_on\\_women\\_9\\_apr\\_2020\\_updated.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_women_9_apr_2020_updated.pdf), (August 17, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The Lancet, “COVID-19: the gendered impacts of the outbreak”, see more: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS01406736\(20\)30526-2/fulltext#back-bib1](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS01406736(20)30526-2/fulltext#back-bib1), (August 19, 2020).



work in insecure labor markets. Nearly 60 per cent of women work in the informal economy, which puts them at greater risk of falling into poverty<sup>1</sup>.

The pandemic in the year 2020 has also led to a steep increase in [violence against women and girls](#). With lockdown measures in place, many women are trapped at home with their abusers, struggling to access services that are suffering from cuts and restrictions. Emerging data shows that, since the outbreak of the pandemic, violence against women and girls and particularly domestic violence has intensified.

In times of crisis such as an outbreak, women and girls may be at higher risk of intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence due to increased tensions in the household. As systems that protect women and girls, including community structures, may weaken or break down, specific measures should be implemented to protect women and girls from the risk of intimate partner violence with the changing dynamics of risk imposed by Covid-19<sup>2</sup>.

The unpaid care economy is a critical mainstay of the Covid-19 response: There are gross imbalances in the gender distribution of unpaid care work. Before Covid-19 became a universal pandemic, women were doing three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men. This unseen economy has real impacts on the formal economy, and women's lives. In Latin America the value of unpaid work is estimated to represent between 15,2 percent (Ecuador) and 25,3 percent (Costa Rica) of GDP<sup>3</sup>.

On 5 April, the Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire and an end to all violence everywhere so that we can focus our attention and resources on stopping this pandemic. But violence is not just on the battlefield. It is also in homes. Violence against women and girls is increasing globally as the Covid-19 pandemic combines with economic and social stresses and measures to restrict contact and movement. Crowded homes, substance abuse, limited access to services and reduced peer support are exacerbating these conditions. Before the pandemic, it was estimated that one in three women will experience violence during their lifetimes. Many of these women are now trapped in their homes with their abusers<sup>4</sup>.

Before the pandemic, it was estimated that one in three women will experience violence during their lifetimes. During the pandemic, many of these women are trapped in their homes with their abusers.

Therefore, it is important for national responses to include specific communications to the public that justice and the rule of law not to be suspended during periods of quarantine or lockdown.

## Conclusion

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<sup>1</sup> UN Sustainable Development Goal, "Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", see more at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>, (August 5, 2020).

<sup>2</sup>United Nations Population Fund - UNFPA, In: "COVID-19: A Gender Lens technical brief protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights, and promoting gender equality", [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19\\_A\\_Gender\\_Lens\\_Guidance\\_Note.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_A_Gender_Lens_Guidance_Note.pdf), (August 23, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> ECLAC (2019) Repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean, available at [https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/2019-10\\_repositorio\\_uso\\_del\\_tiempo\\_eng.pdf](https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/2019-10_repositorio_uso_del_tiempo_eng.pdf), (August 26, 2020).

<sup>4</sup>UN, „Policy brief: The impact of Covid-19 on women“, [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy\\_brief\\_on\\_covid\\_impact\\_on\\_women\\_9\\_apr\\_2020\\_updated.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_women_9_apr_2020_updated.pdf), (August 17, 2020).

*Women empowerment can change the world!*

To improve women empowerment worldwide, people need to change their own perspectives, norms and values. Women and men are equal in all respect and there must be some effective work to be done to make women to work equally with men in every aspect of life. There should be some comprehensive framework for women on the national and international level and effective ways for its implementation and monitoring. Women right should be protected in every aspect on governmental level. Achieving change requires policy and programme actions that will improve women's access to secure livelihoods and economic resources, alleviate their extreme responsibilities with regard to housework, remove legal impediments to their participation in public life, and raise social awareness through effective programmes of education and mass communication. In addition, improving the status of women also enhances their decision-making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life, especially in the area of sexuality and reproduction. This, in turn, is essential for the long- term success of population programmes.

It is recommended that national response plans:

- Put cash in women's hands — if a country has an existing program in place that can directly place money in the hands of women, such as conditional cash transfer programs using mobile banking, those programs should be expanded.
- Introduce measures that can either be implemented with low transaction costs (such as temporarily eliminating electricity bills for poor consumers).
- Use pre-existing national social protection programs and adapt targeting methodologies to ensure income for groups affected by Covid-19 and especially where women are heavily represented (tourism, teaching, retail, restaurants, hospitality, etc).
- Extend basic social protection to informal workers.
- Introduce measures to alleviate the tax burden on women owned businesses.
- Use women's networks and civil society organisations, including microfinance and savings groups, to communicate on benefits.
- Integrate a gender assessment in all country assessments to understand the impact of Covid-19 on women and girls, including economic impact, and how to address it effectively.

According to the UN, "*Policy brief: The impact of Covid-19 on women*", direct support to informal workers and women- led businesses is especially critical: Financial support needs to target hard-hit women-led enterprises and businesses in feminized sectors with subsidized and state-backed loans, tax and social security payment deferrals and exemptions. Governments could, for instance, support income replacement measures to informal workers (as in Thailand and Peru), including measures that specifically cover domestic workers. Public procurement of food, basic supplies, sanitary and personal protective equipment could directly source from women-led businesses. Women in the informal economy need to be supported to access cash transfers or unemployment compensation, especially those who don't have access to banking. We could conclude that Covid-19 pandemic poses devastating risks for women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

The UN Policy Brief Report underlined that it is important for national responses to include specific communications to the public that justice and the rule of law is not suspended during periods of confinement or lockdown. Gender-based violence prevention strategies need to be integrated into operational plans of the justice and security sectors for the crisis and statutes of limitations on offenses, particularly sexual violence offenses, should be suspended.

We have to be keen to ensure that local lessons feed into national, regional and global policy and discussions. This could happen with close work and support broad coalitions of stakeholders drawn together in common cause and motivated by a sense of urgency.

It is necessary for all stakeholders to come together, more effectively, to support major change that states can implement together, in different spheres, but pushing for the same objective. The states have to look with optimism in the future and to go ahead for women's empowerment and gender equality in the modern world.

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