



## ► ILO Brief

December 2023

# Promoting gender equality through responsible business conduct: the role of governments, employers' and workers' organizations

### Key points

- This brief aims to highlight how responsible business conduct can promote gender equality in the world of work. Achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment requires systematic, proactive and transformative change in a range of institutions and areas of action. Women face multifold barriers and gender-based discrimination throughout the employment cycle due to inequalities, legal impediments, cultural mindsets and stereotypes. Governments, employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) and workers' organizations, as well as enterprises have a critical role to play in helping to eliminate these discriminatory practices.
- The brief starts by providing an overview of key instruments to guide responsible business conduct and outlines the principles of equality of opportunity and treatment in ILO's main instrument in this area – the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO MNE Declaration). It then illustrates how the guidance offered by the MNE Declaration and other international instruments can inform the actions of tripartite constituents to advance gender equality. The roles of governments and social partners are also highlighted, along with illustrative examples of action taken by each, independently and jointly through social dialogue.
- The brief concludes by providing a list of relevant resources.
- This is the first in a series of two briefs on gender equality and responsible business conduct. The second brief in the series explores what businesses can do to promote women's economic empowerment at work. This brief has been developed by ILO's Multinational Enterprises and Enterprises Engagement Unit, which leads the promotion of the ILO MNE Declaration, and has benefited from comments of the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI) of the ILO. It was informed by desk-research.

## Background

Gender equality is at the heart of decent work and social justice, and even though equality between women and men in the world of work has seen some encouraging improvements, progress on closing gender gaps has stalled. The gender gaps with respect to key labour market indicators have not narrowed in any meaningful way for over 20 years, which means that persistent disparities remain between women and men in the world of work. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated even further the challenges that women face in employment.

Achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment requires systematic, proactive and transformative change in a range of institutions and areas of action. Governments, EBMOs and workers' organizations have a key role to play. Additionally, enterprises, both public and private, and regardless of size are key in promoting gender equality. National legislation and public policies can go a long way in ensuring women's rights and equal opportunity and treatment, preventing and eliminating violence and harassment, ensuring equal pay for work of equal value, re-valuing care activities, and enabling work-life balance. The social partners can contribute to shaping policies and practices by facilitating capacity building, disseminating resources, advocating for policy change and engaging in social dialogue.

Women face multifold barriers and gender-based discrimination throughout the employment cycle due to inequalities, legal impediments, cultural mindsets and stereotypes. Despite representing one-half of the world's population women only contribute to 37 per cent of the global GDP.<sup>1</sup> Fewer women than men have paid employment, and they are more likely to be employed in low-skilled occupations with significant decent work deficits. Women make up a disproportionate percentage of workers in the informal economy, which is often characterized by precarious working conditions and limited access to or lack altogether of social protection. Globally women continue to be under-represented in leadership and managerial positions; and are paid about 20 per cent less than men.<sup>2</sup>

Unpaid care work is one of the main obstacles to women accessing employment and better-quality jobs. Across the world women perform more than three-quarters of the total amount of unpaid care work, and dedicate on average 3.2 times more time than men to unpaid care responsibilities. In addition, women are also more vulnerable to violence and harassment in the world of work, which has a detrimental impact on women's participation in employment and the quality of their work.<sup>3</sup>

Women's economic empowerment and gender equality are central to economic growth and sustainable development, and also bring business concrete benefits. By embracing gender equality, companies can build inclusive workplaces that attract, develop and retain diverse talent. Such environment increases creativity, promotes employee engagement, brings in multiple perspectives, boosts productivity and innovation, helps capture new markets and strengthens consumer loyalty.<sup>4</sup> Women in leadership can also improve corporate financial performance<sup>5</sup> and introduce more effective risk-management practices.<sup>6</sup>

Governments, EBMOs and workers' organizations can contribute to promoting gender equality in the workplace by taking action in a range of areas. In this brief, we will focus on five of them: achieving equal pay for work of equal value, supporting women's equal representation in decision-making; preventing and ending gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work; promoting work-life balance and equal share of care responsibilities; and building a future of work that works for women.

## Responsible Business Conduct

Responsible Business Conduct (RBC), as part of the wider Business and Human Rights agenda, provides a strong reference framework to address various gender equality gaps in the world of work, advance decent work opportunities and economically empower women. It encourages the positive contribution of businesses to economic and social development, supported by governments through creating an enabling environment

<sup>1</sup> McKinsey&Company. 2015. *The power of parity: how advancing women's equality can add 12 trillion dollars to global growth*.

<sup>2</sup> ILO. 2019. *A quantum leap for gender equality: for a better future of work for all*.

<sup>3</sup> ILO. 2020. *Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 at a glance*.

<sup>4</sup> ILO. 2022. *Transforming enterprises through diversity and inclusion*.

<sup>5</sup> Dame Vivian Hunt, Lareina Yee, Sara Prince, and Sundiatu Dixon-Fyle. 2018. *Delivering through diversity*. McKinsey&Company.

<sup>6</sup> Catalyst. 2020. "Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter (Quick Take)". <https://www.catalyst.org/research/why-diversity-and-inclusion-matter/>

conducive to responsible business practices and adopting a smart mix of mandatory and voluntary measures.

**International instruments to promote RBC**

When it comes to the business and human rights agenda, three leading instruments are recognized by the international community and referenced by policymakers:

- ▶ The [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework](#) (UNGPs)
- ▶ The ILO’s [Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy \(MNE Declaration\)](#)
- ▶ The [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises \(OECD MNE Guidelines\)](#)

These international instruments are [aligned in their approach and complementary in their scope and application](#).

Concerning labour rights specifically, the business and human rights agenda is founded on the ILO’s constitutional mandate as the UN standard-setting organization in the world of work and its international labour standards.

Building on its international labour standards, the ILO adopted in 1977 the [Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy](#). The MNE Declaration provides guidance to governments, social partners and enterprises on labour-related human rights in the broader context of decent work, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. This instrument has been updated several times, most recently in 2022.

The MNE Declaration contains principles addressed to multinational and national enterprises, governments of home and host countries, and employers’ and workers’ organizations in such areas as employment, training, conditions of work and life, industrial relations and general policies. The MNE Declaration also highlights the important role of social dialogue to achieve its aims.

In regard to equality of opportunity and treatment for women workers, the MNE Declaration states that:

▶ Governments should pursue policies designed to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in employment, with a view to eliminating any discrimination based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.

- ▶ ILO MNE Declaration, paragraph 28

▶ Governments should promote equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.

- ▶ ILO MNE Declaration, paragraph 29

It also stresses that:

▶ Governments should never require or encourage multinational enterprises to discriminate on any of the grounds mentioned in paragraph 28, and continuing guidance from governments, where appropriate, on the avoidance of such discrimination in employment is encouraged.

- ▶ ILO MNE Declaration, paragraph 31

This guidance can inform public policies towards more equitable workplaces and reducing existing gender gaps.

**The role of governments in creating an enabling environment to promote gender equality and women’s economic empowerment**

**Normative and policy frameworks**

Governments play a central role in creating an enabling environment in which women can enjoy the rights and protections they need to participate meaningfully and thrive in the economy. These policies should complement and stimulate parallel changes within society: overcoming gender stereotypes, achieving equal distribution of unpaid

care work, establishing a culture of zero-tolerance for gender-based violence and sexual harassment, supporting women-owned businesses and women entrepreneurs, and promoting women's leadership and decision-making in the private sector and in the world of work more broadly.

ILO instruments, tools and resources guide governments in developing adequate national legislation and public policies to promote gender equality in the world of work. International labour standards, and their application in law and practice, provide a strong foundation to this end. Adopted in a tripartite setting, with the participation of the governments, employers' and workers' representatives, ILO Conventions and Recommendations<sup>7</sup> on gender equality are international labour standards that set out broad objectives on combatting discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity in employment and occupation, enhancing social protection and strengthening social dialogue.

The five key ILO gender equality Conventions are the Equal Remuneration Convention ([No. 100](#)), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), Convention ([No. 111](#)), Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention ([No. 156](#)) Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183), and the Violence and Harassment Convention ([No. 190](#)). Two of these standards, Conventions No. 100 and No. 111, are also among the ten fundamental Conventions enshrined in the [ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work \(FPRW\), which was adopted in 1998 and amended in 2022](#). This Declaration creates an obligation for the ILO Member States to respect and promote principles and rights at work in five areas, irrespective of whether they have ratified the relevant Conventions.<sup>8</sup>

- **Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No.100)** recognizes the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value. Its accompanying **Recommendation No.90** suggests how this principle should be

implemented by Member States at the national level.

- **Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)** and **Recommendation No.111** establish the principle of elimination of direct and indirect discrimination on various grounds, including sex, with regards to access to vocational training, access to employment, and terms and conditions of employment. Both instruments highlight the importance of tripartism and call for cooperation and consultation with workers' and employers' organizations, to ensure the effective implementation of rights.
- **Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No.156)** and **Recommendation No.165** promote the right to work-family balance and the right to non-discrimination in employment for women and men with responsibilities in relation to their dependent children and other members of their immediate family who need care and support. They state that the special needs of workers with family responsibilities should be taken into account in developing or promoting child care, family and other community services and facilities.
- **Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)** is the latest and most comprehensive instrument on maternity protection that provides for economic and job security, including: paid maternity leave; protection from dismissal and discrimination; the right to return to the same position or an equivalent position paid at the same rate at the end of her maternity leave; and more generally, that pregnancy and motherhood should not constitute a source of discrimination in access to employment. It mandates a minimum maternity leave period of 14 weeks during which women shall be entitled to cash benefit —to be paid by social insurance or public funds only, so that the employer is not incentivized to avoid hiring women workers of child bearing age. Its

<sup>7</sup> While Conventions are legally binding international treaties that may be ratified by member states, Recommendations serve as non-binding guidelines. In many cases, a Convention lays down the basic principles to be implemented by ratifying countries, while a related Recommendation supplements the Convention by providing more detailed guidelines on how it could be applied. Recommendations can also be autonomous, i.e. not linked to a Convention. (Source:

<https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm>)

<sup>8</sup> ILO. 2022. [ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up](#). Adopted at the 86<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference (1998) and amended at the 110<sup>th</sup> Session (2022).

accompanying **Recommendation No. 191** extends paid leave to 18 weeks.

- **Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)** is the first international treaty to recognize the right of the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. Together with its accompanying **Recommendation No. 206** it provides a common framework to prevent, remedy and eliminate such behaviours in the world of work.

In addition, several other Conventions and Recommendations are of particular relevance to gender equality, such as the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 ([No. 87](#)), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 ([No. 98](#)), which contain enabling rights to pursue gender equality; the Domestic Workers Convention ([No. 189](#)), which seeks to ensure the effective promotion and protection of the human rights of all domestic workers, a significant share of whom are women; and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation ([No. 202](#)), which recognizes that social security is an important tool to promote gender equality.

Achieving gender equality is also at the center of several international treaties and formal texts adopted by the ILO and other international organizations, which outline strategic objectives in ensuring women's fundamental rights in an ever-changing global context (see Annex 1). This includes the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) which sets out 17 global sustainable development goals (SDGs) aimed at eradicating poverty, improving the lives and prospects of all, and protecting the planet. Women's equality and empowerment is anchored in a standalone SDG 5 and mainstreamed in SDG 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promoting lifelong learning for all, SDG 8 on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, SDG 10 on reducing inequalities within and among countries, and other goals. Overall, achieving gender equality is a necessary foundation for the realization of the entire 2030 Agenda for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

Actions to accelerate progress on gender equality in the world of work have been also integrated into the strategies of political fora and legal frameworks at the regional levels (Box 1). They serve as points of reference and prompt governments to take action at the national level.

### Box 1. Gender equality and women's economic empowerment at the center of regional and international public policy

- The [African Union's Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment 2018-2028](#) ensures gender mainstreaming in legislation and legal protection, economic empowerment and peace and security in line with the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) and the Agenda 2063. In particular, it aims at securing equal access to quality education and training for women and girls, economic empowerment, financial inclusion, and social security through increasing employment and providing more quality and decent jobs (Pillar I), as well as adopting laws and policies to protect and enable women's full access to employment, address discrimination and gender pay gap (Pillar III).
- To promote gender equality and inclusion at both the regional and national levels, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has adopted a [Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework 2021-2025](#) rooted in the Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and SGDs. It is designed to ensure a coordinated approach to gender equality and women's empowerment in economic, social, political and cultural spheres throughout ASEAN policies, institutions, and practices and across the work of the ASEAN Communities.
- The [European Union \(EU\) Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#) seeks to end gender-based violence, challenge gender stereotypes, close gender gaps in the labour market, achieve equal participation across different sectors of the economy, address the gender pay and pension gaps, close the gender care gap, and achieve gender balance in decision-making and politics. As part of the strategy, the European Commission has developed proposals on binding pay transparency measures; and on combatting violence and harassment against women, including in the workplace. In addition, the EU's [Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action](#)

[2021-2025 \(GAP III\)](#) aims to accelerate progress on empowering women and girls through all external policies and actions.

- ▶ In the unanimously agreed [New Delhi Leaders' Declaration](#), G20 Leaders collectively reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality and the promotion of “full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women in the economy as decision-makers”, adding that such investment “has a multiplier effect in implementing the 2030 Agenda”. They have also agreed to establish a new Working Group on Empowerment of Women to bolster gender equality initiatives.
- ▶ In Latin America and the Caribbean, there are a number of inter-governmental organizations which have bodies dedicated to advancing gender equality at a regional level. Established in 1928, the [Inter-American Commission of Women \(CIM\)](#) was the first inter-governmental agency established to ensure recognition of women's human rights. CIM is made up of 34 Delegates, one for each Member State of the Organization of American States, and serves as a forum for debating and formulating policy on women's rights and gender equality in the Americas. For its part, the [Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) is a subsidiary body of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and is the main regional intergovernmental forum on women's rights and gender equality within the United Nations system. The Regional Conference on Women is convened periodically, at intervals of no more than three years, to identify the situation of women's autonomy and rights at the regional and subregional levels, present public policy recommendations for gender equality, and conduct periodic assessments of the activities carried out in fulfilment of regional and international agreements.

## National policies

Government policies and measures serve as a prerequisite for creating an enabling environment for gender equality at work. In the area of RBC, an increasing number of governments are developing and adopting national frameworks such as national action plans on business and human rights (NAPs)<sup>9</sup> with the purpose of strengthening coordination and coherence within government on the range of public policy areas that relate to business and human rights. Protection of labour and women's rights are an integral part of NAPs, as often the impacts stemming from business activities are gendered, in that they affect women and men differently. The majority of NAPs adopted to date include policy commitments on gender and equality, either by affirming the government's commitment to ratify relevant ILO Conventions or upholding its existing obligations under ratified Conventions, outlining specific measures to promote gender and equality, and providing guidance to business on respecting women's rights as part of business operations.

### 1. Achieve equal pay for work of equal value

Achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment is not possible without ensuring that work done by women and men is valued equally. Persisting pay inequalities can be explained by occupational segregation, motherhood penalties in employment, wages and leadership, differences in participation in full-time wage employment, as well as discrimination, bias and social norms. Individual's intersecting identities can lead to multiple forms of discrimination and higher pay disparity.

Globally, for each dollar of labour income men earn, women earn 51 cents. The gap increases in lower-middle-income and low-income countries where women receive 29 cents and 33 cents respectively on every dollar received by men.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the gender pay gap is wider at the upper end of hourly wage distribution in high-income countries, while for low- and middle-income countries it is greater at the bottom of the wage distribution than it is at the top.<sup>11</sup>

To **address the gender pay gap**, the governments should adopt and enforce laws and regulations that:<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> ILO, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. 2021. [The linkages between international labour standards, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights](#).

<sup>10</sup> ILO. 2023. [Spotlight on Work Statistics No.12](#).

<sup>11</sup> ILO. 2018. [Global Wage Report 2018/19: What lies behind gender pay gaps](#).

<sup>12</sup> Here and below the recommendations to governments are derived from: ILO. 2021. [Government laws and policies for gender equality](#).

- (i) ensure equal opportunity and treatment at work for all;
- (ii) establish and apply the right of “equal pay for work of equal value”, not just “the same work”;
- (iii) promote social dialogue, including collective bargaining and workplace cooperation;
- (iv) take measures to support wage transparency;
- (v) set adequate minimum wages, statutory or negotiated.

► In **Switzerland**, respect of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is a constitutional obligation. In 2018, an amendment was made to the “Equality Act” which requires public and private employers with 100 or more employees to perform an internal equal pay analysis, obtain verification by an independent body and communicate the result in writing to employees (and shareholders for the public companies); listed companies must publish the results in their annual financial report. To support this process, the Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) created a free, publicly available online Excel-based tool – called Logib – to measure the gender pay gap.<sup>13</sup>

► In 2017, a new Law “Prohibiting Pay Discrimination Between Men and Women” came into force in **Peru**. It introduces a principle of equal pay for work of equal value and creates an obligation for employers to develop tables detailing employee categories and functions, and to determine the remuneration by applying objective criteria based on the tasks and skills required for the job. To support employers in complying with the new Law, the Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion has made available a set of guiding tools.<sup>14</sup>

► Gender equality is in the center of **Italy’s** National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) adopted in response to the COVID-19 crisis for the period from 2021 to 2026.<sup>15</sup> One of the measures implemented under the NRRP was the national gender equality

certification system for companies.<sup>16</sup> The performance of enterprises wishing to obtain certification is evaluated against KPIs in six areas, including pay equity. Companies that receive the certification are requested to annually provide information on their progress towards gender equality, which can be verified by the company’s workers’ representatives as well as territorial and regional councilors for equality. Certified businesses will benefit from reduced social security contributions, increased opportunities for public funding and preferences in public procurement.

Building partnerships is also crucial to close gender pay gaps at global, regional and national levels. Together with UN Women and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), ILO has established the Equal Pay International Coalition to foster multi-stakeholder action to reduce pay inequality. The Coalition engages in raising awareness, knowledge sharing, embracing innovation and scaling up initiatives and programmes that have already yielded positive results. It also offers expertise, resources and capacity building to support its members.



**EPIC**  
 Equal Pay International Coalition  
 EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE

**Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC)** is an initiative driven by stakeholders committed to reducing the gender pay gap and making equal pay for work of equal

<sup>13</sup> Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality. n.d. “Analyse equal pay – simply and securely with Logib”. <https://www.ebg.admin.ch/ebg/en/home/services/logib-triage.html>

<sup>14</sup> Equal Pay International Coalition. n.d. “What is Peru doing to reduce the gender pay gap?”. <https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org/members/peru/>

<sup>15</sup> Italian Government. Presidency of the Council of Ministers. n.d. “Italia Domani, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan”.

<https://www.italiadomani.gov.it/content/sogei-ng/it/en/il-piano-priorita-del-piano/parita-di-genere.html>

<sup>16</sup> Presidenza del consiglio dei ministri dipartimento per le pari opportunità. Decreto 29 aprile 2022. *Parametri per il conseguimento della certificazione della parità di genere alle imprese e coinvolgimento delle rappresentanze sindacali aziendali e delle consigliere e consiglieri territoriali e regionali di parità.*

<https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2022/07/01/22A03808/sg>

value a reality across all countries and sectors. The Coalition brings together governments, employers, workers and their organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia to accelerate the closing of the gender pay gap and the achievement of pay equity.

For further information, see: [www.ilo.org/epic](http://www.ilo.org/epic)

## 2. Prevent and eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work

Violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment, is incompatible with decent work, and entails high costs for victims, business and the national economy.

Convention No. 190 calls on ratifying countries to adopt, “in consultation with representative EBMOs and workers’ organizations, an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach” towards preventing and eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work. Such approach should include, where applicable, prohibiting violence and harassment in laws and regulations, adopting comprehensive strategy to prevent and combat violence and harassment, including by identifying in consultation with EBMOs and workers’ organizations sectors and occupations where workers are particularly exposed to the risk of violence and harassment and protecting them, and by requiring employers to take specific measures within their degree of control to prevent violence and harassment in the world of work. Ratifying countries shall take appropriate measures to establish or strengthen enforcement and monitoring mechanisms and access to remedies and support for victims. In consultation with EBMOs and workers’ organizations, governments are invited to address violence and harassment in the world of work in relevant national policies, such as those concerning occupational safety and health, equality and non-discrimination, and migration; develop guidance, resources and training; and to raise awareness on violence and harassment.<sup>17</sup>

► In **Georgia**, the Article 6 of the 2010 Law on Gender Equality<sup>18</sup> explicitly prohibits harassment and/or

coercion of a person, and any unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour of sexual nature in labour relations.

► The federal legal framework of **Canada** prohibits workplace violence in both labour and anti-discrimination law. The Canadian Labour Code was recently amended to strengthen the existing framework for harassment and violence prevention under the provisions for occupational health and safety. The Workplace Harassment and Violence Regulations, entered into force in January 2021, created an obligation for employers to develop a workplace harassment and violence prevention policy, conduct workplace risk assessment (that includes not only internal risks, but also “circumstances external to the workplace, such as family violence, that could give rise to harassment and violence in the workplace”), provide training for employees and attend trainings themselves, and establish support measures and resolution processes.<sup>19</sup>

► In 2020, the Parliament of **Lebanon** passed the Law No. 205 to criminalize sexual harassment and provide rehabilitation for its victims. The law defines sexual harassment and recognizes various ways in which it can occur, including by electronic means. In addition to punishing the perpetrators the law protects victims from retaliation, including in pay, promotion, transfer, contract renewal or disciplinary action. Along with pressing criminal charges employers and organizations can impose disciplinary sanctions on the perpetrator, and victims have the right to claim compensation. The law also includes whistleblower protections and prohibits discrimination, abuse, or disciplinary measures against people who report harassment or testify the abuse.<sup>20</sup>

► The National Council for Women in **Egypt**, in partnership with the Ministry of Manpower, the Federation of Egyptian Industries and others, launched an awareness-raising video on the role of

<sup>17</sup> Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019. No. 190

<sup>18</sup> Georgia, Law of Georgia on Gender Equality No. 2844 of 26 March 2010, as amended to 15 July 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Government of Canada. n.d. *Requirements for employers to prevent harassment and violence in federally regulated workplaces.*

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/workplace-health-safety/harassment-violence-prevention.html>

<sup>20</sup> Lebanon, Law to Criminalize Sexual Harassment and [for] Rehabilitation of Its Victims No. 205 of 30 December 2020.



business owners and companies in providing safe workplaces for women.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. Promote work-life balance and equal share of care responsibilities

Another important element in promoting and sustaining gender equality and women's economic empowerment is achieving a healthy work-life balance, not just for women, but for all workers. This inclusive approach is essential for several reasons: all workers have the right to a healthy work-life balance; focusing only on women workers risks reinforcing the gender imbalance in family responsibilities; and this policy approach avoids the risk that employers may (consciously or subconsciously) discriminate against women workers. This is not possible without governments taking steps to **tackle inequalities in unpaid care** work and adopting measures aimed at:

- (i) providing universal maternity protection and inclusive leave policies;
- (ii) expanding quality care services and infrastructure;
- (iii) ensuring gender-responsive social protection;
- (iv) providing family-friendly working arrangements;
- (v) facilitating job retention and reintegration after a career break.

► **Sweden** has introduced gender-neutral paid parental leave of a total of 480 days, with each parent being entitled to benefit from 240 of those days. While it is possible to transfer some of the parental leave between the parents, 90 days are reserved for each parent and cannot be allocated to the partner. This policy seeks to further strengthen a more even distribution of unpaid household and care work, and support a dual-earner family model while advancing gender equality in the labour market. In addition, affordable day-care and pre-school system allows

parents to return to work after their parental leave.<sup>22</sup>

- To prevent pregnant women and those on maternity leave from being forced out of their jobs, the Government of the **United Kingdom** proposed to extend the redundancy protection period for 6 months once a mother has returned to work, and to afford the same protections for those who take shared parental leave or adoption leave.<sup>23</sup> In addition, to facilitate women's transition back to work after maternity leave, the Government Equalities Office, together with NGOs, employers' organizations and private partners, prepared a guide and toolkit to help employers set up their own return-to-work programmes.<sup>24</sup> Under law employees can also request flexible working arrangements which should be duly considered by employers and may be refused only on one or more business-related grounds set out in the legislation, and the decision can be appealed.
- To promote work-life balance in **Singapore**, the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment (TAFEP), comprised of the Ministry of Manpower, National Trades Union Congress and Singapore National Employers Federation, has made available a list of recommendations on flexible work arrangements, additional leave schemes, employee support systems. In addition, TAFEP offers guiding tools and informational workshops on how to support employees to manage effectively their work and personal responsibilities.<sup>25</sup> While many companies have switched to flexible work arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic, TAFEP called on employers to keep them permanently, even with easing the workplace restrictions, as part of the future of work.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> ILO. 2022. *Violence and harassment in the world of work: A guide on Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206.*

<sup>22</sup> Swedish institute. n.d. *In Sweden it's possible to combine career with family life. Here's why.* <https://sweden.se/life/society/work-life-balance>

<sup>23</sup> The UK Government. 2022. *Government backs new law to help pregnant women and new parents stay in work.* <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/pregnancy-and-maternity-discrimination-extending-redundancy-protection-for-women-and-new-parents>

<sup>24</sup> The UK Government Equalities Office. 2018. *Returner Programmes: Best Practice Guidance for Employers.*

<sup>25</sup> Tripartite Alliance for Fair & Progressive Employment Practices. n.d. *Employment Practices.* <https://www.tal.sg/tafep/employment-practices>

<sup>26</sup> Singapore Ministry of Manpower. 2022. *Tripartite Statement on Flexible Work Arrangements.* <https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/press-replies/2022/0422-tripartite-statement-on-flexible-work-arrangements>

#### 4. Support women's equal participation in decision-making and leadership at work

Increasing the numbers of women at all levels of decision-making in both public and private spheres is key not only for gender equality and women's economic empowerment, but also for better economic, social and financial results. In particular, increased representation in the public sphere allows women to advocate for gender-transformative policies and socio-economic reforms that address the needs of women, young people and other marginalized groups. Women's representation at the executive and management levels in the private sector can help overcome barriers to women's economic empowerment and address cultural stereotypes and biases. Gender-balanced representation in social dialogue bodies, workers' organizations and EBMOs can effectively strengthen the voice of women and promote gender-responsive transformations in the world of work.<sup>27</sup>

To promote **women's equal representation and access to leadership positions**, governments should:

- (i) promote women's participation and leadership in political decision-making;
- (ii) adopt gender-responsive macroeconomic policies;
- (iii) implement proactive measures to foster gender balance in business management;
- (vi) support and scale-up women-owned enterprises;
- (vii) expand gender-responsive procurement.

► In the **Netherlands**, a new act on improving gender diversity on corporate boards has entered into force in 2022. It provides for a mandatory 1/3 female quota for all new appointments to supervisory boards and non-executive directors of Dutch companies listed on Euronext Amsterdam. The law also requires all large companies to set appropriate target ratios to improve gender equality in their boards and among their senior management personnel, and report annually on their progress.<sup>28</sup>

► In 2020, the President of **South Africa** announced a commitment to set aside 40% of public procurement for women-owned businesses (WOB) along with plans to increase women's ownership of land and provide COVID-19 relief support to women-owned micro, small and medium enterprises.<sup>29</sup> To facilitate the participation of WOB in core areas of the economy, the private sector, civil society and women's organizations, businesswomen and government have joined forces and formed the Women Economic Assembly (WECONA). The initiative aims to create more economic opportunities for women, coordinate and monitor government and private sector actions towards preferential procurement for WOB.<sup>30</sup>

#### 5. Build a future of work that works for women

Rapid technological advances and digitalization can have mixed implications for the future of gender equality – women are predominant in sectors that are both at higher and lowest risk where job losses are likely due to increased automation. In addition, new technologies have stirred concerns about privacy and gender bias, including the amplified exposure of women and girls to risks of violence and harassment. Women are also significantly under-represented in high-paying STEM jobs and their digital skills are often undervalued in the labour market compared to men with the same levels of skills and experiences.<sup>31</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of both paid and unpaid care work which is highly feminized. Enhancing the quality of care jobs, including by adopting technologies, improves women's position in the labour force and workers' overall working conditions.

Government policies can help to achieve **a future of work that is more gender-equal and contributes to the economic empowerment of women** by:

- (i) facilitating lifelong learning;

<sup>27</sup> Global Deal. 2019. [The contribution of social dialogue to gender equality](#).

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands. 2021. *New legislation will improve gender diversity on corporate boards*. <https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-justice-and-security/news/2021/09/29/new-legislation-will-improve-gender-diversity-on-corporate-boards>

<sup>29</sup> The Presidency of the Republic of South Africa. 2020. *Message from President Cyril Ramaphosa on the occasion of Women's Day 2020*.

<https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/newsletters/message-president-cyril-ramaphosa-occasion-women%27s-day-2020>

<sup>30</sup> South African Government. 2021. *Presidency on Women Economic Assembly*. <https://www.gov.za/speeches/presidency-women-economic-assembly-1-oct-2021-0000>

<sup>31</sup> ILO. 2019. [A quantum leap for gender equality: for a better future of work for all](#).

- (ii) closing the gender-related digital divide;
- (iii) creating and protecting quality jobs in the care economy;
- (iv) harnessing technology to promote decent care work.

► To encourage gender equity in STEM education and careers, in 2019 the Government of **Australia** has adopted the Advancing women in STEM strategy and the Women in STEM Decadal Plan which are centered around three key areas – (i) enabling STEM potential through education; (ii) supporting women in STEM careers; and (iii) making women in STEM visible. To accelerate the change, the government is committed to ensuring its institutional arrangements, policies and practices are equitable and advantageous for all people in STEM; tracking girls’ and women’s participation in STEM education and employment through STEM Equity Monitor; embedding culture of evaluation for all projects on girls’ and women’s participation in STEM to identify and support initiatives that work.<sup>32</sup>

In 2021, the Government of **Chile** launched a National Gender Equality Policy for Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation (STKI) accompanied by the “50/50 by 2030” Action Plan, which brings together multiple initiatives led by cross-ministerial collaboration. The Action Plan is grounded on four objectives - (i) promote inclusive education that shapes skills for the future; (ii) build a more diverse and inclusive STKI system; (iii) strengthen data collection on STKI to monitor and evaluate gender policies; (iv) use STKI to close gender gaps in society. In addition, Chile has led the Regional Alliance for the Digitalization of Women in Latin America, supported by Mexico, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Panama, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean as well as other international and national non-governmental organizations and private companies. The multi-

stakeholder initiative aims to promote collective actions in closing gender gaps in access to skills and digital technologies for women in the region.<sup>33</sup>

## The role of EBMOs and workers’ organizations in the promotion of gender equality in the world of work

EBMOs and worker’s organizations have a critical role to play in advancing gender equality in the world of work. This includes by raising awareness and supporting their members, and by engaging in social dialogue.

EBMOs are important catalysts of change within the private sector, and can support their members in adopting gender equality approaches in the workplace by offering them quality information on the business case for gender equality, tools, guidance and training to strengthen their members’ capacity in advancing gender equality. They can also play a key role in shaping national policies through their work with governments, stakeholders and parliaments. Such laws and policies can aim at removing structural, cultural and social barriers that prevent women from maximizing their potential. EBMOs can engage in critical debates on quotas, gender diversity disclosure requirements for companies and voluntary measures to advance gender diversity. Finally, they can lead by example by having policies in place to advance the empowerment of women within their own organizations.<sup>34</sup>

The gender equality issues that EBMOs focus on addressing vary considerably from country to country. Research shows however that commonly, when employers act together and engage through their representative organizations, they can influence reform in a way that is beneficial both to their members and society more broadly.<sup>35</sup>

► The **International Organization of Employers (IOE)** brings together more than 150 EBMOs that

<sup>32</sup> Australian Government. Department of Industry, Science and Resources. 2019. [Advancing Women in STEM Strategy](#).

<sup>33</sup> Government of Chile. 2021. *Government launches Gender Equality Policy for Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation, as well as Regional Alliance for the Digitalization of Women in Latin America*. [https://www.gob.cl/en/news/government-launches-gender-equality-policy-science-technology-knowledge-and-innovation-well-regional-alliance-digitalization-women-latin-](https://www.gob.cl/en/news/government-launches-gender-equality-policy-science-technology-knowledge-and-innovation-well-regional-alliance-digitalization-women-latin-america/#:~:text=on%20women's%20lives.%E2%80%9D-.The%20National%20Gender%20Equality%20Policy%20for%20Science%2C%20Technology%2C%20Knowledge%20and,dozens%20of%20international%20working%20table)

[america/#:~:text=on%20women's%20lives.%E2%80%9D-.The%20National%20Gender%20Equality%20Policy%20for%20Science%2C%20Technology%2C%20Knowledge%20and,dozens%20of%20international%20working%20table">america/#:~:text=on%20women's%20lives.%E2%80%9D-.The%20National%20Gender%20Equality%20Policy%20for%20Science%2C%20Technology%2C%20Knowledge%20and,dozens%20of%20international%20working%20table](#)

<sup>34</sup> ILO. Bureau for Employers’ Activities. 2020. [How employer and business membership organizations can accelerate the business case for change](#).

<sup>35</sup> ILO. 2005. [Employers’ organizations taking the lead on gender equality. Case studies from 10 countries](#).

represent collectively the interests of more than 50 million companies. Gender equality and diversity in the workplace is one of IOE priority areas of work. At the global level, IOE has established a Policy Working Group on Gender Equality and Diversity that supports member organizations in developing a better understanding of legislation, policies and programmes related to gender equality and diversity, while facilitating the exchange of best practices and knowledge, and building organizational capacity to effectively advocate for gender equality in the workplace. Additionally, IOE engages with international fora, including UN, G20, and others to advocate for inclusive economic growth that fosters greater female leadership, enhances female participation, and expands access to business and economic opportunities for women.<sup>36</sup>

- The **Confederation of Norwegian Employers** (NHO) is part of more than 240 collective agreements, many of which have provisions concerning non-discrimination and equality of opportunity for women and men. In addition, the NHO has launched the Female Future Programme to support companies to increase women's representation in corporate management and boardroom by providing training on personal leadership and growth, networking and rhetoric.<sup>37</sup>
- In 2021, the **Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)**, with the support of the Philippine Women's Economic Network, the Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment, and the ILO, launched the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to promote gender equality in the workplace. Under the D&I Committee ECOP aims to work with various industry associations and private companies to raise their awareness and increase their capacity in empowering women and strengthening female leadership. The Committee leads and oversees all the initiatives on promoting diversity, gender

equality and creating a safe workplace for all by implementing company policies and practices.<sup>38</sup>

For their part, workers' organizations have a critical role in representing the voice of workers and safeguarding their rights and achieving gender equality. Many of them do so by incorporating a gender perspective into their work and by conducting targeted action, such as seeking to improve the outcomes for women about equal pay for work of equal value, non-discrimination in employment, work-life balance, and preventing and addressing violence and harassment in the world of work.

According to available data, during the past decades one of the biggest changes in trade unions has been the rise of female membership. This process began around 1970 and has occurred nearly everywhere, with certain countries in northern Europe and the Anglo-Saxon world taking the lead.<sup>39</sup> Although increased female membership does not automatically lead to improved gender outcomes as part of workers' organizations advocacy, it is an important step towards more inclusive governance and industrial relations.

- Equal representation of women as members of trade unions needs to be complemented by proactive measures to promote equal representation in union leadership positions and decision-making processes and bodies. The **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**, which represents 200 million workers in 163 countries, has enshrined women's rights, gender equality and gender parity in all leadership bodies in its Constitutions. It also has undertaken a series of campaigns to increase female representation in its decision-making bodies and among its affiliates. In Asia Pacific, for example, ITUC-Asia Pacific and its affiliates set out this vision and explicit commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects of its work through the Platform of Action for Gender Equality (PAGE), which lays the foundation for the organisation's broader policy and action

<sup>36</sup> IOE. 2022. *Women's Empowerment: a driving force for economic recovery and beyond*. <https://www.ioe-emp.org/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=156624&token=74b33145b592ec9787c0fc8d4dbda1e3360982a6>

<sup>37</sup>Confederation of Norwegian Employers. n.d. <https://www.rovnaodmena.cz/www/img/uploads/509ac3db.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> ILO. 2021. *ECOP, PhilWEN, ILO launch Diversity and Inclusion Committee*. [https://www.ilo.org/manila/public/pr/WCMS\\_817518/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/manila/public/pr/WCMS_817518/lang-en/index.htm)

<sup>39</sup> ILO. 2020. *Empowering Women at Work. Trade Union Policies and Practices for Gender Equality*.

towards achieving gender equality, women’s empowerment, and contributions to sustainable development.<sup>40</sup>

- The **European Trade Union Committee for Education** is implementing the project “Social dialogue and gender equality: Empowering education trade unions to address gender equality in the teaching profession through social dialogue”, which aims to provide education trade unions with concrete tools and practices to address the challenges of gender inequality through enhanced social dialogue in the education sector at national, regional and local level.<sup>41</sup>
- In the United Kingdom, the **Trades Union Congress (TUC)**, a federation of trade unions in England and Wales which gathers the majority of trade unions, has set quotas for women representation on negotiation teams.
- In South Africa, the national gender structure of the **National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA)** has prioritized training collective bargaining teams on gender equality, including on the gender pay gap, highlighting that gender equality is fundamental to union goals of social and economic justice.<sup>42</sup>

Sound industrial relations and effective social dialogue contribute to good governance in the workplace and can have a positive impact on gender equality. Social dialogue includes all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. This may be a tripartite or a bipartite process.

The ILO MNE Declaration emphasizes the value of dialogue and consultations between the different parties to ensure that multinational enterprises take fully into account the policy objectives of the countries in which they operate. It recommends that governments develop and establish

national policies and laws in consultation with EBMOs and workers’ organizations which can further support their promotion.

The operational tools of the ILO MNE Declaration, including the regional follow-up mechanism, tripartite appointed national focal points and company-union dialogue, facilitate the involvement of social partners in the implementation of its principles and promote social dialogue at various levels.

Tripartism and social dialogue can significantly upscale efforts towards achieving gender equality and women’s economic empowerment, which is yet to be realized in any given country.

► **Social dialogue** is defined by the ILO<sup>43</sup> to include all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. It can exist as a tripartite process, with the government as an official party to the dialogue or it may consist of bipartite relations only between labour and management (or trade unions and employers’ organizations), with or without indirect government involvement. Social dialogue processes can be informal or institutionalised, and often it is a combination of the two. It can take place at the national, regional or at enterprise level. It can be inter-professional, sectoral or a combination of these.

Over time, the scope of social dialogue has expanded in many countries to include topics that are essential to achieving gender parity at work, such as equal access for women and men to jobs and skills, maternity and parental leave beyond the duration established by law, the promotion of equal pay for work of equal value, and the prevention of and protection against violence and sexual harassment.

For social dialogue to be an effective vehicle for transformational change for gender equality, it is essential

<sup>40</sup>ITUC-Asia Pacific. n.d. *Gender Equality*. <https://www.ituc-ap.org/issues/gender-equality>

<sup>41</sup> European Trade Union Committee for Education. n.d. *Social dialogue and gender equality: Empowering education trade unions to address gender equality in the teaching profession through social dialogue* <https://www.csee-etu.org/en/projects/addressing-gender-equality-in-social-dialogue/3396-introduction>

<sup>42</sup> IndustriALL. 2022. *Feature: Achieving pay equity through collective bargaining*. <https://www.industriall-union.org/feature-achieving-pay-equity-through-collective-bargaining>

<sup>43</sup>ILO. n.d. *Social dialogue and tripartism*. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/workers-and-employers-organizations-tripartism-and-social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm>

that women are adequately represented in social dialogue bodies, such as economic and social councils, tripartite commissions and labour advisory boards, in collective bargaining teams, as well as in workers' organizations and EBMOs membership and leadership structures.<sup>44</sup> Thus, it is of critical importance that women have equal opportunities to engage in trade unions and EBMOs, and assume leadership positions in both, as well as in social dialogue institutions and collective bargaining teams.

- In several countries, **tripartite commissions** have been established to focus on gender and equality issues. In the Southern Cone of Latin America, tripartite commissions were set up in the late 90's in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, to help overcome resistance to gender issues in industrial relations. More recently, the same model has been replicated elsewhere in the region, for example in Bolivia and Costa Rica. These tripartite commissions on equality have been instrumental in steering the adoption of legislative initiatives and national action plans on gender equality.
- In Europe, dialogue between the European social partners concluded **framework agreements** on issues such as parental leave, part-time work, and other types of agreements on telework, harassment and violence at work, and inclusive labour markets.
- **Collective bargaining** has been a powerful means to reduce gender discrimination in the MENA region. A first-ever collective bargaining agreement (CBA) in Morocco's agricultural sector negotiated in 2015 between the Democratic Labour Confederation (CDT) and the largest agro-company Domaines Brahim Zniber Diana Holding Group, has helped many women in lower paid, precarious and informal employment to obtain employment contracts with job security, paid leave and other social protections.<sup>45</sup> In Jordan, following

a negotiation process promoted by the National Committee for Pay Equity, the Jordanian National Commission for Women, the General Trade Union of Private Education Employees and the Private Schools Owners' Association signed a sectoral CBA regulating and improving working conditions of private schools teachers in Jordan, mostly women.<sup>46</sup>

Gender equality has an important place in collective bargaining, partly due to the growing role of women within the trade union movement across countries, often institutionalized in the form of women's committees in trade unions. In particular, equal pay for work of equal value, work-life balance, and harassment and violence are issues that have been brought to the bargaining table, with significant labour-market outcomes for women. In terms of reducing pay disparities within and across sectors and firms, collective agreements can promote pay transparency, pay rises for female-dominated occupations, and gender-neutral job evaluations to address gender biases in job classification and pay systems.

Cross-border social dialogue is another level on which gender issues can be addressed. This is increasingly taking place in global framework agreements, which are negotiated and signed between multinational enterprises and global union federations. Notably, there has been a significant increase in recent years in the inclusion in such agreements of gender equality clauses and the monitoring of their implementation, covering sectors where women predominate, such as retail, garments and agriculture. Most global framework agreements reference ILO Conventions and the ILO MNE Declaration<sup>47</sup>, which, as seen earlier, includes principles on both equality of opportunity and treatment and freedom of association and collective bargaining.

## Further resources

In addition to public policies for gender equality and individual company efforts, collective action involving different actors and stakeholders is essential to achieve this universal goal.

<sup>44</sup> Blaschke, Sabine. 2015. "Female representation in the decision-making structures of trade unions: The influences of sector, status and qualification". *Journal of Industrial relations*, 57(5), 726–747.

<sup>45</sup> International Center for Research on Women, Solidarity Center and the Confédération Démocratique du Travail. 2019. *The benefits of collective bargaining for women. A case study of Morocco*.

<sup>46</sup> ILO. 2017. *New collective agreement will provide better working conditions for mostly women private school teachers in Jordan*. [https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS\\_546883/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_546883/lang-en/index.htm)

<sup>47</sup> See [https://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/mne-declaration/WCMS\\_737557/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/mne-declaration/WCMS_737557/lang-en/index.htm)

There is a wide range of ILO tools and resources that can guide governments, employers' and workers' organizations in their different yet complementary roles to promote gender equality through RBC.

▶ [ILO MNE Declaration and gender equality webpage](#)

This webpage outlines the various entry points within the ILO MNE Declaration to advance gender equality in the world of work, and provides a list of key resources of interest to governments, employers' and workers' organizations.

▶ **Tools and resources on the ILO MNE Declaration and its operational tools:** [www.ilo.org/mnedeclaration](http://www.ilo.org/mnedeclaration)

▶ [Empowering Women at Work: Illustrative practice series](#)

The Empowering Women at Work series presents key guiding frameworks and over 100 illustrative policies and practices by stakeholders of the world of work in promoting gender equality at work in G7 and EU countries. It comprises four reports, including one on government policies and practices for gender equality, and one on trade union policies and practices to promote gender equality.

▶ **“Promoting gender equality through responsible business conduct: an opportunity for transformational change: the role of business”**

This is the second brief in a series of two briefs on gender equality and responsible business conduct. It focuses on the role of the private sector and outlines how responsible business practices can accelerate the progress of closing gender gaps in the workplace and support women's economic empowerment. It also includes an overview of ILO resources for enterprises on gender equality.

▶ [Empowering Women at Work Capacity Development Platform \(EW@W\)](#)

The EW@W capacity development platform gathers a range of training resources for policy makers, mainly on equal pay for work of equal value, work-life balance and care, and violence and harassment in the world of work.

▶ [Theory of Change towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work](#)

This brief articulates a coherent framework for coordinated action between governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other stakeholders to progress gender equality at work.

▶ [Women in Business and Management](#)

A webpage for EBMOs and their members featuring resources on gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

▶ [Promoting gender equality: a resource kit for trade unions](#)

This kit aims to assist trade unions in enhancing their efforts to eliminate discrimination and advocate for equality.

▶ **More tools and resources of the ILO on gender, equality, diversity and inclusion:**

<https://www.ilo.org/gender/lang--en/index.htm>

## Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit (MULTI)

The Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit (ENT/MULTI) is responsible for the promotion of the ILO MNE Declaration and provides support to governments, employers' and workers' organizations and enterprises on its application. The Unit operates the ILO Helpdesk for Business on international labour standards and leads the ILO engagement with other international organizations on responsible business conduct.

Contact: [multi@ilo.org](mailto:multi@ilo.org)

Website: <https://www.ilo.org/multi>

## Annex 1. Additional ILO frameworks that highlight the relevance of gender equality for decent work

### ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work

In response to current challenges driven by technological innovation, demographic shifts, climate change and globalization, and to mark 100 years since the ILO's founding, the 108<sup>th</sup> session of the International Labour Conference adopted the [ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work](#). The Declaration calls on Member States for the effective realization of gender equality “through a transformative agenda, with regular evaluation of progress made, which:

- ensures equal opportunities, equal participation and equal treatment, including equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value;
- enables a more balanced sharing of family responsibilities;
- provides scope for achieving better work-life balance by enabling workers and employers to agree on solutions, including on working time, that consider their respective needs and benefits; and;
- promotes investment in the care economy”.

### Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19

Acknowledging the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on society in all countries, the 109<sup>th</sup> session of the International Labour Conference adopted a [Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19](#)

[crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient](#). Among other priorities it demonstrates the commitment of governments, employers' and workers' organizations to “implement, through public policies and enterprise practice, a transformative agenda for gender equality by:

- ensuring equal pay for work of equal value, supported inter alia by pay transparency;
- expanding policies providing adequate paid care leave and promoting a more balanced sharing of work and family responsibilities;
- promoting employment creation and lifelong learning policies that close gender skills gaps;
- investing in education, healthcare, social work, the care economy and other sectors, addressing understaffing and improving working conditions;
- removing legal and other types of barriers to entry to and advancement in education, training, employment and careers, including by combating gender stereotypes; and
- preventing and protecting against gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work”.

**Contact details**  
**International Labour Organization**  
 Route des Morillons 4  
 CH-1211 Geneva 22  
**Switzerland**

T: +41 22 799 7239  
 E: [multi@ilo.org](mailto:multi@ilo.org)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54394/SRIN5920>