▶ Policy Brief

June 2020

COVID-19 and the world of work:
Ensuring no one is left behind in the response and recovery

The global community pledged to leave no one behind when adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Delivering on that promise has become more important than ever in the COVID-19 response and recovery process, and addressing the potential fallout. The COVID-19 pandemic is revealing the pervasiveness and seriousness of existing inequalities, and in many cases exacerbating them. Without inclusive policies and targeted measures to deal with the immediate health crisis and its on-going social and economic consequences, there is a risk that particular groups already facing discrimination and exclusion will be disproportionately affected, and left even further behind when the economy starts recovering.

This brief is part of a series on *leaving no one behind* in the context of COVID-19 and the world of work. It provides an overview of specific groups that risk being left behind: people with disabilities, indigenous and tribal peoples, people living with HIV, and migrant workers. This brief does not attempt to address all groups in a vulnerable situation in the context of COVID-19, but rather to highlight some of them in more detail, and bring out the intersectional nature of these identities, as well as the amplified vulnerabilities that are thus exposed. It not only highlights the intersections between the groups, but also with other factors such as gender, age and socio-economic status. It also sets out areas of action to be addressed so that these groups are effectively included in the response and recovery measures, both through mainstreamed and targeted approaches.

Separate briefs provide more detailed guidance and specific examples of measures that have been taken with respect to people with disabilities, indigenous and tribal peoples, people living with HIV, and migrant workers, which should be read together with this overview.[1] A large proportion of workers belonging to these groups work in the informal economy, which is also the subject of a specific brief, which complements this series.[2]

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1   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV*, June 2020; ILO, *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, April 2020.

2   ILO, *COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges*, May 2020. The gender dimensions are also addressed throughout this brief; for further details on the gendered implications of the COVID-19 response, see ILO, *The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work*, May 2020.

▶ Why a focus on specific groups is needed

To deliver on the pledge of leaving no one behind

With the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, in 2015 the international community pledged that no one would be left behind in the process of achieving sustainable development in all its dimensions – economic, social and environmental - and promised to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.[3] A world of "universal respect for human rights and human dignity" was envisaged.[4] Goals were set, including to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, ensure healthy lives, achieve gender equality, promote inclusive and sustainable growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and to reduce inequality within and among countries. Bold and transformative steps were to be taken "which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path".[5]

Those committing to this bold agenda recognized the threats to development progress that were already in place, including poverty; rising inequalities; disparities of opportunity, wealth and power; and global health threats.[6] COVID-19 has amplified these threats and others, putting the development process further in peril, and risking pushing those who were already marginalized even further behind. The COVID-19 crisis is putting the 2030 Agenda to the test: how the crisis and its on-going social and economic consequences are addressed will be a litmus test for the sincerity and credibility of the pledge to leave no one behind.

To ensure a more effective response

An inclusive, rights-based and human-centred approach, that reaches the furthest behind, will also be essential to containing the threat of the outbreak and attenuating its consequences. Everyone is at risk of COVID-19, and the response will only be as strong as its weakest link. Looking back over 100 years of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) existence is a testament to the importance of inclusive responses during not only times of prosperity, but even more importantly in times of crisis.

In 2019, the ILO *Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work* was adopted, acknowledging that the historic advances in economic and social progress that have resulted in more humane conditions of work could be put at risk by such a crisis: "Considering also that persistent poverty, inequalities and injustices, conflict, disasters and other humanitarian emergencies in many parts of the world constitute a threat to those advances and to securing shared prosperity and decent work for all".[7]

To address the disproportionate impact on certain groups of workers

Everyone in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic has the same basic needs: protection of rights, access to medical treatment, services and care, food and income security, and jobs and livelihoods. Yet not everyone has the same level of access, often because of who they are or where they work, with the various aspects often intersecting. The COVID-19 pandemic is having adverse physical and mental health effects, as well as dramatic social and economic consequences on workers, in particular those who were already facing discrimination and marginalization. Many have lost their jobs and income, along with access to health care, social protection benefits, and services.

Protecting workers and ensuring their rights has become challenging, particularly for workers in the informal economy, many of whom are women, who already lacked adequate labour and social protection before the COVID crisis.[8] Some groups are over-represented in the informal economy, including people with disabilities, indigenous and tribal peoples, people living with HIV, and migrant workers.[9] These are not isolated categories, and often intersect and overlap with

3   United Nations, *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, 2015.

4   Ibid.

5   Ibid.

6   Ibid.

7   See *ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work*, 2019.

8   ILO, *COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges*, May 2020; ILO Monitor: *COVID-19 and the world of work*, 3rd edition, April 2020.

9   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV*, June 2020; ILO, *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, April 2020.

each other, as well as with gender, socio-economic status, age, and other factors, resulting in multiple layers of discrimination and stigma at work and in society.

Particular groups may face social and economic marginalization, but they are far from marginal in terms of the numbers they represent, and the disparate COVID-19 vulnerabilities that they face:

▶ Globally, more than one billion people live with some form of disability.[10] The employment gap between people with disabilities and people without disabilities is 24 per cent, with women with disabilities being less likely to be employed than men with disabilities.[11] Persons with disabilities are more likely to be poor and to have health conditions that increase the risk of contracting COVID-19.[12]

▶ There are over 476 million indigenous and tribal peoples. They are almost three times more likely to be living in extreme poverty than non-indigenous.[13] While indigenous peoples are more likely to be employed, the quality of their employment is often poor. They are 20 percentage points more likely to be in the informal economy than their non-indigenous counterparts; this gap is even higher for indigenous women.[14] Tens of millions of indigenous women and men have been working in sectors particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 crisis, including in domestic work, hospitality and tourism, and construction.[15]

▶ Over 37 million people are living with HIV, most of working age. A high proportion work in the informal economy, and they are over-represented among the unemployed.[16] Even before the COVID-19 crisis, 500,000 HIV and AIDS-related labour force deaths were projected for 2020, almost all of which could be avoided with appropriate testing, treatment and care.[17] With increased pressure on health care systems due to COVID-19, HIV prevention and testing services

have decreased, and in some cases there has been a disruption in the supply of life-saving anti-retroviral treatment (ART), putting them further at risk.[18]

▶ Migrant workers represent over 4.7 per cent of the global labour pool, comprising 164 million workers.[19] Most migrant workers are found in sectors of the economy with high levels of temporary, informal and unprotected work, including in care work, which in many countries is primarily carried out by women migrant workers.[20] In too many countries, migrant domestic workers are not covered by national labour laws, so face increasing risk of being left out of social protection and socio-economic responses and support. In the COVID-19 context, there have been a number of reports of increasing levels of discrimination and xenophobia against migrant workers, many layoffs, worsening working conditions and forced returns.[21]

10   WHO and World Bank, *World report on disability*, 2011.

11   UN, *Disability and development report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, by, for and with persons with disabilities*, 2018.

12   WHO, *Disability considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak*, 2020; ILO et al., *Disability-inclusive social protection response to COVID-19 crisis*, April 2020.

13   ILO, *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention: Towards an inclusive, sustainable and just future*, 2019.

14   Ibid.

15   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020.

16   GNP+, *Stigma index, country reports, 2016-2019*.

17   ILO, *The impact of HIV and AIDS on the world of work: Global estimates*, 2018.

18   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV*, June 2020.

19   ILO, *Global estimates on international migrant workers*, 2018.

20   ILO, *Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work*, 2018.

21   ILO, *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, April 2020.

▶ Ensuring inclusive, gender-responsive policy responses: For a better future of work for all

In 1944, the ILO tripartite constituents affirmed that "all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity" and determined that "the attainment of the conditions in which this shall be possible must constitute the central aim of national and international policy".[22] It was not a call relevant only to times of prosperity, but indeed, was made to support recovery from a time of devastation. Promoting and ensuring freedom, dignity, economic security and equal opportunity should also guide the COVID-19 response and recovery process.

Integrated and targeted measures

Both integrated (mainstreamed) and targeted measures are necessary in the COVID-19 response and recovery process. This twin-track approach involves targeted measures for groups in situations of vulnerability, as well as ensuring the inclusion of these groups in mainstream responses to the crisis, including access to financial support, care, benefits and services.

Integrated responses that have been undertaken include for example relaxing eligibility conditions, which have the effect of allowing migrant workers and informal economy workers to benefit from income support schemes during the crisis.[23] Targeted measures have included for example ensuring public health, education and work-related communication on COVID-19 is accessible to persons with disabilities, including through the use of sign language;[24] understood also by migrant workers who speak different languages;[25] and is culturally appropriate and takes into account indigenous peoples' world views and cultural practices.[26]

Targeted measures have also addressed specific health needs, including ensuring coverage of additional health care expenses for people with disabilities and people living with HIV that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic.[27] For migrant workers who are in irregular status or returning home, specific measures in collaboration with the country of origin on amnesties, regularization, information exchange and processes of return have been put in place to ensure protection and smoother repatriation, along with support for skills recognition and other measures to facilitate effective reintegration into labour markets.[28]

Assessments, data and monitoring

Inclusive and effective policies and measures need to be grounded in reliable evidence and data. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, target 17.18, calls for increasing "the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts".

Despite their limitations, rapid surveys can provide an alternative to labour force and household surveys during the COVID-19 outbreak.[29] This data can support a determination of what measures need to be expanded to cover all groups in need, as well as what measures need to be prioritized and targeted to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of particular groups.

A comprehensive mapping of those most at risk of being left behind is critical, including assessing how they are disadvantaged by multiple forms of inequality and discrimination.[30] The ILO has developed a rapid diagnostic tool to:

a. assess the current impact and transmission mechanisms of the COVID-19 crisis on a country's economy and labour market, while identifying the most affected sectors/groups;

22   ILO Constitution, Annex, *Declaration concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organisation (Declaration of Philadelphia)*, 1944.

23   ILO, *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, April 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate response and policy challenges*, May 2020.

24   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020.

25   ILO, *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, April 2020.

26   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020.

27   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV*, June 2020.

28   ILO, *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, April 2020.

29   ILO, *COVID-19: Guidance for labour statistics data collection. Capturing impacts on employment and unpaid work using Rapid Surveys*, May 2020.

30   UN Secretary General, *A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19*, April 2020.

b. review existing policy responses, their objectives and expected impacts, and identify gaps in policy implementation.[31]

The diagnostic includes identifying workers most at risk, and makes specific reference to people with disabilities, people living with HIV, indigenous and tribal peoples, and migrant workers. An assessment of workers by status and level of protection is also needed, including wage, casual, self-employed and informal workers. The ILO is also supporting efforts to develop labour market impact studies, migrant workers' profiles, and undertaking monitoring and rapid assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers and to evaluate migrant and refugee communities' needs.[32]

A rights-based and intersectional approach

The vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes "a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; of respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity".[33] Equality and non-discrimination are at the heart of human rights discourse, and impact on the enjoyment of all other rights.[34] Taking a rights-based approach, with equality and non-discrimination at its core, will be key to ensuring measures designed and implemented in the context of the COVID-19 response are equitable, effective, and leave no one behind.

Social cohesion, mutual support and responsible actions by each and every one have been and continue to be essential for ending this global pandemic. Yet, in many situations, existing exclusion and marginalization of women and men from groups vulnerable to discrimination becomes more visible and exacerbates the impacts of crises for these groups. Fear, which is often fuelled by crises, can lead to stigmatization of certain groups and increased levels of discrimination. The COVID-19 crisis has been no exception. Reports of rising levels of discrimination, and violence and harassment have been alarming: xenophobia against migrant workers; violence and harassment, including against indigenous women and women with disabilities; homophobic attacks, including against people living with HIV.[35] Such reports cannot be ignored, and decisive measures need to be taken to protect and ensure the rights of all to equality and non-discrimination and to be free from violence and harassment.

People with disabilities, people living with HIV, indigenous and tribal peoples, and migrant workers are not homogeneous groups, and often face multiple and intersecting forms of inequality, discrimination and marginalization. For example, people living with HIV are reported to face increased discrimination in accessing health services, and in employment, which is further amplified for indigenous peoples living with HIV.[36] People living with HIV are a diverse group, with HIV status often intersecting with other personal characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender identity, and ethnicity, which may further aggravate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.[37] These examples, and many others, point to the need for an intersectional approach in the design and implementation of policies that captures and addresses the multiple layers of discrimination that may arise in the COVID-19 context.

Gender equality in the COVID-19 response is key to ensuring a better normal

▶ COVID-19 economic downturn is likely to hit women hardest.

▶ 41 per cent of women are employed in sectors at high risk of job losses and decline in working hours, compared to 35 per cent of men.

▶ Women informal workers are under even greater threat.

▶ COVID-19 has increased women's unpaid care work.

▶ It has been a sombre reminder that the scourge of violence and harassment is a reality everywhere, including in the world of work.

Source: ILO, The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work, May 2020

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31   ILO, _Rapid diagnostics for assessing country-level impact of COVID-19 on the economy and labour market_, May 2020.

32   ILO, _Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents_, April 2020.

33   United Nations, _Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development_, A/RES/70/1, 2015.

34   ILO, _Giving globalization a human face_, 2012.

35   ILO, _Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents_, April 2020; ILO, _COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples_, May 2020; ILO, _COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV_, June 2020.

36   CAAN and ILO, _A qualitative study on stigma and discrimination experienced by indigenous peoples living with HIV or having TB at work_, 2019.

37   ILO, _COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV_, June 2020.

Women and men from these groups are often impacted differently in this context. Gender disaggregated data is essential, as women within marginalized groups are often the most disadvantaged, requiring targeted measures also within groups. The gender dimensions need to be taken into account, to ensure measures support both women and men, and promote rather than undermine gender equality objectives.

Advancing equality and non-discrimination, a fundamental principle and right at work, is indispensable for ensuring that the future of work that is now being built is an inclusive one that values diversity, promotes inclusion and eradicates discrimination, violence and harassment. Putting in place equality laws, policies and measures for substantive gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities for all is crucial in this regard, as they contribute to breaking down barriers that prevent access of those at risk of being left behind to decent work as a main source of income, livelihood and resilience.

While there are a wide range of national laws and policies addressing equality and non-discrimination, violence and harassment, a better understanding of how stigma, discrimination, and violence and harassment are manifesting in the context of the COVID-19 crisis is needed. Heightened vigilance is required in the COVID-19 context to detect and counter such practices including through enhanced enforcement. National laws can be supported by workplace policies, designed through social dialogue, on equality and non-discrimination, as well as by a strong, multi-faceted advocacy campaign, including making it clear that violence and harassment will not be tolerated during the COVID-19 crisis or ever.

The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work calls for a transformative agenda for gender equality and for equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work for persons with disabilities, as well as for other persons in vulnerable situations.[38] A range of ILO Conventions and Recommendations concerning equality and non-discrimination,[39] violence and harassment,[40] and specific groups at risk of being left behind,[41] provide a relevant and timely framework for reaching this objective.

Decent work opportunities and dignified livelihoods

Sustainable Development Goal 8, target 8.5, calls for the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men by 2030, and makes specific reference to young people and persons with disabilities. COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on progress with respect to this target. ILO estimates for the decline in working hours for the 2nd quarter of 2020 are staggering, amounting to the equivalent of 305 million jobs.[42] Almost 1.6 billion informal economy workers have been significantly impacted by lockdown measures, and the rate of relative poverty for informal workers is expected to increase by approximately 34 percentage points.[43]

Certain groups are more likely to work in the informal economy, including indigenous and tribal peoples, people with disabilities, people living with HIV and migrant workers.[44] Among informal economy workers, women are over-represented in sectors at high risk of severe impact in terms of job losses and a decline in working hours.[45] Disaggregating by age also provides insights into the nature and extent of the jobs crisis. Young people are suffering disproportionately from the COVID-19 crisis, with approximately one in six young people having stopped working since the onset of the crisis, and those still in employment working reduced hours. Young women have been hit the hardest.[46]

38   See *ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work*, 2019.

39   The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

40   The Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and Recommendation No. 206.

41   These include the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159); the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169); the Migration for Employment (Revised) Convention, 1949 (No. 97); the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143); the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200); the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204).

42   ILO Monitor: *COVID-19 and the world of work*, 4th edition, May 2020.

43   ILO, *COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges*, May 2020; ILO Monitor: *COVID-19 and the world of work*, 3rd edition, April 2020.

44   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV*, June 2020; ILO, *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, April 2020.

45   ILO, *The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work*, May 2020.

46   ILO Monitor: *COVID-19 and the world of work, 4*th edition, May 2020.

Many countries are already promoting initiatives for employment retention and support to companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises. These include skills development, job creation, business development services, employment services, public works, employment intensive infrastructure programmes, and other forms of labour market activation. As these measures are designed and implemented, it will be important that they are inclusive of particular groups that have been hard hit by COVID-19, including providing financial support for employers for inclusive measures.[47] Skills and vocational training for young people within marginalized groups is also needed, to boost youth employment, and ensure young people are not further disadvantaged throughout their working lives.[48] It is essential in the recovery process that groups that have been hard hit by the crisis are able to resume their jobs or economic activities without discrimination, and with necessary financial support. People living with HIV have stated it well: "If you take away our jobs, you will kill us faster than the virus".[49]

Occupational safety and health measures for facilitating back to work transitions, need to be culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of particular groups, in both the formal and informal economy.[50] Accessible environments and reasonable adjustments need to be ensured for an inclusive and safe return to work.[51]

The response to COVID-19 also needs to contribute to efforts to ensure a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies. Initiatives for a just transition and green jobs need to be inclusive of indigenous peoples, people living with HIV, people with disabilities and migrant workers, in all their diversity, to ensure a more inclusive and sustainable recovery in the world of work.[52]

Inclusive social protection

Sustainable Development Goal 1 commits to ending extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030, including through implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors. The cracks in social protection systems have become obvious in the COVID-19 context: "It has revealed once again the devastating consequences of systemic shocks for societies and economies in the absence of universal and adequate social protection. Although the virus does not discriminate between rich and poor, its effects are highly uneven."[53]

The dramatic impact of 55 per cent of the world's population being unprotected by social insurance schemes or by universal or social assistance programmes has been felt the world over. It is urgent to accelerate the building of social protection systems, including floors, to address the most pressing needs as well as the persistent gaps in coverage and benefits, in particular for those most marginalized and at risk of being left behind. Inclusion of migrants in national social protection floors and cooperation between countries for social protection for migrant workers is also key to an inclusive response.[54]

The ILO has set out a range of recommendations, based on international labour standards,[55] for addressing the social protection gaps in the immediate and long term, including building on, complementing and further strengthening national social protection systems in order to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations and ensure no one is left behind.[56] Barriers to accessing social protection for people with disabilities, people living with HIV, indigenous and tribal peoples and migrant workers need to be urgently assessed and addressed.

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47   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020.

48   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020.

49   ILO, *Addressing stigma and discrimination in the COVID-19 response: Key lessons from the response to HIV and AIDS*, May 2020.

50   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020.

51   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020.

52   Ibid.; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020.

53   ILO, *Social protection responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries: Strengthening resilience by building universal social protection*, May 2020.

54   ILO, *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, April 2020.

55   Including the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) and the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102).

56   ILO, *Social protection responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries: Strengthening resilience by building universal social protection*, May 2020.

Effective and affordable access to health care and services: Ensuring effective and affordable access to health care and services for all, including migrant workers and informal economy workers will be essential for an inclusive response,[57] as well as ensuring that they are culturally appropriate and benefit indigenous peoples.[58] Covering the additional health care needs of people with disabilities and people living with HIV, should be included in COVID-19 response measures.[59] Mental health also needs to be addressed, as there are indications that the crisis is impacting on levels of anxiety and depression, in particular for young people.[60]

Food and income support: With food insecurity and livelihoods disrupted, food and income support is essential for many. This is impacting particularly workers in the informal economy,[61] as well as indigenous peoples and migrant workers, most of whom work in the informal economy. Indigenous women, many of whom combine caring for their families and securing income through various economic activities, have been particularly affected.[62] The identification of lands traditionally occupied by indigenous peoples, and the recognition and protection of their rights to ownership, continue to be critical issues in this regard.[63] These heightened vulnerabilities in the COVID-19 context need to be addressed in a targeted and culturally appropriate manner.

Addressing unpaid care work: Unpaid care responsibilities have increased in the context of COVID-19 lockdowns, and many countries have sought to reduce this pressure by extending the duration of parental leave or providing financial subsidies for wage earners and the self-employed to pay for care services.[64] Increased care responsibilities, disproportionately shouldered by women, have particularly affected households with people with disabilities and people living with HIV, which also need to be taken into account in designing and rolling out measures.[65] Designing and reinforcing inclusive social protection systems that benefit all, can be informed by disability-inclusive approaches, including in the context of addressing care responsibilities.[66] Expanding quality care services will also be key to supporting the redistribution of care, as well as for employment creation.[67]

Ensuring voice, representation and meaningful participation

Social dialogue and social partners: Social dialogue, based on respect for freedom of association, is critical to designing policies to promote social justice and to enhance social cohesion.[68] Effective tripartite social dialogue and cooperation has supported needs assessments and the design of effective strategies and policies, protecting workers and their families, including those most vulnerable to the crisis, from job and income loss.[69] In building back better, ensuring voice and representation of all is essential. Employers' and workers' organizations are already working in this direction, including advising on workplace measures to address discrimination and violence and harassment, and ensuring the needs of specific groups are taken into account, as well as making joint statements calling for an inclusive response.[70]

A whole-of-society approach, with governments acting together with social partners in the world of work, will be critical in managing the

57   ILO, *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, April 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate response and policy challenges*, May 2020.

58   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020.

59   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020; ILO et al., *Disability-inclusive social protection response to COVID-19 crisis*, April 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV*, June 2020.

60   *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work, 4th edition*, May 2020.

61   ILO, *COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy, Immediate responses and policy challenges*, April 2020.

62   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020.

63   Ibid.

64   ILO, *The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work*, May 2020.

65   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV*, June 2020; ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020.

66   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020.

67   ILO, *The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work*, May 2020.

68   ILO, *The need for social dialogue in addressing the COVID-19 crisis*, May 2020.

69   Ibid.

70   See for example, ILO, *An Employers' Guide to managing your workplace during COVID-19*, 2020; Public Services International, *Coronavirus: Guidance Briefing for Union Action update*, 2020; Federation of Uganda Employers, National Organisation of Trade Unions, *Joint FUE/NOTU communiqué on COVID-19 response in the world of work in Uganda*, 2020.

impact of COVID-19 and ensuring an inclusive recovery.[71] Measures need to be designed and implemented with the involvement of concerned groups. Governments, employers' and workers' organizations have been involving groups of people living with HIV, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and migrant workers in social dialogue processes in the context of COVID-19. These good practices can continue moving forward to ensure a more sustainable and equitable recovery, with decent work at its core. Continuing to support the development of strong and representative social partner organizations will be essential.[72]

Learning from particular groups: Much can be learned from the experience of other epidemics and the knowledge of particular groups. For example, empowering communities, including people living with HIV, has been a key feature of the HIV response. Employers, workers and their organizations have worked with people living with HIV at the community level to raise awareness, disseminate information, fight stigma and discrimination, and roll out voluntary counselling and testing initiatives, which can also inform the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.[73] Business networks have worked with organizations of people with disabilities to facilitate job matching services during the crisis.[74]

Indigenous and tribal peoples represent a rich diversity of cultures, traditions and ways of life based on a close relationship with nature. Enhanced resilience will need to engage indigenous peoples in their role as workers, employers and custodians of natural resources, which can be vital for the food security of their societies and countries more generally.[75] Promoting green jobs that contribute to resilience and sustainable enterprises and livelihoods is a key strategy that is responsive to indigenous and tribal peoples' needs and aspirations, and also needs to be inclusive of people with disabilities.

Building a better future for all

In the wake of COVID-19, the world will have changed dramatically. Critical lessons are being learned during the crisis that can support a "better normal"[76] moving forward. While the crisis has exposed cracks in social and economic systems, important measures have been taken in a number of countries to address them, at least temporarily, which could be further extended and adapted in the recovery process. It is now "imperative to act with urgency to seize the opportunities and address the challenges to shape a fair, inclusive and secure future of work…".[77]

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, the ILO tripartite constituents, in adopting the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), recognized the importance of employment and decent work for promoting peace, preventing crisis situations from arising, and enabling recovery and building resilience. In this context, the Recommendation acknowledges the importance in times of crisis of ensuring respect for all human rights, including fundamental principles and rights at work; developing and strengthening measures of social protection; and paying special attention to those made particularly vulnerable by the crisis. Developing responses through social dialogue with the most representative employers' and workers' organizations, and involving, as appropriate, relevant civil society organizations, is also emphasized. The Recommendation highlights the relevance of the decent work agenda in times of crisis, now being tested in the COVID-19 context, and provides an important framework for recovery and building resilience.

71   See ILO, *The need for social dialogue in addressing the COVID-19 crisis*, May 2020.

72   See *ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work*, 2019.

73   ILO, *Addressing stigma and discrimination in the COVID-19 response: Key lessons from the response to HIV and AIDS*, May 2020.

74   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response*, June 2020.

75   ILO, *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, May 2020.

76   ILO Director-General, *New Normal? Better Normal*, Op-Ed, May 2020.

77   See *ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work*, 2019.

A more inclusive society and world of work is possible, that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of specific groups including to ensure sustainable livelihoods and decent work. Ensuring no one is left behind is essential in responding to crises, when poverty and inequalities risk being amplified, and to ensuring more equitable development outcomes. Implementing the 2030 Agenda, a "plan of action for people, planet and prosperity",[78] is needed now more than ever.

While certain groups have been historically marginalized in the world of work and in society more generally, they can and should be treated, not as victims, but as agents of change. Their voices and their experiences can help to shape an inclusive, resilient response to the COVID-19 crisis and its socio-economic consequences, and bring the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals within our reach.

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78   United Nations, *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, 2015.