

**Joint Statement on the occasion of the
48th session of the Human Rights Council**

International Statement about the importance of care in the human rights arena

Madam President,

Argentina and Mexico have the honor to speak on behalf of a group of countries (*). The full list of co-sponsors will be published in the extranet.

The health emergency caused by COVID-19 and its consequences highlighted the essential role that care work plays in our daily life, in society and in the economy. Furthermore, it exposed that the unequal distribution of care work is one of the main root causes of gender inequalities.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), women dedicate an average of 4.4 hours to unpaid work -related to care and household work-, while men only dedicate 1.4 hours. In addition, women and girls undertake more than three-quarters of unpaid care work in the world and make up two-thirds of the paid care workforce.

Care functions are disproportionately allocated to women and girls and create a major barrier to the full, equal, effective, and meaningful participation of women in economic market activity¹, including by reducing access to more and better employment opportunities. The disparate feminization of unpaid care responsibilities is a structural barrier to women's empowerment and undermines their autonomy.²

It is imperative to adopt the necessary legal, institutional and policy measures to remove barriers to women's and girls' personal, social and economic development resulting from on an unequal allocation of caring duties which are often closely linked to stereotyping and discrimination³, and thereby promote equal opportunities and an increase in women's participation in the labour market.

¹ Textual from <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/26/39>

² Based on <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/26/39> para. 16

³ Based on <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/26/39> Paras 83 and 84

As it was recommended by OHCHR in the guidance note on COVID, it is essential that we ensure that economic incentives and social safety nets are gender-responsive and reach and empower every woman and girl.⁴

Taking into consideration that equal care arises from international obligations embodied in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we call on States and the Human Rights System to further discuss avenues to promote equal caregiving responsibilities of parents, flexible work practices,⁵ and to discuss access to care and participation on care responsibilities based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Thank you.

⁴ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/COVID-19_and_Womens_Human_Rights.pdf

⁵ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/COVID-19_and_Womens_Human_Rights.pdf

(*)List of co-sponsors: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Czech Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Panamá, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, Uruguay.