

# COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

## GLOBAL FACTSHEET

Version 2 (March 22, 2021)

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in at least 119.2 million cases and over 2.6 million deaths worldwide.<sup>1</sup> From decision-makers and doctors, to entrepreneurs and care providers, women have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 response.

Despite their enormous contributions to mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis is threatening to erase decades of progress for women and girls. While men have been most affected in terms of fatalities, COVID-19 has exacerbated economic crises, care deficits and the 'shadow pandemic' of gender-based violence, with disproportionate impacts on women.<sup>2</sup> Inequalities between groups of women based on race, disability, income, age and more have also been starkly apparent in both the spread and the impact of the virus.

Based on a unique database compiled by UNDP and UN Women, this factsheet provides an overview of the COVID-19 response of governments around the globe, with a focus on measures aimed at addressing threats to gender equality across three key dimensions: the surge in violence against women and girls, the unprecedented increase in unpaid care work, and the large-scale loss of jobs, incomes and livelihoods. It shows that while many governments have taken positive measures to support women and girls, the response remains insufficient and uneven overall – both across regions and dimensions.

### BOX 1: COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

Information in this factsheet is based on the [UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#), which monitors policy measures enacted by national governments worldwide to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, and highlights responses that are gender-sensitive. In addition to policy measures, the tracker also monitors women's leadership and participation in COVID-19 task forces. Co-created by the two agencies, the tracker is coordinated by UNDP, with substantive leadership and technical contributions from UN Women. It is a living database with countries and measures being regularly added and updated.<sup>3</sup> Like all policy trackers, there may be gaps or biases due to a lack of available information, underreporting of measures being announced, overreporting of measures that have been suspended, or the lack of data on the gender components of existing measures. Overall, findings should be interpreted with caution. When considering the number of individual policy measures, it is important to note that countries with few or no COVID-19-related measures may have pre-existing gender-sensitive policies in place that help mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic. Measures also vary significantly in scope. This factsheet therefore also provides information on the content of the measures, which should be considered alongside the aggregate totals. No attempt is made to rank countries, but there is great potential for countries to learn from one another to improve their policy responses for women and girls. More information about the classification of policies, the definition of gender-sensitive measures and the data collection and analysis process can be found in the [methodological note](#).

<sup>1</sup> As of 9am CEST on 19 March 2021. WHO Weekly Epidemiological Update. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update---16-march-2021>

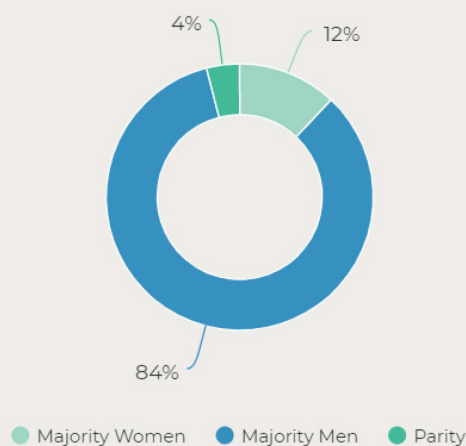
<sup>2</sup> UN Women. 2020. "From insights to action: gender equality in the wake of COVID-19." <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19>; UNDP. 2020. "Gender Inequality and the COVID-19 Crisis: A Human Development Perspective." <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-and-covid-19-crisis-human-development-perspective>

<sup>3</sup> To provide information on national measures to be included in the UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker please contact [covid.gender.helpdesk@undp.org](mailto:covid.gender.helpdesk@undp.org).

### I. COVID-19 response planning and decision-making: where are the women?

In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe, countries rushed to create special governance and advisory mechanisms to help tackle a rapidly evolving health and socio-economic crisis in the midst of extreme uncertainty. To ensure an effective response under such circumstances, women's voices, needs and rights must be brought into pandemic response planning and decision-making. Their equal representation in COVID-19 task forces is a critical way to do so. Yet, while women have been at forefront of fighting the pandemic—as educators, health workers and unpaid care providers—they have been relegated to the backseat when it comes to pandemic decision-making.

**Figure 1: Gender Composition of COVID-19 Task Forces**



New data monitoring women's representation and leadership in 334 COVID-19 task forces across 187 countries, produced by UNDP and UN Women in partnership with the Gender Inequality Research Lab (GIRL) at the University of Pittsburgh, shows that women are significantly underrepresented in COVID-19 task forces. Of the 225 task forces with membership data, women make up less than a quarter (24%) of members and are not represented at all on 12 per cent of all task forces (26 out of 225). Globally, there is gender parity in only 4.4 per cent of task forces (10 out of 225); while the overwhelming majority of task forces (84 per cent) are dominated by men (see Figure 1). For further details see the [Women's Participation and Leadership in COVID-19 Response Factsheet](#).

Women's exclusion from COVID-19 planning and decision-making leaves governments ill-equipped to respond effectively to the gendered social and economic fallout of the pandemic.

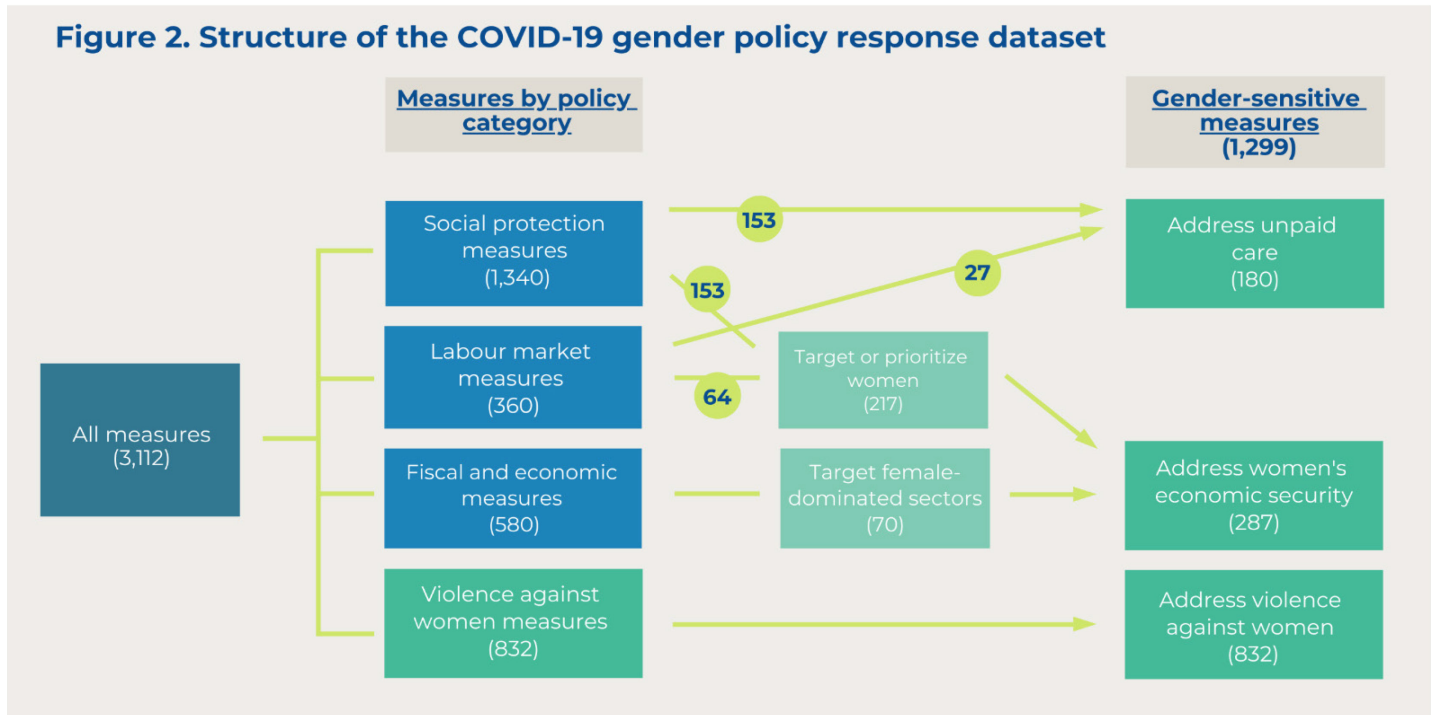
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### II. Policy response to the pandemic: how gender-sensitive is it?

The tracker consists of a total of 3,112 measures taken in response to COVID-19. These measures fall into four main policy categories: social protection, labour markets, fiscal and economic policies and measures to address violence against women and girls (Figure 2). These measures were partly imported from other databases and partly collected by UNDP and UN Women (see [methodological note](#)).

**Figure 2. Structure of the COVID-19 gender policy response dataset**



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### *What is a gender-sensitive measure?*

Gender-sensitive measures are a subset of all measures – those that seek to directly address the specific risks and challenges that women and girls face as a result of the pandemic:

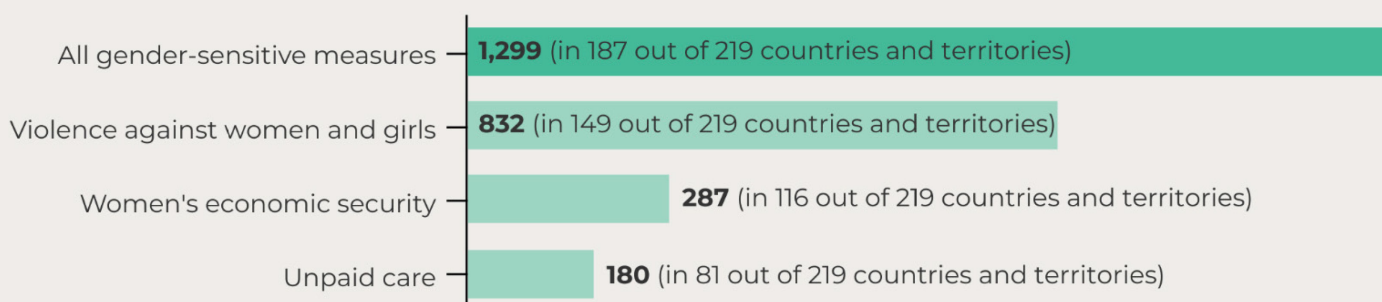
- all violence against women measures are categorized as gender-sensitive by default;
- social protection and labour market measures are defined as gender-sensitive if they target women's economic security or address unpaid care;
- fiscal and economic measures are defined as gender-sensitive if they provide support to female-dominated sectors of the economy, on the assumption that this is likely to protect women's employment and thereby their economic security.<sup>4</sup>

The assessment is conducted based on the available information about policy design. An assessment of the implementation or gender impact of these measures is not included.

### *The global picture*

At the global level, the tracker records 219 countries and territories that have taken 3,112 measures in response to COVID-19. Of these, 1,299 measures across 187 countries and territories have been identified as gender-sensitive (Figure 3). Most of these measures (832 in 149 countries) focus on stepping up action to address violence against women and girls (VAWG). Measures to strengthen women's economic security (287) and address unpaid care work (180) are much fewer in number.

**Figure 3. Number of gender-sensitive measures by dimension**



<sup>4</sup> Given the different data collection and analysis processes used for identifying violence against women measures, on the one hand, and women's economic security and unpaid care measures, on the other, the three areas are not strictly comparable. While women's economic security and unpaid care measures have been located within a broader universe of social protection, labour market, fiscal and economic measures, violence against women measures have no such point of reference.

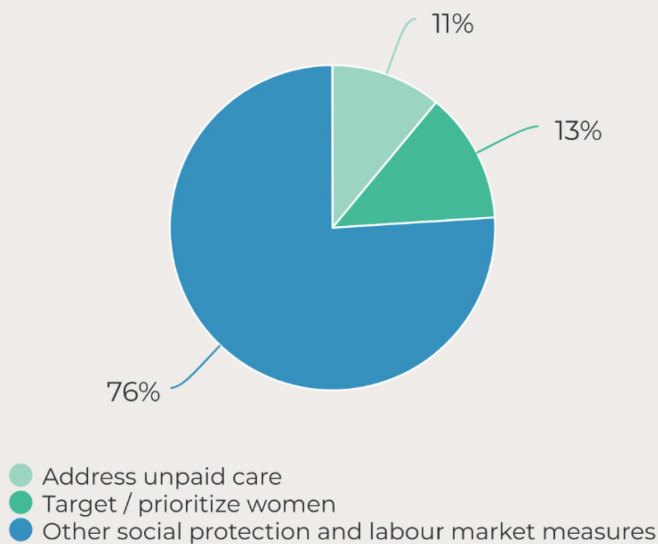
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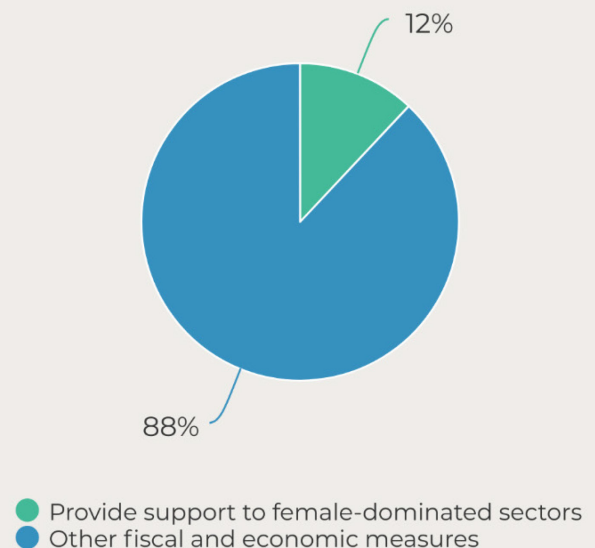
Measures that target women's economic security and address unpaid care also make up only a fraction of the total social protection and labour market response, on the one hand, and the fiscal and economic response, on the other:

- In total, 214 countries and territories have adopted 1,700 social protection and labour market measures in response to COVID-19. However, only 23 per cent of these measures (397) are gender-sensitive in that they target women's economic security or address unpaid care (Figure 4).
- Similarly, 132 countries and territories have adopted 580 fiscal and economic measures to help businesses weather the crisis, but only 12 per cent of these measures (70) aim to strengthen women's economic security by channelling resources to female-dominated sectors (Figure 5).

**Figure 4. Proportion of gender-sensitive measures out of total social protection and labour market response**



**Figure 5. Proportion of gender-sensitive measures out of total fiscal and economic response**

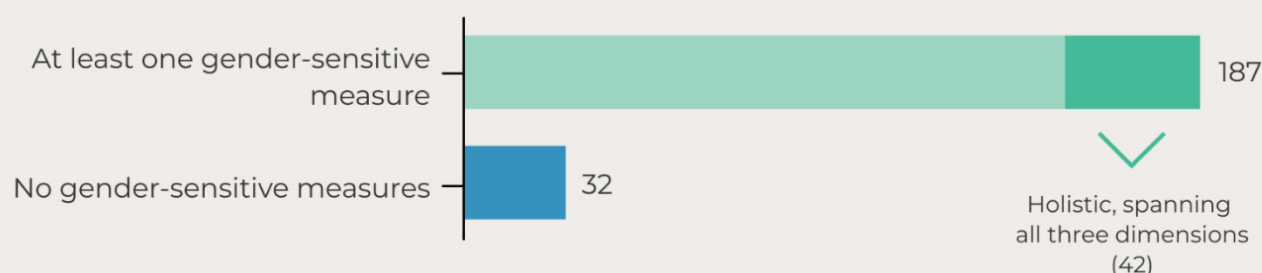


Only 42 countries (19 per cent of those analysed), register a holistic response, with measures that span all three dimensions (see Figure 6 and Annex I). On the other hand, roughly one-sixth of countries and territories analysed (32 out of 219) register no gender-sensitive measures in response to COVID-19 at all.

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**Figure 6. Number of countries by scope of gender response**



### How are different regions doing?

The gender response to the COVID-19 crisis varies widely across countries and regions, signalling differences in political commitment as well as fiscal and administrative capacity. While Europe, Northern America, Australia and New Zealand are leading the response on violence against women and girls (VAWG) and unpaid care – accounting for a third of all VAWG measures and almost two thirds of all unpaid care measures globally – Latin America and the Caribbean has the largest number of measures aimed at strengthening women’s economic security, followed by sub-Saharan Africa (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Number of gender-sensitive measures, by type and region**

	Violence against women	Women's economic security	Unpaid care	Gender-sensitive measures
<b>Central and Southern Asia</b> (13 out of 14 countries and territories)	82	20	4	106
<b>Eastern Asia, South-Eastern Asia and Oceania</b> (27 out of 33 countries and territories)	97	20	18	135
<b>Europe, Northern America, Australia and New Zealand</b> (49 out of 55 countries and territories)	279	36	113	428
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b> (37 out of 45 countries and territories)	208	92	27	327
<b>Northern Africa and Western Asia</b> (23 out of 24 countries and territories)	73	53	13	139
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b> (38 out of 48 countries and territories)	93	66	5	164
<b>TOTAL</b> (187 out of 219 countries and territories)	832	287	180	1,299

### Which gender policies are governments prioritizing?

#### Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

Some 64 per cent of all gender-sensitive measures (832 measures in 149 countries) focus on preventing and/or responding to violence against women and girls – a heartening response to the [UN Secretary-General’s call to action](#) for Member States to counter the ‘horrifying surge’ in reports of violence against women and girls in the midst of the pandemic.

Of all VAWG measures, 65 per cent (538 in 136 countries) aim to strengthen services for survivors (see Figure 7). Most of these measures focus on helplines and other reporting mechanisms (139 measures in 90 countries), police and judicial responses to address impunity (135 measures in 82 countries), the continued functioning and expansion of shelters (93 measures in 70 countries) and ensuring that services remain coordinated and accessible throughout the pandemic (86 measures in 64 countries) (see Figure 8).

Notable efforts have been made to ensure continued access to justice for survivors, including the use of technology to facilitate videoconferencing of court hearings or online testimonies (e.g. in **Lebanon, Singapore, and Trinidad and Tobago**) or remote filing of requests for protection orders (e.g. in **Antigua and Barbuda, Bulgaria, and the Maldives**).

Measures to raise awareness about the increased risks of VAWG during the pandemic and how to seek help were also taken by a significant number of countries (143 measures in 98 countries).

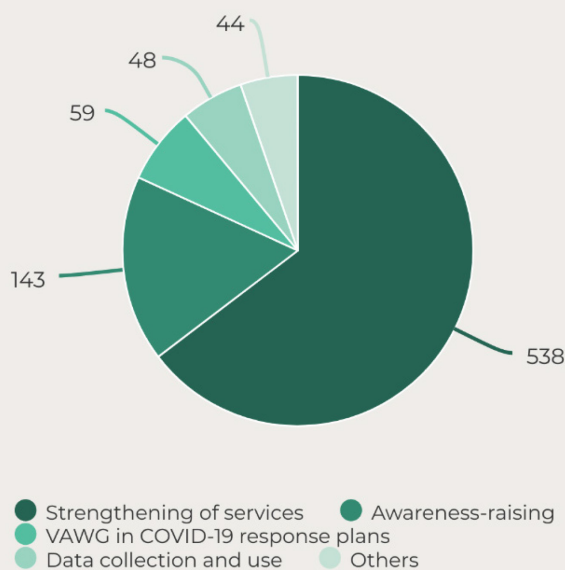
However, less than one-fifth of countries report measures to collect, analyse and use data to inform policies to counter VAWG in the current context (48 measures across 40 countries). Further, very few measures have been identified that address online violence (which has increased during the pandemic),<sup>5</sup> or that target or consult groups of women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.<sup>6</sup> Notable exceptions include:

- **Cambodia**, where personal protective equipment was provided to organizations of persons with disabilities, which were also trained to identify and refer VAWG cases.

<sup>5</sup> UN Women. 2020. “[Brief: Online and ICT-facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19.](#)” April.

<sup>6</sup> These are identified under the “others” VAWG measure type in the tracker.

**Figure 7. Number of violence against women measures, by type**



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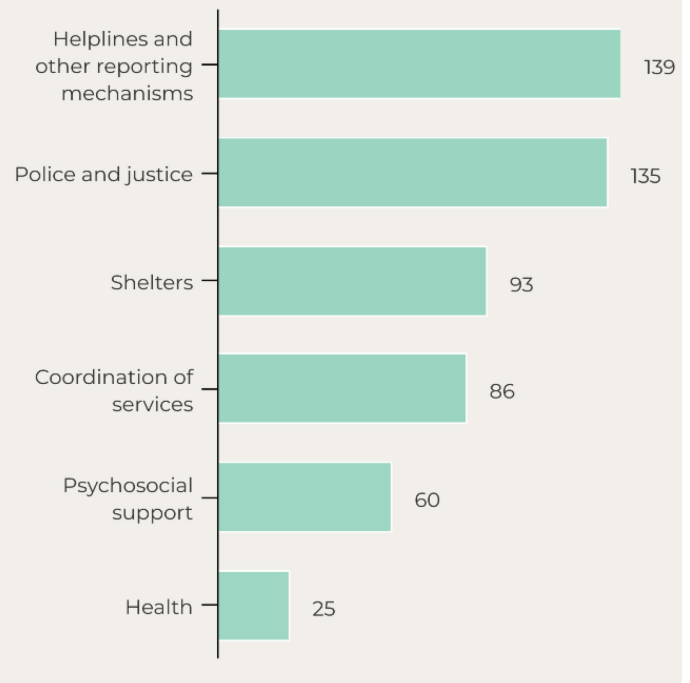
- **Sweden**, where the government provided extra funding to civil society organizations working to combat violence against women, children and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons (at a value of approximately USD 10.5 million).

Integrating VAWG into COVID-19 response planning are key to ensuring that efforts to address VAWG and support survivors can continue unimpeded during the pandemic. However, the tracker shows that only about one third of countries with available data (52 out of 149) have taken this step with 59 measures recorded and few of those adequately funded. Commitments that are part of governments' ongoing planning and policies are critical, since the consequences of the pandemic may increase the risk of VAWG in the long-term. Positive examples include:

- **Bangladesh**, where gender was mainstreamed across the 'Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19', and GBV interventions were included under essential health services, and risk communication and community engagement activities.
- **Zimbabwe**, where GBV services have been deemed 'essential' during the pandemic. Mobile GBV services have been allowed to continue operating to enable access in spite of limited public transport.

Some countries have also provided survivors with access to social protection and economic support. In **Ireland** survivors of domestic violence have been granted immediate access to rent supplement payments without a means test, while the Private Rent Housing Benefit Scheme in **Malta** has been extended to survivors of domestic violence.

**Figure 8. Number of measures to strengthen services, by measure sub-type**



**136**  
COUNTRIES

have adopted measures to **strengthen services** for women survivors of violence

**52**  
COUNTRIES

have integrated **VAWG measures as essential in COVID-19 response plans**

**40**  
COUNTRIES

have **measures to collect, analyse and use data** on VAWG in the context of the pandemic



### Women's economic security

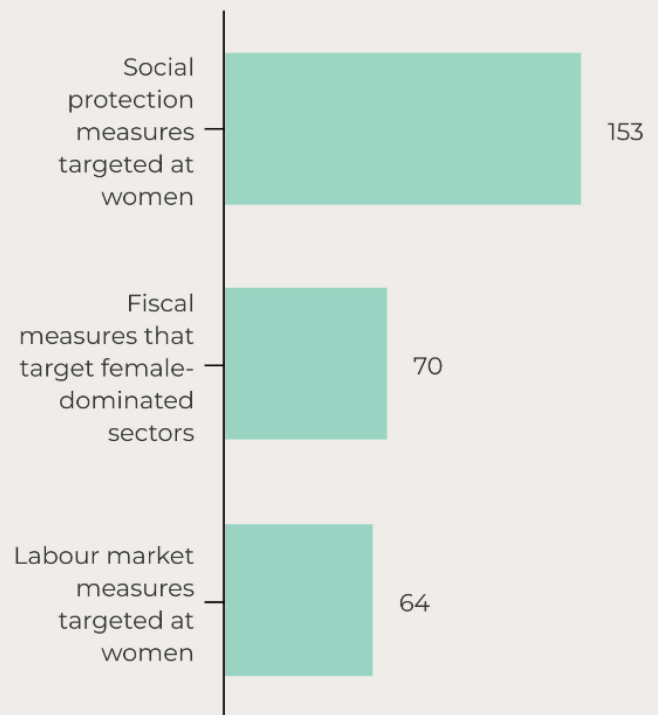
Out of the 2,280 fiscal and economic, social protection and labour market measures registered for over 200 countries and territories, only 287 measures across 116 countries and territories address women's economic security. This amounts to just 13 per cent of the total fiscal, economic, social protection and jobs response. More than half of the measures addressing women's economic security fall into the **social protection** category (153 measures in 84 countries). The main social protection programmes that governments have used to strengthen women's economic security in the context of COVID-19 are cash transfers (68 measures in 55 countries) and food assistance or other forms of in-kind support (39 measures in 32 countries) that prioritize women as the main recipients. For example:

- **Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Kenya, and Togo** launched new cash transfer programmes targeting informal workers that gave priority or provided extra benefits for women. In **Brazil**, Congress approved an emergency cash transfer in March 2020 which provided monthly benefits to 65.9 million informal workers over a nine-month period. Women heads of households received double the benefit.
- **Pakistan** has used digital technology to rapidly roll out the 'Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme', reaching 14 million families in need of livelihood support. Some 4.5 million existing female beneficiaries received top-up benefits for a duration of four months.
- **Rwanda** has targeted female-headed households, capitalizing on its well-established decentralized governance structures to distribute food and other essential items to 20,000 families. Target groups include casual labourers who have lost their livelihoods as a result of COVID-19 containment measures.

**Labour market** measures account for 22 per cent of measures that address women's economic security (64 measures across 31 countries), spanning wage subsidies and training as well as measures that support entrepreneurs, informal workers and the self-employed and specifically target women among these groups. For example:

- **Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru**, have used public information campaigns and adjusted labour legislation to protect the rights of domestic workers.

**Figure 9. Number of measures that address women's economic security, by policy category**



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- **Cabo Verde, Colombia, Egypt** and **Mexico** have developed training programmes for women in digital entrepreneurship, e-marketing and e-commerce, as well as financial skills so that they can continue selling their products online during lockdowns and be better equipped to benefit from the re-opening of economic activities.
- **Argentina, Honduras, Morocco, Senegal, Syrian Arab Republic** and the **United States of America** have launched programmes aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs, informal traders and cooperatives with cash transfers, grants, subsidized credits and/or digital platforms to market local products.
- Only a handful of countries, including **Australia, Chile, Colombia**, and the **Republic of Korea**, have implemented programmes that facilitate women's return to work. Chile promotes companies with an incentive to allow workers on suspended contracts return and hire new personnel by subsidizing salaries for up to 6 months with higher benefits for women, young people and persons with disabilities.

Finally, 49 countries have taken 70 **fiscal and economic measures** to support female-dominated sectors of their economies – that is, sectors that account for a higher proportion of women's employment compared to men's. Overall, these measures make up 12 per cent of the total fiscal and economic response globally (see Figure 5 above).

- For example, **Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Latvia** have provided fiscal support to the tourism sector – which employs a higher share of women than men – through public sector loans and subsidies.

As countries turn to economic recovery, the low number of labour market measures and fiscal measures targeted at women or at the sectors that employ them is a major cause for concern. The emerging evidence suggests that women's employment has been hit harder than men's and that a large number of women are dropping out of the labour force altogether, with working mothers facing the sharpest drop in labour force participation.<sup>7</sup> Stronger action is needed to ensure that women can keep their jobs or re-enter the labour market if they have lost jobs as a result of the pandemic.

**84**  
**COUNTRIES**

have **social protection measures** that target or prioritize women

**49**  
**COUNTRIES**

have **fiscal measures** that channel resources to female-dominated sectors

**31**  
**COUNTRIES**

have **labour market measures** that target or prioritize women

<sup>7</sup> <https://data.unwomen.org/features/fallout-covid-19-working-moms-are-being-squeezed-out-labour-force>

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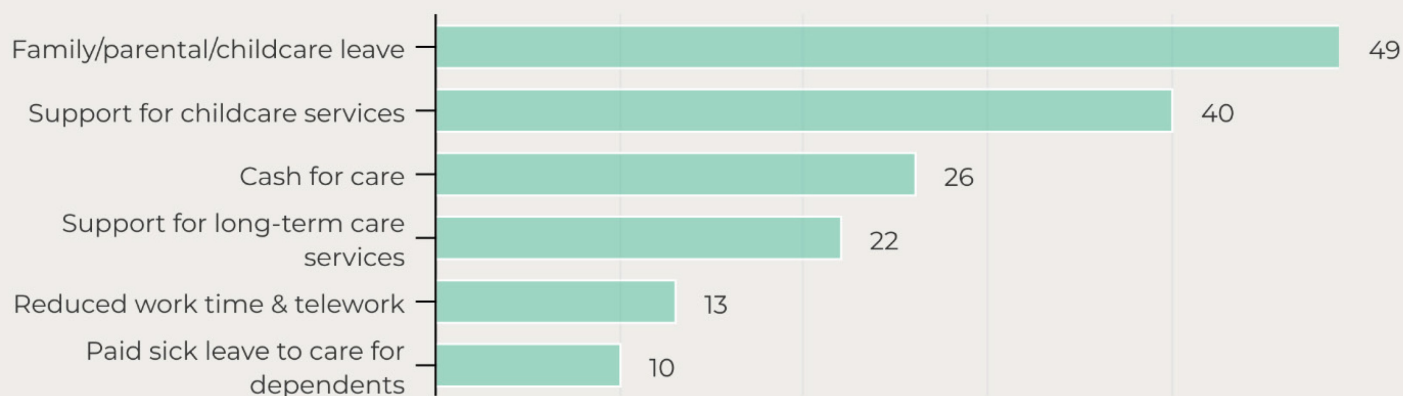
### Unpaid care

Only 180 out of the total 1,700 social protection and labour market measures taken in response to COVID-19 directly address unpaid care, representing only 11 per cent of the total response (see Figure 4 above).

**Social protection** accounts for the bulk of these measures (153 in 78 countries). New or expanded family leave provisions that enable working parents to take time off paid work to care for children or sick family members are among the most common social insurance measures (49 measures across 40 countries), while “cash-for-care” programmes that compensate parents for school or day care closures (26 measures across 20 countries) dominate social assistance (Figure 10). For example:

- **Austria, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Seychelles, Trinidad and Tobago** and **Uzbekistan** have set up new or extended existing paid parental leave schemes to allow workers time to care for dependant family members.
- Some countries like **Belgium, Canada and Hungary** continue to provide parents with extra cash to compensate for childcare and school closures. **Chile** provides cash support (*Subsidio Protege*) to working mothers with children under two who have no access to employer-provided childcare services.

**Figure 10. Most common measures in support of unpaid care**



Of the measures aimed at supporting the continued functioning of care services and their adjustment to the pandemic context (62 measures across 47 countries), 40 are aimed at childcare services and 22 at long-term care for older persons or persons with disabilities.

- 23 countries have taken measures to make emergency childcare services available for essential workers during lockdowns. In **Estonia** local governments have kept a limited number of kindergartens open; **Guyana** launched a special programme to provide free childcare for essential workers through direct payments to facilities.

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- Countries like **France, Germany and Ireland** have tried to keep schools and childcare centres open even as other restrictions were imposed in response to the second wave of infections; while others, like **Chile and Egypt** have developed plans for safe reopening.
- To support long-term care during the pandemic, **Austria, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde and Peru** have scaled up home visits and delivery of food and medicines to older persons and persons with disabilities.
- **Albania, Spain and State of Palestine** have provided financial and/or in-kind support to long-term care facilities, including personal protective equipment; **Serbia** has increased the salary of care workers in nursing homes.

Among the 27 **labour market** measures across 23 countries to address unpaid care, the most common ones include shorter or flexible work arrangements to help parents combine paid work and unpaid care responsibilities (13 measures across 11 countries) and additional wage subsidies for workers with care responsibilities (9 measures across 9 countries).

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mongolia and Spain** have allowed parents to reduce work hours for COVID-19-related family care, while **Cabo Verde, Italy, North Macedonia and Trinidad and Tobago** have enabled employees with care responsibilities to perform their work duties from home or remotely.
- **Cuba, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia** have set up wage subsidies for carers to cover, in part or in full, the salary of parents or those attending to sick family members during the pandemic. In Slovenia income replacements are available for self-employed workers with childcare responsibilities.
- **Australia** has announced an additional AUD 24.7 million in the ParentsNext programme which supports parents with skills development, financial aid for job search or training expenses and local counselling services to facilitate their job search as the economy recovers.

Overall, with less than 40 per cent of countries and territories (81 in total) taking action to support unpaid care, the response has been woefully inadequate to address the severe care crisis that COVID-19 has catalysed. A few countries, including **Argentina and Canada** are recognizing the potential of public investments in the care sector as a key lever for economic recovery with the potential to generate jobs, build human capital and support women's economic security (see Annex II).

**40**  
**COUNTRIES**

have strengthened **family and paid sick leave provisions** for parents and other caregivers

**34**  
**COUNTRIES**

have supported the continued functioning of **childcare services**

**11**  
**COUNTRIES**

have introduced **shorter or flexible work arrangements** for workers with care responsibilities

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**Annex I:** Countries with measures that span all three dimensions with number of gender-sensitive measures, by type

Country	Violence against women	Women's economic security	Unpaid care
Albania	10	1	1
Argentina	10	9	7
Armenia	2	4	1
Australia	13	4	4
Bahrain	1	3	1
Belgium	12	1	4
Bolivia	13	4	2
Cabo Verde	5	2	2
Canada	9	1	9
Chile	12	10	3
China	4	2	2
Costa Rica	9	14	3
Czechia	7	1	4
Egypt	12	9	4
Germany	6	1	6
Estonia	2	1	2
India	5	1	1
Indonesia	11	6	1
Italy	6	1	3
Japan	2	5	2
Jordan	5	1	1

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**Annex I, cont'd:** Countries with measures that span all three dimensions with number of gender-sensitive measures, by type

Country	Violence against women	Women's economic security	Unpaid care
Kosovo, under UNSC res 1244	5	1	1
Latvia	3	2	3
Lithuania	7	3	3
Malaysia	4	1	1
Mexico	7	8	1
Montenegro	2	1	1
Netherlands	6	1	3
New Zealand	9	1	3
Palestine (State of)	12	6	1
Peru	14	2	2
Poland	6	1	2
Romania	9	1	1
Russian Federation	1	6	3
Serbia	5	1	4
Slovenia	5	2	3
Spain	10	1	5
Switzerland	2	1	2
Trinidad and Tobago	7	1	2
Turkey	5	2	1
United States of America	5	2	6
Uzbekistan	10	3	3

### Annex II: Countries in focus

#### Argentina

The tracker records 43 measures taken by Argentina in response to COVID-19, of which 26 have been defined as gender-sensitive. Of these, nine target women's economic security, seven address unpaid care work, and ten tackle violence against women. The high number of gender-sensitive measures makes Argentina's emergency response stand out in the region, in part reflecting the influence of feminists in key ministerial positions and a strong feminist movement. A swift and strict lockdown was adopted on 20 March 2020, which continued until early November. As of 11 March 2021, the country had recorded 53,359 confirmed deaths from COVID-19.<sup>8</sup>

A substantial number of measures address violence against women. Through resolution 15/2020, the National Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity exempted women and LGBTIQ+ people from strict lockdown in cases where they need to report violence. Shelters were identified as essential services, and the Ministry worked with trade unions, the private sector and local governments to repurpose hotels to expand availability. A series of public service announcements promoted on TV and an online campaign targeted at women and LGBTIQ+ people experiencing violence were launched in April to raise awareness and promote the national hotline 144, as well as new WhatsApp and email reporting options.

A package of social protection measures was quickly rolled out to support women's economic security. The enhancement of existing cash-transfer or in-kind support schemes, along with new measures targeting those in precarious employment, prevented a significant amount of people from falling into poverty.<sup>9</sup> A new unconditional cash transfers (*Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia*) was provided in April, June and August to households of unemployed, informal and domestic workers, prioritizing women as recipients and reaching almost 9 million beneficiaries. Beneficiaries of the Pregnancy Allowance and Universal Child Allowance also received top-ups, with an increase in value for those with two or more children, reaching 4.3 million people, the majority of whom are women. New regulations established that domestic workers should be granted paid leave for the duration of lockdown, except those caring for older persons or essential workers. In addition, through Resolution 1/2020, the National Commission for Work in Private Homes ordered a salary increase for domestic workers. Women's economic security was also supported through labour market measures, including a one-off support fund for small tourist-oriented businesses, giving priority to women and LGBTIQ+ people.

To support women's unpaid care work, Argentina announced paid leave for all non-essential workers responsible for dependent children. Further, telework was regulated with a gender perspective, granting teleworkers the right to schedules compatible with their care responsibilities. Financial support was provided to long-term homes for people with disabilities. The government has also been leveraging the spotlight that COVID-19 put on women's care burdens to work towards a comprehensive set of federal care policies. An inter-ministerial committee has been set up for this purpose alongside local consultations with care providers, users and policy makers.

<sup>8</sup> <https://covid19.who.int/table>

<sup>9</sup> Lustig, N., V.M. Pabon, F. Sanz and S.D. Younger. 2020. 'The Impact of COVID-19 Lockdowns and Expanded Social Assistance on Inequality, Poverty and Mobility in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico'. *Center for Global Development Working Paper 556*.

<https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/impact-covid-19-lockdowns-and-expanded-social-assistance.pdf> Accessed 3/18/21

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### Canada

**The tracker records 40 measures taken by Canada in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, of which 19 are gender-sensitive. In line with regional trends, the most measures have been taken to address violence against women (nine measures) and support unpaid care work (nine measures), with one further measure to bolster women's economic security. As of 11 March 2021, Canada had recorded 22,304 deaths from COVID-19.<sup>10</sup>**

With regards to violence, the Government has made available up to CAD 30 million (USD 24 million) to Women and Gender Equality Canada to address the immediate needs of shelters and sexual assault centers and an additional CAD 10 million (USD 8 million) for the network of emergency shelters to support Indigenous women and children fleeing violence. The government has also deemed shelters to be essential services in most provinces and territories to ensure their continued operation.

Women and LGBTIQ+ persons experiencing violence are exempt from social distancing measures. To ensure their continued access to justice, provincial courts continue to hear urgent matters, including protection orders, via conference call. At the sub-national level, Ontario has approved an emergency order that would enable school board employees to be voluntarily redeployed to social services during the COVID-19 pandemic, including women's shelters. Meanwhile, Yukon has provided free mobile phones, equipped with internet and four months of free services, to 325 women at risk of violence, to enable the option of safely accessing support if needed.

To support women's economic security, the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) has announced interest-free loans of up to CAD 40,000 (USD 32,000) for small businesses and not-for-profits, where women are often over-represented, to help cover their operating costs. The Government also provided a temporary one-time boost to the Canada Child Benefit of an extra CAD 300 (USD 240) per child in May 2020.

Canada has taken a wide array of emergency measures to support unpaid care work, from establishing childcare centres for essential workers in at least ten areas, to deploying members of the Canadian Armed Forces to support 54 long-term care facilities across Quebec and Ontario during the pandemic. In March 2020, an Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) was available for workers with caregiving responsibilities, accessible to both employees and the self-employed. In addition, the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit has provided CAD 500 (USD 400) per week for up to 26 weeks per household, for those with care responsibilities.

Canada has also announced investments in the care economy as a key pillar of its economic recovery strategy, committing up to CAD 1.2 billion (USD 1 billion) for a Safe Long-term Care Fund, to help provinces and territories protect people in long-term care facilities and support infection prevention and control; CAD 420 million (USD 337 million) in 2021-22 for provinces and territories to support the attraction and retention of early childhood education and care workers; CAD 15 million (USD 12 million) to sustain the existing federal Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Secretariat; and CAD 75 million (USD 60 million) in 2021-22 to improve the quality and accessibility of Indigenous child care programmes, among other funding streams.

<sup>10</sup> <https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/ca>



# COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

## GLOBAL FACTSHEET

### Cabo Verde

**The tracker records 16 measures taken by Cabo Verde in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, of which nine are gender-sensitive. Two measures support women's economic security, and five address violence against women. Out of just five measures to address unpaid care work taken across Sub-Saharan Africa, two were taken by Cabo Verde. As of 12 March 2021, Cabo Verde had recorded 155 deaths from COVID-19.<sup>11</sup>**

To address VAWG, the Government has run several campaigns to raise awareness about gender-based violence and how survivors can seek help during the pandemic. These include a television spot 'Bu ka sta bo so!' ('You are not alone'), produced by the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity and supported by UNFPA and UNDP, which was broadcast on prime time public and private television, as well as a campaign "Men Against Violence", in partnership with the National Football League. The Institute for Gender Equality and Equity created an SMS service and a specific email address for survivors of GBV to receive immediate support from specialists, in coordination with the National Police. The international campaign "Maskara 19" was adapted to the local context, providing survivors with a code to seek help for use in any pharmacy across the country. Furthermore, the Government reinforced the service provided by shelters on all islands to guarantee the protection of women survivors of GBV.

To support unpaid care work, a teleworking regime was implemented between March and June 2020 whereby parents could work from home to care for children under the age of three. Further, while day care centers for older and dependent persons were closed, home care measures for those who live alone were stepped up with the recruitment of social workers, caregivers and volunteers to guarantee assistance in liaison with services provided by Town Halls, Civil Protection and Health Services. This covers 712 older and dependent people, who were able to receive replacement home care services for the month of April.

In the context of national post-COVID 19 economic recovery plans, the Ministry of Finance launched an integrated programme to formalize informal economic activities up to 2023. The programme adopts a gender perspective in its analysis and integrates women's empowerment objectives, including through training in business development for women. The Government has launched State-backed lines of credit of USD 7.6 million to boost the liquidity of companies, including in tourism, catering, events and related sectors. Tourism-related sectors account for 11.9 per cent of women's employment compared to 5.4 per cent of men's in Cabo Verde.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/cv>

# COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

## GLOBAL FACTSHEET

### Fiji

**Fiji took 24 measures in response to COVID-19, of which 16 were gender-sensitive. All of these gender-sensitive measures address violence faced by women and girls during the pandemic. No measures have been identified in the tracker that address women's economic security or support unpaid care work in Fiji. This is in line with regional trends, where over two-thirds of gender-sensitive measures have taken in response to the upsurge of violence against women and girls. As of 12 March 2021, Fiji had recorded just two deaths from COVID-19, and no deaths since August of 2020.<sup>12</sup>**

In Fiji, the national COVID-19 response included the development of a GBV Working Group led by the Fiji Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and this working group spearheaded a coordinated response to VAWG during the pandemic. The group advanced strategies on behalf of all frontline service providers, developed technical tools, and adapted referral pathways, trainings and communication materials for the public on how to get help. One such training was specifically for health-care workers in hospitals and clinics to identify and safely refer women and children who have experienced violence, and a further training and resource kit was established for helpline staff. The group also developed a referral pathway for women with disabilities.

Throughout the COVID-19 period, GBV services have been considered essential services, and both crisis centers and shelters have been supported to stay open and accessible. The Government provided funding for two national free domestic violence and child helplines (1560 and 1325) which were operational throughout the COVID-19 period, and worked in partnership with telecommunications companies to send text messages containing information on the hotlines to the general population. The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation analysed data emerging from these helplines to look at reporting trends.

To improve access to justice during lockdowns, the GBV Working Group worked closely with Fiji Police and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre to help explain how to get a domestic violence restraining order over the telephone. In addition, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre vehicle has also been cleared by police to move around during the Government-imposed curfew, to transport survivors as required. The justice system has continued to treat violence against women and girls as emergency cases.

To raise awareness, the GBV Working Group has brought together individuals to speak out against GBV, ranging from the police commissioner to rugby players and faith leaders, as the basis for a national media campaign in three languages, which was aired in July, August and September. The Prime Minister also made a public address to condemn VAWG in the context of COVID-19.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://covid19.who.int/region/wpro/country/fj>