



Socialist International Women

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN

Message of Solidarity with all Women and Girls Worldwide during the COVID-19 Pandemic

DECLARATION

The Socialist International Women stands in firm solidarity with all women and girls worldwide during this deeply painful, devastating period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sadly, the suffering and disruption caused by this brutal disease on individuals, societies and economies is severely impacting women disproportionately to men. Women, who are already more vulnerable than men within communities, are experiencing greater levels of poverty due to a higher proportion of livelihoods most often held by women disappearing, are more likely to have increased carer responsibilities at home and are at increased risk of domestic violence and abuse as a direct result of being trapped at home during curfews and lockdowns. In addition, the majority of paid medical and care-giver roles are performed by women, meaning they are at significant risk of contracting COVID-19 as well as being exposed to increased levels of violence within their workplaces. The weight of the burdens on the world's mothers, grandmothers, sisters and daughters at this time is heavier than ever before. It is therefore vital that we all rise to stand firmly together in solidarity with women and girls everywhere. It is vital that we actively support each other and ensure the specific emergency needs of women and girls in this pandemic are addressed as an urgent priority both now and as our global communities re-build into the future.

As the pandemic continues all political and governmental institutions must be held to account for both their actions and inactions in relation to gender based issues as an urgent and critical humanitarian concern. Overall, women are acutely vulnerable in this crisis as they tend to earn less than men; have less in savings; are more likely to be part of the informal economy with no formal employee protections and the service sectors such as retail, market trading and hospitality which have all been severely affected; make up the majority of single-parent households, and are generally more likely to have to give up paid work to perform un-paid carer duties at home. Providing funding for initiatives such as shelters and financial support for victims of domestic violence, increasing child allowance payments for those who have lost income and emergency cash grants for informal traders who can no longer trade are just some of the possible options, which can support women and their families in extreme difficulties. It is vitally important that the overall effects of the pandemic do not become an excuse to derail the hard won progress made on gender equality. This is not just for the sake of women themselves but also for their communities and nations. It is essential that we emerge from this pandemic with gender equality and the specific needs of women and girls firmly at the forefront of policy development and in funding decisions for both emergency support and recovery programmes. At present, inexcusably, this is not the case, with just one in eight countries having specific measures in place to protect women against the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. It is absolutely vital that this number increases rapidly to swiftly alleviate the daily suffering of women and girls at this exceptionally difficult time.

The Socialist International Women is strongly supportive of all initiatives, which progress the goal of keeping gender equality in the public and political eye and increasing understanding of gender equality issues. This includes programmes such as the UN Development Programme's COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker and their recommendations for sex-disaggregated data to enable accurate assessment of the effectiveness or otherwise of

interventions and specifically identify areas of critical concern. The ability to review responses worldwide can be a powerful tool, which can provide a benchmark to hold governments, and communities accountable, demonstrate hard evidence of progress and the effectiveness of initiatives, and provide opportunities to share and learn between communities and nations.

It is also vital that women and men stand together as we move forward through this crisis. Working cooperatively we can support each other and help to heal individuals and families fractured by the brutally damaging effects of this pandemic for the benefit of all. The Socialist International Women warmly applauds all projects which promote positive change and greater understanding regarding gender equality, including the #HeForShe movement's #HeForSheAtHome campaign which calls on women to encourage and educate men in increasing their involvement and contribution in care giving and housework in their homes. By dissolving damaging patriarchal norms at grassroots level in the home, and demonstrating that change is absolutely possible, powerful new seeds of change can be nurtured and grown to create genuinely gender equal societies.

The Socialist International Women reaffirms its commitment to vigorously advocating for the meaningful participation of women at the highest levels of political life and the tenacious pursuit of gender parity in all political processes. The Socialist International Women remains firm in its endeavours to support and champion all who work to create concrete gender equality for women and girls and bring into daily reality the experience of respected human rights and freedoms, effective protection from gender based violence and the absence of gender based economic and political oppression.

The Socialist International Women urges all Socialist International members, affiliated women's groups, NGO's and governments to stand strongly in solidarity with all women and girls worldwide during this unprecedented time of crisis and into our future recovery.

References

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/feature-covid-19-economic-impacts-on-women>

<https://data.unwomen.org/resources/covid-19-emerging-gender-data-and-why-it-matters>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/press-release-launch-of-covid-19-global-gender-response-tracker>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/news-heforshe-launches-heforsheathome-campaign>