



Sharing the Burden:

Integrated Care Solutions that Benefit Families and Businesses, Boost Women's Entrepreneurship and Build a More Inclusive Economy

13:30-15:00 (Bangkok time, GMT+7), 11 June 2020

United Nations Virtual Forum on Responsible Business and Human Rights

New Challenges. New Approaches.

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Background

The unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men is a major barrier to gender equality in Asia and the Pacific. Women and girls spend up to 11 times more time than men and boys on unpaid care work. Without this work the economy would grind to a halt but despite its importance it is not counted in key economic data and its economic and social value remains invisible for policy makers. However, **the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the now even more disproportionate share of unpaid care work that women take on, and this may offer an opportunity to address the issue.** Unpaid care work keeps many women from paid work and other economic activities. In Asia and the Pacific only half of women aged 25 years and up participates in the labour force but it is estimated that improving women's labour force participation represents 58 percent of the total GDP opportunity in the region. So finding solutions to meet families' needs for affordable, accessible quality care services would contribute to gender equality, a more inclusive labour force, and economic growth. Also, as ILO has predicted, an increased investment in care services to achieve the SDGs could create 120 million more jobs in the global care economy by 2030. This is particularly important in Asia and the Pacific where expanding populations, changing family patterns, increasing urbanization, and rapidly ageing societies are increasing the demand for care services. Substantively increased investment in the care economy is thus needed and increased attention to how private and public sectors can collaborate to build a care infrastructure that benefits women, men, businesses and the economy overall.

Session Description

The session will highlight the urgency of a systemic approach of governments, business, and civil society to address the unequal distribution of domestic and care work. The session will discuss the emerging solutions for recognising, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work and ensuring care providers' representation in policy and decision-making around care. Special focus will be on care service solutions initiated by private sector, employers, and entrepreneurs and how these have been stimulated by public policies and regulations such as India's Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act and Vietnam's Labour Code, which mandate employers' support to employees' care needs. This offers opportunities for women

entrepreneurs to build sustainable social enterprises for care provision, thereby simultaneously meeting the needs of working parents; improving companies' ability to attract, recruit and retain staff from a larger and more diverse talent pool; and professionalizing care services through up-skilling and certification of care givers, and creating decent care jobs for especially women.

Session Objectives

This session aims to:

- Highlight the urgent need for systemically addressing the unpaid care work issue and women's disproportionate share of it in Asia and the Pacific, which especially impedes women's equal economic participation, hurts business, and slows down the economy.
- Shine a light on how crucial it is to address the unequal burden of care work for a gender sensitive COVID-19 recovery and a long-term more inclusive economy. It will appeal to decision makers to significantly increase budgets for this often-deprioritized issue.
- Showcase good examples of entrepreneurship- and/ or market-driven care provision models where families' care needs are met through innovative, adaptable ways of service provision and social enterprise initiatives, while facilitated by appropriate regulatory frameworks and financing from public and private side.

Questions

- How can public and private sectors collaborate to recognise, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work, and enable more equal labour force participation for women and men?
- Which types of legislation and policy have proven successful in incentivising employers to support and implement care solutions for their employees, and what has been the impact on the business?
- How does an entrepreneur or social enterprise build a viable, responsible care business that on one side offers accessible, affordable, quality care services and on the other side creates decent, fair wage care jobs?
- How can the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) by UN Women and the UN Global Compact be used to promote and expand employer-supported childcare?

Speakers

- **H.E. Mr. Staffan Herrström**, Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden to Thailand
- **Ms. Hilde Hardeman**, Head of the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, European Commission
- **Ms. Sunita Cherian**, Chief Culture Officer & Senior Vice President, Corporate Human Resources, Wipro Limited



- **Ms. Joni Simpson**, Senior Specialist in Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination for East & South East Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization
- **Ms. Richa Singh**, Research and Policy Lead for Asia, Oxfam Asia
- **Ms. Nadira Mohd Yusoff**, Founder and CEO, KIDDOCARE
- **Ms. Sarah Knibbs (moderator)**, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific