

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

GLOBAL FACTSHEET

Version 1 (September 28, 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in at least 27 million cases and over 900,000 deaths worldwide.¹ 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.² 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. 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.³ 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 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](#).

¹ As of 10am CEST on 6 September 2020. WHO Weekly Epidemiological Update. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200907-weekly-epi-update-4.pdf?sfvrsn=f5f607ee_2

² 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>

³ 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.

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

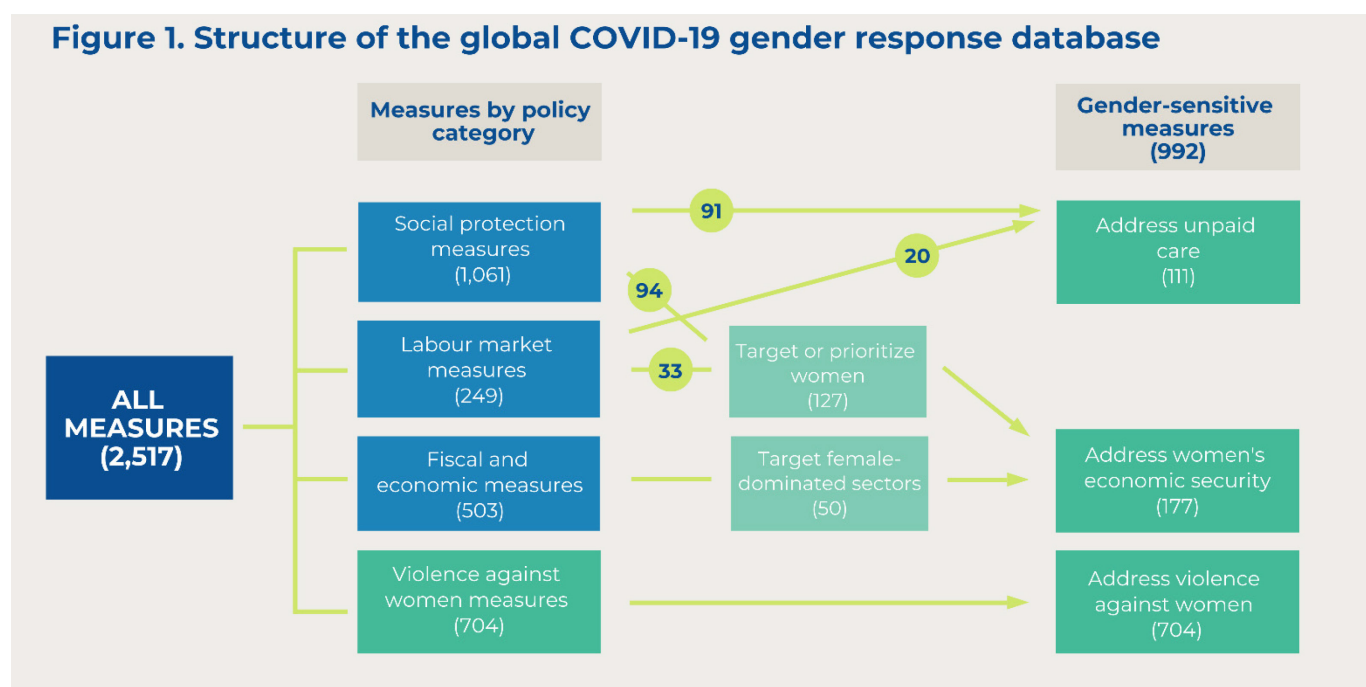
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As governments move from mitigating the harshest impacts of the crisis, to recovery and the longer-term imperative to 'build back better', it will be critical to build on the positive lessons emerging from the immediate policy responses to the pandemic. These include building, strengthening and extending gender-sensitive social protection systems; creating new sources of decent work for women; investing in the care economy as a key foundation for economies and societies; and scaling up the global response to eradicate the scourge of violence against women and girls, once and for all.

I. What is a gender-sensitive measure?

The set of all measures contained in the tracker consists of 2,517 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 1). These measures were partly imported from other databases and partly collected by UNDP and UN Women (see [methodological note](#)).

Figure 1. Structure of the global COVID-19 gender response database



COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

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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, including:

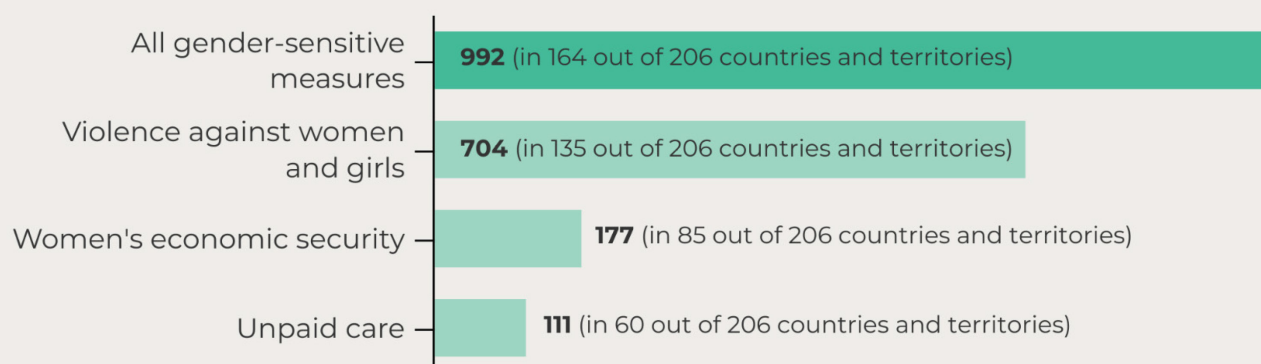
- all violence against women measures are categorized as gender-sensitive by default
- social protection and labour market measures are defined as gender-sensitive if they target women's economic security or address unpaid care
- fiscal and economic measures are defined as gender-sensitive if they provide 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.⁴

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.

II. The global picture

At the global level, the tracker records 206 countries and territories that have taken 2,517 measures in response to COVID-19. Of these, 992 measures across 164 countries and territories have been identified as gender-sensitive (Figure 2). Most of these measures (704 in 135 countries) focus on stepping up action to address violence against women and girls (VAWG). Measures to strengthen women's economic security (177) and address unpaid care work (111) are much fewer in number (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Number of gender-sensitive measures by dimension



⁴ 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.

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

GLOBAL FACTSHEET

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, 199 countries and territories have adopted 1,310 social protection and labour market measures in response to COVID-19. However, only 18 per cent of these measures (238) are gender-sensitive in that they target women's economic security or address unpaid care (Figure 3).
- Similarly, 130 countries and territories have adopted 503 fiscal and economic measures to help businesses weather the crisis, but only 10 per cent of these measures (50) aim to strengthen women's economic security by channelling resources to female-dominated sectors (Figure 4).

III. 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, North America, Australia and New Zealand are leading the response on violence against women and girls (VAWG) and unpaid care – accounting for 32 per cent of all VAWG measures and almost half 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).

Figure 3. Proportion of gender-sensitive measures out of total social protection and labour market response

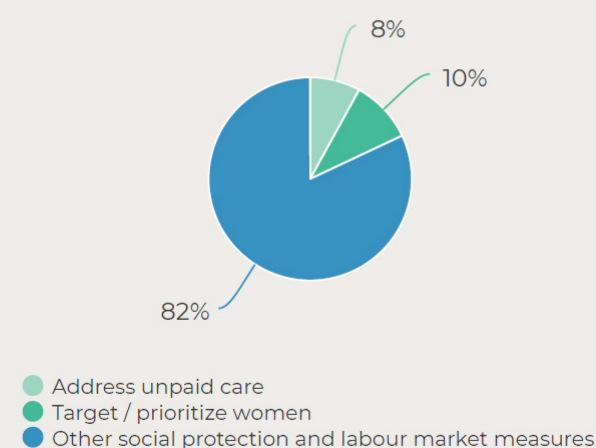
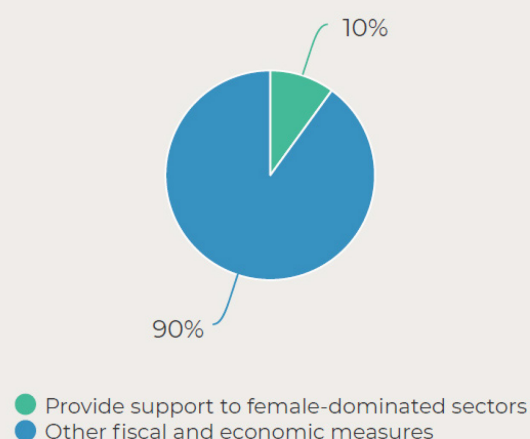


Figure 4. Proportion of gender-sensitive measures out of total fiscal and economic response



COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

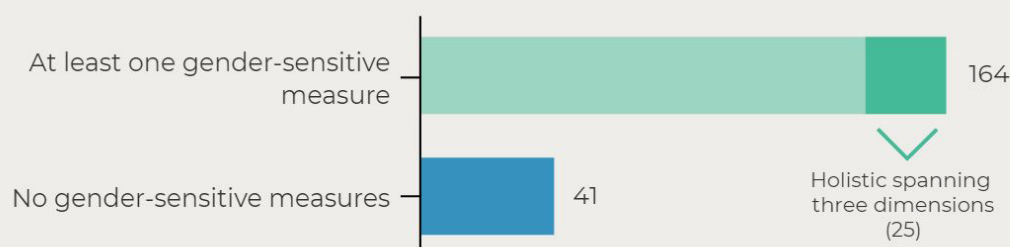
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Table 1. Number of gender-sensitive measures, by type and region

	Gender-sensitive measures	Violence against women	Women's economic security	Unpaid care
Central and Southern Asia (11 out of 13 countries and territories)	76	60	12	4
East Asia, South-East Asia and Oceania (22 out of 28 countries and territories)	100	82	9	9
Europe, Northern America, Australia and New Zealand (48 out of 52 countries and territories)	340	256	21	63
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 out of 43 countries and territories)	261	177	61	23
Northern Africa and Western Asia (19 out of 24 countries and territories)	102	65	29	8
Sub-Saharan Africa (29 out of 46 countries and territories)	113	64	45	4
TOTAL (164 out of 206 countries and territories)	992	704	177	111

Based on the compiled data, only 25 countries (12 per cent of those analysed), register a holistic response, with measures that span at least three dimensions (see Figure 5 and Annex I). On the other hand, one-fifth of countries and territories analysed (41 out of 206) register no gender-sensitive measures in response to COVID-19 at all.

Figure 5. Number of countries by scope of gender response



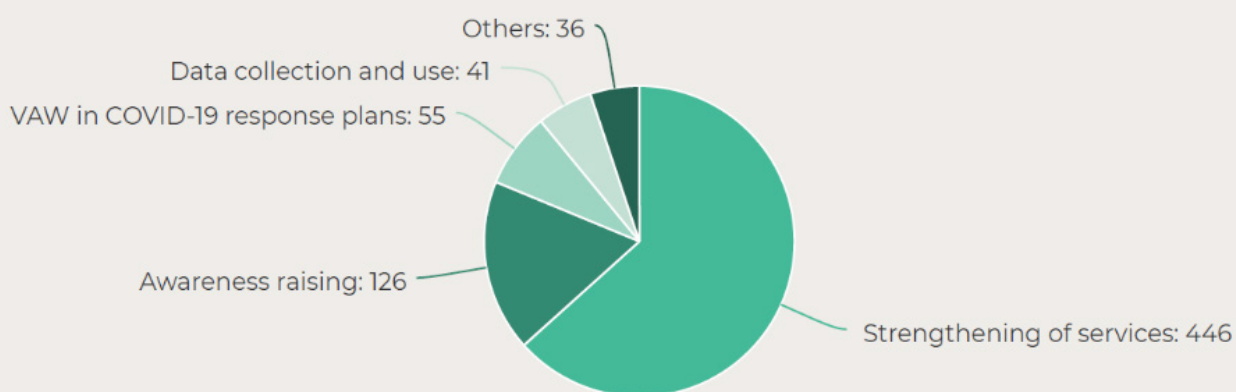
IV. Which gender policies are governments prioritizing?

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

71 per cent of all gender-sensitive measures (704 measures in 135 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 VAWG measures, 63 per cent (447 in 121 countries) aim to strengthen services for women survivors (see Figure 6). Most of these measures focus on helplines and other reporting mechanisms (122 measures in 84 countries), shelters (82 measures in 63 countries) and police and judicial responses (96 measures in 65 countries) (see Figure 7).

Figure 6. Number of violence against women measures, by type



In **India**, for example, the National Commission for Women has launched a WhatsApp number to report cases of domestic violence, in addition to the online reporting services that were already operational.

Measures to raise awareness about the increased risks of VAWG during the pandemic and how to seek help were taken by a significant number of countries (126 measures in 88 countries). However, a minority of countries report measures to collect, analyse and use data to inform policies to counter VAWG in the current context (41 measures across 36 countries) (see Figure 6).

Services to respond to and prevent VAWG must be treated as essential services and as an integral part of national and local COVID-19 response plans. However, the tracker shows that only 48 countries have taken this step, with 55 measures recorded and very few adequately funded. This is worrying, as the pandemic will have long-lasting consequences that

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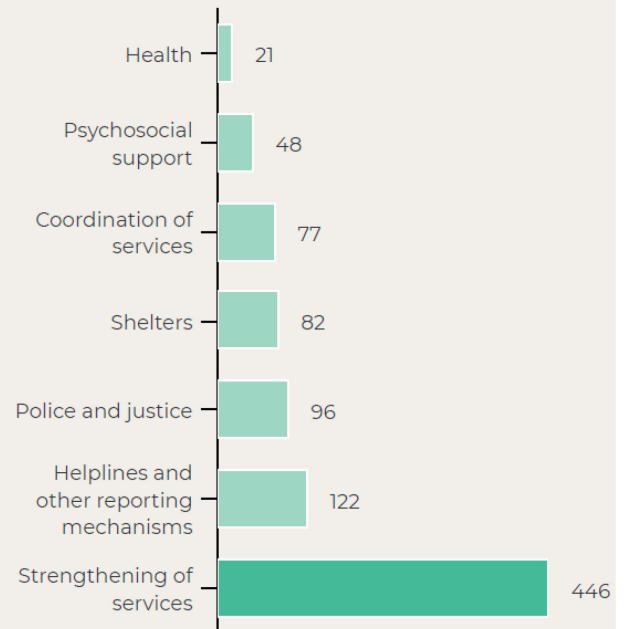
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increase the risk of violence for women and girls. As such, commitments that are part of governments' sustained and long-term planning and policies are critical to address these risks. Positive examples include:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, which has developed a plan to support civil society organizations running shelters as an integral part of the intervention plans of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees.
- **Colombia**, where the Ministry of Health adopted a resolution to transfer financial resources for response and protection measures for gender-based violence survivors.
- **Sweden**, where additional funding – approximately €9 million (USD 10.5 million) – has been channelled to civil society organizations to support their work to address violence against women, children and LGBTIQ+ persons by intimate partners or family members.

Very few measures to address online violence (which evidence shows has increased during the pandemic⁵) and to reach the most marginalized groups of women have been identified.⁶

Figure 7. Number of measures to strengthen services, by measure sub-type



121

COUNTRIES

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

ONLY 48

COUNTRIES

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

ONLY 36

COUNTRIES

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

⁵ UN Women. 2020. "Brief: Online and ICT-facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19." April. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/brief-online-and-ict-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-during-covid-19>

⁶ These are identified under the "others" VAWG measure type in the tracker.

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

GLOBAL FACTSHEET

Overall, governments have widely adopted measures to strengthen services for women survivors of violence, but the response has lagged behind in making prevention and redress of VAWG an essential part of national and local COVID-19 response plans and collecting and using data to inform the response.

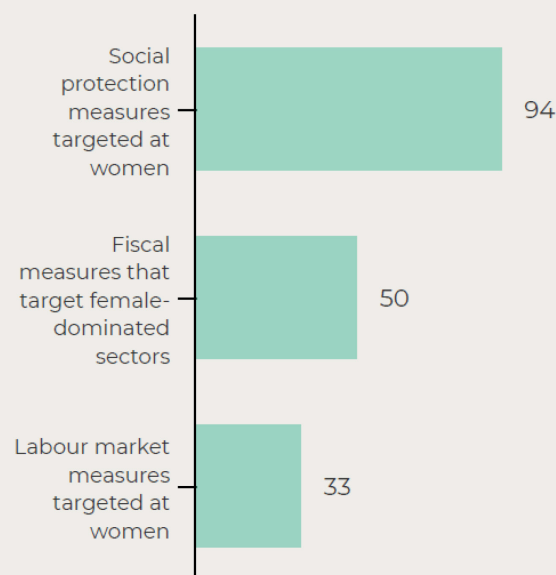
Women's economic security

Out of the 1,813 fiscal and economic, social protection and labour market measures registered for over 200 countries and territories, only 177 measures across 85 countries and territories address women's economic security – amounting to just 10 per cent of the total fiscal, economic, social protection and jobs response.

Roughly half of the measures addressing women's economic security fall into the **social protection** category (94 measures in 58 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 (51 measures in 41 countries) and food assistance or other forms of in-kind support (21 measures in 20 countries) that prioritize women as the main recipients. For example:

- **Argentina** scaled up cash and in-kind social protection for women, including those in the informal economy. On 21 April, a new unconditional one-off cash transfer “Emergency Family Income” was launched targeting households of unemployed, informal and domestic workers, with women as primary recipients. Benefit levels are set at ARS 10,000 pesos (about USD 132, roughly equivalent to 75 per cent of the national minimum wage). According to the latest data from the Ministry of Economy, women comprise around 60 per cent of recipients.
- **Pakistan** is using digital technology to rapidly roll out the “Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme”, reaching 16.9 million families in need of livelihood support. Some 4.5 million existing female beneficiaries will receive top-up benefits for a duration of four months.
- **Rwanda** is targeting female-headed households and 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.

Figure 8. Number of measures that address women's economic security, by policy category



COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

GLOBAL FACTSHEET

Labour market measures account for 19 per cent of measures that address women's economic security (33 measures across 20 countries), spanning wage subsidies, support for women in informal employment and women entrepreneurs as well as training programmes that target women. For example:

- **Ecuador** and **Peru** have used public information campaigns and adjusted labour legislation to protect the rights of domestic workers.
- **Colombia, Mexico** and **Nigeria** 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.
- **Egypt, Georgia, Honduras, Morocco** and **Togo** 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.

Finally, 35 countries have taken 50 **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 just over 10 per cent of the total fiscal and economic response globally (see Figure 4 above).

- For example, **Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica** and **Trinidad and Tobago** prioritized fiscal support to tourism – which employs a higher share of women than men – through the provision of public sector loans and subsidies.

The low number of labour market, fiscal and economic measures aimed at strengthening women's economic security or supporting the sectors that employ them signals a major gap in the response so far. 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.

ONLY
58
COUNTRIES

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

ONLY
35
COUNTRIES

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

ONLY
20
COUNTRIES

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

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

GLOBAL FACTSHEET

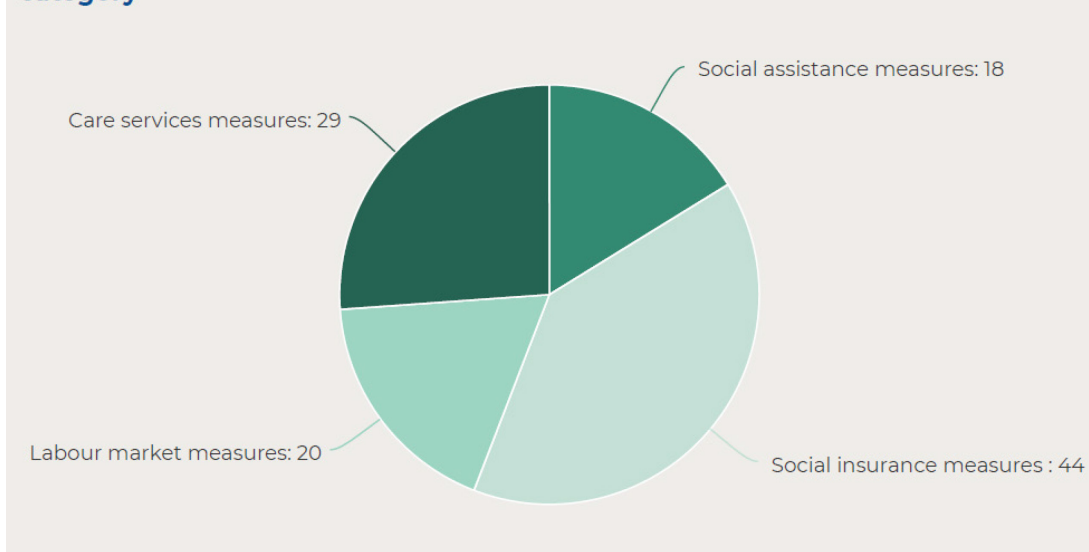
Unpaid care

Only 111 out of the total 1,310 social protection and labour market measures taken in response to COVID-19 directly address unpaid care, representing only 8 per cent of the total response (see Figure 3 above).

Social protection accounts for the bulk of these measures (91 in 59 countries). This includes social insurance, social assistance and care services (Figure 9). 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 (40 measures across 36 countries), while “cash-for-care” programmes that compensate parents for school or day care closures (15 measures across 12 countries) dominate social assistance. For example:

- **Austria, Canada, Chile, Spain and the Republic of Korea** have set up new or extended existing paid parental leave schemes to allow workers time to care for dependant family members. In Austria employees with children can take up to three weeks of care leave at full pay, partly government subsidized.
- In **Poland**, if the nursery, children’s club, kindergarten or school a child attends is closed due to COVID-19, parents are entitled to 14 additional days of childcare allowance. Likewise, the **Cook Islands, Czechia, Germany and Italy** provide parents with extra cash when childcare services and schools are closed.

Figure 9. Number of measures that address unpaid care, by policy category



Of the measures aimed at supporting the continued functioning of care services and their adjustment to the pandemic context (29 measures across 26 countries), 12 are aimed at childcare services and 17 at long-term care for older persons or persons with disabilities.

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

GLOBAL FACTSHEET

- **Australia** and **Costa Rica** have both ensured that childcare services remain open during lockdown to provide continued support to essential and other workers with young children.
- To support the provision of long-term care, **Serbia** has increased the salary of care workers in nursing homes by 10 per cent. **Kuwait** has ensured workers as well as people living in nursing homes receive three months' worth of food support.

Among the 20 **labour market** measures across 18 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 (12 measures across 11 countries) and additional wage subsidies for workers with care responsibilities (six measures across six countries).

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, the Plurinational State of Bolivia** and **Spain** have allowed parents to reduce work hours for COVID-19-related family care.
- **North Macedonia**, and **Trinidad and Tobago** have enabled employees with care responsibilities to perform their work duties from home or remotely. Similarly, in **Cabo Verde** parents of small children, in consultation with their employer, can work from home.
- **Montenegro, Latvia, Cuba** and **Germany** have set up new 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 **Uzbekistan**, one of the working parents is provided paid leave at full pay for the duration of school and kindergarten shutdowns.

Overall, with less than one-third of countries and territories (60 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.

Beyond the immediate response to contain the negative impact of the pandemic, the COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity for countries to build back better for women and girls and transform existing economic models towards a renewed social contract that prioritizes social justice and gender equality. Scaling up investments in the areas covered by this tracker is a critical step for advancing towards this goal.

36

COUNTRIES

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

ONLY 12

COUNTRIES

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

ONLY 11

COUNTRIES

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

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

GLOBAL FACTSHEET

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

Country name	Total number of measures	Violence against women	Women's economic security	Unpaid care
Albania	11	9	1	1
Angola	6	4	1	1
Argentina	26	13	8	5
Bolivia	18	14	2	2
Canada	12	9	1	2
Chile	20	12	7	1
China	6	3	2	1
Costa Rica	18	8	7	3
Egypt	21	11	7	3
India	16	9	6	1
Indonesia	6	4	1	1
Italy	8	4	1	3
Latvia	7	3	1	3
Malta	8	5	1	2
Mexico	12	6	5	1
Netherlands	8	6	1	1
New Zealand	10	7	1	2
Peru	14	10	2	2
Romania	12	9	1	2
Russian Federation	7	1	5	1
Serbia	10	5	1	4
Slovenia	5	3	1	1
Spain	16	10	1	5
Trinidad and Tobago	8	5	1	2
United States of America	7	3	3	1

Annex II: Countries in focus

Argentina

The tracker records 44 measures taken by the Government of Argentina in response to COVID-19, of which 26 have been defined as gender-sensitive. Of these, eight measures address women's economic security, five target unpaid care work, and 13 address violence against women. The high number of gender-sensitive measures makes Argentina's emergency response exemplary in the region, in part in reflecting the influence of feminists in key ministerial positions and a strong and multifaceted feminist movement. In Argentina, authorities adopted swift and strict measures, involving a full closure of borders and a nationwide lockdown beginning on 20 March, which has continued for much of the population. The country had recorded 12,229 confirmed deaths from COVID-19 as of 18 September.⁷

A strong package of social protection measures has been implemented, ranging from bolstering pre-existing targeted cash-transfer schemes, to new measures addressing paid and unpaid care work. Paid leave was extended to a range of groups, including domestic workers in private homes, adults over 60, pregnant women, people with pre-existing health conditions and to those with dependent children requiring care. In March, this paid leave guarantee was extended further to all workers in non-essential sectors. Regarding cash transfers, a non-contributory, lump-sum payment of 'Emergency Family Income' (*Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia*) was provided once every two months (April, June and August). These payments prioritized women as cash recipients, included informal and domestic workers, and reached almost 9 million beneficiaries. Beneficiaries of the Pregnancy Allowance and Universal Child Allowance have also received an additional bonus, which increases in value for those with two or more children, and has reached 4.3 million people. Support has also been provided to homes and residences that care for persons with disabilities, in the form of supplies and funding.

Women's economic security has also been supported through gender-sensitive labour market measures. Firstly, through an agreement between the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity and the Ministry of Social Development, people experiencing gender-based violence are eligible for entry into a national "Promote Work" scheme that supports studies and job training. Secondly, legal regulations prescribed that those working remotely and responsible for children under age 13, older adults, or persons with disabilities have the right to schedules compatible with their care responsibilities.

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 the strict lockdown measures 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 the network of available shelters. 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.

⁷ <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/argentina?country=~ARG#what-is-the-cumulative-number-of-confirmed-deaths>

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

GLOBAL FACTSHEET

Australia

The tracker records 36 measures taken by Australia in response to COVID-19, of which 16 have been defined as gender-sensitive. After an initial spike in COVID-19 cases in March–April, numbers dropped to relatively low levels, but have increased again in recent months, with 832 confirmed deaths as of 18 September.⁸ From a gender perspective, Australia initially demonstrated a particularly innovative response regarding unpaid care work (four measures), with a free childcare scheme for the children of essential workers, as well as a strong response to addressing the rise in violence against women during lockdown (10 measures).

In terms of support for unpaid care work, the “Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package” was a payment to support childcare services, including centre-based day care, family day care, outside-school-hours care and in-home care, to remain open during the lockdown period. To receive these payments, child support services must prioritize care to essential workers, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and previously enrolled children, and must not charge any fees. This was highly significant not only for working mothers, who could access free childcare, but also for ensuring the ongoing employment of childcare providers, the majority of whom are women. However, the emergency childcare package has now been significantly scaled back.

In addition, various measures have been taken to support families in caring for sick family members, namely an expansion of income-support payments and a guarantee of two days of unpaid caregiver’s leave. Workers (including casual workers and self-employed) can now receive the JobSeeker payment if they care for someone who is affected by COVID-19, and those not entitled to this payment can receive the Crisis Payment (Special Benefit) if they are caring for someone required to be in quarantine or self-isolation.

Regarding measures to end gender-based violence, Australia has a comprehensive package of 12 measures across multiple areas. As an overarching response, the Government announced an AUD 150 million (USD 107 million) Domestic Violence Support Package to help family and domestic violence support services meet the growing demand as a result of the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. This package includes funding for the legal assistance sector, as well as for the national domestic, family and sexual violence hotline, 1800RESPECT. The “Help is Here” campaign was also launched as part of this package, providing clear information about where to seek help for family, domestic and sexual violence. In addition, a dedicated COVID-19 family and domestic violence taskforce was set up within the Department of Communities, to work with police and service-providers to ensure services remain open during the pandemic. Regarding access to justice, survivor protection and support facilities have been granted extended powers of representation for survivors of violence, to a limited extent, for the duration of COVID-19. Some judicial services have been moved online, including online access to restraining orders.

⁸ <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-deaths?country=~AUS>

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

GLOBAL FACTSHEET

Ethiopia

Ethiopia has taken a total of 10 measures in response to COVID-19, of which five have been coded as gender-sensitive. While limited in number and scope, the gender-sensitive measures that have been taken address women's economic security (three) and violence against women (two), with indirect benefits for women's unpaid care work. While Ethiopia recorded relatively low numbers of COVID-19 cases in the first half of 2020, since July the country has seen growing numbers of confirmed cases, and a death toll of over 1,000.⁹ More broadly, as part of the COVID-response, the country announced a five-month state of emergency on 8 April, with physical distancing measures and restrictions on community gatherings, school closures and mandatory quarantines for travellers.¹⁰

Ethiopia is one of the only examples of where a country has taken measures that grant paid leave to beneficiaries of public works programmes, with direct benefits for women's economic security and indirect support for their unpaid care work. This is through the Urban Productive Safety Net Project (UPSNP), which partly targets female-headed households and foresees the provision of both community-based childcare services and reduced working time for women with children. Before and after childbirth, the programme enables women to receive direct support without work requirements. During COVID-19, beneficiaries of the UPSNP will receive an advance of three months' payment while on leave from their public work obligations. Further, beneficiaries of the UPSNP will be able to withdraw 50 per cent of their savings to cover expenses arising from the COVID-19 emergency. In addition, low-income citizens who are currently not benefitting from UPSNP will be covered by the Project and will receive three months advance payment. In 16 cities, citizens who are identified as being at high risk of COVID-19 exposure and harm and who need assistance will also receive three months' payment.

The Rural Productive Safety Net Project has also made a number of adaptations for COVID-19. Firstly, the public works requirement has been waived since the beginning of April. Secondly, the project will scale up horizontally and vertically for 3 to 6 months, starting in July. The estimated scale-up caseload is 1 million people, with an estimated cost of USD 50–70 million. It is likely that benefits will include both cash and food. The cash benefit value will increase by about 22 per cent for scale-up.

In Harari State specifically, paid sick leave has been implemented for government employees who are at a higher risk of COVID-19 (older persons, pregnant women, those with underlying conditions). These groups have been permitted to stay at home while continuing to receive their salaries, ensuring that higher-risk groups are able to maintain social distancing measures while remaining secure in their income.

To address violence against women in Ethiopia, the courts have continued to hear domestic violence cases with minimal interruption during COVID-19. In addition, in Hawassa City, "Safe City" messages on prevention and response to domestic and sexual violence have been shared with religious authorities for community outreach.

⁹ WHO. 2020. <https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/et>

¹⁰ UN Women. 2020. https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20africa/attachments/publications/2020/policy-brief_evawg%20covid_ethiopia.pdf?la=en&vs=2540

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

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Fiji

Fiji took 20 measures in response to COVID-19, of which 13 were gender-sensitive. All of these measures address the violence faced by women and girls during the pandemic, one of the highest totals in this policy category in the region. Despite this constructive response in the area of ending violence against women, Fiji has not taken any measures to address women's economic security, unpaid care work, or targeting feminized sectors of the economy. As of 18 September, Fiji had recorded just two deaths from COVID-19.

Fiji has integrated ending violence against women and girls into the national COVID-19 response through the development of a GBV Working Group under the Safety and Protection Cluster, led by the Fiji Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA). The GBV Working Group advanced strategies on behalf of all service-providers and signed on to the Fiji Service-Delivery Protocol for Responding to Cases of GBV. Specifically, the GBV Working Group developed technical tools, adapted referral pathways, and provided trainings and communication. This included a referral pathway for women with disabilities. The MWCPA also analysed domestic violence helpline data to look at trends in reporting during the pandemic.

Throughout the COVID-19 period, GBV services have been considered essential services. To strengthen services for survivors, the Fiji Government funded two national free domestic violence and child helplines which were operational throughout the COVID-19 period. The GBV Working Group strengthened psychosocial support through the development of information, education and communication materials and training for helpline staff. A training was also developed specifically for health-care workers in hospitals and clinics to identify and safely refer women and children who have experienced violence. 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 GBV Working Group negotiated that women fleeing violence should be transported in police vehicles to support services during curfew hours. 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.

To raise awareness about gender-based violence, 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.