

COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

Factsheet: Latin America and the Caribbean

Version 1 (September 28, 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in at least 27 million cases and over 900,000 deaths worldwide.¹ 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 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 so far by governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, 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 economic insecurity caused by the large-scale loss of jobs, incomes and livelihoods.³ The region has one of the highest number of gender-sensitive measures (261), second only to Europe, Northern America, Australia and New Zealand. However, the gender response has

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.⁴ Measures for Latin America and the Caribbean region were mostly imported from the ECLAC COVID-19 Observatory, which includes a specific section on Gender Policies, produced in partnership with UN Women. 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, for example, 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 10 am 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>

³ Asia-Pacific Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group. 2020. “The COVID-19 Outbreak and Gender: Regional Analysis and Recommendations from Asia and the Pacific.” May. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GiHA%20WG%20analysis%20%20brief.pdf>

⁴ 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.

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been uneven across countries and patchy in some areas, particularly in unpaid care. Despite this, examples of innovative, gender-responsive measures continue to be implemented in a range of contexts.

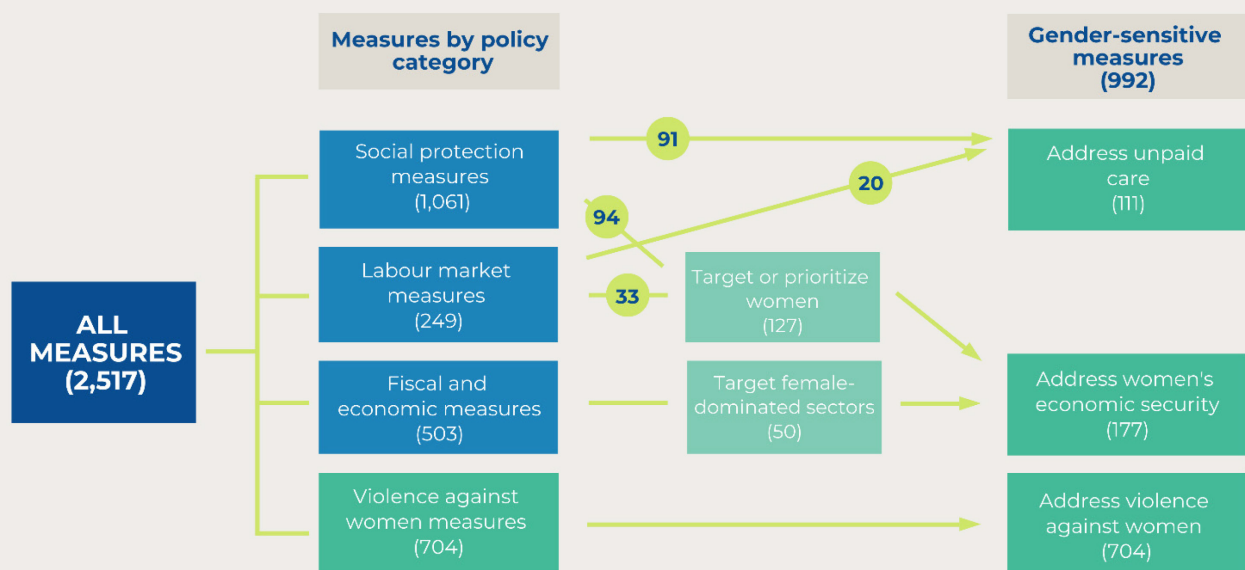
I. What is a gender-sensitive measure?

The set of all measures contained in the global 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](#)).⁵

Gender-sensitive measures (992 in total) 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

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



⁵ In this region, measures were partly imported from other existing databases, mainly from ECLAC COVID-19 Observatory produced in partnership with UN Women, and partly collected by UNDP and UN Women.

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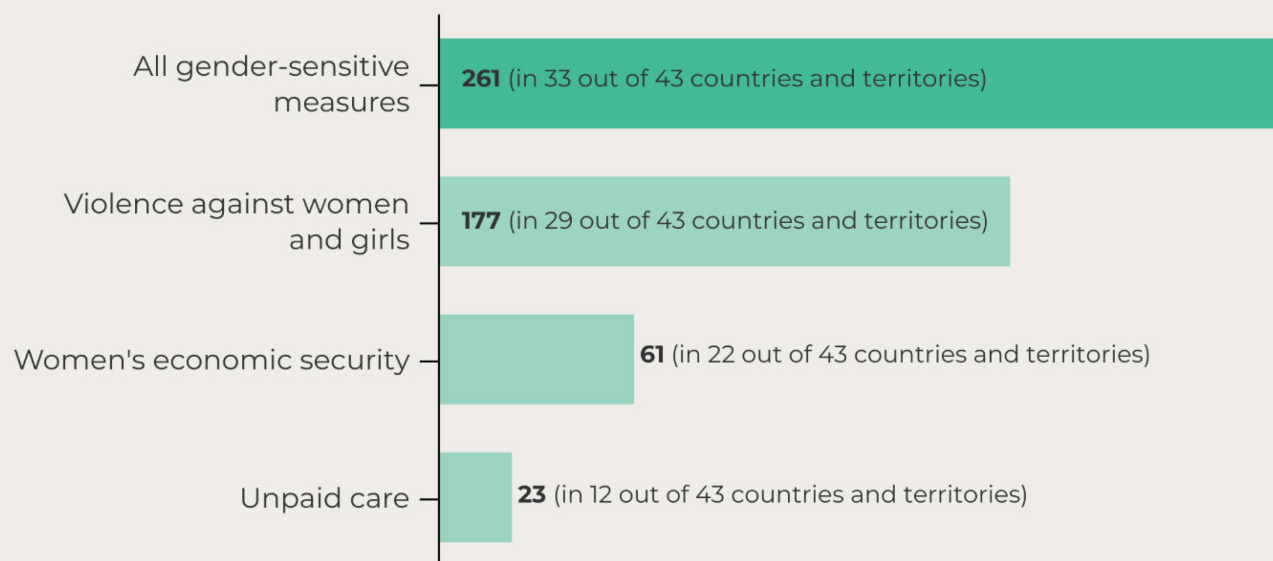
- fiscal and economic measures are defined as gender-sensitive if they provide support to female-dominated sectors of the economy, on the assumption that this is likely to protect women's employment and thereby their economic security.⁶

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 regional picture

Across Latin America and the Caribbean, the tracker registers 33 countries and territories (see Annex I for the full list) out of the 43 analysed have taken a total of 261 gender-sensitive measures in response to COVID-19. Echoing global trends, most measures taken in the region address violence against women (177 measures across 29 countries), followed by measures to address women's economic security (61 measures across 22 countries), with relatively fewer measures to address unpaid care work (23 measures across 12 countries). Most countries taking at least one gender-sensitive measure are in Latin America (20 countries), compared to 13 in the Caribbean.

Figure 2: Number of gender-sensitive measures in Latin America and the Caribbean, by dimension



⁶ 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, 42 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean have adopted 339 social protection and labour market measures in response to COVID-19. Of these measures, 22 per cent (75) are gender-sensitive in that they strengthen women's economic security or address unpaid care (Figure 3) – a comparatively higher share than in other developing regions.
- Similarly, 23 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean have adopted 58 fiscal and economic measures to help businesses weather the crisis, but less than 16 per cent of these measures (nine) have aimed to strengthen women's economic security by channelling resources to feminized sectors (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Proportion of gender-sensitive measures out of total social protection and labour market response in Latin America and the Caribbean

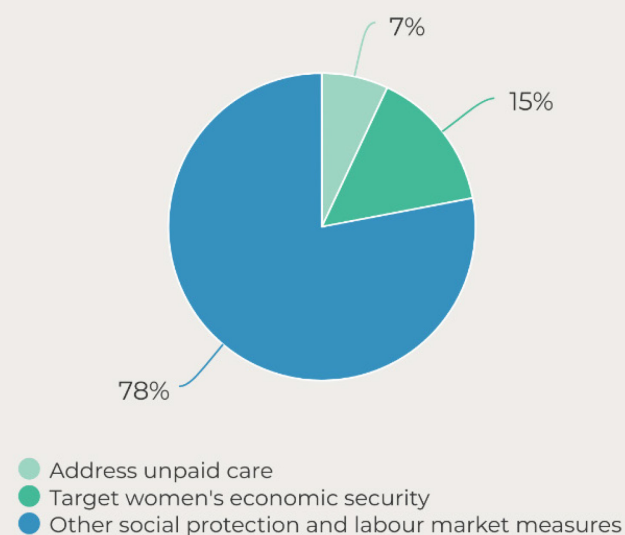
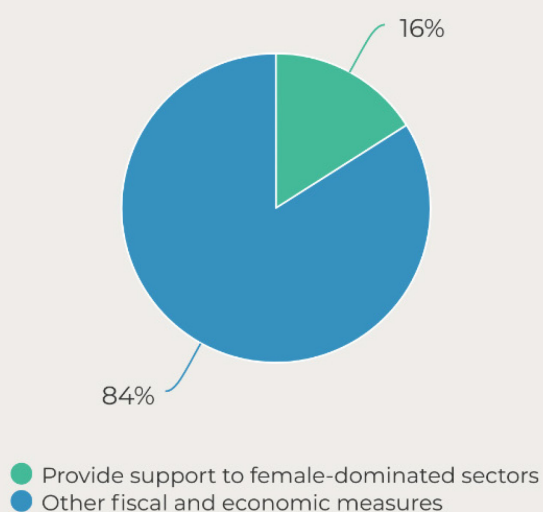


Figure 4. Proportion of gender-sensitive measures out of total fiscal and economic response in Latin America and the Caribbean



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III. Which gender policies are governments prioritizing?

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

Some 68 per cent of all gender-sensitive measures in Latin America and the Caribbean (177 measures in 29 countries) focus on preventing and/or responding to violence against women and girls.⁷ Latin American countries account for the bulk of these measures (223 measures across 20 countries), while comparatively fewer Caribbean countries (24 measures across nine countries) register measures to address violence against women.

Almost two-thirds of all VAWG measures in the region (114 in 26 countries) are aimed at strengthening services for women survivors (Figure 5), including through helplines and other reporting mechanisms (30 measures in 22 countries), police and judicial responses (29 measures in 19 countries), coordinated services (23 measures in 17 countries), shelters (15 measures in 12 countries) and continued provision of psychosocial support (11 measures across nine countries). For example:

- In **Argentina**, shelters for survivors were identified as essential services to ensure their continued functioning and the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity has coordinated with trade unions, the private sector and local governments to repurpose hotels to expand the network of available shelters.
- In **Barbados**, the social services helpline has been expanded to offer services for survivors of intimate partner violence and virtual courts have been introduced for urgent cases, which include cases of violence against women and girls.
- In **Bolivia**, **Chile** and **Colombia**, women can report violence and seek help in pharmacies, usually using a key word that alerts pharmacy staff of the situation.
- In **Colombia**, the Presidential Council for Women supported the adaptation of 65 buildings to be used as shelters for women at high risk of violence, while the Ministry of Health has taken specific actions to support sexual and reproductive health during the pandemic, including abortion care in accordance with the law.
- Foreseeing the possibility that a survivor may not be able to leave their home to report violence, **Costa Rica** has strengthened patrolling and home visits in areas where situations of violence have been previously registered.
- In **Cuba**, *Las Casas de Orientación a la Mujer y la Familia*, which offer individual counselling, group activities and training programmes for women experiencing violence, have continued their work.
- In the **Dominican Republic**, shelters for survivors of violence have been declared essential services and they, along with *Línea Mujer *212* (a women's hotline) remain available 24/7 during lockdown.
- In **El Salvador**, an emergency psychological support centre has been established, staffed by medical professionals and psychologists, providing support for women with mental health problems, and particularly for survivors of violence in the context of confinement.

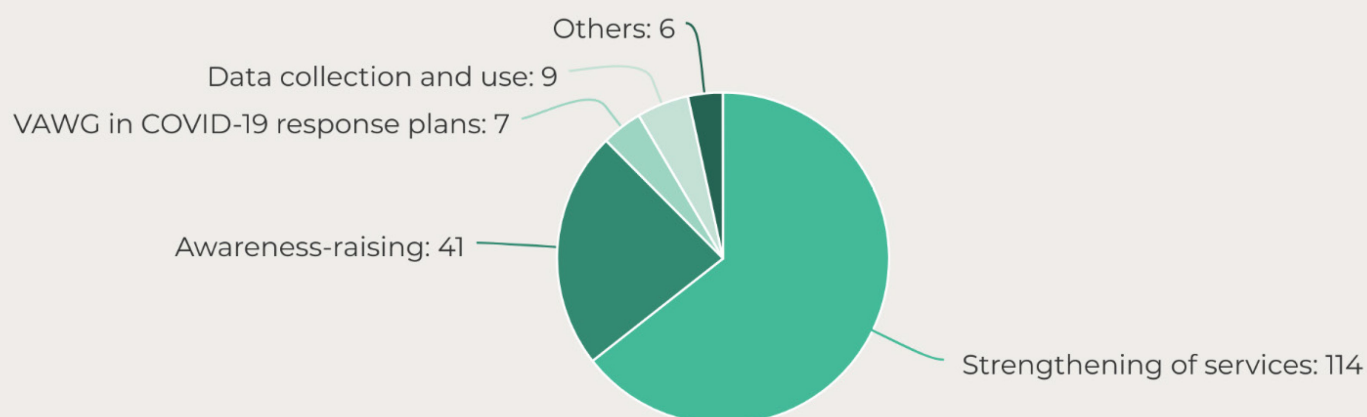
⁷ These measures were partly imported from other existing databases, mainly from ECLAC COVID19 Observatory produced in partnership with UN Women, and partly collected by UNDP and UN Women.

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- In **Guyana**, two toll-free 24-hour helplines were established for survivors of sexual, domestic and gender-based violence. Women who might not be able to speak safely may contact the service through WhatsApp, email or Messenger.
- In **Panama**, the Health Minister, prosecutor's office, police, and judiciary are all part of an intersectoral group created by the Minister of Social Development to respond to violence against women during the COVID-19 emergency.
- In **Peru**, there are 175 mental health centres operated by the Ministry of Health, all of which offer services to survivors of violence via telephone or online. All services are free and available seven days a week.
- **Saint Kitts and Nevis** announced the strengthening of counselling and support services for women who are survivors of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Police Service's Gender-Based Violence Unit, staffed with specially trained police personnel, is available to support survivors during COVID-19.

Figure 5. Number of violence against women measures in Latin America and the Caribbean, by type



The second most common type of measure taken in the region was awareness-raising and campaigns (41 measures in 22 countries). For example:

- **Brazil** launched the campaign '*Para algumas famílias, o isolamento está sendo ainda mais difícil*' (For some families, isolation has been even harder) to tackle domestic violence, focusing on the vulnerabilities of women, children and older persons during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Ecuador**, through the social media campaigns *#MujerEcuadorTeAcompaña* (*#WomenEcuadorIsWithYou*) uses infographics and videos to disseminate information about helplines, care services and guidance in cases of

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domestic and gender-based violence. Messages provide a gender, intergenerational and intercultural perspective and have been disseminated with the support of public figures (such as journalists, singers and influencers).

- In **Peru**, the campaign '*Mascarillas Violetas*' was launched as a joint initiative by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), showing support to victims of gender-based violence by using violet masks as a symbol.

Eight countries in the region have taken nine measures to improve the collection and use of violence against women data in the COVID-19 context. For example:

- In **Bolivia**, the Attorney General's Office has published data on violence against women and femicide cases during quarantine.
- In **Mexico**, a working group on statistics has been set up to establish a minimum set of indicators that allow for the timely monitoring of violence against women and contribute to the improvement of statistics about the context in which violence against women occurs during the pandemic.
- In **Panama**, the Prosecutor's Office publishes a statistical report with data on cases of domestic violence every month.

Services to respond to and prevent VAWG must be treated as essential services and an integral part of national and local COVID-19 response plans. However, according to the tracker, only six countries in the region (Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay and Peru) have taken this step. This is worrying, since the pandemic will have long-lasting consequences that increase the risk to women and girls of violence, and only commitments that are part of governments' sustained and long-term planning and policies can help to address these.

The tracker registers very few measures to address online violence in the regions, which evidence shows has increased during the pandemic,⁸ and very few measures to reach the most marginalized women. Exceptions include:

- **Argentina**, where the National Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity has authorized women and LGBTIQ+ people to circulate freely to report violence (resolution 15/2020).
- **Haiti**, where a portal for reporting online child sexual abuse images has been set up to combat the increasing risks of online sexual abuse of children, particularly girls, as a result of more people staying at home and using the Internet due to pandemic-related lockdown measures.

⁸ 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>

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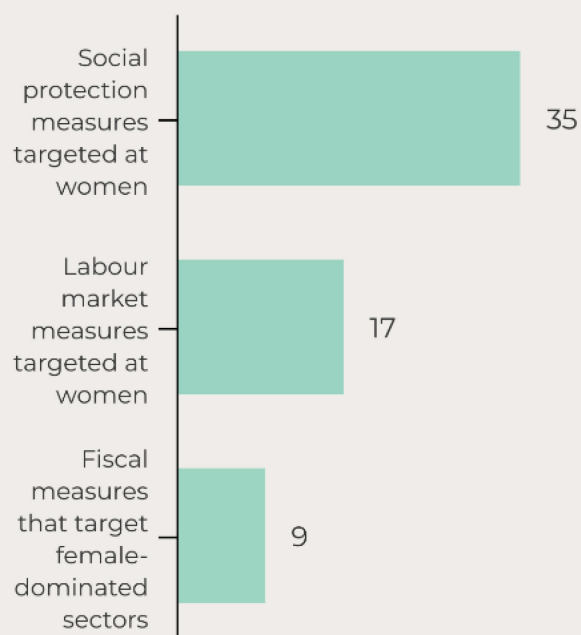
Women's economic security

Out of the 397 fiscal and economic, social protection and labour market measures registered in Latin America and the Caribbean, 61 measures across 22 countries and territories address women's economic security – amounting to just 15 per cent of the total. Latin American countries account for the majority of measures (90 per cent, 47 measures across 14 countries) to address women's economic security, compared to only 10 per cent of measures registered in the Caribbean (five measures across four countries).

More than half of measures to address women's economic security (35) fall into the **social protection** category (Figure 6); mostly cash transfers (17 measures across 12 countries) or food and other in-kind assistance (seven measures across six countries) that prioritize women as the main recipients. For example:

- **Antigua and Barbuda** has implemented the COVID-19 Emergency Food Assistance Programme, which provides food packages and essential medication to populations in vulnerable situations, especially older persons living on their own, single or female-headed households, persons with disabilities and unemployed people with children.
- In **Argentina**, the Government introduced the Emergency Family Income (*Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia*) a non-contributory lump-sum payment of ARS 10,000 (USD 155) provided between April and September 2020 to one member of the family, prioritizing women as recipients. The total number of beneficiaries reached almost 9 million people, including informal workers, self-employed and domestic workers.
- In **Brazil**, an emergency cash transfer of USD 115 per month (or 60 per cent of the minimum wage) was established for adults who do not have a formal job and live in poor households not receiving other monetary support (like Bolsa Familia). Single mothers will receive a double benefit. Mothers under 18 years old are eligible.
- In **El Salvador**, the Government has mandated private companies to ensure the quarantine of specific workers, including those older than 60, pregnant women or those with pre-existing conditions, and these workers are to receive paid sick leave for 30 days.

Figure 6. Number of measures in Latin America and the Caribbean that address women's economic security, by policy category



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An additional 17 measures across 10 countries that target women's economic security fall into the **labour market** category, including support for women entrepreneurs and women in informal employment. For example:

- **Barbados, Ecuador and Peru** have promoted the rights of domestic workers through information campaigns and regulatory adjustments.
- **Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Paraguay** have taken measures to support women's entrepreneurship through subsidized loans, virtual trainings, financial education, home delivery and digital marketing platforms.
- In **Costa Rica**, the Programme "+Women, +Nature" is an initiative to promote gender equality in the biodiversity sector (water, protected areas and forests). It will make three financial instruments available to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on women. The "FONAFIFO by your side" credit has a line of credit of CRC 5 million (USD 8,370) with trusteeship guarantees, a 10-year term and a fixed interest rate of 4 per cent per year for productive development, working capital, infrastructure, equipment and innovative projects related to the forest.

Finally, eight countries in the region register a total of nine **fiscal and economic measures** that target feminized sectors of their economies – that is, sectors that absorb a higher proportion of women's employment compared to that of men. These measures account for less than 16 per cent of all fiscal and economic measures adopted in the region. For example:

- The **Dominican Republic** pledged to provide assistance to particularly hard-hit sectors, including tourism, to the tune of RD 229.4 million (USD 3.9 million). Tourism-related activities, such as accommodation and food services account for 11 per cent of women's employment compared to 5.2 per cent of men's in the Dominican Republic.
- In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Government will provide TT 50 million (USD 7.4 million) as part of a grant facility for Tobago hoteliers to upgrade their premises. Tourism-related activities, such as accommodation and food services account for 8.6 per cent of women's employment compared to 3.1 per cent of men's in Trinidad and Tobago.

For economic recovery to be gender-responsive, fiscal, economic and labour measures aimed at strengthening women's economic security need to be maintained and expanded to ensure that women can hold on to their jobs or re-enter the labour market if they have become unemployed as a result of the pandemic.

Unpaid care work

Out of the total 339 social protection and labour market measures taken in response to COVID-19, only 23 directly address unpaid care – more than in any other developing region. Nevertheless, the unpaid care response represents just seven per cent of the total social protection and labour market response in the region (see Figure 3 above).

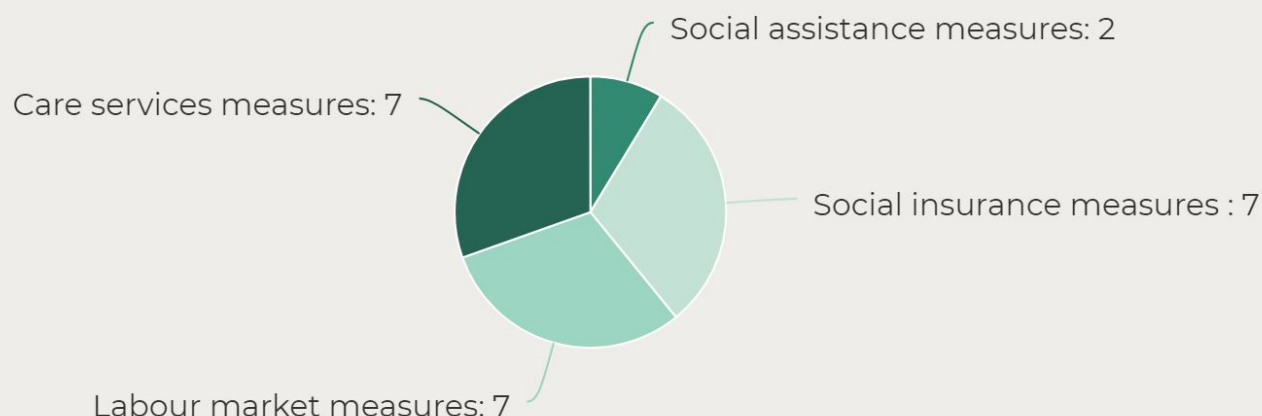
Nine of these measures fall into the **social protection** category – comprising social assistance, social insurance and care services (Figure 7) – mainly family leaves (six measures in six countries) and cash-for-care to compensate parents for school and daycare closures (two measures in two countries) For example:

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- **Chile** has extended the leave period for parents who were on parental leave at the time of the outbreak of the pandemic for an initial 30 days, which can be extended up to 90 days total as long as the state of emergency continues.
- **Mexico** has launched a cash-for-care scheme in the '*Programa de Apoyo para el Bienestar de las niñas y niños, hijos de madres trabajadoras*', which seeks to improve access to labour markets for parents and guardians who work, or are seeking work or studying opportunities, by helping them pay for childcare.
- **Trinidad and Tobago** has introduced a "Pandemic leave" scheme covering public sector, fixed-term contract and short-term contract employees, on-the-job trainees, and those ineligible for sick leave. As part of this measure, employers are encouraged to implement remote work policies where possible, to minimize the need for employees with children to physically attend work. In situations where it may not be possible for employees with children to work from home, employers are required to explore options of shift work, staggered working hours and/or rostering. In cases where alternative work arrangements cannot be made, the employee must be allowed to stay at home with their dependents without being penalized.

Figure 7. Number of measures that address unpaid care in Latin America and the Caribbean, by policy category



Six additional measures to address unpaid care fall into the **labour market** category. Examples include:

- **Bolivia**, as part of revised paid leave requirements (Decreto Supremo 4196), allows reductions in working hours; paid leave for older adults, pregnant women and people with health conditions; paid leave for workers with dependent children under 5; as well as paid leave for all workers, public and private, who are suspected of having contracted COVID-19.
- **Cuba** – for the duration of one month, a wage subsidy covers the total salary of workers who are responsible for children whose classes were suspended. After one month, if the closure of educational facilities continues, carers are guaranteed 60 per cent of the minimum wage.

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- **Costa Rica** – a temporary reduction of working hours was agreed between social partners to allow jobs to be preserved during lockdown. The law stipulates that work-time reductions must be applied proportionally to women and men in similar or equivalent jobs.

Finally, the tracker registers only seven measures to strengthen care services for children (one measure), older persons and persons with disabilities (six measures in four countries). For example:

- In **Costa Rica**, where childcare services of the National Network of Infant Care and Development (REDCUDI) have continued to operate throughout the health emergency to enable parents to continue working without having to shift the burden to grandparents or other high-risk groups within their family support networks.
- In **Peru**, a support network to protect and care for older persons and persons with severe disabilities was established in the context of the health emergency, which includes three phases: identification and geo-referencing of high-risk older persons and people with severe disabilities; delivery of a package of prioritized services and monitoring of the targeted population; and support for their caregivers.

In addition to providing benefits and services to support unpaid caregivers, countries like the **Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador** and **Uruguay** have promoted awareness through social media campaigns on the importance of sharing care responsibilities within the household in the context of lockdowns.

Overall, with only 28 per cent of countries and territories analysed in Latin America and the Caribbean (12 out of 43) taking action to support unpaid care, the response has been woefully inadequate to address the severe care crisis that COVID-19 has catalysed.

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Annex I: Number of gender-sensitive measures registered in Latin America and the Caribbean, by type and country

Country/territory	Women's economic security	Unpaid care	Violence against women	Total gender-sensitive measures
Antigua and Barbuda	1	0	2	3
Argentina	8	5	13	26
Aruba	1	0	0	1
Bahamas	1	0	0	1
Barbados	0	2	2	4
Belize	0	0	2	2
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2	2	14	18
Brazil	3	0	8	11
Chile	7	1	12	20
Colombia	7	0	13	20
Costa Rica	7	3	8	18
Cuba	0	2	2	4
Dominica	0	1	2	3
Dominican Republic	1	0	4	5
Ecuador	2	0	9	11
El Salvador	2	0	4	6
Guatemala	2	0	8	10
Guyana	0	0	2	2
Haiti	0	0	1	1
Honduras	1	0	7	8

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Cont'd, number of gender-sensitive measures registered in Latin America and the Caribbean, by type and country

Country/territory	Women's economic security	Unpaid care	Violence against women	Total gender-sensitive measures
Jamaica	3	0	3	6
Mexico	5	1	6	12
Montserrat	0	1	0	1
Nicaragua	0	0	2	2
Panama	0	0	8	8
Paraguay	2	0	12	14
Peru	2	2	10	14
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0	0	3	3
Saint Lucia	1	1	0	2
Suriname	0	0	5	5
Trinidad and Tobago	1	2	5	8
Uruguay	1	0	8	9
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	1	0	2	3
TOTAL	61	23	177	261

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Annex II: Countries in focus

In focus: Argentina

The tracker records 44 measures taken by the Government of Argentina in response to COVID-19, of which 26 have been coded as gender-sensitive. Of these, 8 measures address women's economic security, 5 target unpaid care work, and 13 address violence against women. This high proportion of gender-sensitive measures makes Argentina's emergency response exemplary in the region, in part 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.⁹ The country had recorded 12,229 confirmed deaths from COVID-19 as of 18 September.¹⁰

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 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, including 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 scheme, "Promote Work," which 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 array 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 to 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.

⁹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/27/argentina-economy-crumbles-buenos-aires-lockdown-continues/>

¹⁰ <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/argentina?country=~ARG#what-is-the-cumulative-number-of-confirmed-deaths>

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In focus: Trinidad and Tobago

The tracker records 14 measures taken by Trinidad and Tobago in response to COVID-19, of which eight have been coded as gender-sensitive. Two of these measures address unpaid care work, one targets feminized sectors of the economy, and five target violence against women and girls. This multi-faceted emergency response is holistic in that it straddles three categories of gender-sensitive policies recorded in the tracker. The country experienced a jump in cases in August, after a gradual rise in July, and recently implemented a range of stricter restrictions in response.¹¹ As of 18 September, there have been 107 deaths.

With positive implications for women's unpaid care work, Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Labour has introduced "Pandemic leave" as a new classification of paid leave for public sector workers, including those not eligible for sick leave, and advised the private sector that they should follow similar protocol. People who have fallen ill and have used up their sick leave will be eligible for extended sick leave, followed by pandemic leave. Pandemic leave will also apply to those workers who are not eligible for sick leave. This measure is especially aimed at working parents without access to a support system to care for their children during the closure of schools. As part of the 'pandemic leave' measure, employers are encouraged to implement remote work policies where possible, to minimize the need for employees with children to physically attend work. In situations where it may not be possible for employees with children to work from home, employers are required to explore options of shift work, staggered working hours and/or rostering. In conditions where there are both parents in a family, one parent is encouraged to stay at home while the other reports for duty, and in cases where alternative work arrangements cannot be made, the employee is to be allowed to stay at home with their dependents without being penalized by either disciplinary action or by non-payment of salary. This measure therefore is of indirect benefit to women's economic security.

One fiscal measure has been taken that targets industries that have the highest proportion of women employees. The Government will provide TT \$50 million (USD 7.4 million) as part of a grant facility for Tobago hoteliers to upgrade their premises. This subsidy targets the tourism sector, a sector which is feminized in the country: 9 per cent of women workers are employed in tourism, compared to 3 per cent of men. In turn, 60 per cent and 78 per cent of workers in services and clerical activities, which are also generally tourism related or specific industries, are women.

A set of relevant measures have been set in motion to end gender-based violence in the country. These include, for example, making available for survivors of gender-based violence and abuse the Domestic Violence Hotline 800-SAVE, as well as Trinidad and Tobago's Police Service's (TTPS) Gender-Based Violence Unit, staffed with specially trained police personnel, during the COVID-19 period. In addition, the government has also opened two gender-based violence shelters in Trinidad and indicated that more will be opened in Tobago.

The country has also started the process to complete a government-led Gender Impact Assessment of COVID-19.

¹¹ <https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-trinidad-idUKL1N2FH0A4>