

ECOSOC MEETING

19 July 2024, 10am – 1pm,
ECOSOC Chamber at the UNHQ

CARE AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

CONCEPT NOTE



**United
Nations**

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

PURPOSE: This meeting will promote care and support systems from the foundational pillars of gender equality, human rights, and sustainable development. It will seek to articulate good practices, lessons learned about the contribution of care and support systems to ensure the wellbeing and the rights of care recipients and caregivers through coherent and gender responsive policies. It will also seek pathways for implementation of this agenda based on the ongoing efforts by Member States, the UN System, and relevant stakeholders and to take concrete steps towards establishing care and support systems that are human rights-based, gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, and age-sensitive.

BACKGROUND

The Care agenda has built important momentum over the last year, as the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/77/317 titled “The International Day of Care and Support”, and the Human Rights Council adopted resolution “Centrality of care and support from a human Rights Perspective”. The latest resolution adopted by the ECOSOC (E/RES/2024/4) urged member states Member States to “ensure the creation of enabling environments

for promoting care and support systems for social development and implement all measures necessary to ensure the well-being and rights of care recipients and caregivers, to recognize and redistribute care work among individuals, as well as families, communities, the private sector and States, and to contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.”

CARE AND SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Care and support systems are crucial to sustain societies, and to foster economic prosperity. Sustainable Development cannot be achieved without robust and resilient care and support systems where no one is left behind. These systems are not only critical to addressing the undervaluing and gendered division of care work as a precondition for SDG 5 on gender equality and the

empowerment of all women and girls with benefits cutting across multiple SDGs, including SDG 1 on Poverty, SDG 3 on Good health and wellbeing, SDG 4 on Quality education, SDG 8 on Decent work and economic growth, SDG 10 on Reduced inequalities, SDG 11 on Sustainable cities and communities, thus contributing to support just, prosperous and sustainable economies.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS LENS OF CARE

Care is central to meeting the physical, psychological and emotional needs of care receivers and care providers, thereby enhancing their rights, dignity, agency and well-being. This encompasses not only the rights of paid and

unpaid care workers, as enshrined in the human right treaties and various international labor standards, but also the broader obligation to support all persons throughout their life cycle. Such care and support ensures



that all people can live independently and within their communities. This is particularly crucial for upholding the dignity, agency, independence and autonomy of older persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with mental health conditions. It is also central to children's

development through the provision of sufficient, safe and nutritious food, to support healthy growth and development through stimulating environment and social interactions with attentive caregivers.

CARE AND GENDER EQUALITY

The redistribution of the disproportionate responsibility of domestic and care work that women have historically faced is a matter of economic and social justice. Work that, by the way, remains invisible and undervalued in many parts of the world today. Official figures indicate this: according to the International Labor Organization (ILO), 16.4 billion hours a day are dedicated to unpaid

care work, which is equivalent to 11 trillion dollars or 9% of the world's GDP. Furthermore, the Gender Snapshot 2023 found that progress towards a fairer balance of unpaid care work has been slow and that globally women spend 2.8 more hours than men on unpaid care and domestic work.

CARE AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

It is clear that more needs to be done to recognize, reward and value paid care work and care workers as essential workers and adopt measures that combat gender stereotypes related to care and support, as well as those related to, inter alia, race, disability, ethnicity, age and migratory status, to reduce occupational segregation for care work. It is also important to improve the working conditions and reduce precarious employment in paid care work. Working conditions for

care workers should be improved and decent work for care workers should be promoted in accordance with international labor standards. In particular, decent work contracts should be ensured for care and support workers in the informal and formal economy, including migrant care and support care and support workers. Additionally, it is key to account the value of informal care work and the need for recognition and support for unpaid family caregivers.

ADVANCING CARE AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS: THE INSTITUTIONAL OPPORTUNITY

This ECOSOC Special Meeting will provide a platform for member states, UN Agencies and stakeholders to share best practices, innovative policies, and effective strategies that recognize and bolster care work as a fundamental component of social and economic development. To this end, the UN system has mobilized efforts towards a UN Policy Paper on Transforming Care Systems in which aims to inform and harmonize UN Agency efforts on care

by offering key definitions, guiding principles, approaches and policy options that can be contextualized to different socio-economic realities. It intends to amplify the impact of the UN System in advancing comprehensive care systems that enable gender equality, well-being and social justice alongside sustainable development and economic transformation.



OBJECTIVES

In accordance with draft resolution E/RES/2024/4, the objective of the informal intergovernmental interactive dialogue is to:

- **Evaluate experiences, good practices, and main challenges concerning the promotion of and investment in care and support systems** – Participants will discuss past experiences and existing practices in promoting and investing in care and support systems, and will have an opportunity to react to the UN Policy Paper on Transforming Care Systems
- **Understand contributions of care and support systems to individuals, families, societies, and economies** – The discussion aims to deepen understanding of how care and support systems contribute to the well-being of individuals, the resilience of families, the cohesion of societies, and the overall economic prosperity.
- **Consider caregivers’ and receivers’ roles, and pathways to the care economy** – Central to this dialogue is the recognition of the pivotal roles played by caregivers and receivers in care and support systems.
- **Discuss the potential of investing in the care and support systems** to reduce women’s time and income poverty, support women’s labor force participation and expand employment opportunities in the care sector.

FORMAT

The meeting will be open to all delegations, and will consist of a high-level opening, an interactive panel discussion, and a closing segment. The meeting will feature the participation of the President of the Economic

and Social Council and high-level officials from the United Nations. Leaders from civil society, private sector and other key partners also will be in attendance.

PARTICIPATION

Delegations are invited to share their valuable contributions by requesting the floor in the open discussion segment of each panel. There will be no list of speakers for this event. Every effort will be made to

facilitate contributions from Permanent Missions and other participants during the interactive panel discussions. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided to all official UN languages.

