

# Feminist and Human Rights-Based *SOCIAL PACT ON CARE*

## What kind of world and economy do we need ?

“Countries are never prepared, and once such a crisis happens, like COVID-19, it becomes obvious who is excluded from government help packages and assistance, taking measures for corporations and other privileged sectors while others, such as poor women, are marginalized.

—Claribed Palacios, Union of Black Domestic Workers (UTRASD), Colombia.

## HOW DO WE DEFINE CARE?

All paid and non-paid activities that make **social reproduction** possible and include both direct (e.g., caring for the sick or feeding a child) and indirect activities (e.g., cooking, cleaning, collecting water and/or firewood), as well as **community work**.

## WHY IS CARE WORK A WOMEN'S RIGHTS ISSUE?

Worldwide, women and girls provide 3/4 of all unpaid care work, and 2/3 of paid care workers are women. Care work has historically been associated with women and has been distributed in structural conditions of discrimination and inequality, particularly among women and girls of disadvantaged groups. The **unfair social distribution of care**, the deepening global care crisis, and the devastating impacts for women are rooted in a social pact that women never agreed to. This pact has made social reproduction invisible, naturalized care as women's responsibility, deepened the feminization of poverty, intensified women's exploitation, and nurtured a neoliberal capitalist model that centers economic growth instead of well-being and prioritizes profit over people and the planet. Such a pact is not only unfair but unsustainable, as the current crisis is clearly demonstrating.

## A NEW SOCIAL PACT ON CARE TO COMBAT STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES IS URGENT!

**A new pact will center human rights, people and the planet**, grounding our social and economic relationships in a primary commitment to care. This new pact will reject economic growth as the dominant and only paradigm of development and understands that limitless economic growth and pursuit of profit are unsustainable for all forms of life. Building a feminist future necessarily entails transforming the world of social reproduction as a key step to dismantling the structural inequalities that prevent women from fully enjoying substantive equality and their wider economic, social and cultural rights.

“Patriarchal stereotypes such as perceived roles of women in society and within households continue to impact how care work is viewed within society, but also by those who develop laws and policies.

—Charlene May, Women Legal Center, South Africa

# WHAT ARE THE 6Rs OF THE PACT ON CARE?

Based on the shared analysis of members from a diversity of countries and backgrounds, we have outlined a series of elements (6Rs) that are necessary – and build a feminist future.



## 1. RECOGNITION

- Recognize, respect, protect, and fulfill care as a universal right
- Realize substantive equality by addressing intersecting forms of discrimination
- Expand and fulfill the rights of all care workers
- Strengthen access to justice for paid and unpaid carers

## 2. REPRESENTATION

- Make women and girls' roles in unpaid care visible and measurable
- Value the economic and social contributions of care
- Transform normalized stereotypes that feminize and undervalue care
- Reconceptualize care through a political vision that elevates life-sustaining actions

## 3. REDISTRIBUTION

- Enhance state capacity to provide care
- Ensure private sector supports rights-based, quality care
- Redistribute care responsibilities between women and men
- Create enabling conditions for community-led care systems (e.g. cooperatives)

## 4. REDUCTION

- Ensure meaningful participation of paid and unpaid care workers and community-based networks in care governance
- Strengthen transparency and accountability in both public and private care provision

## 5. RIGHTS

- Recognize the human right to receive and provide quality care
- Realize substantive equality, addressing intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Expand and fulfill the rights of all care workers, ensuring access to social protection.

## 6. RE-FRAMING THE ECONOMY

- Transition to a regenerative and redistributive economy based on care and human rights
- Expand and ensure access to quality public services, countering privatization
- Build a more just international financial architecture, including by cancelling illegitimate debt



ESCR-Net - International Network for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights- is a member-led network connecting over 300 social movements, Indigenous Peoples' groups, and human rights organizations and defenders from 76 countries. Since 2003, the Network has provided a space for members to connect their struggles across regions to address systemic challenges. Central to our collective strategy is intersectional feminism, which shifts from a gender-neutral stance to one that recognizes indirect discrimination in seemingly neutral laws, policies, and practices.

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