



Socialist International Women

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN

VIRTUAL EXECUTIVE MEETING

18 DECEMBER 2020

The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality

DECLARATION

The members of the Executive Committee of the Socialist International Women (SIW) came together on 18 December 2020 to hold a virtual meeting to highlight the impact coronavirus COVID-19 is having on gender equality and how it is affecting women and girls all around the world.

Sadly the severity of the pandemic is affecting women disproportionately on all levels and in all regions. Poverty, unemployment and domestic violence are all on the rise and affecting women the most.

Most women in the developing world tend to work in the informal sector – a sector which has been hit hard by the various lockdown measures, reducing women's income substantially. With no employment pay benefits or protection, women are being pushed further into poverty and hardship.

Travel and tourism is another area that has been hit significantly by the pandemic, impacting the economies and livelihoods of many developing countries and again, impacting women as it is a sector that employs millions of women all over the world.

With school closures and travel restrictions in place, women are also having to bear most of the responsibility of childcare and providing care to other family members in need of support such as the elderly or disabled, further impacting women's ability to focus on themselves, their wellbeing and their earnings and income.

Apart from having to cope with the difficulties forced on them by COVID-19 and the lockdown measures, women are also having to face other challenges such as natural disasters as in the case of the devastating earthquake which affected Turkey and Greece in October, or the hurricanes and torrential rains and floodings which hit a number of countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean in November, further weakening the economies and conditions of these countries and further marginalising women and their dependants.

With governments focusing all their attention and resources on the pandemic and COVID-19, gender issues are being ignored, forgotten or postponed. The progress made so far in gender equality will no doubt regress; therefore it is imperative that we join forces without delay to highlight the plight women are currently facing.

For this reason, the SIW Executive Members call on all Socialist International members, NGO's and governments to:

- *Stand* in solidarity with all women and girls worldwide during this unprecedented time of crisis and into our future recovery
- *Evaluate* the full impact COVID-19 is having on women and girls and put forward clear, concise and effective recommendations on how to mitigate the impact
- *Formulate and implement* a post-COVID-19 recovery strategy that includes short-term and long-term gender-sensitive policies which governments can implement in their countries.