

# COVID-19 and Gender Equality in Global Supply Chains



## Summary text

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected women's employment in global supply chains and resulted in a significant reversal in gender equality gains.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that between 2019 and 2020, there has been a decline in global employment to the tune of 54 million jobs for women or 4.2%, and 60 million jobs for men, which is equivalent to 3%.

## The gendered impact of COVID-19

- 1** Dismissals of workers have disproportionately affected specific groups of women, regardless of their skills or years of service at a given factory, for example, women who are pregnant or on maternity leave.
- 2** The burden of unpaid care on women has significantly increased as a result of school closures and family members getting infected by the virus. In India, it is estimated that the time spent on unpaid care work has increased by 30% since the pandemic started, making it more difficult for women to remain in the workforce.
- 3** There is also a growing body of evidence that the pandemic has increased the risks of gender-based violence (GBV) against women, including domestic violence.

### RECOMMENDATION 1



#### Collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data

Collect and utilise supply chain tools and assessment systems to gain a better understanding of women workers' roles in the supply chain, including employment status and pay, to ensure they are not left behind in the recovery process.

### RECOMMENDATION 2



#### Support health, safety and wellbeing measures

Implement health and safety protocols to control the virus spreading in the workplace, such as providing PPE, testing kits and handwashing facilities at no cost, or developing training materials to educate workers on hygiene practices and social distancing.

### RECOMMENDATION 3



#### Listen to women's voices

Encourage and support suppliers to ensure equal representation of women in worker committees, internal taskforces and other worker organisations, to make sure women's voices are at the centre of recovery and rebuilding efforts.

### RECOMMENDATION 4



#### Support women's unpaid care work

Provide women workers with childcare facilities where possible, and utilise worker-management communication channels to determine other measures that could support women with care work, such as flexible working arrangements.

### RECOMMENDATION 5



#### Address gender-based violence in the workplace

Support suppliers with training on GBV for all workers and supervisors, including what it constitutes, how to detect it and provide remedy. Complaints should be resolved immediately and communicated to the workers concerned and all necessary steps should be taken to support victims by providing them with safe spaces and flexibility to take time off work if they need to.