

UN WOMEN SERIES:

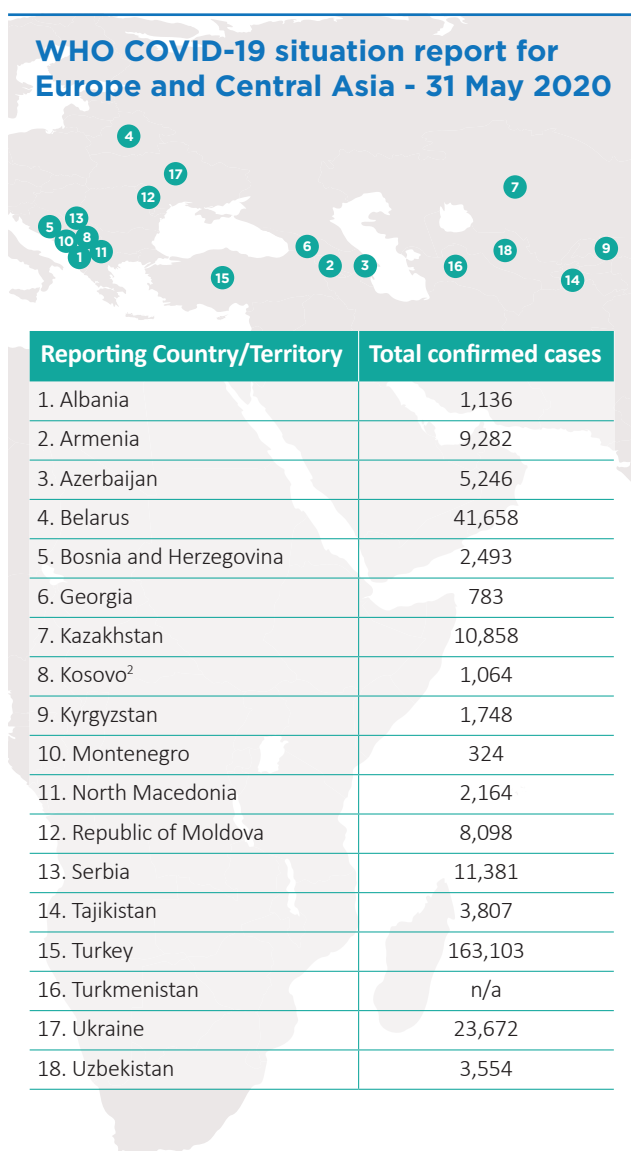
Women at the forefront of
COVID-19 response in Europe
and Central Asia



**Voices of gender
equality mechanisms
on COVID-19**

May 2020

On 9 April 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General launched a policy brief on “The impact of COVID-19 on Women”¹ that showcases how COVID-19 could reverse the limited progress that has been made on gender equality and women’s rights. The report provides recommendations to strengthen women’s leadership and ensure that their valuable contributions are at the heart of resilience and recovery. Currently, UN Women in Europe and Central Asia is engaged in consultations with partners – including governments, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies, private-sector companies and other development actors – to find practical solutions for delivering COVID-19 response and recovery efforts that recognize the needs of women and girls and their central role in making these efforts most effective.



The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the 4th World Conference on Women in China 25 years ago, lays out the need for institutional mechanisms to serve as catalysts for significant political change on gender equality. As such, the creation of gender equality mechanisms was one of the critical areas of the Platform, to inspire institutional change. Gender equality mechanisms, also referred to as women’s machineries, are government institutions which serve as the central entity responsible for implementation and integration of gender equality measures across policies and programmes. They are often the key drivers of action plans to achieve the goals set forth in international agreements on women’s rights such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Gender equality mechanisms can take different forms, including as ministries and high-level commissions, and are usually located at the highest level of government. The authorities of such mechanisms vary; however, they remain a vital voice for working towards and achieving gender equality at the country level. Gender equality mechanisms are crucial partners for UN Women to support Member States to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.

In May 2020, UN Women initiated online consultations with **gender equality mechanisms** from 14 countries³ in the **Western Balkans and Turkey, Eastern Partnership and Central Asia** sub-regions to discuss challenges and priorities for the gender dimensions of the short- and long-term COVID-19 response. The consultations were attended by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and UN Women Deputy Executive Director Åsa Regnér, who highlighted the need for concrete action to ensure that all policies and programmes regarding public health protection, preparedness, resilience and response take full account of women’s needs.

This summary provides an overview of the discussions during two online meetings with gender equality mechanisms, including key issues raised, conclusions and recommendations.

“We must utilize the windows of opportunity created by the pandemic to avoid further rollback, by placing women’s leadership and contributions at the heart of resilience and recovery.”

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director

1. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women>
 2. All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244.
 3. Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (under UN Security Council resolution 1244), Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Ukraine, Serbia, Uzbekistan and Turkey.

Priorities and challenges for governments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of COVID-19

Participating representatives of gender equality mechanisms underlined that the COVID-19 pandemic is putting an unprecedented and significant strain on economies and public health systems. They added that it has magnified inequalities and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls. It is evolving beyond a global health crisis into a labour market, social and economic crisis, posing a serious threat to women's safety, employment and livelihood.

In this context, they outlined a range of priority measures envisaged by their governments as essential for gender equality.

Ensuring a well-coordinated, integrated response to violence against women and girls that follows a survivor-centred and human-rights-based approach is a prerequisite for delivering efficient services to save lives.

Gender equality mechanisms recognize that the pandemic has increased risks and escalated various forms of violence against women and girls. Calls to stay at home, movement restrictions, increased stress and economic pressure due to job losses, non-operational or narrowed networks for interaction, and reduced services all put women and children at acute risks of domestic violence.

Representatives also pointed out that emergency measures imposed by authorities to prevent COVID-19 are slowing down and complicating the provision of **safe houses** for survivors of domestic violence. For example, **in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, every survivor requires permission for accommodation in a safe house, and staff need training on sanitary measures. In **Albania**, the Government introduced specific protocols and regulations on temporary and long-term shelters and the case management of women and children in need of protection, support and treatment during the emergency.

In many countries in the region, free online services have been introduced to prevent and respond to domestic violence. In **Kosovo**, the Ministry of Health established a free hotline providing psychosocial support during the pandemic. In **Montenegro**, the national helpline registered approximately 20 per cent more calls in March and April 2020 than in March and April 2019; the Government also developed a Crisis Action Plan for specialized service-provision, in line with the Istanbul Convention, which established a framework for a joint work with civil society organizations (CSOs). In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Agency for Gender Equality developed a plan to support victims of violence against women and girls and recommended that relevant ministries provide emergency funding to safe houses during the crisis, without public tenders. It also recommended implementing risk-management measures to enable a coordinated response to violence against women and girls during the pandemic. In many countries, psychosocial and social services and information on protection from COVID-19 are being provided through online platforms run in cooperation between CSOs and private companies.

“The main priorities of Uzbekistan during the pandemic continue to be implementing national projects and programmes to ensure gender equality, employment and support for women's entrepreneurship, measures to prevent domestic violence and ensure access to medical services.”

Her Excellency Tanzila Narbaeva, Chair of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, Uzbekistan

Representatives underlined that violence against women and girls, and sexual violence, are **underreported**. Violence against women and girls occurs even more in crises. In **Turkey**, most women who have been subjected to violence (89 per cent)⁴ have not consulted with any institution. The reporting rate is likely to fall even further in the context of the pandemic. Women's machinery representatives suggest a clear communications strategy involving various actors, including governments and CSOs, to inform the public and ensure survivors have information and alternative means to report violence.

Continuing the work of the judiciary and police and coordinating case management responses were highlighted by the representatives as important steps to prevent violence and protect women's and children's rights.

Gender equality mechanism representatives emphasized that police are currently implementing COVID-19 prevention measures on top of their regular law enforcement responsibilities, making it harder for them to ensure smooth, prompt and effective responses to reports of domestic and violence against women and girls and monitor restraining

orders for perpetrators of violence. In **Kazakhstan**, in almost every location with mobile coverage, those on the register of offenders are checked remotely by video calls. This enables rapid monitoring, observation of domestic conditions, assessment of an individual's state, and essential questions to be answered.

Representatives shared some new practices introduced as part of the COVID-19 response. In **Serbia**, the online work of local coordination groups for domestic violence prevention (coordinated by prosecution bodies) has resulted in urgent measures elaborated by the gender equality mechanism being implemented smoothly and a security plan prepared for all high-risk cases. In **Kazakhstan**, based on the Government's recommendations, courts toughened rulings for the rape of children, sexual violence against minors, and the production of pornography involving children and adolescents. Draft amendments to the Domestic Violence Law in **Kazakhstan**, now under consideration by Parliament, also consider problems encountered during quarantine. In **Albania**, the amendments to tighten penalties for abusers were enforced by national law.

Some measures taken by governments to respond to violence against women during COVID-19:

In Montenegro, the Be Safe app enables survivors of domestic violence to send an SMS to request help.



In Uzbekistan, a helpline service and a 'No to violence!' channel was launched in the Telegram messenger (messaging app that works over the Internet). About 20 women and girls receive such assistance daily.

In Turkey, more than 3,400 places are available at Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres in all provinces.

4. Written submission by the representative of gender equality mechanism of Turkey, 22 May 2020

Addressing economic insecurity to facilitate economic empowerment and redistributing unpaid work.

The representatives of gender equality mechanisms unanimously confirmed that **women entrepreneurs** require greater support, as they more frequently close their businesses due to reduced capital and time (because of performing additional unpaid work) and lack of business networks. As the representatives highlighted, women in the region predominantly work in the industries most affected by reduced economic activity (such as tourism, catering and services sector), and almost instantly lost their incomes due to the economic crisis created amid the pandemic. In this context, in **Kazakhstan** and **Kyrgyzstan**, commercial banks have deferred loan payments for all individuals and legal entities temporarily left without an income.

Women are put in a more vulnerable position, as they work in poorly paid sectors that are under more pressure. They are at the forefront of the crisis response and recovery: in health, social, care, education, retail and other sectors, including the informal sector, and have less certainty and social protection. Partners also pointed that **women in vulnerable situations** include single mothers, women survivors (or those at risk of violence), elderly women, rural women, women with disabilities, migrant women, refugee women, women seeking asylum and Roma women. Their vulnerabilities increase dramatically in pandemic conditions, especially regarding health and ability to cope – given the increased isolation, anxiety and economic stress.

Representatives of gender equality mechanisms stated that governments are particularly concerned with assisting the most vulnerable. So, in **Kyrgyzstan**, fines and penalties for utility payments were cancelled and fines were increased for stores charging unreasonably high prices on food and medicines. People who cannot work have unemployment benefits; and measures are in place to support families, some of which will continue after this period. In **Uzbekistan**,

social assistance is provided to vulnerable groups, including payments to families for childcare and the provision of financial assistance. In **Moldova**, the unemployed and those who lost jobs are receiving unemployment benefits, while subsidies for entrepreneurship have been introduced. In **Ukraine**, a special COVID-19 fund is assisting the unemployed and those who have to stay at home.

Representatives of all gender equality mechanisms conveyed that women’s burden of housework and care for children and elderly household members is much greater and in need of redistribution.

Because of the crisis, public and private sector work is limited and under strain, unemployment is rising, and work from home is expected and required without interruption, regardless of caregiving responsibilities. Innovative solutions are needed for a fair and balanced distribution of unpaid work and inclusive care. Childcare services should be available and free, or for affordable prices. Representatives highlighted **challenges in negotiating investments in care services and infrastructure** with governments and investors.

Gender-responsive planning and budgeting was highlighted by representatives from **North Macedonia** and **Serbia**. They emphasized that in order to increase funding and utilize all available resources and gender expertise, at all levels and in all spheres of life, resources should be reallocated through gender-responsive budgeting and reviews of donor funding. Inclusiveness should be ensured during planning by involving women, CSOs, service-providers, the private sector and local communities. The representative from **Turkey** suggested designing policies and programmes considering the impact on women and girls, especially women living in poverty. She pointed out gender-responsive budgeting tools that support the principle of ‘Leaving No One Behind’ by allowing the needs of women and disadvantaged groups to be integrated in policies and budgets and by ensuring their meaningful participation in all development areas.

Economic impact of the pandemic in some countries:

In Azerbaijan, more than 70,000 people have lost their jobs because of the pandemic and they are still receiving most of their salaries with government support.

In Kyrgyzstan, COVID-19 has had a strong impact on 47% of business respondents who participated in UN Women’s Rapid Gender Assessment in May, while 13% of businesses have shut down completely.

In Kazakhstan, more than 1.6 million citizens and about 12,000 small- and medium-sized businesses have had loan and credit payments deferred.

The representative of **North Macedonia** highlighted the importance of analysing national pandemic response planning and implementation from a gender perspective, to ensure that women's and men's challenges and needs during and after the crisis are fully addressed. To enable adequate planning and budgeting, she said **data on the effects of COVID-19 on women and men should be collected and made available**, a point equally underlined by the representatives of **Moldova** and **Serbia**.

Sex-disaggregated data and statistics and people-centred approaches are critical to effective and efficient response and recovery.

Gender equality mechanisms highlighted that sex- and age-disaggregated data and analysis would provide necessary evidence on how COVID-19 affects women, girls, men and boys and inform decision-makers tasked with preparing national response and recovery plans on the gender differential impacts of the pandemic and the need to address the specific vulnerabilities of women, girls, men and boys.

Gender-responsive measures are needed to boost the economy.

Representatives called for gender-responsive anti-crisis economic measures, including urgent support for businesses, guarantees and tax incentives, maintaining current employment and creating new jobs. The representative of **Montenegro** considered that economic inequalities and the gender pay gap are now more visible than ever. She suggested adapting policies since women are on the front lines of the workforce in the health, social and service sectors. Representatives also highlighted the importance of temporarily abolishing tax sanctions and penalties for late payment of taxes, and imposing moratoriums on inspection of

business entities. In **Kazakhstan**, more than 1.6 million citizens and about 12,000 small- and medium-sized businesses have had loan and credit payments deferred.

The representative of **Turkey** shared information about the COVID-19 Exit Strategy they developed to provide solutions to overcome the impact of the pandemic on women and girls. In **Azerbaijan**, the Government plans to create 90,000 jobs for women by the end of the year and banks will be supported to give preferential credits for women entrepreneurs.

Labour and employment laws and policies should be revised to address risks of additional potential crises and ensure protection for all types of employment, as highlighted by several representatives.

The representative from **North Macedonia** said the Government is working on a new labour law to ensure protection for all employment – including temporary and part-time employment as well as flexible working arrangements, where women are overrepresented. In other countries in the region, companies have been asked to provide workers with minimum incomes (if possible) during forced absence from work.

The economic situation of migrant families is a concern. A representative from **Kyrgyzstan** explained that during the outbreak in Russia, thousands of labour migrants from Central Asia returned home after losing their jobs amid quarantine measures. She highlighted that this has worsened the socioeconomic situation of families that are highly dependent on remittances as a main source of income. Representatives noted a serious reduction in key sources of income such as remittances and income from family businesses. These drops in household income were particularly pronounced for vulnerable groups and large families.

“To ensure a gender-sensitive response to COVID-19, we are further planning to enhance sex-disaggregated data collection for policy analysis and inclusion of gender equality priorities in economic recovery, provide priority support to women on the front lines of the response and expand and adapt essential services for prevention and response to domestic violence.”

His Excellency Vadym Prystaiko, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine

The need to ensure access to social services was strongly emphasized by all gender equality mechanisms.

They suggested prioritizing actions to **overcome difficulties in accessing information** about the crisis, and **available services**, for example, to protect and improve health – including sexual and reproductive health and family planning. The representative of **North Macedonia** shared the country’s current work with the EU Delegation to create a recovery package with a strong gender perspective. Not only should at least 50 per cent of benefits be provided for women, but the access of all women, whether rural or urban, must be ensured.

Special attention should be paid, in their views, to the **health and psychosocial needs and working environment of front-line female health workers**, including midwives, nurses, community health workers and facility support staff. The representatives from **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan** and **Uzbekistan** shared their practice of compensation if health workers contract COVID-19 or die as a result. Representatives also noted the importance of the availability of health-care assistance for health professionals and vulnerable groups, including application of WHO standards in the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19. They stressed that resources intended for reproductive health should not be redirected towards COVID-19, as this could increase maternal and infant mortality/morbidity, sexually transmitted diseases and abortions.

Ensuring access to decision-making has been highlighted as an integral part of putting women and girls at the forefront of pandemic response. There is a risk that the absence or low rate of women’s participation in decision-making processes will result in a lack of policy responses that address the specific perspective and needs of women and girls during and after the pandemic.

Information and communication technologies were highlighted as critical tools in terms of both response and longer-term changes.

The gender equality mechanisms underlined that the crisis clearly demonstrates that increased connectivity and access to technologies improve women and girls’ access to health, education, financial and other services, as well as their participation in decision-making, which can transform their lives. However, the representative from **Moldova** raised concerns regarding poor access of women and girls from marginalized groups to digital technologies, and their digital illiteracy. They all recognize that ICTs are crucial for the new world of work, but these technologies also heighten exposure of women and girls to cyberstalking and other forms of violence or abuse. The participant from **Kyrgyzstan** suggested the need to consider new ways to make the most of ICT opportunities to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. Gender equality mechanisms called for greater engagement of women and girls in the ICT sector and more favourable environments for them to become entrepreneurs and investors in the new digital economy. As the representative of **Kyrgyzstan** pointed out, the involvement of women and girls in ICT is now predominantly in the sphere of education, but there is not a single female founder of an ICT company in her country.

Representatives agreed on the need to **improve mechanisms for coordination and partnership** during the emergency. Some suggested including CSO representatives working with vulnerable groups on commissions for the distribution of humanitarian assistance, to improve the distribution of support and prevent its misuse. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Agency for Gender Equality has developed recommendations to integrate gender perspectives in planning, decision-making and implementation of measures to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. These recommendations were submitted to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, entity and cantonal governments, civil protection staff and the crisis staff of ministries of health at all levels of government.

“Despite these challenges, we have learned from this period that coordination and combination of resources and powers always lead to effective and successful interventions and responses. In addition, engagement in the preparation of measures, guidelines, plans and tools is key to effective gender-sensitive responses.”

Bardhylka Kospiri, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection, Albania

Lessons learned by gender equality mechanisms and actions to advance long-term gender-responsive solutions in the post-COVID era

Meeting participants confirmed that the current crisis has showed that, despite significant progress on the adoption of laws and policies declaring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, women cannot yet fully exercise their rights in practice. The representative of **Kosovo** underlined that gender equality mechanisms should be involved in every emergency, safeguarding the lives and economic security of women and men.

Regular risk assessments and investment in preparedness were highlighted by gender equality mechanisms as critical to avoid the negative fallout from similar situations in the future. **Kosovo's** representative suggested taking COVID-19 response and recovery strategies as lessons learned for emergency situations in the future, not only related to health, but also crises that arise from natural hazards. The representative of **Albania** supported this priority and recommended investing more in mainstreaming gender in policies and infrastructure for national emergency preparedness, as well as having emergency plans ready to be implemented immediately from both sides (States and donors), if and when needed. All relevant authorities – such as civil protection staff, governments and other decision-making bodies – should have **equal representation of women and men in their structures** (even after this emergency). The spread of the virus requires joint efforts by all States, and constructive international cooperation with women's active participation at a qualitatively new level.

Participants identified the need for urgent **transformative change in the mindsets of the general public and service-providers**. There was a common understanding that innovative approaches need to be explored to transform perceptions, mindsets and behaviour at all levels of society to create a critical mass of new thinkers who will demand structural changes, leading to relations based on principles of equality and equity.

During the consultations, participants highlighted that **societal perceptions of the roles of men and women continue to be patriarchal and reflect unequal power relations both within families and in the public domain**. As gender biases continue to play a role and women earn less than men in comparable positions, policies and public campaigns are needed to counter stereotypes and the undervaluation of the work performed by women. They stressed that **companies should ensure equal treatment and pay for work of equal value**.

Furthermore, participants recognized that the crisis could be utilized to drive transformative change of entrenched gender norms and inequalities, especially regarding the care economy and the redistribution of unpaid work. They see women at the forefront of the recovery period – from teachers to nurses to those at home performing the bulk of unpaid and invisible work – and suggest **looking for innovative solutions for a more fair and balanced distribution of work**.

Women have been the hardest hit because they are overrepresented in the informal economy, mostly doing care work. Moving them to formal employment is a crucial step. International support and support from local partners are needed to **create new formal job opportunities for women**.

Representatives emphasized that many new policies, strategies and action plans are now being evaluated and should be prepared and approved by the end of 2020. They see this is a good moment to **seize the opportunity to bring about long-term gender-responsive solutions for the post-COVID-19 era**.

Representatives agreed that more should be done to ensure **women's equal representation in all COVID-19 response-planning, decision-making, implementation and monitoring**. Otherwise, all State policies and measures will be less effective or potentially even damaging for certain vulnerable groups of women. A gender lens should be applied to all financial packages and social assistance programmes to address the differential socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 in order to preserve and advance equality. The representative of **Georgia** urged fellow gender equality mechanisms to engage grass-roots-level CSOs, activists, youth and citizens in all stages of policy development.

Participants highlighted that **governments, businesses, trade unions and individuals all need to be involved** to mitigate the impact on people's lives and to address the specific risks and vulnerabilities that women and girls face because of deep-rooted social inequalities and stereotypes. Incentive packages are needed to support the economic development and engagement of vulnerable populations.

Gender-sensitive planning and budgeting is recognized by **Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey** as an important tool to Leave No One Behind. It can equally empower women in vulnerable situations and groups who face disadvantages stemming from unequal planning and budgets, and ensure their meaningful participation in all areas of social life.

Key messages to address inequalities exposed and exacerbated by COVID-19

Addressing gender-differentiated needs and priorities in crisis response and recovery:

- Ensure women's equal representation in all COVID-19 response-planning, decision-making, implementation and monitoring.
- Mainstream gender and apply gender-responsive tools to all plans, legislation, policies, budgets, infrastructure and investments for crisis/emergency preparedness and response.
- Ensure national response and recovery plans are sufficiently resourced to address inequalities and violence against women and girls.
- Design economic recovery packages that: recognize the value of unpaid domestic and care work; provide childcare; support family-friendly policies; and engage men to equally share the responsibilities of unpaid care and domestic work.
- Use gender statistics and sex- and age-disaggregated data to inform crisis response and recovery plans.
- Align national gender equality policies with priorities for long-term recovery.
- Tackle the new challenges posed by the changing world of work from a gender perspective.
- Mitigate the pandemic's impact on enterprises and employment, with gender-responsive approaches to reach women-owned enterprises, women-dominated professions, supply chains and hard-hit sectors.

Strengthening gender responsive service-delivery in a crisis context:

- Invest in universal gender-responsive social protection, including affordable access to quality health care, income supplementation, and hunger relief, to avoid deepening inequalities.
- Provide gender-responsive financial assistance to people in vulnerable situations (people with disabilities, single parents, informal workers, etc.)
- Ensure widescale integration of ICTs in education and health care through an online system of non-cash and electronic payments.
- Provide equal education for girls, challenge gender stereotypes and overcome discriminatory practices in schools and universities.
- Intensify training on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming, especially to ensure that public employees have practical skills in these areas.
- Ensure that emergency responses include essential psychosocial support.
- Scale-up immediate health responses to prevent transmission of the virus, to end the pandemic and focus on people already at risk, and groups in vulnerable situations.
- Provide health-care and front-line workers with occupational safety and health equipment, decent working conditions and adequate remuneration, including equal pay for work of equal value.
- Promote the principles of tolerance, equality and solidarity among the general population – especially among young people – as the general public is insufficiently aware that crises can disproportionately affect women and girls.

Representatives of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group in Europe and Central Asia shared their recommendations with gender equality mechanisms:

- Ensure women, including youth female activists, and women's organizations are meaningfully represented in decision-making on crisis assessment, preparedness, response and recovery
- Put violence against women and girls and gender equality high on governments' agendas, including for the pandemic response.
- Bridge the gender gap in digital literacy.
- Strengthen State policies and programmes to increase women's access to health, psychological and social services. Protect reproductive and sexual health, as well as economic and social rights, which are being combatted by religious and opinion leaders in all countries.
- Develop new programmes to support women's economic empowerment and build their resilience in all areas and of all ages. Ensure that economic policy responses prioritize not only large corporations, but also young employees in the field.

“Any effective economic response to the crisis caused by the coronavirus should factor in a gender perspective, understanding the challenges faced by women and incorporating solutions that would aim to reduce the disproportionate gender impacts the crisis may have.”

Sanela Skrijelj, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy, North Macedonia

Closing the digital gender divide:

- Apply new ICT solutions to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- Expand the use of ICTs so citizens have equal access to new business opportunities, including use of online tools that will enable women and men to manage their business.
- Develop ICT-related gender-responsive employment and develop training programmes compliant with international standards that are accessible to all women and girls.
- Empower women to manage their own finances by introducing new financing instruments and increase the availability of banking services through mobile banking.
- Improve opportunities for women to become entrepreneurs and investors in the new digital economy by introducing innovative approaches that will increase the number of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.
- Ensure that people in vulnerable situations can access ICTs and online public services.

Reinforcing partnerships and coordination among stakeholders:

- Ensure timely crisis-related information-sharing between stakeholders.
- Improve regional cooperation between gender equality mechanisms to exchange best practices in alleviating the consequences of COVID-19.
- Work with men and boys to address gender stereotypes, based on COVID-19 lessons learned.
- Improve public awareness of female heroines in times of crisis and recovery in order to inspire change.

- Provide institutional support and resources to CSOs active in promoting gender equality, to increase their capacity to help the most affected groups and be equally represented in COVID-19 recovery.
- Invest in State programmes offering women opportunities to learn how to use and benefit from ICT.

“We face an uncertain future. We must put women and girls at the centre of our work and navigate the course together towards Generation Equality so that 2030 is a cut-off date for ending gender inequality. We must work hand-in-hand, support each other and learn from each other to build a better future for all.”

Alia El-Yassir, UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia.