WOMEN WORKERS UNITED

# Women Workers' Agenda: En-*Gendering* the Philippine Trade Unions' 15-point Labor Agenda

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This publication is produced by the Women Workers United,
with technical assistance from the International Labour Organization Country Office
for the Philippines. The views expressed hereto by WWU in this document are not the
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Women workers call for the protection and safety of trade unionists and human rights defenders. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.



This document was produced by
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# Acknowledgment

Finally, the Women Workers' Agenda is born!

We, the convenor organizations of Women Workers United (WWU), are proud to give birth to the first-ever comprehensive labor agenda **of, for and by women workers**. From conceptualization to data collection, analysis, writing, editing and finalization – the entire process of developing the Women Workers' Agenda was driven by women committed to fighting for workers' rights, gender equality and social justice for all. The process of developing the Women Workers' Agenda can be likened to the experience of pregnancy and childbirth – a journey marked by a whirlwind of emotions, inexorable setbacks, sleepless nights, tough decisions and countless sacrifices. It was a year-long difficult journey, but worth all the effort. We thank everyone who helped deliver this "baby" into the world.

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We dedicate the Women Workers' Agenda to all the women workers who struggle every day for a living wage and livelihood, decent work, recognition of basic rights, and against discrimination and violence in the world of work. Our aim, through the Women Workers' Agenda, is to organize the broad ranks of women workers behind our Agenda and take our shared struggles to arenas available to us – in dialogues, negotiations, legislation – and, of course, to the streets.

Just like any baby, the Women Workers' Agenda will need continuous care, attention and nourishment from all of us – trade unions, civil society and other social partners. This is only the beginning, and we have so much more work to do in putting the agenda into action. Let this living document help us navigate the challenges before us, harmonize our actions and strengthen collaboration as we strive to build women workers' power and a better world for all.

# List of Organizations

**Convening Organizations**

Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP)

Federation of Free Workers (FFW)

General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action (GABRIELA) Philippines

Kilos Na Manggagawa (KNM)

Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan National (KMK National)

Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU)

Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK)

**Participating Organizations**

Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) Davao

Alliance of Health Workers (AHW)

Alliance of Nationalist and Genuine Labor Organizations (ANGLO) - KMU

Asosasyon ng Manggagawa sa Caloocan (AMC)

Ateneo de Davao Employees Union (AdDEU) - FFW (Faculty)

Ateneo de Davao Employees Union (AdDEU) - FFW (Non-Teaching Staff)

Bahaghari

Barangay Health Workers Biñan Laguna Federation - PSLINK

Batibot Early Learning Center

Biñan Public Secondary School Teachers and Personnel Association (BPSSTPA) - Basic Education Sector Teachers Federation (BESTFED) - PSLINK

BMP - Negros

BPO Employees Gays, Lesbians and Allies for Genuine Acceptance and Democracy (BE GLAD)

BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) - Iloilo

Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI)

Buylog-Capiz

Capiz Emmanuel Hospital Employees Union (CEHEU) - FFW

Caregivers of the Philippines Association Inc. (CPAI)

Central Philippines University Faculty Association (CPU-FA)

Central Philippines University Rank and File Union (CPURAFLU) - Federation of Free Workers

Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (COURAGE)

De La Salle Medical and Health Sciences Institute Employees Union (DLSMHSIEU) - FFW

DepEd National Employees Union (NEU) - PSLINK

Ecumenical Institure for Labor Education and Research, Inc. (EILER)

Education International (EI)

Employees Association of Regional Health Office XI (EAR) - PSLINK

Federation of Free Workers Women's Network (FWN)

FFW - Lopez Sugar Chapter (LSC) Sagay City

GABRIELA Davao

GABRIELA Iloilo

Iloilo Doctors Hospital Employees Union - NFWU - KMU

Iloilo Mission Hospital Employees and Labor Union (IMHELU) - FFW

Iloilo Pride Team

Iloilo Terminal Public Market Vendors Association

IndustriALL Global Union

International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) - Asia Pacific

Kingsmen Employees Association (KEA) - FFW

KMK Southern Tagalog

Labor United and Alliances (Lab-U All)

Lantapan Municipal Rank and File Employees Association (LAMURFEA) - PSLINK

League of Sanitation Inspectors of the Philippines Inc. (LSIPI) - PSLINK

Liga ng Kababaihang Manggagawa sa Cavite Economic Zone

Metal Workers Alliance of the Philippines (MWAP)

Migrante Philippines

Nagkahiusang Kababaye ang Mamumuo sa  Davao de Oro (NKMDDO)

Nagkaisang Guro ng Pamantasan ng Lungsod Quezon (NGPLQ) - PSLINK

National Organization of Teachers and Office Workers (NATOW) - NTUC

National Trade Union Center of the Philippines (NTUC)

National Union of Building and Construction Workers (NUBCW)

Nexperia Philippines Inc. Workers' Union - NAFLU - KMU

Ninja Van Riders Union (NVRU) - FFW

Nonoy Librado Development Foundation, Inc. (NLDFI)

Northern Iloilo State University Faculty Union - PSLINK

Oriang

PAMALAKAYA

Parent's Alternative on Early Childhood Care and Development, Inc. (PAECCDI)

Partido Manggagawa (PM)

PCUP Employees Union (PEU) Mindanao - PSLINK

Philippine Agricultural Commercial and Industrial Workers Union (PACIWU) - NTUC

Pinagsamang Lakas ng Manggagawa sa Manila Bay (PIGLAS) - ANGLO - KMU

PINAY Careworkers Transnational - SENTRO

Polomolok Government Employees Association (PGEA) - Philippine Independent Public Sector Employees Association (PIPSEA)

Public Services International (PSI)

Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK)

Samahan ng Manggagawa ng Kristiyanong Pamayanan (SMKP)

San Pedro Hospital Employees Union (SPHEUW) - FFW

Sandigan

Sentro ng Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO)

Trade Federation 2 Kilos Damit/FFW

Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)

United Cirtek Employees Association (UCEA) - FFW

UNITED Domestic Workers

Unyon ng Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA)

UP Visayas All UP Academic Employees Union (UPV-AUPAEU) - ACT

Workers Assistance Center (WAC)/Liga ng Kababaihan

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# List of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ACT | Alliance of Concerned Teachers |
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| AFTA | ASEAN Free Trade Area |
| AHRC | Ateneo Human Rights Center |
| AI | Artificial Intelligence |
| AoA | Agreement on Agriculture |
| BARMM | Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao |
| BHW | Barangay Health Workers |
| BLMA | Bilateral Labor Migration Agreements |
| BMP | Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino |
| BNS | Barangay Nutrition Scholars |
| BPO | Business Process Outsourcing |
| CAMP | COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program |
| CAS | Committee on the Application of Standards |
| CBA | Collective Bargaining Agreement |
| CEACR | Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations |
| CNA | Collective Negotiation Agreement |
| CODI | Committee on Decorum and Investigation |
| CPCS | Compensation and Position Classification System |
| CSC | Civil Service Commission |
| CSO | Civil Society Organizations |
| CWR | Center for Women's Resources |
| DBM | Department of Budget and Management |
| DEI | Diversity, Equity and Inclusion |
| DHSUD | Department of Housing Settlements And Urban Development |
| DILG | Department of The Interior And Local Government |
| DMW | Department of Migrant Workers |
| DO | Department order |
| DOLE | Department of Labor and Employment |
| DRRM | Disaster Risk Reduction and Management |
| DSWD | Department of Social Work and Development |
| ECOP | Employers' Confederation of the Philippines |

| | |
|---|---|
| EDCA | Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement |
| ELCAC | End Local Communist Armed Conflict |
| EMLA | Expanded Maternity Leave Act |
| EO | Executive Order |
| EPIRA | Electric Power Industry Reform Act Of 2001 |
| ERG | Employee Resource Groups |
| ESG | Environment, Social and Governance |
| EU | European Union |
| FFW | Federation of Free Workers |
| FOA | Freedom of Association |
| FTA | Free Trade Agreement |
| GABRIELA | General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action |
| GAD | Gender and Development |
| GATS | General Agreement on Trade In Services |
| GATT | General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade |
| GBV | Gender-Based Violence |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GOCC | Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations |
| GSIS | Government Service Insurance System |
| GSP+ | Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus |
| GVC | Global Value Chains |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| HLTM | High-Level Tripartite Mission |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IP | Indigenous People |
| IRR | Implementing Rules and Regulations |
| ISLE | Integrated Survey Of Labor and Employment |
| ITUC | International Trade Union Confederation |
| KMK | Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan |
| KMU | Kilusang Mayo Uno |
| KNM | Kilos Na, Manggagawa |
| LFPR | Labor Force Participation Rate |
| LFS | Labor Force Survey |

| | |
|---|---|
| LGBTQIA+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual |
| LGU | Local Government Unit |
| MACWIE | Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy |
| MNCs | Multinational Corporations |
| MNE | Multinational Enterprises |
| MOA | Memorandum of Agreement |
| MTRCB | Movie and Television Review and Classification Board |
| NAPWPS | National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security |
| NBI | National Bureau of Investigation |
| NCR | National Capital Region |
| NEDA | National Economic and Development Authority |
| NTIPC | National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council |
| OECD | Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development |
| OFW | Overseas Filipinos Workers |
| OSH | Occupational Safety and Health |
| OWWA | Overseas Workers Welfare Administration |
| PAOS | Post-Arrival Orientation Seminar |
| PCG | Philippine Coastguard |
| PCW | Philippine Commission on Women |
| PDOS | Pre-Deployment Orientation Seminar |
| PEOS | Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar |
| PEZA | Philippine Economic Zone Authority |
| PN | Philippine Navy |
| PNP | Philippine National Police |
| PNP-CIRAS | Philippine National Police's Crime Information, Reporting and Analysis System |
| POLO | Philippine Overseas Labor Office |
| PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| PSA | Philippine Statistics Authority |
| PSLINK | Public Services Labor Independent Confederation |
| PSLMC | Public Sector Labor-Management Council |
| PUVMP | Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program |
| PWD | Persons with Disabilities |
| RTIPC | Regional Tripartite Industrial Peace Council |
| RTWPB | Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards |

| | |
|---|---|
| SAP | Social Amelioration Program |
| SOGIESC | Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics |
| SSL | Salary Standardization Law |
| SSS | Social Security System |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics |
| TRIPS | Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights |
| TUPAD | *Tulong Panghanapbuhay Sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers* |
| TWG | Technical Working Group |
| UHC | Universal Health Care |
| UN CEDAW | United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women |
| UNCLOS | United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| VAW | Violence against Women |
| VFA | Visiting Forces Agreement |
| WAGI | Women and Gender Institute |
| WEF | World Economic Forum |
| WIEGO | Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing |
| WIR | World Inequality Report |
| WPS | West Philippine Sea |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |
| WWU | Women Workers United |

Typhoon-hit residents in Guadalupe, Coron, Palawan are gradually getting back on their feet through an industry that most of them have known for decades: sawali production. ILO Photo by Marcel Crozet.

# The Filipino Women Workers' 15-Point Agenda: Executive Summary

The **Women Workers' Agenda: En-Gendering the Philippine Trade Unions' 15-point Labor Agenda** integrates, expands and deepens the gendered perspectives of each of the 15-point Labor Agenda that the Philippine trade unions launched in 2021. It enriches and supplements with critical gendered perspectives and dimensions the Philippine trade unions' 15-point Labor Agenda.

The "en-gendering" process, which was initiated and conducted by the Women Workers United (WWU) – a coalition of women trade union leaders in the Philippines, with the technical support of two academics from the School of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of the Philippines – included participatory dialogues, workshops and consultations that involved over 300 women leaders from 82 trade unions and workers' organizations across various industries in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. This initiative drew support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office in the Philippines.

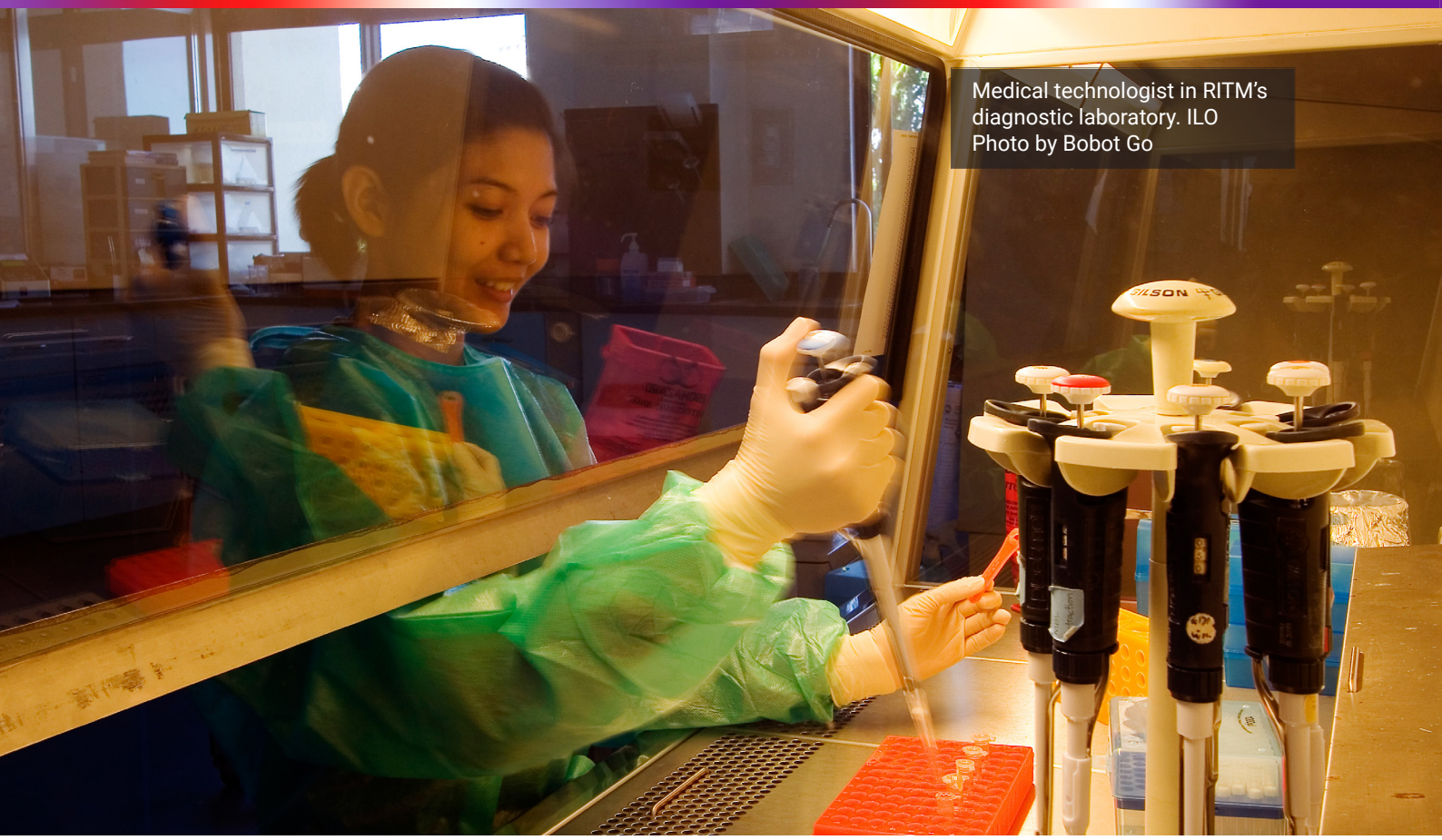
## Women in the Labor Market in the Philippines

Despite advances in non-discriminatory laws and gender-responsive policies in the Philippines, women workers continue to face challenges and difficulties in the labor market. Women's labor force participation rate remains static; less than half of all women 15 years old and over participate in the labor force compared to over three-quarters among men. As of March 2023, of the 26.3 million Filipinos aged 15 years and older that were not in the labor force, close to 17 million or 64.7 per cent were women, mainly due to women's household duties. Women face poorer employment outcomes. Of the 47 million Filipinos employed in September 2023, 59.6 per cent comprised men while only 40.4 per cent were women. Women's unemployment rate is also higher compared to that of men. In September 2023, the unemployment rate among women was 5.2 per cent compared to the rate for men at 4.1 per cent. Women tend to cluster in the services sector, where labor productivity and unionization rates are lower compared to industry sectors (like manufacturing), while men workers are concentrated in both the agricultural and industry sectors.

Occupational segregation by gender persists in the Philippines, despite some improvements over the years. This means that the unequal distribution of female employees favoring males across all the occupational categories remains. As a result, gender wage gap persists. An Asian Development Bank (ADB) study published in 2011 found this gap between 23 per cent and 30 per cent.

Women comprise a larger share of workers in the informal sector. Between 2010 and 2018, the share of the self-employed and unpaid family workers among women remained higher than the share among men (37.2 per cent women compared to 29.7 per cent men in 2018).

TESDA trainees bottle the mango concentrate and papaya pickle. ILO Photo by Ruben Hamahiga De la Cruz.



Medical technologist in RITM's diagnostic laboratory. ILO Photo by Bobot Go

Women are more prone than men to experience violence and harassment at work. Around one in five (one-fifth) Filipino workers experienced harassment in the workplace according to the Lloyd's Register Foundation-Gallup polls survey.

Persistent patriarchal structures perpetuate systemic gender pay gap and job segregation in the economic sphere; limited representation in policy- and decision-making processes in the political sphere; and continued devaluation and subordination of women at the socio-cultural sphere. The intersection of economic marginalization, political invisibility and socio-cultural subordination perpetuates a patriarchal system upon which exploitative or neoliberal capitalist social relations are strengthened.

## Gendered Analysis of the 15-Point Labor Agenda and Women Workers' Recommendations

1. **Fully realize freedom of association and workers' right to security of tenure.** Women workers who experience threats to their freedom of association and union rights are even more vulnerable than men because they are: more vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual assault, and harassment; more prone to miscarriage/s when arbitrarily detained, in cases when women trade unionists are pregnant; more susceptible to mental health traumas from family/child separation; and more prone to sexual identity labelling resulting in stigmatization and discrimination.

2. **Strengthen and expand collective bargaining.** Collective bargaining can be an effective mechanism in addressing women's concerns and issues at the workplace such as gender pay gap, work-life balance, gender discrimination and GBV. However, women's lower representation in union membership and leadership impacts on their representation and participation in collective bargaining processes.

3. **Strengthen wage policies, especially for the low-wage sectors, and ensure equal pay for work of equal value.** Low and stagnating wages disproportionately affect women workers. In several industries, women receive lower wages than men because of gender-based job differentiation or occupational gender segregation as well as continued

gender discrimination when women are perceived as (physically) weaker than men.

4. **Implement universal and adequate social security and social protection for all.** Women are more disadvantaged than men in the labor market. Yet, compared to men, women have less access to social protection. Disparities in the access to social protection between men and women are found largely in social insurance.

5. **Ensure quality public services.** Women workers are disproportionately represented in low-pay, insecure jobs and in the informal economy, and have limited access to formal social protection programs. They are more likely to be unemployed compared to men. Thus, improving women's access to quality and free (or affordable) public services help women perform their productive and reproductive roles.

6. **Protect and support enterprises and workers in the informal sector.** Women in informal employment are over-represented in the most vulnerable employment category of contributing family workers, home-based workers doing piece-rate work in the lower tiers of supply chains (whatever their employment status) and domestic workers. By contrast, they are under-represented among employers and, to some extent, own-account workers.

7. **Achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, and the LGBTQIA+ community: Address gender discrimination, gender-based violence and gendered distribution of unpaid care work.** In the process of deepening the gender analysis in the labor agenda on gender equality, varying forms of discrimination that women and LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual) experience in the workplace were discussed, such as discrimination in employment opportunities and in access to paid, high-paying, secure and decent jobs. Furthermore, persistent practices of violence and harassment against women and LGBTQIA+ people were highlighted, along with unequal gendered distribution of unpaid care work.

**7.1 Promoting gender equality and non-discrimination laws.** The Philippines has many good and promising laws that promote women's rights and gender equality, but implementation is always problematic. Many provisions in existing gender equality laws and policies are not consistently provided and universally accessed by women workers.

**7.2 Eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work.** Filipino women workers face various forms of GBV whether at the workplace, when going to and coming from work, and at the domestic sphere.

**7.3 Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work.** The workforce in the care sector or economy includes mothers, wives, domestic workers, nurses, teachers, community health workers, and so on – majority of whom are women. Women still bear the brunt of unpaid care work.

**7.4 Achieve gender equality and empower the LGBTQIA+ community.** The LGBTQIA+ respondents have reported experiencing discrimination during hiring and employment, curtailment of their freedom for gender expression, and lack of access to facilities, professional development opportunities and promotion.

8. **Adopt and implement a resilient, equitable and sustainable development path for communities by integrating climate change and peace and resilience measures into national policies, strategies and planning.** As


ILO Director General Gilbert F. Houngbo, accompanied by Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, interacts with female Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) at the Migrant Workers Resource Center (MRC). ILO Photo by G. Carreon

the climate crisis has exacerbated through the years, its impacts have continuously put women workers at heightened risk, amplifying existing inequalities and vulnerabilities in the workforce.

9. **Protect the rights and ensure the well-being of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), including undocumented workers.** Majority of Filipino overseas workers are women. In 2023, of the 1.96 million deployed OFWs, 57.8 per cent were women and 42.2 per cent were men. The majority (69.8 per cent) of women OFWs can be found in elementary occupations, which are paid lower than in middle/high-skilled and professional occupational groups.

10. **Adopt and implement a sustainable industrial policy that combines economic upgrading and social upgrading.** Discussions on industrial policy in the Philippines have not been participatory and mostly happen among the economic policymakers in the country. The significant shift to export-oriented industrialization beginning in mid-1970s until the present has considerably shaped Philippine trade and investment policies towards liberalization. Women continue to be under-represented in industrial policy-making.

11. **Tax wealth of the super-rich to fund universal social protection and economic recovery.** Inequality has reached alarming proportions in the recent decades. The top one per cent, or the world's billionaires, have doubled their wealth in the last 10 years, or 74 times more wealth than the bottom 50 per cent of the world combined. Based on the rising and unabated increasing wealth and incomes inequalities, wealth tax is one of the proposed measures to reverse the trend. Taxing wealth may improve women's access to social protection.

12. **Strengthen and deepen social dialogue.** Social dialogue is one of the four fundamental pillars of ILO's framework on Decent Work together with employment, workers' rights and social protection. However, women workers decried the lack of gendered lens on the social dialogue processes and the general lack of a more

meaningful women representation/ participation in social dialogue mechanisms.

13. **Adopt policies and measures aimed at protecting workers in the digital economy and those that perform work remotely using digital tools and platforms.** In the current digital economy, women workers can be found in web-based or location-based digital platform work. The shift to online work offers increased flexibility for workers; however, it also brings about various socio-economic issues and forms of discrimination and violence against women in the digital economy.

14. **Agenda for the future of work, workers and workers' power.** The emergence of new working arrangements and cutting-edge technologies has caused labor markets to reconfigure. The changing world of work and the future of work undoubtedly impacts women workers disproportionately, given the current realities of women's work: concentrated in low-skilled and low-paid jobs, largely contractual, and highly precarious and often dispensable in the face of labor market shocks and shifts.

15. **Assert the Philippines' sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea and ensure the demilitarization in the area in order to defend the livelihood of our fishery workers, agricultural workers, and other rural workers living in the islands surrounding the area.** In the on-going maritime conflict between the Philippines and China in the sovereign use and territorial integrity of disputed waters, the discussion on the maritime conflict has always been at the domain of state-level foreign policy that it has been considered a 'state-centric' issue. The 'state-centric' discourse on the West Philippine Sea has failed to inject the gender lens which made the state-based policies less effective without the integration of gender perspectives

The gendered analysis of the 15-point Labor Agenda led the women leaders and activists to come up with recommendations for each of the Agenda points. These recommendations are aimed at promoting and strengthening gender equality and gender justice in the world of work. The recommendations do not only require institutional changes, but concrete actions as well, that are to be implemented on four levels: National Legislation level, Executive-level regulations and issuances, Workplace/Enterprise-level (directed towards employers) and Union-level.

Women workers at the forefront of standing up for labour rights. Photo by WWU.

A female comfort and safety controller works on the Final Test machine. ILO Photo by Ruben Hamahiga De la Cruz.

# Introduction

In November 2022, trade unions in the Philippines launched their *15-Point Labor Agenda: Towards Building Worker and Trade Union Power in the Philippines*. This was the result of an iterative process involving consultations, workshops and validation meetings in 2021. The Agenda is a synthesis of positions of trade unions and workers' organizations on major issues that are the most important to workers. While the Agenda includes an item on gender equality—*Agenda 7: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and the LGBTQIA+ community*, the weak conditions and higher vulnerabilities of women workers, as well as the unequal gender-based power relations in the Philippines that subordinate women necessitate a two-pronged approach: accompanying dedicated action on gender equality with systematic gender mainstreaming. This involves carrying out a gender analysis and highlighting the gender dimension and possible gender gaps of each of the other Agenda points, and expanding Agenda 7.

Thus, in 2023, the Women Workers United (WWU) – a coalition of women leaders coming from the various trade unions that participated in drawing up the 15-Point Labor Agenda – initiated the process. A Technical Working Group (TWG) of seven women leaders, with the support of two consultants from the University of the Philippines School of Labor and Industrial Relations, who were engaged by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for the Philippines led the process. It included the conduct of two pre-summit workshops, through which the gender analysis framework and tools were finalized; three island-wide (Luzon-wide, Visayas-wide and Mindanao-wide) workshops and a validation session that involved women leaders of trade unions and other workers' organizations coming from various regions; a series of meetings of the WWU TWG and Convenors to finalize the consolidated summaries of the island-wide workshops and draw up common points of agreement; and thematic workshops on ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) in March 2024, and Decent Work and the Care Economy in May 2024. Each WWU member organization also underwent internal organizational processes to discuss and validate the Women Workers' Agenda. Finally, a national summit was held in October 2024 where the Women Workers' Agenda was launched.

In total, over 300 women leaders from at least 83 trade unions and workers' organizations from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao participated in the en-gendering of the labor agenda. Supported by the ILO Country Office for the Philippines, the **Women Workers' Agenda** was crafted.

This report consists of two parts: the first discusses and analyses women workers' participation in the labor market in the Philippines and identifies and explains the underlying reasons of women workers' weak labor market conditions and outcomes; and the second part discusses the 15-point Labor Agenda with a gender perspective, using relevant literature, statistical data and the results of the pre-summit and island-wide workshops organized by WWU. Each agenda is immediately followed by sets of recommendations addressed to (1) national and legislative bodies of the Philippine government; (2) the executive branch of the government and its departments; (3) enterprises; and 4) unions.

TESDA trainees add final touches to the table set designed for fine dining. ILO Photo by Ruben Hamahiga De la Cruz.

# Women in the Philippine Labor Market

Since 2006, the Philippines has been ranking high in closing the gender gap as per the World Economic Forum's (WEF) *2023 Global Gender Gap Report*. The WEF ranks about 146 countries based on their progress towards gender parity (measured across four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment) using a global gender gap index, which "measures scores on a 0 to 100 scale and scores can be interpreted as the distance covered towards parity (i.e. the percentage of the gender gap that has been closed)".[1] In 2023, the WEF reports that the Philippines has achieved 79.1 per cent gender parity and ranks 16th globally.[2] The country is also identified as the most gender equal country in East Asia and the Pacific, owing to its 79.1 per cent overall gender parity rate compared to the region's score of 68.8 per cent. Specifically, on the economic participation and opportunity index, the Philippines is said to have closed the gender gap to 78.9 per cent, compared to a global weighted average of 59.8 per cent.[3]

Though the 2023 rating is an improvement of the country's parity index score and ranking in 2022 at 78.3 per cent (rank 19), it is still lower than the parity level in 2018, which was 79.9 per cent. In fact, between 2018 and 2023, gender parity was declining in the country. In other words, gender gap was widening. This is mainly attributed to lower and declining scores in the economic participation and opportunity index, particularly the subindices on labor force participation rate (LFPR) and wage equality for similar work, as well as, to a lesser extent, to the health and survival index (particularly the sex ratio at birth subindex) and political empowerment.

In 2018, the Philippines earned a total score of 80.1 per cent in the economic participation and opportunity index, while the subindices on LFPR and wage equality for similar work got a score of 68.8 per cent and 79.3 per cent, respectively. In 2023, all these scores went down – 78.9 per cent for economic participation and opportunity, and 64.1 per cent and 75.2 per cent for the subindices on LFPR and wage equality for similar work, respectively.[4]

In health and survival, the scores declined as well from 97.9 per cent in 2018 to 96.8 per cent in 2023. This is attributed to the decline in the scores of the sex ratio at birth subindex, from 94.3 per cent in 2018 to 92.8 per cent in 2023.

Meanwhile, the Philippines has been consistently scoring low (below 50 per cent) on the political empowerment index. In 2018, the overall score for this index was 41.6 per cent, which further declined to 40.9 per cent in 2023. The regression is mainly attributed to the subindex on women in parliament, from a score of 41.8 per cent in 2018 to only 37.6 per cent in 2023.

A female dresssmaking trainee works on a dress using an industrial sewing machine. ILO Photo by Ruben Hamahiga De la Cruz.

Safety and health risks in small businesses are high for workers. Local communities earn from traditional-craft of lantern making but it is also vital to ensure occupational safety and health, and protect workers from dangers and accidents. ILO Photo by M. Fossat.

Much of the Philippines' often touted stellar performance in achieving the so-called gender equality is attributed to national efforts, namely legislation and policymaking that seek to progressively eliminate barriers to the full enjoyment of women's human rights and uplift the status of women in society. The enactment of national laws aimed at promoting gender equality and the institution of gender-responsive policies over the years – many of which were pushed by the country's globally recognized and robust women's rights movement – have provided opportunities for women workers to assert equal rights and participate productively in the workforce.

Yet despite these efforts, women continue to experience discrimination and gender stereotyping at the domestic sphere, at home and in society as a whole. This may be partly attributed to the poor or dismal implementation of gender equality laws and the lack of mechanisms at the workplace, industry and even at the national level to monitor and enforce its implementation. These laws and policies could help protect women's rights, provide gender responsive measures to address women's conditions, and provide redress mechanisms and access to justice for women workers whose rights have been violated in the world of work. Discrimination and gender-stereotyping also stems from biased social norms that undervalue "women's capabilities and rights in society – [they] constrain women's choices and opportunities by regulating behaviour and setting the boundaries of what women are expected to do and be."[5]

At the same time, global trends have had significant impact on national efforts towards gender equality. According to the 20223 WEF Global Gender Gap Report, gaps in the global labor market persists, leaving whatever advancements towards gender parity highly volatile.[6] Women's labor force participation is declining globally, and further indicators of economic opportunity such as gender differentiated unemployment rate, standard of working conditions, workforce representation and leadership across industries, reveal significant disparities between women and men.[7] In addition, labor market risks posed by protracted geopolitical conflicts, unanswered concerns regarding the direction of international trade and supply chains, large-scale climate catastrophes, and the disruptive potential of new and emerging technologies are anticipated to disproportionately harm women, particularly those who are already in precarious conditions in the world of work.

Hence, Filipino women workers are reeling from a multitude of issues and challenges. While risk factors in the global labor market are persistently present, huge challenges remain in terms of achieving substantive gender equality for women workers, including gaps in the implementation of existing laws and policies, as well as in crafting

new ones aimed at providing gender-responsive social safety nets and easing women's multiple burdens and vulnerabilities.

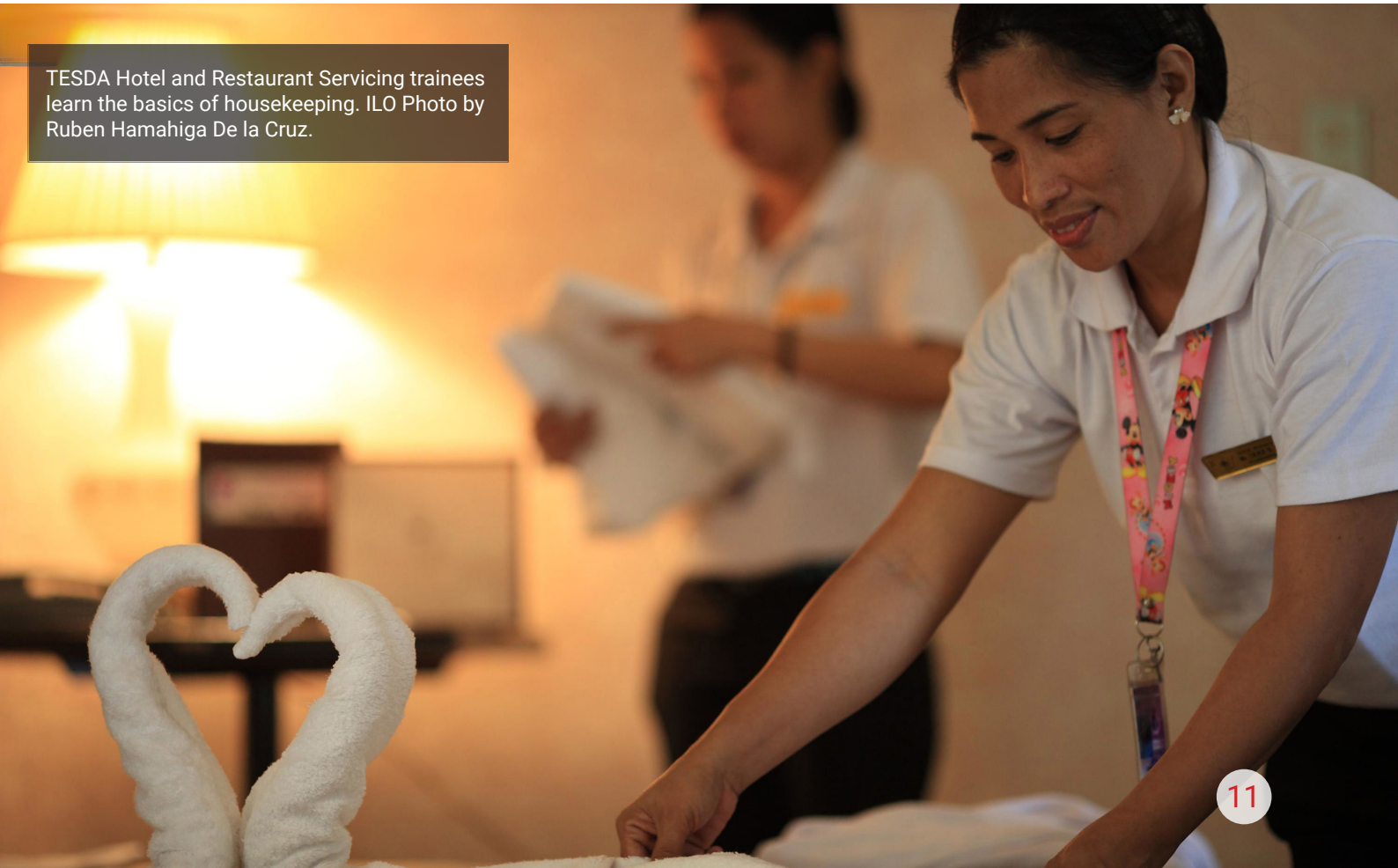
At the core of the persistence of gender inequality is patriarchy and capitalism.

## The intersection of patriarchy, capitalism and gender inequality

Despite advances in non-discriminatory laws and gender-responsive policies in the Philippines, structural gender inequalities persist. At the economic sphere, the persistence of gender pay gap and job segregation renders women economically marginalized. At the cultural and societal levels, gendered social norms and patriarchal masculinities emphasize the superiority and authority of men over women, value aggressive and risk-taking behavior, thereby exposing women to violence and harassment. At the political sphere, women lack significant representation in policy- and decision-making processes. These patriarchal political, economic and societal structures perpetuate gender inequalities from households to workplaces and communities. Women are thus identified as second-class citizens and the natural providers of paid and unpaid reproductive or care work.

The systemic gendered inequalities are produced and reproduced through the patriarchal and capitalist relations in the contemporary political economy. 'Patriarchy', meaning the system that perpetuates the rule of the father or the dominance of men over women, continues to prop-up the divide between productive and reproductive work in the capitalist economic system. Productive work, which refers to the primary mode of wealth accumulation mostly done outside the home, is paid and mostly done by men. It is recognized as a source of national wealth. Reproductive work, on the other hand, refers to the care work done that reproduces and sustains life – the bulk being unpaid and mostly done by women. In contemporary times, care work, which includes domestic work and caring for children and the elderly, has been Increasingly marketized, especially if done for others and outside a woman's household; nevertheless, it remains undervalued.

Capitalism benefits from patriarchy by undervaluing social reproduction which involves replenishing labor power and sustaining life through care work. Social reproduction through



TESDA Hotel and Restaurant Servicing trainees learn the basics of housekeeping. ILO Photo by Ruben Hamahiga De la Cruz.

care work allows workers to gain strength to work. Organizing the family around the wage-earning male worker and making the woman responsible for his reproduction through unpaid domestic work is at the heart of the patriarchal order that constitutes a central material basis for the capitalist system.[8] Indeed, the important role of women in social reproduction remains indivisible, resulting in the continued exploitation of women at home and in the family. Simply put, capitalist production exploits and profits from women's paid and unpaid reproductive work.

Therefore, women's political, economic and socio-cultural subordination is necessary for the advent and functioning of capitalism. As a well-known feminist argues, capitalism has constantly reproduced "unequal power relations, hierarchies, and divisions, which, in turn, generate ideologies, interests, and subjectivities that constitute a destructive social force".[9] Thus, the sexual division of labor is an inherent characteristic and prominent feature of the capitalist mode of production. Women's low wages, precarious work and livelihood, and unpaid care work are critical in sustaining capitalist accumulation and reproduction.

The intersection of patriarchy, capitalism and women's subordination are at the crux of gender inequality and discrimination (a point discussed in Agenda 7) and women's poorer working conditions.

## Weaker labor market conditions and outcomes of women

As elsewhere, women workers in the Philippines face more disadvantages than men in the labor market. Women's labor force participation remains weak. In addition, women comprise the majority of workers who are not in the labor force. Compared to men, women experience poorer employment conditions and outcomes in terms of the following: lower employment rate; higher unemployment rate; lower share of paid, regular and full-time employment; lower wages; a larger share of vulnerable workers in the informal sector; and higher vulnerability to violence and harassment at work.

### *Women's labor force participation rate remains static*

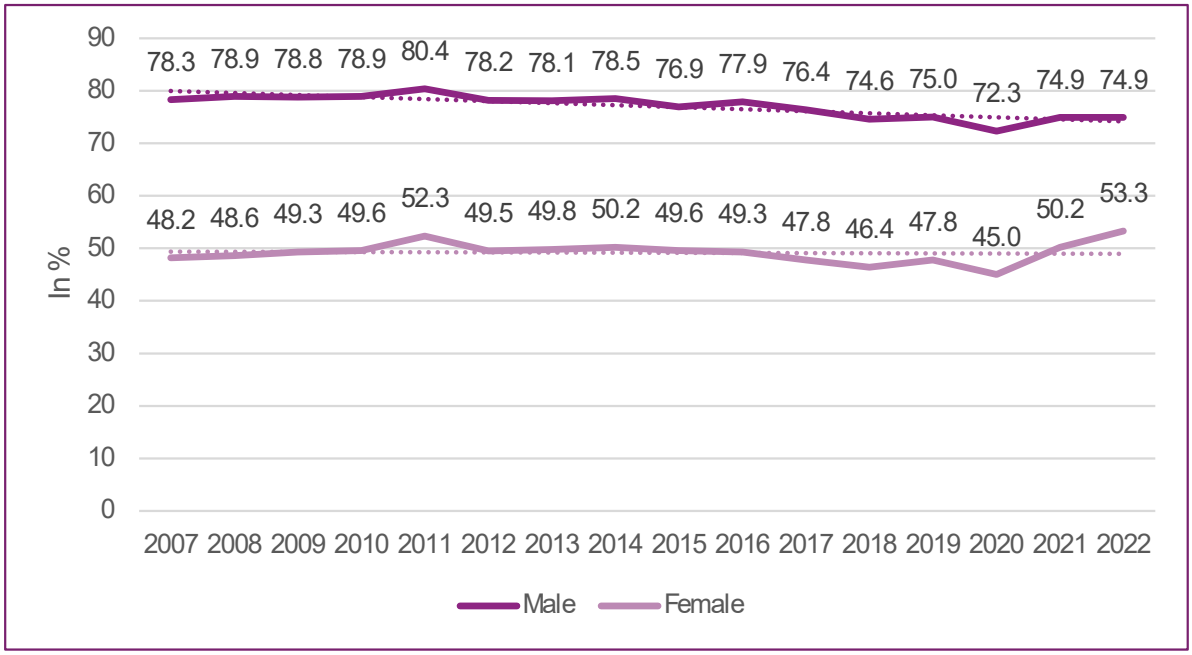
As figure 1 shows, the LFPR[10] of women between October 2007 and October 2022 remained unchanged, averaging 49.2 per cent. This suggests that less than half of all women aged 15 year and older were working or were actively looking for work during the period. The LFPR gap between men and women during the period averaged at 27.9 percentage points, which is within the range of 25–30 percentage points year-on-year as cited in one study.[11] In fact, Filipino women's LFPR, based on ILO's 2018 estimates, has remained consistently low and among the lowest in the Southeast Asian region.[12] In September 2023, women's LPFR stood at 53.4 per cent compared to 74.7 per cent for men.[13]

Women's reproductive role appears to be penalized in the workplace. An empirical study calculated the penalty (that is, the reduction in the likelihood of employment) for pregnancy and motherhood: "Pregnancy is associated with a reduction in the likelihood of employment by 13 percentage points for the all-women sample and by 37 percentage points for the currently married sample".[14]

The same study further mentioned different factors that will also be discussed later in the paper:

> The low labor force participation of Filipino women is attributed to multidimensional factors including stereotyped gender roles that assign women to domestic and reproductive roles and men to economic and productive roles; religious restrictions on the types of occupation that women can undertake; lack of access by women to skills training for virtual jobs and e-commerce that are more compatible with domestic responsibilities; occupational gender segregation; employer discriminatory practices; and undercounting of women's economic activities.[15]

Figure 1. *Labor force participation rate by sex, 2007–2022*[16]




***There are more women than men who are not included in the labor force***

Persons that are not included in the labor force are those that are not looking for work; thus, neither employed nor unemployed such as housewives, students, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and retirees. Majority of persons not in the labor force are women.[17] In March 2023, of the 26.3 million Filipinos aged 15 years and older that were not in the labor force, close to 17 million (64.7 per cent) were women.[18]

Women's unpaid care work responsibilities largely explain their economic inactivity. In March 2023, of the 7.4 million Filipinos aged 15 years and older who were not in the labor force due to household duties, an overwhelming 94.8 per cent were women.[19] Men comprised a puny share of 5.2 per cent.

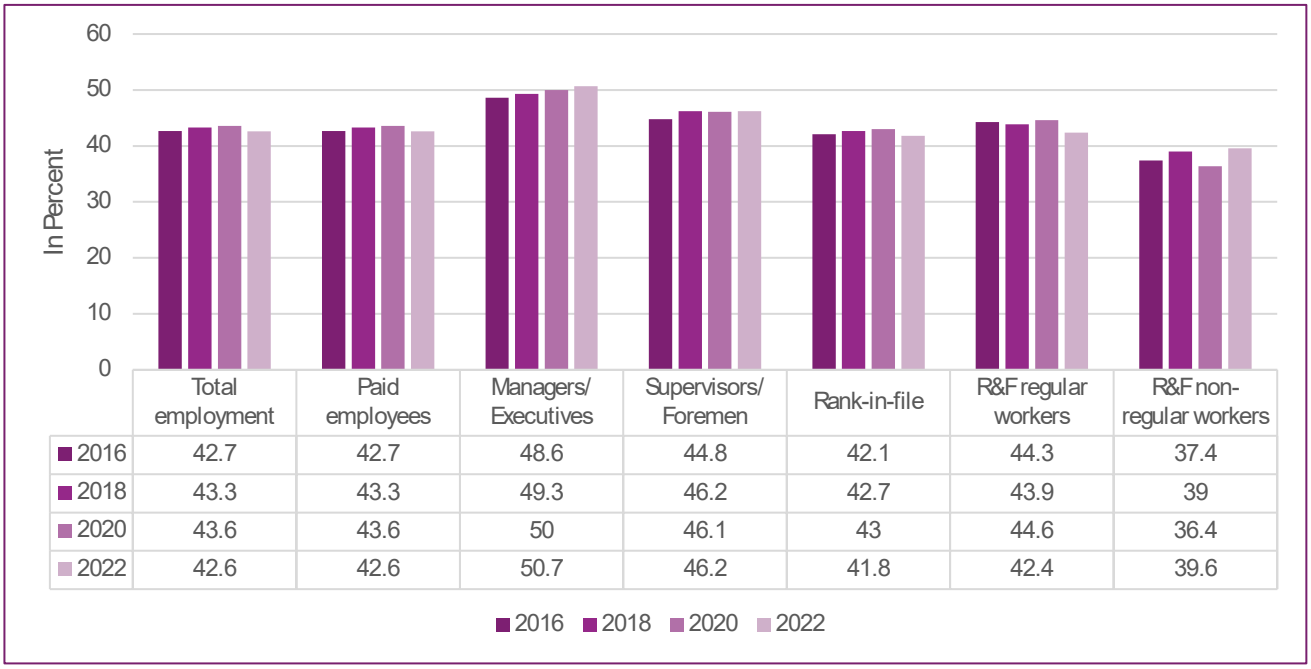
Indeed, women are more likely to withdraw from the labor force due to marriage, childbirth and childrearing. Moreover, the presence of young children aged 3 years old and below negatively affects women's labor force participation, which is not the case for men.[20] The lack of adequate, free and accessible public care infrastructure contributes to women bearing the burden of care work.

***Women face poorer employment outcomes***

Of the 47 million Filipinos employed in September 2023, 28 million (59.6 per cent) were men while only 19 million (40.4 per cent) were women[21] – a decline from 42.6 per cent in 2022 (see fig. 2). Women's lower share of employment persists over the years. For example, between June 2016 and August 2022, women's share in total employment averaged at 43.1 per cent.[22]

Women account for less than half of paid employment, averaging at 43.1 per cent between 2016 and 2022. As shown in figure 2, women's share of total paid employees remained unchanged overall in the same period. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) Integrated Survey of Labor and Employment (ISLE), of the 5.3 million paid employees, women accounted for only 2.2 million (42.6 per cent).

Figure 2. *Women's share of employment by type of workers in establishments with 20 or more workers: June 2016 to August 2022*[23]




| | Total employment | Paid employees | Managers/ Executives | Supervisors/ Foremen | Rank-in-file | R&F regular workers | R&F non-regular workers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2016 | 42.7 | 42.7 | 48.6 | 44.8 | 42.1 | 44.3 | 37.4 |
| 2018 | 43.3 | 43.3 | 49.3 | 46.2 | 42.7 | 43.9 | 39 |
| 2020 | 43.6 | 43.6 | 50 | 46.1 | 43 | 44.6 | 36.4 |
| 2022 | 42.6 | 42.6 | 50.7 | 46.2 | 41.8 | 42.4 | 39.6 |

Women also account for less than half of all rank-and-file and regular rank-and-file workers, averaging 42.4 per cent and 43.8 per cent, respectively, between 2020 and 2022 (see figure 2). In the same period, women's share among these workers even declined from 43 per cent to 41.8 per cent among the rank-and-file and from 44.6 per cent to 44.2 per cent among the regular rank-and-file. Among the non-regular rank-and file workers, women's share slightly increased between 2016 and 2022. Their share averaged 38.1 per cent. A significant increase is observed between 2020 and 2022 when women's share of the non-regular workers went up from 36.4 per cent to 39.6 per cent.[24]

Meanwhile, while women's share among supervisors/foremen appear higher than in other categories of workers, they still comprise less than half of all workers under this category – averaging only 45.8 per cent between 2016 and 2022. In fact, overall, it did not change during the same period. Nonetheless, it can be inferred that gender parity has been achieved among managers and executives between 2020 and 2022. By August 2022, women made up 134,350 of the 264,858 managers/executives.[25] This doesn't mean, however, that women managers earn the same level of wages as their men counterparts. In fact, in 2021, there was a nine per cent gender wage gap in the managers occupational category, which will be shown later in table 2. This suggests that women may be holding lower managerial positions and thus receiving lower pay compared to men managers.

The unemployment rate in September 2023 was also higher among women at 5.2 per cent compared to men at 4.1 per cent.[26] The unemployed women are most likely those that do informal work while looking for work.

Based on the 2020 Labor Force Survey (LFS), there were more industries (12 out of 21) where the majority of workers are men (table 1) in 2020. Women comprised the majority in 9 out of the 21 industries: Repair of Computers and Personal and Household Goods; Other Personal Service Activities; Education, Public and Private; Activities of Extra-Territorial Organizations and Bodies; Human Health and Social Work Activities; Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles; Financial and Insurance Services; Real Estate Activities; Accommodation and Food Service Activities; and Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities.

Table 1. *Total number and share of persons engaged in establishments by industry and sex: Average for 2014 and 2020*[27]

| Industries | 2014 | | | 2020 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % Women | % Men | Total | % Women | % Men |
| Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing | 11,587,961 | 26.3 | 73.7 | 9,985,966 | 23.4 | 76.6 |
| Mining and Quarrying | 235,164 | 9.0 | 91.0 | 185,971 | 8.3 | 91.7 |
| Manufacturing | 3,178,880 | 44.7 | 55.3 | 3,200,050 | 39.7 | 60.3 |
| Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply | 85,295 | 15.5 | 84.5 | 80,939 | 15.8 | 84.2 |
| Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities | 51,266 | 21.3 | 78.7 | 58,169 | 16.5 | 83.5 |
| Construction | 2,519,480 | 2.1 | 97.9 | 3,702,994 | 2.4 | 97.6 |
| Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles | 7,135,475 | 59.9 | 40.0 | 8,254,575 | 61.4 | 38.6 |
| Transportation and Storage | 2,661,436 | 3.5 | 96.5 | 2,933,579 | 3.9 | 96.1 |
| Accommodation and Food Service Activities | 1,656,151 | 57.5 | 42.5 | 1,474,221 | 53.2 | 46.8 |
| Information and Communication | 354,067 | 37.2 | 62.8 | 350,750 | 34.6 | 65.4 |
| Financial and Insurance Activities | 491,172 | 57.8 | 42.2 | 555,762 | 58.5 | 41.5 |
| Real Estate Activities | 169,823 | 54.8 | 45.2 | 192,068 | 55.8 | 44.2 |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities | 209,336 | 47.5 | 52.5 | 260,387 | 51.1 | 48.9 |
| Administrative and Support Services Activities | 1,074,259 | 35.2 | 64.8 | 1,609,323 | 38.4 | 61.6 |
| Public Administration and Defense; Compulsory Social Security | 1,926,556 | 42.5 | 57.5 | 2,563,352 | 47.1 | 52.9 |
| Education (Public and Private) | 1,244,062 | 73.3 | 26.7 | 1,286,294 | 73.5 | 26.5 |
| Human Health and Social Work Activities | 480,713 | 67.4 | 32.6 | 542,366 | 68.5 | 31.5 |
| Arts, Entertainment and Recreation | 350,117 | 38.6 | 61.4 | 230,612 | 42.4 | 57.6 |
| Repair of Computers and Personal and Household Goods; Other Personal Service Activities | 2,152,195 | 71.2 | 28.8 | 2,353,559 | 74.2 | 25.8 |
| Activities of Households as Employers; Undifferentiated Goods-and Services-Producing Activities of Households for Own Use | 524,506 | 89.5 | 10.5 | - | - | - |
| Activities of Extra-Territorial Organizations and Bodies | 8,336 | 52.7 | 47.3 | 2,324 | 73.4 | 26.6 |

Women workers also accounted for a significant share – at least one-third – in other service-oriented industries: Public Administration and Defense; Compulsory Social Security; Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; Manufacturing; Administrative and Support Services Activities; and Information and Communication (table 1).

In contrast, in 2020, women had the lowest share of the total employed in Construction, Transportation and Storage, and Mining and Quarrying.

There were notable trends on the share of women of total employment across industries. Between 2014 and 2020, women's share of the total employed decreased in six industries: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Mining and Quarrying; Manufacturing; Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities; Accommodation and Food Service Activities; and Information and Communication. The largest decrease was registered in manufacturing.

Meanwhile, during the same period, the largest increases of women's share (by 3 percentage points and over) were recorded in five industries – all of which were services activities: Activities of Extra-Territorial Organizations and Bodies; Public Administration and Defense; Compulsory Social Security; Arts and Entertainment; Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities; Administrative and Support Services Activities; and Wholesale and Retail Trade. Note that, except in Administrative and Support Services Activities, majority of the employed in these industries are women.

These findings suggest that women workers tend to cluster in the services sector where labor productivity and unionization rates are lower compared to industry,[28] while men workers are concentrated in both the agricultural and industry sectors. Specifically, in 2021, women were mostly employed in the wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles and personal and household goods, while men were mostly employed in agriculture, hunting and forestry.[29]

### *Occupational gender segregation remains persistent although there are some improvements in certain industries and occupational categories*

As elsewhere, occupational segregation by gender persists in the Philippines, despite some improvements over the years. This means that the unequal distribution of female and male employees – favoring the latter – across all the occupational categories remains. According to PSA, female share in occupational employment remained unchanged between 1995 and 2017. While female share had slightly grown (1.5 per cent) since the mid-1990s, from 36.4 per cent in 1995 to 37.9 per cent in 2017, peaks of only 39.1 per cent (2002) and 39.6 per cent (2016) were posted during this period (figure 3).[30]

Figure 3. *Female share in occupational employment, Philippines: 1995–2017 (in per cent)*[31]

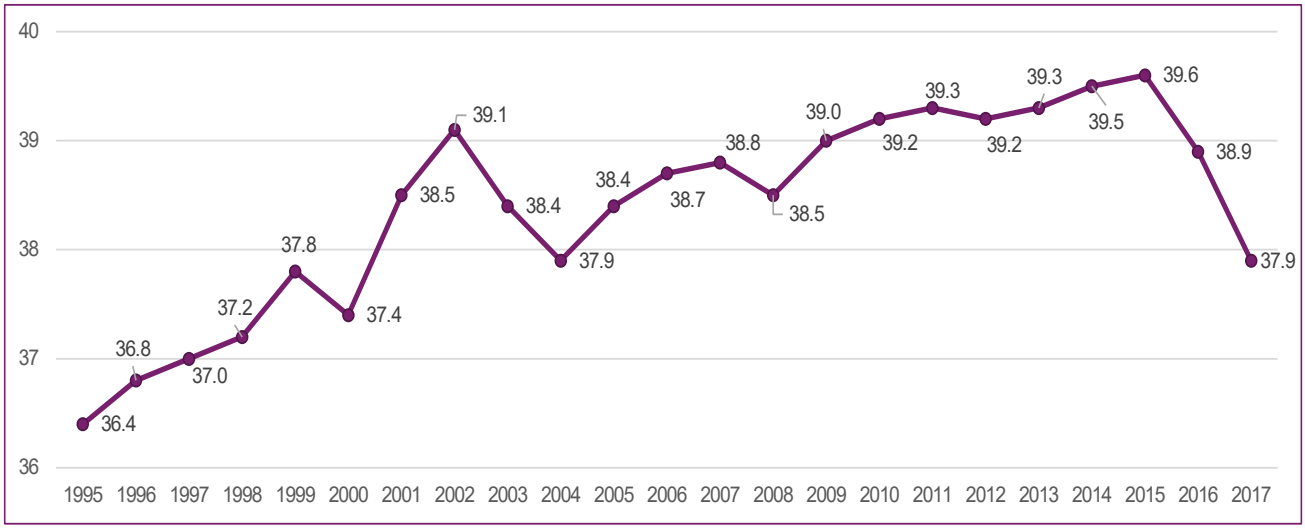
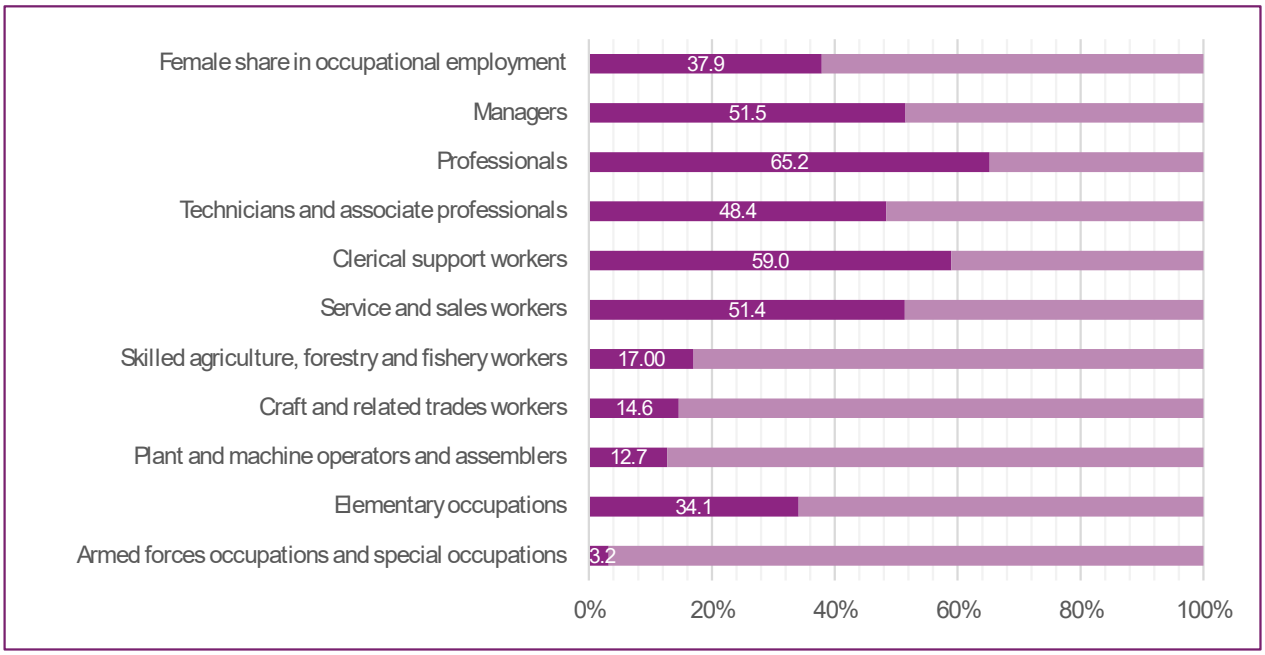


Figure 4. *Female share in occupational employment (in percent), 2017* [32]




Women comprised the majority of workers in 4 out of 10 occupational categories (figure 4) in 2017: professional (65.2 per cent), clerical support group (59 per cent), managers (51.5 per cent) and service and sales workers (51.4 per cent).[33] While this may appear as a positive development, the fact remains that gender parity is far from being achieved in the other six occupational categories where men overwhelming dominate.

Moreover, comprising the majority of employment does not mean that women occupy jobs that are highly-skilled and highly-paid. According to a recent empirical study, occupational titles for professionals include mostly engineering posts like agricultural, civil, electronics, geodetic, marine and Chief Operating Officers, which are commonly held by men.[34] Moreover, skilled workers, such as blacksmiths, butchers, carpenters, electricians and farmers are dominated by men; whereas dressmakers, housemaids, jewelers, sweepers and weavers, who are less paid compared to the male-dominated skilled jobs, are dominated by women. According to PSA, service and sales worker was the most common occupation among women in 2021.[35]

The entrenched gender segregation of occupations emanates from the gendered division of labor on reproductive work or social reproduction which include activities essential in sustaining life on a daily basis. The broad spectrum of care work such as childminding, preparing and serving food, laundering clothes, cleaning the household and providing care and support for children, elderly and even other people in the community can be considered reproductive work. Reproductive labor, mostly unpaid when provided by wives and mothers, takes place outside the market, hence considered invisible and not real work.[36] For centuries and by tradition, women have disproportionately performed reproductive work, privileging men to excel in most occupations at the expense of women. The gendered division of reproductive work sustains the contemporary capitalist relations that benefited men directly and indirectly.

### *Gender wage gap remains*

In the Philippines, the gender wage gap – a measure of the difference between the average daily basic pay of men and women as a percentage of the average daily basic pay of men – is a result of multiple factors. For instance, because of the traditional family setup – the husband as the breadwinner and the wife as the homemaker and caregiver, "society in general, is more willing to give higher salaries to male employees".[37] Gender discrimination is another

factor. Using the Philippine LFS for the years 2003 to 2005, a study by Cabegin found strong evidence that gender differences in wages is attributable to discrimination; even if women workers bring in better human capital attributes, they remained to be less compensated.[38] This is despite the fact that the Philippines ratified the fundamental ILO Convention 100 (Equal Remuneration Convention) and the country has several laws that require equal pay for equal work. These laws are not always enforced, and many employers continue to pay women less than men for the same work.

However, government data showed that the overall gender wage gap averaged -5.3 per cent in 2017; that is, women's average daily basic pay was higher by 5.3 per cent compared with the rate for men (table 2), indicating the apparent absence of a gender wage gap.[39] The same trend was observed in 2018 and 2021 (table 3). But it cannot be generally concluded that indeed women receive a higher pay than men and that gender wage gap "it cannot be generally concluded as such" "wage data refers to a wide mix of occupational has been eliminated. The PSA itself noted that, as groups with different job contents".[40] Based on 2021 data, negative gender wage gap rates, which indicate that average daily wage rates of women are higher than their male counterparts, are present in four occupational categories – elementary occupations, armed forces and special occupations, technicians and associate professionals, and clerical support workers. Except for clerical support workers, women represent only a small fraction of the workforce in these occupational categories, but their combined negative wage gap rates effectively skewed the overall average – making it seem as though the gender wage gap in the country has been eliminated and that women's pay has overtaken that of men. Given the limitations of statistical averages, it is important to use more in-depth and nuanced analysis in understanding gender wage gaps.

Table 2. *Gender Wage Gap by Major Occupation Group, Philippines: 2017* [41]

| Major occupation groups | Gender Wage Gap (%) | Average Daily Basic Pay (Philippine Peso) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Men | Women |
| **All occupations** | -5.3 | 407.09 | 428.83 |
| Managers | 4.7 | 943.51 | 899.59 |
| Professionals | 9.3 | 921.05 | 834.99 |
| Technicians and Associate Professionals | 6.3 | 594.59 | 556.94 |
| Clerical Support Workers | 3.5 | 530.52 | 512.09 |
| Service and Sales Workers | 24.4 | 387.89 | 293.35 |
| Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers | -33.6 | 292.02 | 390.08 |
| Craft and Related Trades Workers | 25.5 | 383.05 | 285.54 |
| Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers | 9.9 | 414.16 | 373.34 |
| Elementary Occupations | 23.5 | 272.09 | 208.19 |
| Armed Forces Occupations and Special Occupations | -55.8 | 833.30 | 1,297.91 |

*(Note: A negative number means women earn more than men.)*

Table 3. *Gender wage gap by major occupation group, 2018[42] and 2021[43]*

| Major occupation groups | Gender wage gap (%) | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2018 | 2021 |
| All occupations | -4.8 | -16.3 |
| Managers | 0.1 | 9.0 |
| Professionals | 8.6 | 7.6 |
| Technicians and associate professionals | 10.5 | -4.4 |
| Clerical support workers | 0.4 | -1.6 |
| Service and sales workers | 24.6 | 12.4 |
| Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers | -45.0 | 17.0 |
| Craft and related trades workers | 24.1 | 27.4 |
| Plant and machine operators and assemblers | 11.3 | 23.1 |
| Elementary occupations | 24.9 | -22.0 |
| Armed forces occupations and special occupations | -16.0 | -29.0 |

As shown in Table 2, in 2017, the average daily basic pay of men is higher than the rate for women in 8 of the 10 occupational groups, including in occupations such as service and sales workers where most of the employed are women. This can be surmised as well in 2018. In 2021, gender wage gaps existed in six of the 10 occupational categories. Wage gaps persisted in these occupational groups because, while there may be more employed women in some of these groups, most of them may be occupying lower-ranking positions and thus were receiving lower pay.[44]

Relatedly, an Asian Development Bank (ADB) study emphasizes that despite women's slight wage advantage on the gender wage gap in 2011, "once human capital gender differences are taken into account, the gender wage gap is between 23 per cent and 30 per cent, demonstrative of the high level of gender inequality in the labor market".[45] The same study points out the following:

> First, wages are reported only for employees and do not include information about income generated from own-account work. Thus, for countries such as the Philippines with a high share of vulnerable employment, the gender wage gap refers only to a small share of all workers.
>
> Second, the gender wage gap typically is reported without adjusting for human capital differences between women and men (calculated, by proxy, as formal education and years of labor market experience). In countries such as the Philippines, where women have higher levels of formal education than men, this unadjusted gender wage gap will underestimate women's disadvantage.
>
> Finally, employee wages are reported only for a specific period of time, such as a day, a week, or a month, and therefore generally do not reflect gender differences in work over a longer period of time, such as a year. Women may have lower quantities of time in paid work due to domestic and family care constraints and/or employers' discriminatory hiring decisions and preference to hire men for full-time/full-year jobs. Thus, over a longer time period, the gender annual earnings gap will be larger than the gender hourly wage gap.
>
> …in the Philippines' gender wage gap is calculated using the average daily rate of pay, so this will not take account of differences in amounts of paid work.[46]

The ADB adds that, "the gender wage gap for the paid labor market as a whole masks vast differences across occupations and industries".

Fruit and vegetable sellers on the sidewalk. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.

A more recent study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) points out that while women today are more educated, there are certain lucrative fields that are male-dominated, such as those which heavily use digital technology. It found that women who are engaged in digital jobs receive 18.4 per cent less salary than men.[47]

In this light, the WEF reports that in 2022, women's income is just 71.6 per cent that of men in the Philippines.[48] In fact, an analysis of the Philippines' scores in the subindex on wage equality for similar work (a component of the economic participation and opportunity index of the WEF Global Gender Gap Index) shows a regression from 81.2 per cent in 2020 to 75.2 per cent 2023.[49] This means that the wage gap for similar work between women and men increased by 6 per cent during the period.

The ILO *Global Wage Report 2018/2019* likewise points out that women workers account for 73 per cent of all workers who belong to the bottom one per cent of hourly wage distribution.

The above findings support previous data reported by the PSA. Accordingly, between 2012 and 2018, the average real daily basic pay of women was lower than men. In 2018, women's average real daily basic pay was 371.05 pesos while the rate for men was 388.94 pesos.[50] Even among non-regular/precarious workers (that is, short-term, seasonal and casual workers), women workers received lower pay than men between 2014 and 2018. In 2018, the average real daily basic pay of non-regular/precarious women workers was 256.51 pesos, while their male counterparts received 292.37 pesos.[51]

There are several factors that may account for the lower earnings of women. As mentioned, over the years, women's LFPR[52] had been consistently lower than the rate for men. Moreover, women workers' share in paid employment is lower than men's share. Women account for a larger share than men in low wage jobs. This trend persisted between 2012 and 2018. In 2018, of the total employed, the share of low-paid (wage and salary) women workers was 15.8 per cent, while men's share was 10.2 per cent.[53]

The basis of payment of wages may contribute as well to the lower pay of women. Based on the 2021/2022 ISLE of the PSA, in August 2022, women accounted for less than half (42.7 per cent) of the 5.2 million full-time workers. They accounted for the same proportion (42.7 per cent) among the 3 million monthly full-time employees and a lower share (35.2 per cent) of the 2 million

full-time daily workers. Women comprised 43.8 per cent of all part-time workers.[54] Not having a full-time job means less working time and thus less pay, especially when the hourly pay rate of part-time work is lower than that of full-time work. Additionally, limits to lower earnings have an impact on social security or insurance contribution.

To increase their earnings, women tend to work more hours than their male counterparts. In 2018, women comprised 25 per cent of the employed with excessive work hours (that is, more than 48 hours of actual work per week) in their primary job, while men accounted for 19.6 per cent.[55]

***Women comprise a larger share of workers in the informal sector***

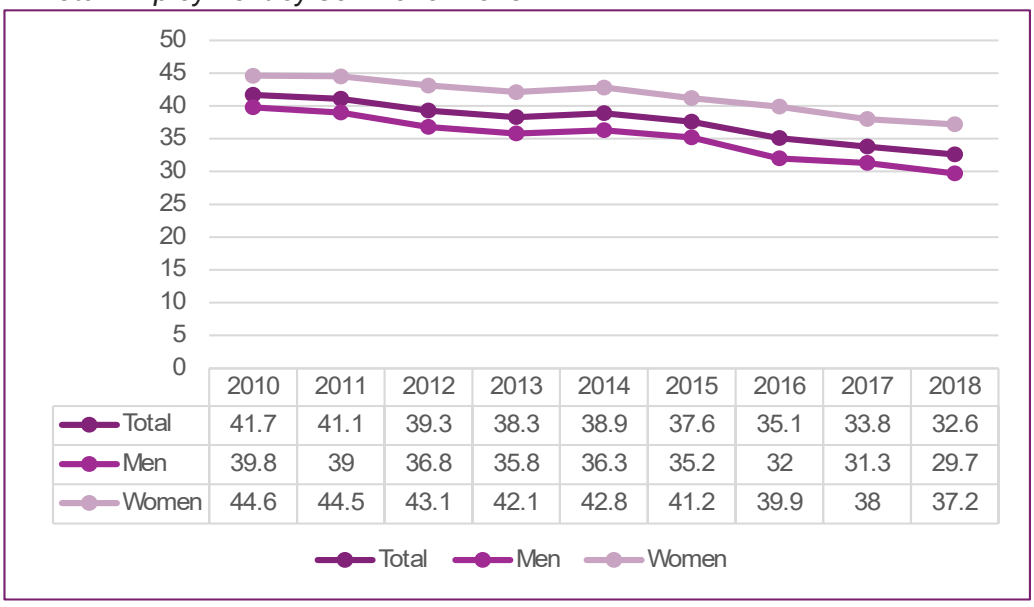
Vulnerable workers, defined as the sum of working owners/self-employed and unpaid workers, make up the bulk of workers in the informal sector. There is a larger share of vulnerable workers among women than among men. A 2019 National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) study found that,

> … most women in some of the less developed regions in the country work in the informal sector and account for more than 50 per cent of women workers. These workers become vulnerable given that informal sector employment lacks social protection, gives low remuneration and has poor working conditions.[56]

In 2018, of the 41.2 million total employed persons, 13.4 million (32.3 per cent) comprised the self-employed and unpaid family workers. Of the latter number, 5.8 million (43.6 per cent) were women. Nonetheless, between 2010 and 2018, the share of the self-employed and unpaid family workers among women remained higher than the share among men (figure 5). It was even higher than the national average. The shares of both sexes were declining during the period.

Moreover, there is an interesting trend to note: men's share of the self-employed and vulnerable workers appears to be declining faster than women's share. In 2010, women's share among the self-employed and unpaid family workers was 44.6 per cent compared to men's share of 39.8 per cent – or a difference of 4.8 percentage points. In 2018, despite the decline, the difference widened at 7.5 percentage points: women's share was 37.2 per cent and men's share was 29.7 per cent. This may suggest that women face more vulnerabilities than men that constrain their transition to the formal sector.

Figure 5. *Proportion of Self-Employed and Unpaid Family Workers in Total Employment by Sex: 2010–2018* [57]




| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 41.7 | 41.1 | 39.3 | 38.3 | 38.9 | 37.6 | 35.1 | 33.8 | 32.6 |
| Men | 39.8 | 39 | 36.8 | 35.8 | 36.3 | 35.2 | 32 | 31.3 | 29.7 |
| Women | 44.6 | 44.5 | 43.1 | 42.1 | 42.8 | 41.2 | 39.9 | 38 | 37.2 |

Source: Graph constructed by authors using data from PSA (2019). Decent Work Statistics (DeWS) Philippines

Table 4. *Violence against Women data, 2022*[58]

| ***Violence against Women*** | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Forms of Violence** | | **Age Group** | | | | | | **Reference Period/ Source** |
| | | **15-19** | **20-24** | **25-29** | **30-39** | **40-49** | **Total** | |
| **Percentage of Women Age 15-49 Who Have Experienced Various Forms of Physical and Sexual Violence, by Current Age** | | | | | | | | |
| Physical Violence Only | | 2.8 | 5.8 | 6 | 6.9 | 7 | 6.4 | 2022/ NDHS, PSA |
| Sexual Violence Only | | 1.6 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.3 | |
| Physical and Sexual Violence Only | | 0.7 | 1.8 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 1.4 | |
| Physical or Sexual Violence | | 3.8 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 7.9 | 7.7 | 7.3 | |
| Number of Women | | 767 | 1,635 | 2,087 | 4,528 | 4,346 | 13,362 | |
| **No. of Cases Reported to PNP CIRAS**[59] *i/ (as of 04 April 2023)* | **2021** | **2022** | **Inc. / Dec. (%)** | **No. of Cases Served by DSWD** *(as of June 2022)* | | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** |
| **Total** | 13,830 | 11,307 | -18.2 | **Total** | | 1,035 | 1,153 | 592 |
| Violation of RA 9262 i1/ r/ | 9,385 | 7,161 | -23.7 | Physically Abused/ | | 90 | 77 | 34 |
| Rape r/ | 2,311 | 2,103 | -9 | Maltreated/ Battered | | | | |
| Acts of Lasciviousness | 1,625 | 1,612 | -0.8 | Sexually Abused | | 171 | 114 | 42 |
| Others i2/ r/ | 509 | 431 | -15.3 | Sexually Exploited | | 26 | 77 | 45 |
| | | | | Psychological/ Emotionally Abused | | 292 | 237 | 121 |
| | | | | Illegal Recruitment | | 225 | 14 | 0 |
| | | | | In Detention | | - | 1 | 0 |
| | | | | Armed Conflict | | - | 6 | 5 |
| | | | | Victims of Trafficking | | 62 | 134 | 47 |
| | | | | Others i3/ | | 169 | 493 | 298 |

***Women are more prone than men to violence and harassment at work***

Based on the latest Gender Factsheet issued by the PSA in 2023, the Philippine National Police (PNP) reported a total of 11,307 cases of VAW or violence against women (that is, violations of Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women Act, rape and other forms of sexual violence) in 2022 (table 4). Whilst there's an 18 per cent decrease of cases reported from 2022 (13,830), many cases have also gone unreported. The Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) also report having handled cases of physical abuse, maltreatment and sexual abuse, trafficking, etc. totaling to 1,035 cases in 2020, 1,153 cases in 2021 and 592 cases in 2022.

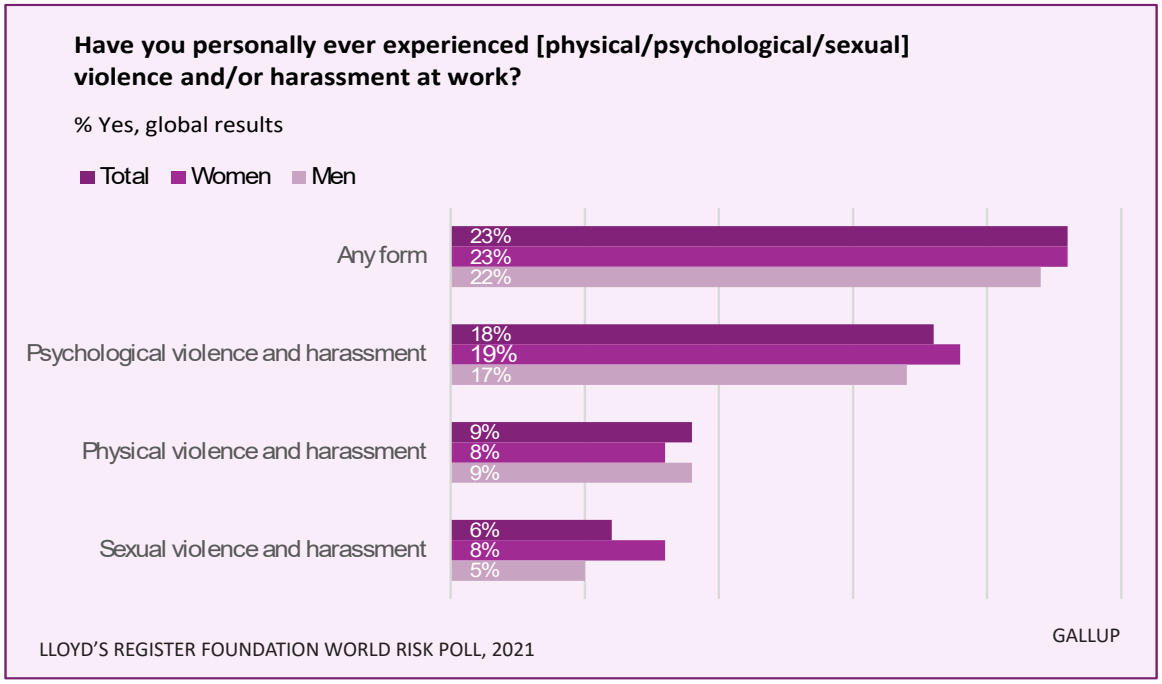
VAW also extends to the workplace. In fact, workplace violence and harassment are global phenomena as per a survey conducted in 2022 by the ILO, Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup. The survey is the first-ever study on violence and harassment at work on a global scale involving 74,000 respondents in 122 countries. According to the survey, 23 per cent or 740 million workers worldwide admitted that they have experienced some form of violence and harassment in the workplace (figure 6). Workplace violence and harassment can be in the form of physical, psychological and sexual violence.

The study entitled *Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey*, found out that "youth, migrant, and wage and salaried women and men were more likely to face violence and harassment at work".[60] This can be particularly true among women because, according to the survey results, "young women were twice as likely as young men to have experienced sexual violence and harassment, and migrant women were almost twice as likely as non-migrant women to report sexual violence and harassment".[61]

In the Philippines, around 1 in 5 Filipino workers experienced harassment in the workplace based on the Lloyd's Register Foundation-Gallup polls survey. According to the 2021 poll report, about 22 per cent of women and 18 per cent of men in the Philippines experienced violence and harassment in the workplace. Among the Filipino women workers who experienced harassment, "13 per cent said they were sexually harassed, 9 per cent said they were psychologically and physically harassed and 12 per cent said they experienced all three forms of harassment".[62]

Indeed, like their counterparts in other ountries, women workers in the Philippines are more susceptible to violence and harassment in the world of work than men.

Figure 6. *Global survey on violence and harassment at work, 2022*[63]




Women workers call for an end to the practice of contractualization. Photo by WWU.

# Gendered Analysis of the 15-Point Labor Agenda and Women Workers' Recommendations


Women workers raise their voice for freedom of association and the right to organize. Photo by WWU.

# 1 Fully realize freedom of association and workers' right to security of tenure

In the 2023 Global Rights Index of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the Philippines landed again among the 10 worst countries for workers.[64] The country has been consistently included in this list since 2017. For 2023, the Philippines got a rating of 5, which means that workers' rights, including the right to establish and join a union, are not guaranteed. The ITUC reports that workers and their representatives "remained particularly vulnerable to red-tagging, violent attacks, abductions and arbitrary arrests. Workers across many sectors still faced significant obstacles when attempting to form trade unions".[65] These findings largely reflect the conclusions and recommendations of the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) in the June 2019 International Labour Conference, the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the High-Level Tripartite Mission (HLTM) of the ILO in the Philippines in January 2023.

Women workers are not exempt from abduction and arbitrary arrest. Of note, the ITUC reports two recent cases: one case involved the abduction of an officer of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers along with an organizer of the Alliance of Health Workers in January 2023; and the other case involved the arrest of an officer of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), together with an officer of the Pasiklab Operators and Drivers Association, in October 2022 allegedly for directly assaulting and robbing a police officer during a rally in July 2020.[66]

Women workers who experience threats to their freedom of association (FOA) and union rights are even more vulnerable than men, because they are:

- more vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual assault and harassment;
- more prone to miscarriage/s when arbitrarily detained, in cases when women trade unionists are pregnant;
- more susceptible to mental health traumas from family/child separation; *and*
- more prone to sexual identity labelling resulting in stigmatization and discrimination.

One case highlighted in the "Joint Report of Trade Unions to the ILO High Level Tripartite Mission" dated 23 January 2023 was the police and military harassment of trade unionists under the Nexperia Philippines Inc. Workers Union – a union led by a woman worker and affiliated with KMU. According to the report, 121 union members reported that they were visited in their homes by the PNP, while 54 allegedly received letters dissuading them from joining the union and participating in union activities.[67]

Women are also not spared from being red-tagged. In fact, the Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) reports that more women human rights defenders had been red-tagged than men. Of the 456 incidents of red-tagging that the AHRC monitored from January to June 2024, 16.1 per cent targeted women while 5.7 per cent targeted men, indicating that women were red-tagged three times more than men. [68] AHRC adds: "Many women activists reported being threatened with rape or other forms of sexual assault. This suggests that red-tagging might also be used as a tool for gender-based persecution, reflecting deeper societal biases and the vulnerability of women".[69]


Women workers march for labour rights and social justice. Photo by WWU.

In this light, one of the biggest hurdles to women workers' exercise of the right to FOA is trade union repression. The island-wide pre-summit workshops of the WWU concluded that women workers who organize and unionize, especially those working in economic and freeport zones, are met with repression and attacks carried out by state forces; this is despite the existence of guidelines[70] that protect the statutory rights of workers in economic and freeport zones. These attacks were not limited to economic attacks such as illegal termination and union busting, but to actual threats to the life and safety of women workers. Women worker participants of the workshop reported experiencing harassment, threats, intimidation, surveillance, illegal arrest and detention, abduction and, worst, killings. Several women agricultural workers also reported seeing officials of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) accompanying members of the military in conducting red-tagging and in "sham" surrender operations in workers' communities. These affirmed one of the key conclusions of the 2023 ILO HLTM in the country – that unionism in the Philippines is being linked by state forces and actors with illegal activity and terrorism.

Violence against and arrests of trade unionists, including women leaders and organizers, and union busting have a chilling effect on the full and legitimate exercise of FOA. They hold back workers from joining trade unions or workers' associations. They stifle the growth of unions in the country both in terms of union density and economic and political influence.

Between June 2014 and June 2020, union density, or the number of workers who are union members of the total paid employees, declined from 7.7 per cent to 6.0 per cent.[71] The biggest decline was recorded between June 2016 and June 2018, when union density declined by almost a quarter (24.9 per cent). In August 2022, data from PSA's 2021/2022 ISLE showed an incremental increase of 6.5 per cent but still lower than the 2014 union density rate.

Women's share in union membership is still less than men. In 2020, data from the PSA indicate that 45.4 per cent of union membership were women.[72] However, between June 2014 and June 2020, there was growth in women's share in union membership: from 34.7 per cent in 2014 to 45.4 per cent in 2020. This may be due to a

more robust organizing of women workers by trade unionists, among other factors. However, in August 2022, women's share (139,496) of the total union membership (345,754) significantly declined to 40.3 per cent, according to the 2021/2022 ISLE of the PSA. In terms of the total collective bargaining agreement (CBA) coverage (446,756), women accounted for only 40.9 per cent in the same period.

The picture is even less rosy when it comes to women's share in union leadership. In 2020, only 29.8 per cent of union officers across all industries were women.[73] This proportion declined further to 27.4 per cent in August 2022, based on the 2021/2022 ISLE of the PSA. Meanwhile, women union presidents accounted for 29.1 per cent of all union presidents in 2020,[74] which further went down to 16.2 per cent in August 2022. In 2020, it is only in the wholesale and retail trade industry where there are more women union officials (60 per cent) than men. In 2022, majority (54 per cent) of union officials in administrative and support service activities were women. In the education (except public education) industry, women and men have equal share among union officials.

There are several interrelated factors that account for women's underrepresentation in union membership and leadership. They include the following: women's unpaid care work and multiple burdens; persistence of patriarchal gender norms and stereotypes within the family, workplace and union; violence, harassment and discrimination at work and within the union; perception that women have limited capacity, skills and self-confidence to take on leadership positions; lack of or low prioritization of women's issues in trade union work and activities; and resistance to affirmative actions and policies for gender equality.[75]

Primarily, women are unable to take on more union work given the multiple burdens that they carry both at home and at the workplace. Women workers have also reported experiencing discrimination in their capacities to lead. Several women workers who attended the island-wide pre-summit workshops of the WWU cited statements from company management saying that women are "unable to lead" because they are "weak and fainthearted", and that women workers are only capable of secretarial work and cannot lead their unions.

Women's lower share in paid employment, as discussed earlier – which may also be attributed to the factors identified above – also contribute to their lower share in union membership. In addition, union organizing is concentrated among regular (permanent) employees. Women are more likely to hold less secure or precarious jobs in the formal sector.

***Security of tenure: Gender impact of contractualization on freedom of association***

Women's employment status likewise affects their right to organize. The pre-summit and island-wide workshops conducted by the WWU revealed that women were disproportionately represented in contractual and informal work. The decades-long policies and practices of contractualization and the increasing number of informal workers have posed immense challenges to the exercise of the rights to FOA and collective bargaining of women workers. Workers on short-term contracts are less likely to join trade unions than workers on permanent contracts as the former are more vulnerable to threats of termination or non-renewal of contracts.

Women labour leaders and workers fight for their rights with joy and resolve. Photo by WWU.

Multiple subcontracting arrangements, particularly in the garments and manufacturing sectors – where women comprise 68 per cent[76] and 45 per cent[77] of total employment, respectively – have also contributed to the expansion of contractualization and fissuring of the employment relationship (that is, the use of agency-hired work including manpower cooperatives). Of the 36,342 establishments with 20 or more workers that were included in the 2021/2022 ISLE of the PSA, 3,364 or nine per cent resorted to subcontracting in August 2022. Agriculture, fishery and forestry had the highest proportion of establishments (13 per cent) resorting to subcontracting, followed by industry (mining and quarrying; manufacturing; electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities; construction) at 12.7 per cent and services at eight per cent.

Women workers united in their demand for inclusion, equality, climate action and social protection. Photo by WWU.

Within the services sector, the women-dominated industries are the top users of subcontracting: human health and social work activities (except public health activities) at 12.9 per cent; arts, entertainment and recreation at 10.7 per cent; and administrative and support service activities at 10.3 per cent. Subcontractors heavily rely on job orders, mostly irregular, from the principal or contractor. Multiple subcontracting results in price squeezing (that is, the reduction of profit margins) in the subcontracting chain. The irregularity of job orders and the price squeeze encourage subcontractors to hire contractual workers as a cost-saving strategy. Multiple layers of contractors and subcontractors have also posed immense challenges to the monitoring and enforcement of labor standards.

Blurring the employment relationship is also one employer strategy to avoid unionization. Establishing manpower cooperatives has been used to skirt labor regulations, including FOA. The "cooperative" structure and principles have been used by many manpower cooperatives and employers to avoid the unionization of workers; that is, by invoking that these workers are not employees but "owners" of the cooperative. In many establishments, manpower cooperatives are even in-house cooperatives (that is, organized by the officers/managers/supervisors of the company itself or its affiliate company), a form of labor-only contracting that is a prohibited practice under DOLE Department Order (DO) 174, Series of 2017.

Contractualization is one of the biggest hindrances to workers' ability to exercise their constitutionally-guaranteed trade union rights. Without the capacity to unionize and collectively bargain, women contractual workers in the Philippines experience multiple issues, such as: low wages, with a percentage going to the manpower agency for some; "no work, no pay" scheme; lack of leaves and days off; and lack of benefits and social protection, particularly maternity benefits and programs for solo parents. Given the precarity of their employment, women workers are forced to keep their grievances to themselves for fear of being terminated.

Meanwhile, the rising number of women workers in the informal economy have also contributed to women workers' limited participation in unions

and bargaining processes. Women workers in the informal economy include vendors, barangay health workers (BHWs), barangay nutritionists, fisherfolks and farm workers, among many others. In lieu of unionizing, they form workers' associations and networks such as non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and other labor rights advocacy groups. Given that their associations and networks have no bargaining power, they utilize other forms to raise issues in the workplace such as lobbying, protesting and mobilizing, and holding dialogues with local government units (LGUs) and relevant government agencies.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) End all forms of contractualization by passing the security of tenure bill in both the public and private sector, and by regularizing contractual workers. Passing this bill into law is crucial in fully realizing women workers' rights to FOA and collective bargaining.

(b) Pass into law the Public Services Labor Relations Act.

(c) Pass bills filed in Congress that aim to strengthen FOA such as the Anti-Union Interference, Union Formation, Protection of Workers in Cases of Merger and Consolidation, and Worker's First Lien on Bankruptcy.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Strengthen regulations and enforcement mechanisms to promote and protect private, public and informal workers' right to FOA and civil liberties.

(b) Address and resolve all cases of trade union and human rights violations, as recommended by the ILO HLTM in the Philippines.

i. It should be made clear that state forces are not authorized to interfere with union activities.

ii. Stricter penalties must be imposed on trade union rights violators, particularly state forces such as the military and the police.

iii. The government should provide protection and support for victims and complainants.

(c) Rescind the following executive and administrative issuances:

i. The Executive Order (EO) 70 that created the national and regional task forces to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (ELCAC), that has been red-tagging and harassing unionists;

ii. Anti-union issuances of the Public Sector Labor-Management Council (PSLMC) of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

(d) Issue a new DOLE DO that supersedes DO 174 and DO 174-A on the rules that govern contracting and subcontracting arrangements, and that effectively plugs the gaps and loopholes in the legal frameworks.

(e) The Secretary of Labor should use its power, mandated by the Labor Code, to regulate all forms of precarious work arrangements, including the

Fighting for women workers' rights and welfare is a happy and joyful crusade. Photo by WWU.


Labour rights, working conditions, agrarian justice, better public services, decent wages and an end to gender-based violence are some of the many things that workers are fighting for. Photo by WWU.

use of "labor cooperatives", "workers cooperatives", "manpower cooperatives", labor-only contractors, agency employment agencies, contractualization, casualization, refusal to recognize employer-employee relationships and similar work arrangements, which is essential in allowing workers to fully exercise their constitutional rights to organize, collectively bargain and strike.

(f) Issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Labor Education Act (Republic Act 11551).

(g) Recognize associations of workers in the informal economy and give them the right to bargain with LGUs and relevant government agencies.

i. Informal workers in the public sector like the BHW and barangay nutrition scholars (BNS) must be recognized as employees and not merely as volunteers.

ii. The government must also facilitate the transition of workers in the informal economy to the formal economy through a comprehensive job creation program.

(h) Initiate awareness and education programs that encourage unionism and leadership among women workers. The DOLE should strengthen its regulatory powers and uphold its mandate of protecting workers' rights against trade union repression.

(i) Government authorities should recognize and respect women paralegals and organizers who assist in the filing of cases related to workers' rights violations or who represent workers in labor cases and hearings.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Comply with the ILO HLTM recommendations and existing international and national laws and policies on FOA of workers.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Preserve gains already made in defending labor rights against bills that seek to reverse these gains (such as the 70-30 rule on tuition fee increase for education workers' benefits).

(b) Establish the Workers' Rights Watch as the labor movement's own mechanism for monitoring the strict enforcement of FOA, and ensure women's representation in the said formation or body.

# 2 Strengthen and expand collective bargaining

Collective bargaining can be an effective mechanism in tackling and addressing women's concerns and issues at the workplace, such as gender pay gap, work–life balance, gender discrimination and GBV.

Women's lower representation in union membership and leadership impacts on their representation and participation in collective bargaining. This creates a constraining environment for women seeking involvement in economic and political struggles in the workplace. In 2020, of the 333,776 workers covered by a CBA, 45.4 per cent (151,474) were women. While this was a positive development relative to the 2014 coverage of only 34.4 per cent, women's representation still needs to be addressed, particularly in terms of their involvement in the bargaining team and in the process itself, and in terms of having provisions in the collective agreement that reflect and respond to women's concerns.

A study by the Institute of Labor Studies identified three factors that are critical for winning gender issues in bargaining:

(1) Inclusion of women in union leadership and bargaining teams;

(2) Legislative/policy framework for gender equality bargaining; and

(3) Workers' and employers' strategies.[78]

In the survey involving 37 enterprise unions (21 in the service sector and 16 in industry), the authors found that women comprised just 27.9 per cent of the bargaining teams across sectors (37.7 per cent and 17.4 per cent in services and industry sectors, respectively). Note, however, that being in the bargaining team does not automatically mean women are serving as panel negotiators. The survey revealed that, on average, only over half (54.8 per cent) of the women in bargaining team across the enterprise unions served as panel negotiators.[79]

Women's underrepresentation in union leadership and bargaining teams is one important factor that may explain the low proportion of bargaining agreements that include gender-related provisions reflected in table 5.

Despite women's increasing representation in union membership, Table 5 suggests that more needs to be done in integrating gender issues in bargaining agreements, especially as specific problems of women are more likely to

Enterprises in Bacoor, Cavite learn more about digital wages and the transition to responsible wage digitization. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.

Table 5. *Proportion of enterprise unions that have gender-related provisions in the CBA (%)*[80]

| Gender-related provisions (N=23) | % of unions |
|---|---|
| *Hiring, Promotion & Training* | |
| Elimination of gender-bias in job descriptions and advertisements | 26.1 |
| Gender-equal appointment and promotion criteria | 34.8 |
| Gender neutrality in age limitations | 21.7 |
| Gender equality in access to training | 26.1 |
| *Gender Pay Gap* | |
| Inclusion of equal pay clause | 13.0 |
| Exclusion of separate salary/ wage scales for women and men | 13.0 |
| *Work, Family and Personal Life Integration* | |
| Domestic/care work leave benefits | 39.1 |
| Flexible working hours | 39.1 |
| Childcare facilities and services | 17.4 |
| Breastfeeding breaks and facilities | 21.7 |
| Provisions for light/safe duties for pregnant workers | 30.4 |
| *Safe and Just Workplace* | |
| Detailed provisions on preventive measures against sexual harassment | 21.7 |
| A complaints procedure and a complaints officer | 30.4 |
| Protection and support for offended employees | 43.5 |
| Sanctions for those found guilty of harassment | 34.8 |
| Awareness-raising initiatives on sexual harassment | 13.0 |
| Protection against discrimination based on gender | 13.0 |
| Protection against violence at work, including physical and verbal abuse | 34.8 |

be addressed in workplaces with unions where women are actively participating and in positions of leadership.

In the pre-summit and island-wide consultations conducted, women leaders identified issues and policy gaps that further limit the active participation and leadership of women in unions and workers' associations.

- Women continue to face discrimination in unions.
  - Leadership positions are typically held by men, while women are generally restricted to administrative and secretarial duties such as minutes–taker, treasurer and so on.
  - Women's participation in negotiations with the management is sometimes discouraged or even subjected to a vote.
- Women bear the burden of multiplicity of responsibilities – juggling both work and domestic duties. Oftentimes, domestic duties take precedence over their active participation in union activities.
- Women workers experience threat, harassment, intimidation, surveillance and other forms of violations, including sexual and GBV, when forming or joining unions or associations, especially when it is affiliated with "leftist organizations".
- Repressive policies are being implemented by the government and business enterprises that affect and limit women's participation in unions (like the Anti-Terror Law and the PSLMC).
- Grievance mechanisms to address unique problems faced by women in workplaces, including the Committee on Decorum and

Women leaders and representatives taking charge of responsible and fair digital wages. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.

Investigation (CODI) that is typically limited to sexual harassment concerns, are not working.

- There is an absence of a gender committee in many unions.
- There are no specific programs for women in the CBA.
- Laws and policies for women workers are not effectively and sufficiently implemented.

## Recommendations

<u>Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs</u>

(a) Provide a gender-responsive bargaining framework/model and bargaining agreement.

(b) Recognize associations of informal workers that will represent and bargain with LGUs.

<u>Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations</u>

(a) Ensure inclusion of gender equality provisions in CBAs/Collective Negotiation Agreements (CNAs) such as:

i. lactation breaks;
ii. breastfeeding stations/lactation rooms;
iii. hospitalization leave;
iv. special purpose leave;
v. paid care work leave;
vi. family planning seminars;
vii. free pre- and post-natal care;
viii. free hygiene kits;
ix. mental health programs;
x. reproductive health-related leaves, separate from regular leaves;
xi. policies on the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace and grievance mechanisms, in line with the ILO Convention No. 190;
xii. subsidy for children with special needs;
xiii. scholarships (also extended to family members of a worker who is single);
xiv. provisions for solo parents.

(b) Integrate gender and women's rights in personnel orientations, including in teacher induction programs.

(c) Support gender training in workplaces and the creation of women's committees.

(d) Explore having a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the WWU and the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) on the promotion of gender-responsive collective bargaining, negotiations and agreements.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Ensure active participation and representation of women workers during negotiations and decision-making processes, by setting gender quotas at 30 per cent or more and by conducting targeted trainings to help women become effective leaders and negotiators. This will also increase the number of women in the negotiating panel.

(b) Launch a training program for women union leaders, in support of women's active participation in collective bargaining and negotiations.

(c) Provide a gender-responsive bargaining framework/model and agreement by developing a union bargaining agenda for women and gender concerns, and ensure the inclusion of gender provisions in CBAs/CNAs.

(d) Get women elected to leadership roles in unions by implementing a minimum number of women candidates for leadership roles and adopting a gender quota at 30 per cent or more.

(e) Form a women's/gender committee in unions to tackle and address gender-specific challenges in workplaces.

(f) Perform a gender audit of trade unions.

(g) Provide capacity building activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of women workers and union representatives on various issues, such as:

i. labor issues;
ii. gender specific training/workshops (to end stigma);
iii. union formation and women's participation;
iv. orientation on CBA
v. foa and its gender aspects
vi. skills and development training for gender-responsive negotiations
vii. conduct orientations on women specific needs and LGBTQIA+[81] needs

(h) Conclude a MOA with the employer on the conduct of gender sensitivity trainings.

(i) Advocate and campaign for union organizing and building that includes women and LGBTQIA+ workers.


Women and men engage in meaningful discussions towards responsible and fair digital wages. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.

# 3 Strengthen wage policies, especially for the low-wage sectors, and ensure equal pay for work of equal value

On 13 March 2024, the ILO's Governing Body reached an agreement on the issue of the living wage. According to the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, the concept of a living wage is:

- the wage level that is necessary to afford a decent standard of living for workers and their families, taking into account the country circumstances and calculated for the work performed during the normal hours of work;
- calculated in accordance with the ILO's principles of estimating the living wage;
- to be achieved through the wage-setting process in line with ILO principles on wage-setting.

The ILO agreement also sets out several basic principles for estimating living wages, including the usage of evidence-based methodologies and robust data that are transparent and publicly available; the conduct of consultations with social partners; and the consideration of regional and local contexts and socioeconomic and cultural realities.[82]

In the Philippines, wages are fixed in several ways in the private sector: regionally, through minimum wage orders by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs); at the Workplace/Enterprise-level, by decision of the employer; and through collective bargaining in unionized enterprises. The Wage Rationalization Act (Republic Act 6727) of 1989 delegated the determination of minimum wages to the RTWPB beginning in 1990. Most establishments, especially those without a union, rely on minimum wage orders from the RTWPBs to adjust the wages of regular and non-regular rank-and-file employees. However, since 1989, although nominal wages

Figure 7. *Nominal and real minimum wages in the National Capital Region (Philippine Peso)*[83]


Women workers highlight the need to address and bridge the gender wage gap in the world of work. Photo by WWU.

have been increasing, real wages – wages that have been adjusted for inflation – have been declining over the years. The unabated increases in prices of commodities, particularly food products, further reduce the amount of goods that workers' wages can purchase. In the National Capital Region (NCR), where the minimum wages are the highest, real minimum wages stagnated despite the increase in nominal minimum wages between 2021 and 2024 (figure 7). Minimum wages have more impact on the low wage sector, where women workers are disproportionately represented. Stagnating real minimum wages thus leave women worse off than their male counterparts.

Minimum wages across the country vary. As mentioned, NCR has the highest minimum wage of 610 pesos per day or 15,860 pesos per month, while the minimum wage in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) remains the lowest in the country, at only 316 pesos for non-agriculture and 306 pesos for agriculture.

Meanwhile, wages in the public sector are standardized at the national level through legislation or EOs. However, the Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK) reports[84] that while the salaries of government employees have increased over the years through the Salary Standardization Law (SSL), salary adjustments, particularly for the rank-and-file, have barely kept up with the ever-increasing prices of goods and services. Additionally, a growing number of government workers including teachers, nurses and other frontliners (such as disaster workers) – majority of whom are women – are paid below minimum wages due to widespread contractualization in the bureaucracy. Contractualization in the public sector comes in the form of hiring job orders and contract-of-service workers who are not government employees; that is, they do not have an employment relationship with the government agency where they render work. As of June 2023, there are 832,812 job orders and contract of service in the government sector, majority or 70 per cent of which are working in LGUs, 21 per cent in national government agencies, while the rest are working in Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) and State Universities and Colleges. This means that close to half (47.5 per cent) of the total number of government regular workers (1,751,975), as of June 2023, are paid lower wages than their regular counterparts, and have no job security, benefits and social protection.[85]

Pay gaps between national and local government employees also exist. Section 10 of the Compensation and Position Classification

Act (Republic Act 6758) provides that salary rates for locally hired government workers shall be determined based on the class and financial capability of each LGU. It also sets percentage caps on rates of pay depending on the classification of the LGU. Thus, a regular public nurse hired in a sixth-class municipality, for example, is paid 35 per cent less than a public nurse hired in a first class LGU, even if both are performing the same job and have the same qualifications. In addition, the Local Government Code set general limitations on personal services expenditures, further hindering the capacity of LGUs to hire and pay regular public workers.

In the GOCCs, the implementation of the Compensation and Position Classification System (CPCS) has led to massive pay inequities and wage distortions. The GOCC Governance Act of 2011 (Republic Act 10149) excluded GOCC workers from the SSL, pending the completion and implementation of CPCS by the Governance Commission for GOCCs. However, it was only in 2021, after more than a decade, that the CPCS was approved through EO No. 150, while its implementing rules and guidelines came out in January 2022. Worse, the CPCS resulted in extremely inequitable salaries among rank-and-file employees of GOCCs, substantial cuts on allowances and benefits, and gross violations of existing CNAs. For instance, in the case of Landbank, the approved salary structure will lead to around 10 per cent of its rank-and-file employees receiving a paltry 0.67 per cent salary increase while those occupying top management positions will get a pay hike of up to 236 per cent.

Indeed, the minimum wages received by the majority of Filipino workers in both private and public sectors are poverty wages. According to data from IBON Foundation, the average minimum wage rate in the country in June 2024 was 9,606 pesos, which is only 69.6 per cent of the average monthly poverty threshold for a family of five in 2023.[86] Moreover, the country's minimum wage is lower compared to other countries in Asia. In 2022, the statutory nominal monthly minimum wage in the Philippines averaged US$147.90, which was lower than the rate in China (US$286.50), Cambodia (US$194), Indonesia (US$187.50), Malaysia (US$340.80), Mongolia (US$175.10), Thailand (US$248.40) and Vietnam (US$167.40).[87]

A wide wage gap exists between the minimum wage and the family living wage or a wage that enables a family of five to have a decent standard of living. According to IBON, the average living wage across regions for a family of five is 1,208 pesos per day as of April 2024.[88] With an average daily nominal minimum wage rate of 440 pesos, the wage gap is huge at 767 pesos or 63.5 per cent. Across the regions, the highest wage gap is in BARMM at 82.6 per cent and the lowest is in NCR at 48.8 per cent. In all the regions, except CARAGA where data is not available, the wage gap is more than 50 per cent.

Women workers who are highly concentrated in low-paying occupations will directly benefit from a national minimum wage/living wage. Differences in wages for different types of jobs for elementary occupations for men and women will be removed with the application of the proposed national minimum wage. It will provide protection to women workers regardless of their employment status. Increasing the minimum wage rates across the board will push wage rates of women workers above minimum wage rates.

Low and stagnating wages disproportionately affect women workers, as evidenced by the findings from the island-wide workshops and consultations of WWU.

(1) In several industries, women receive lower wages than men because of gender-based job differentiation or occupational gender segregation. At the same time, gender discrimination is widely practiced in many companies. Women are perceived as physically weaker than men. For example, in some areas in the Panay region, women fisherfolks are given 50 per cent less than a man's share of the net income from each fishing trip, because they are regarded as physically weak compared to men. Ownership of the means of production results in a higher share of net income. However, most fishing boats are owned by men.


Wages, jobs and rights are key issues and concerns of women workers. Photo by WWU.

In agriculture, women workers are given tasks with lower pay, such as harvesting, sorting and weeding. Meanwhile, men work on tasks with higher pay, such as applying fertilizers, planting sugar cane in sugar plantations and loading vans in banana plantations. These van-loaders also get overtime pay, since their work extends till the end of the day.

In the sectors of garments, food manufacturing and agriculture, women usually occupy job positions with lower pay. In the food manufacturing sector, men who are machine operators receive higher wages than women workers who are doing other tasks in the processing line, such as packing and sorting. In the garments sector, men sewers handle coats and suits, and receive an average weekly income of 8,000 pesos. Meanwhile, women sewers handle polo barongs and receive a lower average weekly income of 4,200 pesos. While pants are sewn by both men and women for 300 pesos per piece, male sewers can finish 8 pieces of pants in a week, while women sew an average of five to six pieces per week.

Gender wage gaps and wage disparities exist in the public sector between the male-dominated occupations and the female-dominated occupations. For example, the base pay for public school teachers in 2024 falls under Salary Grade 11, equivalent to 27,000 pesos per month, while the base pay for a private-enlisted personnel in the Philippine Army and a Police Officer I in the PNP is 29,668 pesos per month. Public school teachers, non-teaching personnel, health workers, emergency and disaster workers, and other frontliners delivering essential services are at the bottom half of the salary scale.

Filipino migrant women workers in Hong Kong are mostly domestic helpers who receive a monthly wage of US$400, while male Filipino migrant workers are typically drivers who receive higher monthly wages.

(2) Women's reproductive roles and unpaid care work are at the crux of gender discrimination at work and low pay. There are company policies that are discriminatory in hiring women workers. For example, a job opening

for a technician would require a male worker applicant. In the industry of business process outsourcing (BPO), some BPO companies prefer men because they are perceived to be feistier than women; that is, men can clinch sales and deals better. In the hospitals, men are preferred to be hired for the position of the orderly. Marital status is not required to be stated in job openings, but during job interviews, applicants are asked if they are single or married. Companies would still prefer hiring single women workers.

During the pandemic, there were women workers in BPOs and hospitals who lost their jobs because they got pregnant. In banana plantations, there are no maternity leaves for pregnant women workers before their due date. Their maternity leave will start when they begin experiencing labor pains. In the garments industry, when pregnant women workers experience nausea or morning sickness, their production rate declines, thereby decreasing their outputs and their wage since they are paid on a per-piece basis. They would need to work longer hours to achieve their usual daily wage. In some manufacturing firms, women workers receive delayed maternity benefits. In some regions, women fisherfolks are not allowed to join the fishing trips when they have their menstrual periods and/or when they are pregnant.

Many informal workers both in the public and private sector are not covered by the Expanded Maternity Leave Act (EMLA) and do not have maternity benefits. They would have to stop work for some time after giving birth, leaving them without any source of income. Informal women workers could not enroll in free technical and skills training offered by the government because of their reproductive role and unpaid care work, thus further limiting their opportunities to get high-paying jobs or occupations.

Working women are more likely to file a leave from work to attend to family emergencies, such as when children or elderly relatives get sick. For contractual and casual women workers, this means no pay for the days they are on leave. Unfiled absences are penalized. If they would need longer time to take care of their family, they face termination due to long absences. For those with unions, they can use their emergency leaves to take care of their children. However, the emergency leave cannot be utilized if they will be taking care of elderly family members. For informal workers, similar emergencies would force them to close down their stores (*sari-sari* or convenience stores) or not sell goods, leaving them with no income for the day. Migrant workers with three months of continued absences due to emergency situations also risk losing their jobs. Public school teachers find it difficult to avail of emergency leaves.

Women's reproductive roles, lower ranking-positions in the job hierarchy, lower pay (including overtime pay), and their higher propensity to take leaves of absence from work to attend to family and household needs result in a lower take home pay for women.

(3) The low wages/income received by women workers are not sufficient to cover the basic needs of their families and thus they resort to other sources of income or funds. Women's wages go directly to food, education of their children, utilities, rent and transportation. Other needs such as healthcare, savings, tuition, insurance, housing and rest and recreation are not covered. Thus, many women workers are compelled to borrow money from relatives. In dire situations, they would resort to "five-six" lending schemes;[89] pawning their ATM cards; asking for cash advances from their employers; moonlighting as an online seller, party hostess, tutor (for BPO workers), drag performer (as in the case of LGTBQIA+ workers in the BPO industry); performing odd jobs such as washing laundries, cleaning houses, selling vegetables and snacks, scavenging and picking wastes for recycling, driving tricycles, selling items from Personal Collection, Avon, Natasha and the like, selling used clothing (commonly referred to as *ukay-ukay*), and folding notebooks (for home-based outsourced work, where they earn 500 pesos per week).

Cash advances and loans further drive women deeper into debts. Cash advances in companies bear interest rates ranging from 5 per cent to 20 per cent (in Mindanao) for 15 days to one month. When women workers receive their wages, the cash advances are deducted, leaving almost nothing for their families for the rest of the month. In many cases, women workers resort to taking out more loans to pay for their outstanding loans.

During dead season in sugar plantations in Region 2, informal agricultural workers resort to other forms of survival, such as picking up cow's dung to sell for 80 pesos per sack, catching frogs in rivers for 120 pesos per kilo, catching grasshoppers to sell for 50 pesos per cup and beetles for 500 pesos per kilo. Women in fishing communities would sell dried fish and do other odd jobs in the informal economy.

Migrant domestic workers also do part-time work, such as doing manicure and pedicure, providing hair services (like hair perming and hair cut) to fellow migrant workers, pawning their passports, and walking the dogs of other people.

(4) The employment status of women workers also affects their wages. Women workers are mostly in precarious forms of work without job security and where they earn less than regular workers. In food manufacturing, contractual workers earn minimum wage rates for a 12-hour work day, and they do not receive overtime pay. In some companies, contractual workers receive below minimum wage until they get regularized. Women workers on temporary and contractual jobs are also unlikely to get promoted.

In the public sector, job orders are not regarded as government employees, and do not have employee-employer relationship with the government. They are not covered by the SSL, and they do not receive overtime pay. Tasks that need overtime work are passed on to them since they are not paid per hour. Most of them also experience delayed payment of their salaries.


The fight for decent wages is also a fight for decent and quality standards of living. Photo by WWU.

BHWs, who are mostly women, are regarded as volunteers and receive varying allowances based on the capacity and category of the LGU and on the prerogative of provincial/local government/barangay chiefs. Their monthly allowance ranges from zero to 8,000 pesos, which is way below the government's monthly poverty threshold for a family of five.

(5) Women workers in the informal sector do not earn wages, because they do not have formal employer-employee relationship. They do not have social protection and do not receive any benefits, including maternity benefits. They experience income insecurity as they hold odd jobs, such as washing laundries, cleaning, performing domestic work, street-vending, seasonal work in agricultural plantations and in fishing, online-selling, doing home-based businesses, home-based subcontracting, and producing handicrafts. Household laundresses earn 1,200 pesos for a twice a week laundry work.

Agricultural workers in sugar plantations in Isabela receive 300 pesos per day and do not have employment contracts. Jeepney dispatchers earn 15–20 pesos per jeep, with men and women dispatchers receiving the same rate. Their usual income for half a day is 350 pesos.

(6) The absence of a union affects women's wages. In BPOs and in the gig economy, no mechanisms are in place for wage hikes. Women workers generally rely on additional income from performance-based incentives. For BPO workers, the conditions to receive incentives increasingly become harder to achieve, while gig economy workers experience decreasing incentives.

(7) Women workers do not have roles in wage-setting mechanisms, except for having women union representatives during collective bargaining and negotiations. Wage-setting in the country is not gender-responsive and does not take into account the reproductive and care work needs of women and men. Addressing gender pay gap has also not been the priority of most unions.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Reform the current wage-setting mechanism towards abolishing the RTWPBs and push for a national minimum wage that approximates the living wage and responds to gender needs. The proposed national minimum/living wage should be implemented along with providing security of tenure to women workers and allowing them to practice their right to FOA and collective bargaining, and an inclusive job creation for all genders.

(b) To effectively inform wage-setting processes, living wage estimates should adhere to ILO principles that include the usage of evidence-based methodologies and robust data, the conduct of consultations with social partners, transparency, public availability, and the regular adjustments to reflect changes to the costs of living.

(c) Enact a fair and gender-responsive SSL for public sector workers, anchored on living wage and pay equity.

(d) Strengthen sectoral and multi-employer collective bargaining and ensure women's representation and participation.

(e) Comprehensively address gender pay gap.

  (i) Drafting of legislative measures and policies on equal pay for work of equal value that prohibit any less favorable treatment between men and women in terms of pay and conditions of employment, and penalizing non-compliance;

  (ii) Addressing gender discrimination in the workplace in hiring and promotion.

(f) Make wages and collective bargaining and negotiations gender-responsive and ensure women workers' participation in wage-setting mechanisms. Wage-setting should take into account workers' care responsibilities and recognize women workers' needs to support their sexual

and reproductive health and rights and care responsibilities.

(g) Increase the base pay of nurses and education workers in the private sector.

(h) Legislate the grant of paid emergency leaves for taking care of elderly parents or relatives.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Increase the wages and benefits of local domestic workers.

(b) Enhance wages and benefits of migrant workers, including overseas domestic workers and other care workers, and address gender pay gaps through engagement in rights-based bilateral or multilateral labor agreements in consultation with workers' organizations.

(c) Provide continuing education, upskilling and support for skills assessment and certification, especially for women workers who are employed in low paying jobs.

(d) Provide support for women workers to pursue careers in traditionally male-dominated fields, as well as education and training opportunities.

(e) Women workers taking on their unpaid care work responsibilities should not be penalized, nor should this result in diminution of wages and benefits.

(f) Promote ILO's "5R Framework on Decent Care Work: Recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work, and reward and represent paid care work".

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Ensure payment of living wages in accordance with the ILO's basic principles for estimating living wages and ensure a fair compensation system for all workers.

(b) Adopt a company policy on addressing gender pay gap.

(c) Institute enterprise-based mechanisms for periodic gender pay audits.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Address gender wage gaps through collective bargaining.

(b) Build the union's capacity for negotiating living wages, addressing gender pay gaps and conducting gender pay audits.


Women call for responsible and fair digital wages. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.

# 4 Implement universal and adequate social security and social protection for all

Women are more disadvantaged than men in the labor market. Yet, the former have less access to social protection, particularly in terms of social insurance. Women's low LFPR and their overrepresentation in the informal sector result in their inability to gain access to social insurance benefits, especially since social insurance programs in the country often cover only formal workers, leaving out millions in the informal economy. Aside from their poor employment outcomes, women's unpaid care work or their socially defined role of looking after the needs of their families also forces them not to seek formal employment.

It therefore follows that women who are not working and not actively seeking work, or those considered by the government as excluded from the labor force, mostly belong to poor households. Among persons not in the labor force who belong to the poorest income group in 2016–2017, majority (58 per cent) were women.[90] Their weak financial capacity further constrains them to gain access to social protection.

According to a study by Tabuga and Cabaero of the PIDS, Filipino women's poor access to social protection program "may result in their vulnerability, instability, and poverty".[91] The same study, citing 2017 data, found that:

- 69 per cent or around 8.3 million women workers are not yet members of any social protection programs, such as the Social Security System (SSS), Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).
- Among women, the highest proportion of those without social insurance are the private household workers at 98 per cent, followed by unpaid family workers at 95 per cent and then the self-employed at 92 per cent.
- The agricultural sector has the highest proportion of those unable to avail of the SSS, GSIS and PhilHealth, at about 98 per cent for female workers compared to 95 per cent for male workers.

Pregnant women learn about maternity protection and exclusive breastfeeding in a garment factory. ILO Photo by E. Tuyay.

Maternity leave improves maternal and infant health, including physical health and well-being, lowers the chance of reporting intimate partner violence, reduces the chances of mothers and infants being re-hospitalized, and enables mothers to manage stress better.[92] Paid maternity leave and other maternity benefits facilitate women workers' return to productive work in good physical and mental health. As such, it is important that the benefits of paid maternity leave be enjoyed by women workers, including the job orders and contract of service workers in the public sector. As of 30 June 2024, women comprised 36.8 per cent of all job order workers and 43 per cent of all contract of service workers engaged in the public sector.[93] However, data from the ILO social security database indicate that only 12.4 per cent of mothers with newborns received maternity benefits in 2020 in the Philippines.[94]

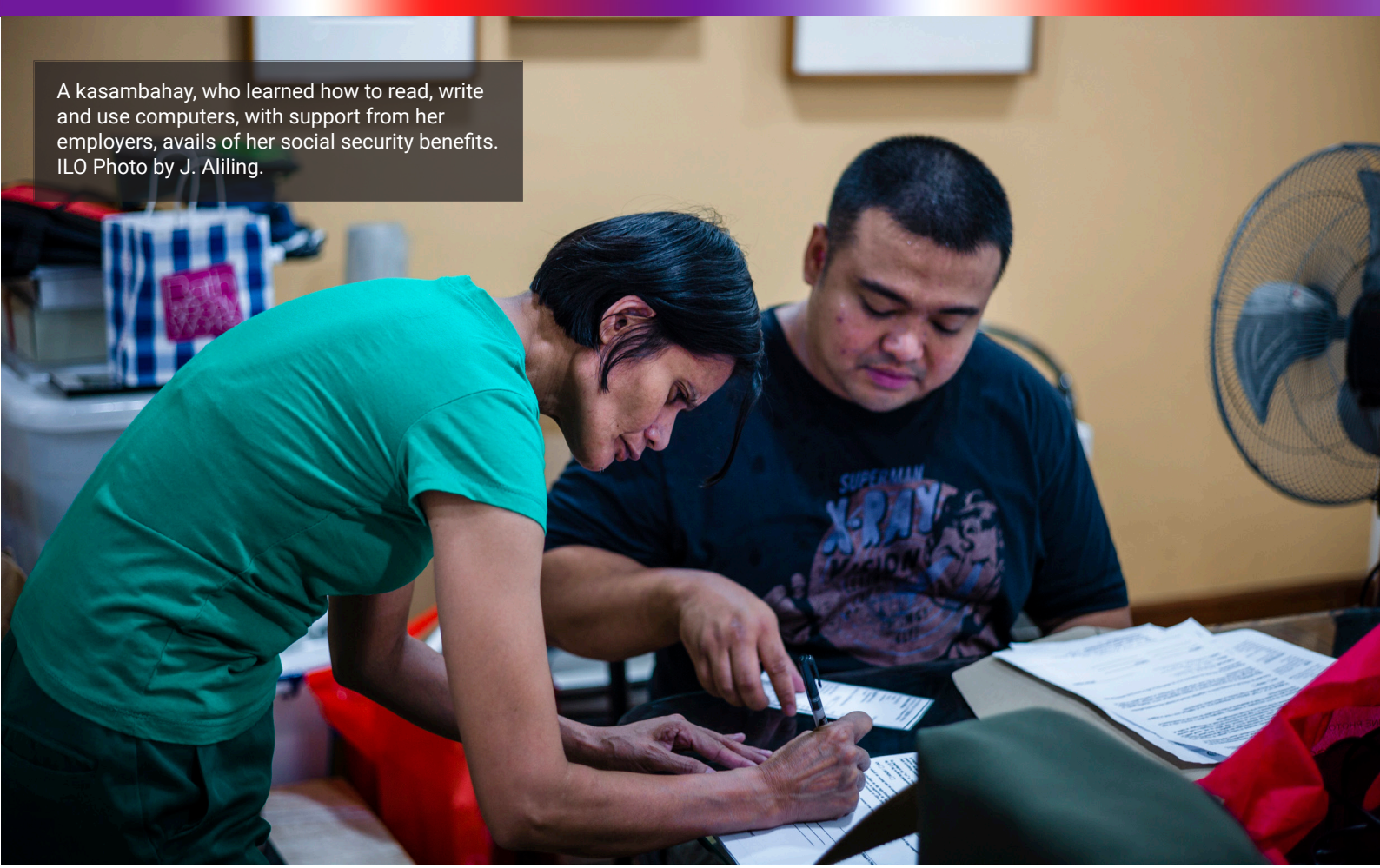
The lack of comprehensive and accessible social protection program in the Philippines to provide support and assistance to poor households had contributed in the prevalence of child labor. An ILO study in 2015 showed that involvement in child labor is much higher among households who were exposed to shocks, such as loss of employment of a household member, loss of harvest, serious accident of a working member, or fall of the price of the product of a household business.[95] The study suggests that child labor is used as a means to cope with the adverse effects of shocks because of the inability of the current social protection system to give assistance to vulnerable families in times of shocks. Child labor in the country is prevalent in the agriculture, mining and services sector. Children have also been found working in hazardous conditions and in illicit activities, such as when they fall victim to online sexual exploitation.

The results of the island-wide workshops and consultations organized by WWU revealed that even women workers covered by SSS, GSIS and other existing social protection programs continue to face various barriers in accessing services and benefits. Some of the issues include:

- Lack of information on existing programs and policies;
- Limited benefits;
- Difficulty in accessing/availing benefits;
    - Difficulty in using digital tools/online services;
    - Difficulty in submitting requirements like birth certificates, government IDs, and the like.
- Failure of employers/agencies/manpower cooperatives to remit payments on time resulting in arrears and delayed payment of benefits;
- Non-implementation of laws/programs such as:
    - Lack of nursing/breastfeeding/childminding stations in both public and private workplaces;
    - Poor enforcement of occupational safety and health (OSH) especially in the public sector;
    - Lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) provided to certain groups of workers (like agricultural workers/banana plantation, BHWs, field workers of Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor, informal workers, job orders/contract of service, among others).
- Limited livelihood programs and skills trainings;
- Politicized programs and services (like in the case of the *Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers* or TUPAD and disaster/calamity assistance)
- Exclusion of regular employees from receiving assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The gap in social protection is wider in the case of women who are disproportionately represented in the informal sector. According to Tabuga and Cabaero:[96]

- There are more women than men in informal employment. In 2017, there were 39 million women on informal employment; whereas about 25 million men were under informal employment.
- Forty per cent of women compared to 30 per cent of men are categorized as one of the following: self-employed without any



A kasambahay, who learned how to read, write and use computers, with support from her employers, avails of her social security benefits. ILO Photo by J. Aliling.

paid employee; employer in own family-operated farm or business; and unpaid worker in own family-operated farm or business. Three out of four household workers are women; and 61 per cent of unpaid family workers are also women.

Women workers in the informal sector find social insurance contributions unaffordable because of their insecure jobs and livelihood, and low and unstable incomes. As most of them are not in an employment relationship, they have to shoulder both the employer and employee contributions required by the SSS, PhilHealth and Pag-IBIG. Moreover, many women in the informal sector are not covered by the EMLA. While the self-employed may avail of benefits under the said law, other informal sector workers are unable to do so as they are excluded from EMLA coverage.

OSH is another area that requires more attention. Women workers in various sectors are exposed to OSH risks and hazards. Current OSH policies also overlook the relationship of health and gender roles. There is limited information on different gender-related risks of exposure to certain chemicals, hazardous substances and biological agents; the physical demands of heavy work; ergonomic design of workplaces, workplace structure, arrangements and attitudes; and the length of the work day, with due consideration to workers' domestic duties and reproductive health.

For example, women in the BPO sector experience health issues such as eye strain, back pain, headache, and musculoskeletal and sleeping problems.[97] Women workers employed in households are more likely to be exposed to verbal, physical, or sexual harassment. In wholesale and retail trade, women workers are prone to musculoskeletal problems due to prolonged standing. In the education sector, women workers suffer from several occupational hazards and risks, including ergonomic, chemical, physical and psychosocial hazards. The common health illnesses among education workers are repetitive strain injuries and work-related musculoskeletal disorders.[98]

Climate change and increasing global temperatures is exacerbating the perennial problem of heat in many factories, particularly in the garments industry. Studies have shown that prolonged heat exposure can lead to various health issues, including heat stress, dehydration

Expecting and nursing mothers require social protection but workers in the informal economy are often not covered. ILO Photo by E. Tuyay.

and heat-related illnesses, like heat exhaustion and heat stroke. In addition, in the garments industry, some companies enforce a demerit system that denies workers, mostly women, toilet breaks, leading to high rates of urinary tract infections and other illnesses.[99]

Women's unpaid care work includes caring for the elderly and PWDs. The lack of or limited access to social protection of these groups in the population weighs heavily on women who often serve as their unpaid care workers. The government thereby passes onto women its duty to provide social protection for the elderlies and PWDs, care work becomes even more burdensome as women struggle to provide any means of social protection for these workers.

According to PSA, only one in five persons (1.8 million) aged 60 and above were receiving retirement/old-age pension from the SSS and GSIS in 2018.[100] This leaves the overwhelming majority of the elderlies without an old-age pension.

For the 1.4 million indigent senior citizens who are not part of the pension system, the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 (Republic Act 9994) provided an additional government assistance of 500 pesos in monthly allowance to augment the daily expenses and other medical needs of those who are frail, sickly or with disability; with no regular income or support from family and relatives; and without pension from private or government institutions. This amount has been doubled to 1,000 pesos in 2024 with the enactment of the Social Pension for Indigent Seniors Act (Republic Act 11916), which lapsed into law on 30 July 2022. Republic Act 9994 also entitles all Filipino residents 60 years or older to benefits and privileges as granted by law, including a 20 per cent discount and exemption from value-added tax for selected goods, free medical and dental services in government facilities, and others. These benefits also extend to elderly dual citizens who have resided in the Philippines for at least six months. Nonetheless, the meagre government assistance and low pensions received by most of the elderlies are simply not enough for their day-to-day living expenses, including medical expenses, amidst soaring prices of goods and services.

PWDs may be even worse off in terms of access to social protection. Due to their disabilities, most PWDs are not employed or have short

employment periods, preventing them from being covered by the SSS or GSIS. The amended Magna Carta for Persons with Disability (Republic Act 10754) expands the benefits and privileges for PWDs, including discounts on goods and services, educational assistance, express lanes and tax deductions for establishments. The law also grants tax incentives to those caring for and living with a person with disability, up to the fourth degree of affinity or consanguinity.

There are also laws that integrate and mainstream PWDs in the labor market and in society. The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (Republic Act 7277) centers on employment, education, health care, social services, telecommunications, buildings and transportation, and political and civil rights of PWDs, and prohibits discrimination against disabled persons in employment, transportation, and in public accommodation and services. The Act Expanding the Positions Reserved for Persons with Disability (Republic Act 10524), which amends Republic Act 7277, mandates that at least one per cent of all positions in government agencies, offices, or corporations be allocated for individuals with disabilities. The law also encourages private corporations with over 100 employees to reserve at least one per cent of all positions for PWDs and provides incentives for doing so. Moreover, it provides additional deduction from the net taxable income of private entities that improve or modify their physical facilities in order to provide reasonable accommodation for disabled persons.

Notwithstanding these programs, the LFPR of PWDs remains low. Data from the LFS of the PSA indicate that of the 76 million working-age Filipinos in January 2022, only 1.9 million were PWDs. Of this number, only 353,000 or less than 1 in 5 were in the labor force. PWDs face structural barriers to employment, like low educational attainment resulting in skills gaps. As a consequence, in January 2022, over 1 in 4 Filipino PWDs worked in elementary occupations, such as street-sweeping, domestic work and ambulant vending, which are often low-paying and highly insecure jobs.[101] PWDs face additional challenges, including difficulties in using public transportation, limited access to job postings, attitudinal barriers such as being pitied instead of being treated as equals, and restricted access to general and skills-based education.

The COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted the need for adequate and accessible social protection. The lockdowns resulted in significant job losses and/or reduced working hours in sectors where women mostly work, including tourism, food and accommodation, wholesale and retail, and personal services. Although the government rolled out several support programs such as the COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP) and the *TUPAD-Barangay Ko, Bahay Ko*, the majority of displaced workers were not able to access these programs. The government implemented as well the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), that provided emergency cash grants of 5,000 to 8,000 pesos to low-income families for two months. However, SAP was hounded by several issues, such as the timely distribution of the cash assistance, the reconciliation of lists of beneficiaries, and logistical challenges.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Ensure adequate public funding for social protection programs and services.

(b) Expand coverage of social protection programs and services to cover workers in the informal economy towards promoting universal social security coverage through:

i. Reconfiguring membership categories and contribution arrangements;

ii. Subsidizing social insurance contributions for informal and low-income workers and other indigent persons;

iii. Making contribution rates more affordable;

iv. Providing assistance to families facing shocks, like sudden loss of income, loss of harvest, serious accidents, fall of price of business, and so on.

(c) Expand coverage of social security programs and benefits/packages (SSS, GSIS, PhilHealth, Employees Compensation, and the like), including services that respond to gender-specific needs. PhilHealth should also cover check-ups and primary health care.

(d) Expand the unemployment insurance scheme of the SSS and GSIS to include not only permanent layoffs, but also temporary layoffs (like those under "floating status"). Simplify requirements in availing the said insurance benefits.

(e) Pass the Maternity Benefit for Women in the Informal Economy, that will enhance EMLA by covering informal and contractual workers.

(f) Pass the Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy (MACWIE) and include security of location for small vendors against demolitions and for LGUs to provide space for informal workers.[102]

(g) Pass the PWD Employability Act to facilitate PWD's access to employment opportunities and reduce women's unpaid care work.

(h) Implement and enhance social protection for senior citizens.

<u>Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs</u>

(a) Provide free annual medical examination, medicines, health services for women (such as free annual pap smear, free medicine for cervical cancer, free contraceptives, among others).

(b) Increase efforts in information dissemination and awareness-raising on social protection programs and services among women workers in different sectors.

(c) Improve inter-agency coordination to improve efficiency and eliminate gaps and inconsistencies.

(d) Improve delivery of social protection services and benefits to avoid burdening workers, especially women.


A woman health worker checks on another woman worker to ensure occupational safety and health, especially of women workers. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.

i. Simplify requirements to access social protection programs.

ii. Establish more satellite offices or one-stop shops to improve access to social protection.

(e) Support lifelong learning and provide more scholarships for women workers.

(f) Provide support for women workers in industries/sectors during lean months.

(g) Provide more livelihood and skills trainings and financial support for women.

(h) Provide hazard pay for workers exposed to various risks.

(i) Provide options for flexible working arrangements for women workers with care responsibilities and reproductive health needs to enable them to fully participate in the labor force (like work-from-home arrangements, telecommuting, hybrid work arrangements, and so on).

(j) Stop demolitions without just relocation and adequate support.

(k) Strengthen labor inspections to check if gender equality related programs and services are being implemented, as well as review and update the DOLE inspection checklist.

(l) Address corruption by enhancing transparency mechanisms in government agencies and offices, establishing an efficient system to track program beneficiaries, and implementing other appropriate measures.

(m) Strengthen monitoring of OSH risks, especially in women-dominated sectors like garments, electronics and agriculture.

(n) Conduct a comprehensive study on gender and health in the world of work to improve national OSH policies for women workers, such as by incorporating gender dimensions in hazard identification, risk assessment and control measures and labor inspections.

(n) Strengthen enforcement of existing laws, mechanisms and programs to prevent and eliminate child labor and its worst forms. Strengthen assistance to and protections for child trafficking victims.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Provide free annual medical examination, medicines, health services for women (such as free annual pap smear, free medicine for cervical cancer, free contraceptives, among others) at the Workplace/Enterprise-level.

(b) Expand the granting of emergency leaves or domestic emergency leaves with pay to at least ten days.

(c) Provide health care insurance for workers.

(d) Implement gender-responsive OSH programs. Develop more women safety officers and ensure women workers' representatives in OSH trainings and committees.

(e) Provide sleeping or resting quarters at the workplace that workers could access during calamities (like floods and heavy rains), when it is difficult to commute, or when workers have to work night shifts.

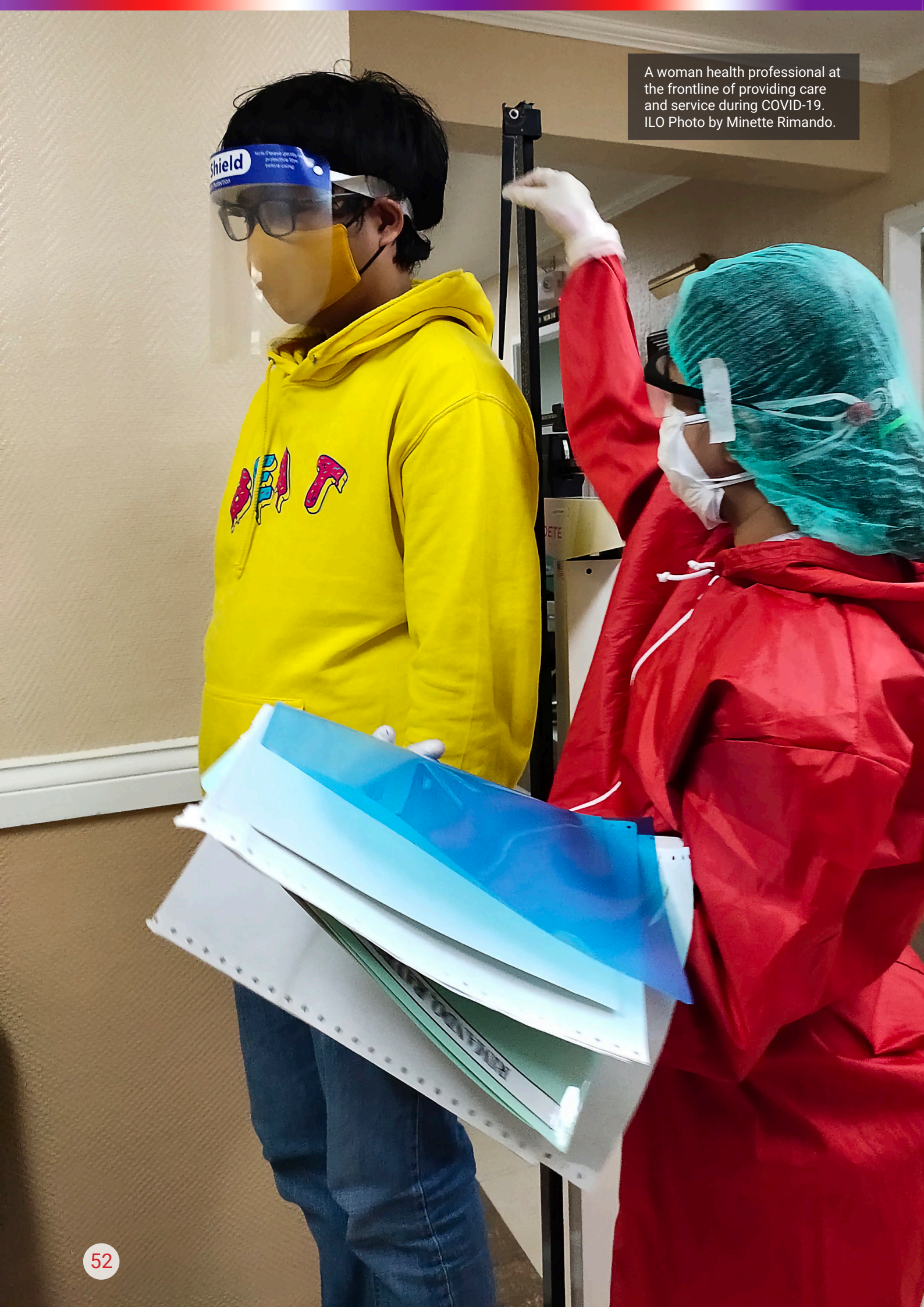
Union-level recommendations

(a) Raise awareness and organize union campaigns on advancing universal social protection and relevant international labor standards.

(b) Build capacity to identify and address gender-specific OSH concerns at the workplace level.

(c) Ensure women union representatives in OSH Committees.

(d) Raise awareness and hold campaigns on addressing child labor.




A woman health professional at the frontline of providing care and service during COVID-19. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.

# 5 Ensure quality public services

Quality public services are essential in ensuring human and workers' rights, sustainable development and social justice for all. Marginalized sectors, including women and workers in the informal economy, rely on free, accessible and quality public services. Increases in the prices of electricity, water and transportation; power cuts and water service interruptions; and lack of proper housing deprive women and their families of their rightful access to these essential services. Ensuring that everyone has equal access to basic services such as health care, education, electricity, water and sanitation, and housing is therefore indispensable to the women workers' agenda.

Like social protection, access to quality public services, such as healthcare and education, is vital for women workers who face multiple burdens. As mentioned, women workers are disproportionately represented in low-pay, insecure jobs and the informal economy, and have limited access to formal social protection programs. They are more likely to be unemployed compared to men. Thus, improving women's access to quality and free (or affordable) public services help women perform their productive and reproductive roles.

Women workers are further marginalized and dispossessed when public services are privatized. Privatization of public services risks having a discriminatory effect because quality public services are essential in overcoming exclusion and systemic discrimination. Because of women's reduced economic and political power, they are often less likely to be able to afford privatized services. When public services are diminished and delivered at a profit, women are forced to fill in the gaps of delivering health and social care. Consequently, privatization increases the gendered burden of unpaid work.

With privatization, corporate profits take precedence over the public interest. Privatization often leads to higher prices, job cuts, lower wages and union-busting. Privatization likewise leads to loss in income for the government. Therefore, privatization should be stopped.

Unfortunately, rather than prioritizing funding for and strengthening public services and creating decent jobs in the public sector, the Philippine government continue to privatize water, education and health, along with rightsizing the bureaucracy. The government's inability to effectively prevent and address widespread corruption and political patronage further weakens effective public services delivery.

Government spending for social services remains low over the years. Between 2000 and 2018, government spending on health averaged 1.24 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It was only between 2018 and 2021 that a gradual and consistent increase of the share was observed: from 1.54 per cent in 2018, 1.69 per cent in 2019, 2.28 per cent in 2020 and to 2.49 per cent in 2021.[103] The more significant increases in 2020 and 2021 were due to the health emergency needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The country's spending on health as a share of GDP in 2020 (2.28 per cent) is lower than the average of 2.92 per cent for East Asia and the Pacific (excluding high-income countries).[104]

While the passage of the Universal Health Care (UHC) Law (Republic Act 11223) in 2019 is a welcome development, the government needs to fully fund the program. The benefits given by PhilHealth are inadequate. And although out-of-pocket expenditure as a share of current health expenditure was decreasing between 2019 (48.8 per cent) and 2021, it remained high at 41.5 per cent in 2021.[105] Meanwhile, the cost of private

health care services continues to increase, and therefore health services remain inaccessible to many people that need them. This is why the UHC must focus not only on expanding health insurance for everyone, but also on improving the scale and quality of public health services.

Public education is another area of social spending that appears to have been slowly dropping off the radar over the years. While government's expenditure on education as a share of GDP may appear higher than health spending, averaging 3.6 per cent between 2014 and 2022, the rates have been erratic over the years: alternating between an increasing share and a declining share year-on-year. In 2014, government's expenditure on education as a share of GDP was 2.9 per cent, which increased to 3.5 per cent in 2015, only then to decline to 3 per cent in 2016. In 2018, the rate was 3.9 per cent, which again dropped to 3.4 per cent in 2019. In 2020 and 2021, the rate was 3.9 per cent, but it again fell to 3.6 per cent in 2022.[106] Although the rate in 2021 was higher than the average of 3.0 per cent for East Asia and the Pacific (excluding high-income countries),[107] the erratic trend suggests the lack of a consistent commitment of the government to improve spending on public education, which is vital to the provision of quality education.

Other public services that are essential in easing the burden of women's unpaid care work so they could engage more in productive and remunerative work include access to affordable and quality transportation, water facilities, electricity and housing. However, the state of, access to and cost of enjoying these services leave much to be desired.

In the sphere of public transportation, just transition is severely lacking in the implementation of the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) – a program launched by the Duterte administration in 2018 that involved replacing the old iconic jeepneys with imported electric vehicles that have at least a Euro 4-compliant engine. Not only is the cost of modernization – standing at 2.5 to 3 million pesos – prohibitive even with the oft-minimal government assistance, operators and drivers are also forced to consolidate into transport cooperatives or corporations by the end of April 2024. Moreover, the government failed to hold meaningful consultations with jeepney drivers, operators and commuters, resulting in the poor design and implementation of the program.

Many jeepney drivers and operators lost their livelihood as the government pushed for the full implementation of the PUVMP, with its repercussions extending to women and children


A young girl and a boy get to equally enjoy the benefits from a new water system built by indigenous peoples under the Japan-funded ILO Water and Sanitation Project in South Upi, Maguindanao. ILO Photo by Fazlurrashed Paslangan.

who will also suffer the loss of the family's primary source of income.

Meanwhile, the government remains lackadaisical in implementing and strengthening active transportation systems, such as walking and cycling. Active transportation improves people's health, augments poor public transportation systems, and addresses traffic woes. During the pandemic, active transportation (cycling, in particular) was promoted through the construction of bike lanes. However, as restrictions eased, many of the bike lanes have not been maintained, which further expose cyclists to accidents on the roads. Promoting active transportation requires safe roads and streets, sidewalks and cycling facilities, and secure bicycle parking, among others. Local governments have a crucial role in designing land-use strategies to make active transportation efficient, safe and pleasant.

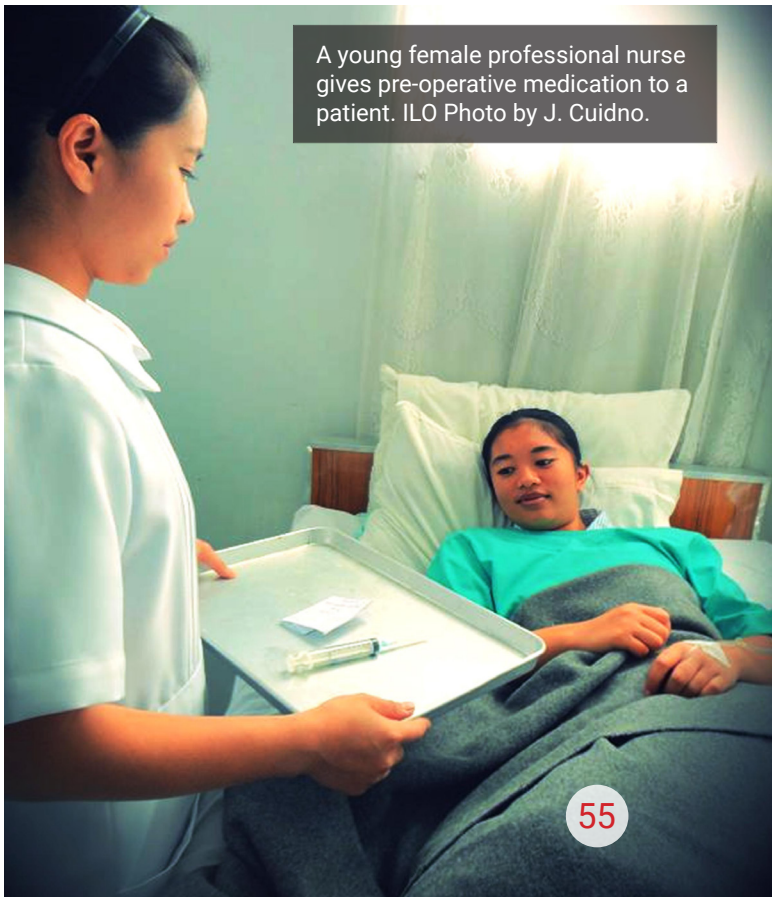
As fuel prices continue to soar, consumers pay more for their electricity and water consumption. In February 2024, households consuming 200 kilowatt-hour (kWh) saw an additional charge of 45 pesos or 115 pesos on their electricity bill; 45 pesos or 172 pesos for those consuming 300 kWh; 45 pesos or 229 pesos for 400 kWh; and 45 pesos or 287 pesos for 500 kWh.[108] In the first month of 2024, Manila Water and Maynilad also carried out additional charges: for Maynilad consumers, an additional charge of 4.74 pesos per month for lifeline customers; 26.61 pesos per month for those consuming 10 cubic meters or less; 100.67 pesos for those consuming 10 to 20 cubic meters; and 205.87 pesos for those consuming 30 cubic meters or more.[109]

According to the UN-Habitat Philippines Country Report 2023, there is a backlog of 6.5 million housing units in the country.[110] An estimated 3.7 million informal settler families are directly impacted by this deficit. If left unaddressed, this backlog can reach around 22 million by 2040. The same report identifies some of the main drivers contributing to the backlog:

> Urban migration, a rising number of informal settlements, armed conflict, systemic inequity, and climate change. […] The backlog is further worsened by declining housing production brought about by tedious bureaucratic regulatory and approving process, high reliance on private sector investment, and inadequate budget allocation for housing.[111]

The *Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino* (National Housing for Filipinos) or simply known as the 4PH program, which was launched by the Marcos Jr. administration in July 2023, aims to build one million housing units annually until the end of Marcos Jr.'s term to house 3.7 million informal settler families; half a million of whom are low-income families and reside in high-risk areas in Metro Manila and NCR. However, a report of the Center for Women's Resources (CWR) highlights that, due to several factors, such as the slow process and lengthy time needed to construct mid-rise and high-rise condominium buildings, only about 100,000 housing units – equivalent to 10 per cent of the target – can be distributed this year as announced by the Department of Housing Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD).[112] The CWR argues that the 4PH program will not solve the housing problem of homeless Filipinos, because the construction of housing units relies on the private sector and businesses, while the costs of monthly payments, estimated at 3,500 pesos, remain unaffordable to informal settler families.[113]

Informal living spaces make women and their families vulnerable to demolitions. The CWR further adds: "When families are displaced,



A young female professional nurse gives pre-operative medication to a patient. ILO Photo by J. Cuidno.

women become more vulnerable to abuse, violence, and security and health issues, especially when access to social services and job opportunities at their relocation sites, if available, is uncertain."[114]

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Stop the privatization of public services. Prioritize people over profit. Stop plans to privatize GOCCs, local water districts and public markets. Review policies such as the Public Services Act. Consider "remunicipalization" or the process of taking privatized services back in public hands, as well as alternative forms of local public service delivery that are growing in trend in many parts of the world.[115]

(b) Prioritize funding for education, health, social service and other basic services.

(c) Implement the ILO Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151) by passing enabling laws, like the Public Service Labor Relations Bill, to improve the rights and working conditions of public workers leading to better delivery of public services.

(d) Recognize informal workers in the public sector such as BHWs and Barangay Nutrition Scholars as public workers.

(e) Legislate laws to improve rights and benefits of poorly protected workers such as the proposed bills for BHWs, daycare workers, public school teachers, public health workers, nurses, sanitation inspectors, medical technologists and non-uniformed personnel, among others.

(f) Create plantilla positions in the public sector.

(g) Junk the government's rightsizing program and review the Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) Rationalization Program on Organization and Staffing Standards and Guidelines.

(h) Pass reforms and laws to improve working conditions in government and address existing injustices.

   i. Equalization of salaries between national and local government workers;

   ii. New SSL;

   iii. New Compensation and Position Classification System for GOCCs.

(i) Adopt effective measures to combat corruption by passing into law the following:

   i. Freedom of Information Bill;

   ii. Whistleblowers Protection Act.

A mother breastfeeding her child right after giving birth inside a maternity hospital facility.ILO Photo by E. Tuyay.


Children in Mindanao have more time to read and learn, as local community benefits from a new water system built by indigenous peoples under the Japan-funded ILO Water and Sanitation Project in South Upi, Maguindanao. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.

(j) Amend the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Republic Act 9136) to lower electricity rates. Ensure the state's role in planning and power generation and distribution, and defend electric cooperatives against any form of corporatization.

(k) Adopt an affordable, renewable energy/solar-powered, sustainable and government-subsidized mass public housing program nationwide that integrates community participation in the process. This will create a sense of ownership and belongingness for the residents, and increase the livability of the area.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Ensure effective implementation of mandated Gender and Development (GAD) budgets for more gender-responsive public services, programs, activities and projects.

(b) Ensure availability, accessibility and affordability of wellness and mental health-related programs and services in the workplace.

(c) Ensure adequate funding and implement effective measures to support active and sustainable transportation for all.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Stop corporate takeovers of essential public facilities, such as hospitals, local water districts and electric and transport cooperatives.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Strengthen campaign against privatization.

(b) Increase membership awareness on the need to defend quality public services.

A street vendor selling pineapples near a bus stop in Tagbilaran, Bohol. ILO Photo by Viggo Hansson.

# 6 Protect and support enterprises and workers in the informal sector

According to the ILO, the informal economy "refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements."[116] It thrives mostly in a context of high unemployment, underemployment, poverty, gender inequality and precarious work. The informal economy encompasses both the informal sector and informal employment: the former is broadly defined by ILO as "units engaged in the production of goods and services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned",[117] while the latter was defined by the PSA – citing the 17th ICLS guidelines of the ILO – as referring to "all remunerative work (i.e. both self-employment and wage employment) that is not registered, regulated or protected by existing legal or regulatory frameworks, as well as non-remunerative work undertaken in an income-producing enterprise".[118]

The significance and permanence of the informal economy is globally recognized. Growth resulting from accelerated integration of local economies into the global capitalist economy has facilitated the expansion of the informal economy and may have constrained its transition to formality. Outsourcing and global value chains (GVCs) encouraged the growth of informal enterprises and the expansion of informal work. The Philippines exhibits a higher degree of backward participation[119] than forward participation in GVCs, indicating a larger proportion of foreign value added across all industries.[120] Backward integration raises the vulnerabilities of GVCs. The COVID-19 pandemic and the war between Russia and Ukraine disrupted the normal functioning of value chains. Firms find it difficult to source inputs necessary for the production process. Many companies laid off workers. For example, the CWR reports that in September 2020, over 4,000 workers were laid off following the withdrawal of orders from global brands like Adidas, Under Armour and Lululemon from Mactan Apparel, and First Flory in the Mactan Economic Zone.[121] It is to be noted that women comprise the majority of workers in the garments and apparel sector in the Philippines.

As the Philippine economy's global integration deepens, the vulnerability of jobs and livelihoods, particularly those of women, to economic crisis and shocks increases. Global economic integration has resulted in increasing income inequality and continuing high levels of unemployment and poverty in many countries, including the Philippines. Many new entrants to the labor market and workers who lost their jobs in the formal economy find difficulty in accessing formal employment. These workers are thus pushed into informal activities, resulting in the rise in informal employment in both the informal and formal sectors.

The lack of decent jobs, continued contractualization of labor, and the lack of a sound and comprehensive industrial policy (discussed later in this report) have likewise contributed to informalization of work of women in the informal economy. There is a higher share of women holding informal jobs compared to men. Workers in the informal sector include street vendors, domestic workers, small-scale traders, casual laborers, home-based workers, platform workers, service and care workers, agricultural workers, migrant workers, subcontractors, and other informal workers.

Workers in the informal sector suffer from decent work deficits. According to the ILO, workers in the informal economy, which includes the informal sector,

> … are exposed to inadequate and unsafe working conditions, and have high illiteracy levels, low skill levels and inadequate training opportunities; have less certain, less regular and lower incomes than those in the formal economy, suffer longer working hours, an absence of collective bargaining and representation rights, and, often, an ambiguous or disguised employment status; and are physically and financially more vulnerable because work in the informal economy is either excluded from, or effectively beyond, the reach of social security schemes and safety and health, maternity and other labour protection legislation.[122]

Even in the informal sector, women face more disadvantages than men. Women are more likely to be working in the most vulnerable positions. An ILO report cites an analysis carried out by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) on the interactions between type of informal work, level of earnings and risk of poverty, which found a hierarchy of earnings and gender segmentation across employment types.[123]

- Informal employers are at the top, with the highest earnings and lowest poverty risk; followed by own-account workers, employees, other informal wage workers, industrial outworkers/home-based workers and, at the bottom, unpaid contributing family workers.
- Women in informal employment are over-represented in the most vulnerable employment category of contributing family workers, home-based workers doing piece-rate work in the lower tiers of supply chains (whatever their employment status), and domestic workers. By contrast, they are under-represented among employers and, to some extent, own-account workers.
- Gender pay gaps are another dimension of gender disparity in informal employment. Women in informal wage employment generally face a double penalty: on average, informal wage workers are paid

Expecting and nursing mothers require social protection but workers in the informal economy are often not covered. ILO Photo by E. Tuyay.

lower wages than formal workers, and women are paid lower wages than men.[124]

The above findings validate an earlier study done by Martha Chen who emphasized the existence of gender segmentation in the informal sector.[125] Chen explains that "women tend to work in a variety of activities, associated with different levels of earnings, than men", partly because "men tend to possess more human capital due to educational discrimination against girls; men tend to have better tools of the trade, operate from better work sites/spaces and have greater access to productive assets and financial capital".[126] Women-led enterprises, including those in the informal sector, are further constrained by factors such as discriminatory legal and property rights and social norms and culture. Thus, women-led enterprises are typically less productive than men-led enterprises because of a more adverse business environment.[127]

Worse, women workers in the informal economy also lack access to childcare facilities, maternity benefits and other women-specific services and benefits.

Intersecting characteristics compound the challenges that women in the informal economy face. According to the ILO, "[a] woman's ethnicity, disability, HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] status, sexual orientation, age, and level of education for example, may hamper her capacity to find employment in the formal economy and widen the inequality gap she must confront in the informal economy".[128]

In the island-wide consultation workshops of the WWU, women participants highlighted many issues faced by women workers in the informal sector. In terms of finding work and their working conditions, the women participants identified the following:

- Too many requirements to secure employment, which may cost as much as 1,855 pesos:[129] barangay clearance (80 pesos), cedula (70 pesos), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) clearance (220 pesos), police clearance (120 pesos), provincial clearance (180 pesos), medical certificate (1,000 pesos), municipal health certificate donation (30 pesos), PSA birth certificate (155 pesos);
- Low job security and lack of legal employment contracts;
- Low wages;
- Lack or limited social protections and benefits (SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-Ibig);
- High vulnerability to discrimination and GBV, including rape, especially in domestic work;
- Physical, verbal and emotional abuse, and other forms of maltreatment;
- Age discrimination;
- Occupational health and safety concerns/ unsafe workplace; hazardous working conditions and non-compliance to OSH standards (like the lack of PPE provisions);
- Difficulty in exercising the right to form a union; non-recognition of some associations of informal workers, which leave them excluded from government aid;
- Red tagging of informal workers' associations.

They also face challenges that constrain the operation and sustainability of their informal enterprises and livelihoods, such as:

- Lack of legal protection;
- Clearing operations by LGUs against street vendors and small-scale traders, accompanied by:
  - Confiscation of goods;
  - Imposition of excessive penalties;
  - Corruption and bribery.
- Lack of capital to start, sustain and grow a small business (costly business space rentals) and of means to renovate stalls and spaces provided by the government, which is often shouldered by vendors;
- Inability to find new markets;
- Limited skills in marketing and advertising strategies;
- Lack of access to services, government assistance, loans, and the like;

- Lack of or limited knowledge on digital apps to boost sales, among others;
- Problems in acquiring business permits (like costs, complex documentation, unclear procedures, inconsistent enforcement, absurd requirement, lack of information);
- Demolition of urban poor houses and problems in relocation programs (such as being far from jobs and livelihood);
- Impacts of climate change, with natural and man-made disasters having more severe impact on informal enterprises.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Pass the MACWIE.

(b) Prohibit all forms of contractualization.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) With the tripartite sectors, devise and implement an employment plan/program that creates more decent jobs.

(b) Remove discriminatory requirements in the registration of enterprises, like the following:

i. Certification from the LGU

ii. Proof of billing

iii. Valid ID/barangay ID

(c) Simplify the requirements to gain employment by making them accessible and free.

(d) Improve gender-responsive data collection on workers in the informal economy in view of developing effective programs and services for them.

(e) Ensure access to capital, markets, training and secured and safe market spaces for vendors.

(f) Strengthen OSH in the informal sector by broadening existing national OSH policies and programs to the informal economy.

(g) Stop the reclamation in coastal communities.

(h) Provide support, such as livelihood and financial assistance, for displaced informal workers.

(i) Support the creation of social and solidarity economy enterprises.

(j) Institutionalize social dialogue between LGUs and organizations of workers in the informal economy.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Provide full support in organizing workers in the informal economy and fully integrate them into the labor movement.

A woman sells rags on the sidewalk. ILO Photo by Minette Rimando.

# 7 Achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, and the LGBTQIA+ community: Address gender discrimination, gender-based violence and gendered distribution of unpaid care work

In the process of deepening the gender analysis in the labor agenda on gender equality, varying forms of discrimination that women and LGBTQIA+ experience in the workplace were discussed, such as discrimination in employment opportunities and in access to paid, high-paying, secure and decent jobs. Furthermore, persistent practices of violence and harassment against women and LGBTQIA+ people were highlighted, along with unequal gendered distribution of unpaid care work.

***Persistent lived experiences of discrimination in the workplace for women***

In line with ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Bill of Rights of the 1987 Philippine Constitution guarantees equal protection of rights for every Filipino and prohibits discrimination of persons based on ethnicity, race, religion or belief, political inclination, social class, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, civil status, medical condition or any other status in the enjoyment of rights. It also imposes on the State the duty to ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.[130]

In 1989, an amendment to the Labor Code was passed and legislated (Republic Act 6725). The law prohibits discrimination against women with respect to terms and conditions of employment solely on account of sex. It identifies acts of discrimination: (a) payment of a lesser compensation, including wage, salary or other form of remuneration and fringe benefits, to a female employee as against a male employee, for work of equal value; and (b) favoring a male employee over a female employee with respect to promotion, training opportunities, study and scholarship grants solely on account of their sexes. A willful commission of an employer of these unlawful acts carries a criminal liability under the law.

Despite this law, gender-based discrimination remains prevalent in the workplace. The participants in the island-wide consultations reported multiple incidents where discrimination is present in the workplace. The sectors under scrutiny include manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, informal workers, transportation and education. The findings reveal a complex landscape of discriminatory practices, including disparities in wages, constraints to employment, dress code restrictions and other constraints to freedom of gender expression, limited access to facilities, pregnancy-related terminations, limited opportunities for professional development and promotion, and other discriminatory practices related to termination and retirement. Various forms of GBV and harassment in the world of work have also been identified, including physical, verbal, psychological, economic and sexual violence. In the manufacturing sector, discriminatory practices, through indirect orders of early retirement for women, dress code restrictions, and limited maternity benefits were reported. In export processing zones in the past, women were even examined monthly to check if they were menstruating as a means to monitor

that they were not pregnant. Additionally, women workers reported instances of physical and verbal abuse that created a hostile work environment.

Incidents of discrimination in the healthcare sector include fat-shaming, body-shaming and limited support for female workers experiencing domestic violence. In the agriculture sector, gender-based discrimination manifests in wage disparities and the underestimation of women's capabilities. In the fishing industry, women fisherfolks experience discrimination due to their gender and reproductive traits; such that, during their menstrual period, they are not allowed to go fishing, resulting in loss of income. Discrimination in the transportation sector is explored through highlighting biases against female drivers and commission-based practices for dispatchers. Most women in the industry are often assigned to non-physical forms of labor such as dispatching, collecting fares, and the like. Experiences of gender-based discrimination in the education sector focused on dress code restrictions, with many policy makers in the sector failing to recognize the dress code as discriminatory in terms of gender expression. Strict dress codes such as slacks for men and skirts for women remain enforced. There is also discrimination against pregnant applicants, and limited support for female employees in this sector. Contractual workers in the education sector are less likely to be regularized when found pregnant. Similar work discrimination can be found in the BPO sector, where there are many LGBTQIA+ workers, including discriminatory dress codes, lack of gender-inclusive facilities, wage discrimination and lack of access to promotion opportunities.

### 7.1 Promoting gender equality and non-discrimination laws

As mentioned, the Philippines has many good and promising laws that promote women's rights and gender equality, but implementation is always problematic. Many provisions in existing gender equality laws and policies are not consistently provided and universally accessed by women workers. The following are the notable gaps and issues in existing gender equality laws:

- Laws aimed at protecting women from workplace violence and harassment, such


Signing up for ILO Convention 190 on Ending Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. Photo by WWU.

as the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 (Republic Act 7877) and the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 (Republic Act 11313), are not universally and uniformly implemented at the workplace. Hence, workplace mechanisms, such as the institution of a CODI that could handle cases of sexual harassment, implementation of massive and constant awareness campaign to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, and assistance to victims of violence and harassment, are often absent or ineffective.

- Laws such as the Magna Carta of Women Act of 2009 (Republic Act 7910), Expanded Maternity Leave Law of 2019 (Republic Act 11210), Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law of 2012 (Republic Act 10354), Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009 (Republic Act 10028), Expanded Solo Parents Act of 2022 (Republic Act 11861) and other social safety assistance provisions in existing Philippine laws that promote the recognition of women's rights, provide special benefits to women workers, and ensure protection against discrimination especially among vulnerable groups, such as migrant workers, rural and indigenous women, informal workers, solo parents, among others, as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW) to which the Philippines is State Party, are not universally enjoyed by women workers. Funding to implement these laws is also lacking.
- However, gaps remain in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the existing gender equality laws that need to be improved and strengthened. For example, the Magna Carta of Women Act (Republic Act 7910) lacks oversight mechanisms for its implementation from Congress and the Commission on Human Rights – the bodies designated as Gender Ombud.[131] The assessment, repeal or reform of legislations remain "contingent on the mindsets of legislators, prosecutors and the judiciary"[132] that are shaped by contemporary patriarchal structures, misogyny and continuing gender stereotypes in the country.

  Women workers' access to rights and benefits under these laws are contingent on several factors, such as their employment status, the industry or sector they belong to, as well as the representation, strength and level of awareness on women's rights in trade unions. Specifically, regular workers could avail of leave benefits but not those who are contractual or those who work under conditions of no work, no pay. Those who are regular employees in the public sector can avail of benefits and social protection, and some workplaces even allow contractual workers to avail benefits or access to existing childminding facilities. However, these benefits in the public sector are not available for those who are considered "volunteers" such as BHWs and day care teachers. In unionized workplaces, recognition and benefits for women and other gender responsive mechanisms in CBAs are enforced. But this is not the case for the women workers who cannot fully exercise their right to form unions and engage in collective bargaining, most notably among agricultural workers, migrant workers and informal sector workers who are largely unorganized into trade unions.
- While according to law, employers have the duty to contribute to raising awareness on gender equality and women's rights, including the existence of laws that protect women, this obligation is not universally, uniformly, and consistently fulfilled by employers, especially in the private sector. Employers or company management only comply when such is part of compliance mechanisms for reporting and accreditation – for example, if these were part of DOLE inspection, accreditation list of academic institutions, or annual GAD compliance monitoring of government agencies and offices. Furthermore, there are still existing provisions in the Labor Code that serve to perpetuate gender stereotyping in the provision of services and job segregation.

- Programs of relevant government agencies, such as the DOLE, DSWD, Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), PNP and LGUs, that are mandated by law to ensure implementation of such laws are either superficial or ineffective. The PCW has a limited role in ensuring the implementation of gender equality policies among government agencies.
- The active participation of women workers in unions and in leadership positions is highly correlated with the existence of regular programs for women and functioning women's committees. There are workplaces, through workers' or union initiatives, that enforce policies promoting women's rights and gender equality, such as information dissemination on women's rights, free services for women during Women's Month, hiring and promotion based on productivity and not on gender, non-implementation of gender binary dress codes to allow for gender expression, and availability of all-gender restrooms, among others. Workplaces in industries or sectors that have low women's participation in unions, much less in leadership roles, also usually do not have women's committees and regular union programs to promote women's rights and freedoms.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Review and amend existing laws and processes in the Philippine justice system that put women at a disadvantaged position (like the Labor Code, Family Code, Revised Penal Code and so on) in consultation with trade unions.

(b) Review the Labor Code and propose amendments to promote gender equality in terms of gender sensitive language and gender explicit provisions.[133]

(c) Other Labor Code provisions that need to be amended to promote gender equality, including article 133, section 14 of the SSS Law; art. 134 (Family Planning) that puts the burden only on women; art. 138 (women in certain occupations such as bars, nightclubs); art. 92 (rest day for pregnant and nursing women).

(d) Legally recognize BHWs as public workers and not mere volunteers.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Ensure that laws and policies are implemented and that there are corresponding penalties or reprimands for non-implementation, including by reviewing and amending policy issuances in the public and private sectors to be consistent with the Magna Carta of Women (like the CSC/DOLE orders on special or gynecological leaves).

(b) Ensure widespread, regular, comprehensive and systematic awareness raising on women's rights and gender equality laws at the workplace level so workers are aware of their rights, benefits and gender equality mechanisms.

(c) Ensure legal and policy compliance of employers by including workplace gender audit (to monitor how gender equality laws and policies are implemented) in existing compliance monitoring of relevant government agencies or by instituting such mechanisms when there is none.

(d) Ensure that women workers who could not avail of rights and benefits due to their employment status (as in the cases of contractual, informal, migrant or not unionized workers) are provided with access to such benefits as a special measure (see: State assumes the responsibility of employer) until such time as more strategic and permanent mechanism is institutionalized (such as the regularization of all workers; legal recognition of rights and protection for informal workers and those considered as volunteers; inclusion of rights and benefits of migrant workers in bilateral agreements with host countries, among others).

(e) Ensure that rank and promotion schemes and hiring requirements are based on merit/productivity, regardless of gender.

(f) Provide skills training and educational opportunities for women in low-paying jobs.

(g) Review the role of media in perpetuating gender stereotyping and task relevant government agencies like the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) to issue policies promoting gender equality.

(h) Strengthen the roles of national agencies, such as the PCW and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), to ensure compliance to gender equality policies. The PCW should include labor/sector representatives in the commission and act as the Ombudsperson for Women at the national level. The DILG should ensure compliance of LGUs to gender equality by including this as an indicator in accomplishing the Performance-Based Bonus and/or the Seal of Good Local Governance incentives.

(i) Integrate gender equality language and content in the formulation of the IRR of the Labor Education Act (Republic Act 11551).

(j) Allocate GAD budget for trainings aimed at developing women leaders among workers organizations/unions.

<u>Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations</u>

(a) Integrate and implement employer's responsibilities in promoting gender equality in company rules and regulations.

(b) Disseminate information on gender equality laws and policies to raise awareness on women's rights at the workplace level.


Young people call for an end to gender-based violence in the world of work. Photo by WWU.

(c) Adopt affirmative action in hiring and workplace policies to address gender gaps.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Raise awareness and understanding on how patriarchal structures and values perpetuate gender inequality in the world of work.

(b) Conduct a gender audit to comprehensively identify needed changes in the union's policies and practices.

(c) Establish and strengthen women's committees and ensure women's representation in union leadership and structures through affirmative action and other means.

(d) Ensure that benefits for women according to gender equality laws are included in CBA/CNA to ensure implementation and foster awareness of workers on their rights.

(e) Promote union programs for gender equality.

## 7.2 Eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work

As mentioned, Filipino women workers face various forms of GBV, whether at the workplace, when going to and coming from work, and at the domestic sphere. While there are many laws and policies that seek to protect women from different forms of violence, the reality is that VAW continues to be poorly addressed in the world of work. These have serious implications to women's workplace productivity, in particular, and in the fulfillment of gender equality in society in general.

As long as VAW remains unaddressed, this will continue to be a source of vulnerability and burden that women workers face on their own. The same is true for the burden of domestic care and reproductive work that women have traditionally assumed as unpaid work and as personal responsibility. To ensure that women's rights are fulfilled, protected and promoted in the world of work, this necessitates an approach that directly addresses issues of VAW and unpaid care work.

There are also specific psychosocial impacts of injuries, traumas, violence, harassment, abuse of power, pay gaps and the like that should be addressed immediately before it evolves into


Women Workers United (WWU) leaders raise their hands and voices for ILO C.190 implementation. Photo by WWU.

a mental health condition. These impacts vary per age group. The younger sector needs more guidance and attention, especially those working under the age of 25 whose prefrontal cortex is not fully developed yet, and therefore have more difficulties in problem-solving, learning, reasoning, emotions, and thinking.[134]

One important step that the Philippine government recently took in addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work is the ratification of the ILO Convention No. 190 with the concurrence of the Philippine Senate on 11 December 2023. The Philippines is the first country in Asia to ratify this landmark convention.

In the pre-summit workshops and island-wide consultations of the WWU, women participants highlighted the following issues:

- Women workers experience multiple forms of violence, notably sexual harassment, domestic abuse and rape within and outside the world of work that may be committed by employers, managers, co-workers or partners. Despite laws and policies against various forms of VAW, the situation persists.
- While there were instances when violations were reported to proper authorities (such us the police, company representative/ management, union), many remain unreported, especially cases of sexual harassment that are considered "mild" such as catcalling, unwanted touching, verbal sexual harassment, and the like.
- Underreporting remains a major impediment to addressing VAW due to stigma, retaliation, culture of impunity and other discriminatory practices. Domestic violence that occurs inside the household remains commonly underreported due to persistent structural divide between the public and private spheres. GBVs inside the household is compounded by the absence of a divorce law in the country, which trap women in a cycle of violence.
- Due to weak implementation and gaps in existing laws and regulations, GBV is not treated as a workplace issue. Employers and unions are not fully capacitated to address cases of GBV.
- Cases that were reported were dealt with on a case-to-case basis, despite clear legal provisions on how to handle specific cases. For example, there were cases when a co-worker who was accused of sexual harassment was only given a verbal reprimand or was encouraged to resign from work by the management/employer/ union. Although there were cases that were properly reported to the authorities such as barangay officials through the assistance and facilitation of CSOs/NGOs and trade unions, particularly supporting victims in filing cases to the courts, gaps remain in services provision to victims provided by NGOs, workers' associations, and unions.
- According to the CWR, during severe crises, women and children endure heightened abuse and exploitation, especially those coming from impoverished families. In 2022, 24,635 cases of VAW and children, or an average of 75 victims per day or 3 victims per hour.[135] The data from the PNP-CIRAS, a total of 19,635 cases of VAW and children were reported from January to August 2023, with an average of 54 female victims per day.[136]

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Implement ILO Convention No. 190 through the passage of an enabling law on violence and harassment in the world of work. Ensure women workers' role in processes involved in aligning national laws and policies in compliance with the Convention.

(b) Review and amend existing laws to better address GBV in the world of work (for example, imposition of higher penalties on GBV perpetrators).

(c) Enact an OSH Law for the public and informal sectors aligned with ILO C190.

(d) Pass into law the Divorce Bill.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Implement ILO Convention No. 190 at all levels: national, LGU and Workplace/ Enterprise-level. Include women worker's role in crafting the enabling law and the IRR. Conduct tripartite consultations on the Convention's implementation through the DOLE. Consult women workers in the development of the country's report to ILO regarding the implementation of the Convention.

(b) In the public sector, ensure adequate funds for the implementation of ILO Convention No. 190. GAD budget allocation can be used to promote the Convention and build capacity. Include in Strategic Performance and Management Systems (like the Office Performance Commitment and Review, the Individual Performance Commitment and Review, and the individual Performance Report) the target for Convention's implementation in consultation with employee's organization.

(c) Ensure the implementation of laws, as well as access to redress mechanisms of victims of violence and harassment without fear of retaliation. Violence and Harassment should be grounds for filing Unfair Labor Practice by trade unions.

(d) Review and monitor the implementation of CODI in workplaces, including how cases were handled. Strengthen the implementation of CODI's mechanisms to avoid case-to-case basis resolutions of sexual harassment cases.

(e) Include violence and harassment in the world of work and GBV as risks in the OSH Standards.

(f) Include employers' compliance with existing laws on VAW, particularly the effective implementation of CODI, in the scope of labor inspections by DOLE. Create Labor Inspection plantilla positions that are gender-balanced. Conduct joint inspections with unions, as well as deputize the latter to hold similar inspections.

(g) Establish GBV desks in the DOLE, CSC and LGU field offices. Ensure adequate funds and capacity of field officers for GBV in these offices. Provide additional funding for implementing agencies. Develop clear policy, effective mechanisms to address violence and harassment in the public sector. Strengthen OSH/labor inspections in the public sector.

(h) The PCW should strengthen monitoring and assessment of implementation of laws and policies related to GBV in the world of work. It should also conduct capacity-building for LGU executives on violence and harassment.

(i) Develop effective mechanisms to address GBV in the informal sector where majority are women informal workers.[137]

(j) Review the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) Charter to ensure compliance with existing laws.[138]

(k) Support victims of violence and harassment by ensuring that: workers are protected from retaliation; prevention mechanisms (such as Human Resource intervention mechanisms, enclosing offices/classrooms with windows, conduct of psychological examination) are in place; and special work-leave for victims (like domestic violence leave with pay, compensatory leave, violence and harassment paid leave, consideration of mental health impacts) are provided.

(l) Integrate gender equality and gender sensitivity training in OSH trainings in male-dominated sectors, such as construction.

(m) Raise awareness and enforce the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act 11313) to address sexual harassment in mass transportation systems, public vehicles, streets, and other areas.

(n) Include provisions on addressing GBV in Bilateral Labor Migration Agreements (BLMAs) to protect migrant workers.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Establish and strengthen CODI and OSH Committees, and include GBV-preventive programs. Review existing mechanisms in the private and public sectors to align with ILO Convention No. 190. Develop model CODI and review CODI implementation in the private and public sectors to promote and comply with gender equality laws and policies. Strengthen workers' role in bipartite mechanisms. Enhance the capacity of employers and workers' organizations to establish and implement CODI.

(b) Integrate "Zero Tolerance for Violence" policies in the OSH committees at the company/Workplace/Enterprise-level. Employers should implement their responsibilities as provided under existing laws (such as the establishment of CODI and complaints procedures, conduct of awareness-raising activities, provision of services, facilitation of redress, and implementation of sanctions and disciplinary measures, among others).

(c) Endeavor to raise awareness and build capacity among management and personnel on GBV issues and policies in public and private sectors. Integrate GBV concerns in cases handled by OSH committees.

(d) Conduct immediate interventions with young workers to address the psycho social impacts of injuries, traumas, violence, harassment, abuse of power, pay gaps, and so on. Promote mental health in the world of work.

(e) In the informal sector, put in place mechanisms against harassment and violence; strengthen LGU and barangay-level mechanisms against violence and harassment mechanisms (like barangay VAW desks) for urban and rural informal workers; and make available visibility materials on violence and harassment in enterprises/workplaces – especially male-dominated ones, public transport, construction sites, markets and other public places.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Raise awareness of workers on women's rights and protection against sexual harassment. Pay particular attention to awareness-raising among young women workers who often become victims of violence in the world of work (including online sexual abuse and exploitation) and provide psychological support and other legal and administrative assistance to them.

(b) Raise the capacity of trade unions and workplaces to deal with cases of GBV.

(c) Adopt GBV-related organizational policies (at the union or community levels), including the creation of GBV committees.

(d) Build the capacity of unions in promoting mental health, raising awareness among workers, and assisting victims of trauma, violence, harassment, abuse of power, pay gaps, and so on.

(e) Strengthen linkages with NGOs/CSOs that have the capacity to handle cases of GBV, and train paralegals and para-counselors among women workers.

(f) Include provisions against GBV in CBA/CNA.

(g) Ensure union representatives and women workers' representation in CODI.

### 7.3 Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work

Care is necessary for the existence and reproduction of societies and the workforce, and for the overall well-being of every individual. Care work encompasses activities and relations involved in meeting the physical, psychological and emotional needs of adults and children, old and young, frail and able-bodied. Care work is both

paid and unpaid with majority of women and girls providing unpaid care services. According to the ILO, care work is comprised of *direct and indirect* care activities.[139] Direct care includes personal and relational care activities, such child-care and care for the sick or for the elderly; while indirect care services include cooking, cleaning, ironing and so on. Care work can be unpaid and mostly done by women and girls, or paid that is performed for pay or profit. The workforce in the care economy includes domestic workers, nurses, teachers, community health workers, among others; majority of whom are women.

"Women still bear the brunt of unpaid care work", according to a news article that cites a 2022 study conducted by Oxfam Philippines with the Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) of Miriam College.[140] From the results of a survey of 232 women in March 2022, the study found that gender stereotypes persist even in this day and age – where women are expected to do care work, while men are to be the main breadwinners in the household.[141] In 2021, the National Household Care Survey conducted from January to March 2021, covering 1,177 individuals across eight regional provinces of the Philippines found out that "[w]omen spend up to 13 hours a day on unpaid care work, including supervisory care activities, compared to only eight hours for men".[142]

The WWU island-wide consultations reported similar findings that women do all forms of care work at home and devote long hours to unpaid care work. Those who have regular paid work devote around five to ten hours a day for unpaid domestic care work on top of their paid work hours. Meanwhile, those who have no regular work or have flexible work hours, as in the case of informal workers, devote nine to 12 hours daily for unpaid care work. Those who also care for elderly or sick family members devote an additional three hours for their already existing care work.

Women also rely on other women in the family or in the community (like their daughters, mothers, sisters, woman friends or neighbors) to help in care work. Men (as in spouse or partner) are able to help when they have no work or the woman is not present to do the work. The daily burden of care work poses negative impacts on women's physical, emotional and mental health, but these are often neglected because "there is no other

A female childcare provider, with her experience and the time she spends with the child, is held in high regard by her employers who are young parents. ILO Photo by J. Aliling.

choice" but to keep going and no one else will do the work. The multiple burden of unpaid care work on women workers constrain their ability to seek high-paying, high-skilled and secure work. More women can be found in elementary occupations that are low-paid, informal and insecure work.

The ILO 5R Framework on Decent Care Work further emphasizes that investing in transformative and gender-responsive care services can generate employment, particularly for women, and close the gender gap on employment.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Ratify and implement ILO Conventions that are related to care policies:

- C183 Maternity Protection Convention;
- C156 Workers with Family Responsibilities;
- C102 Social Security Minimum Standards and Recommendation 202 Social Protection Floors.

(b) Adopt a national legal framework that recognizes care as a human right and public good. The social and economic value of care work and the human right to care – that is, to care and to be cared for throughout our lives – should be recognized. Rebuilding the social organization of care, including ensuring a rights-based and gender transformative approach to care, is critical in realizing gender equality, sustainable development and social justice for all.

(c) Pass a Public Care law. Ensure provision of and adequate funding for public care facilities (such as public laundry, childminding centers, community kitchens, and care facilities for elderly, children, PWDs, people needing long-term care). Respond to care needs during disasters/calamities/pandemics.

(d) Ensure legislation of a family living wage to account for everything needed for the upkeep of families of workers.

(e) Provide social protection to workers across all genders.

(f) At the sociocultural level, promote distribution of care work regardless of gender and normalize shared responsibility for domestic work.

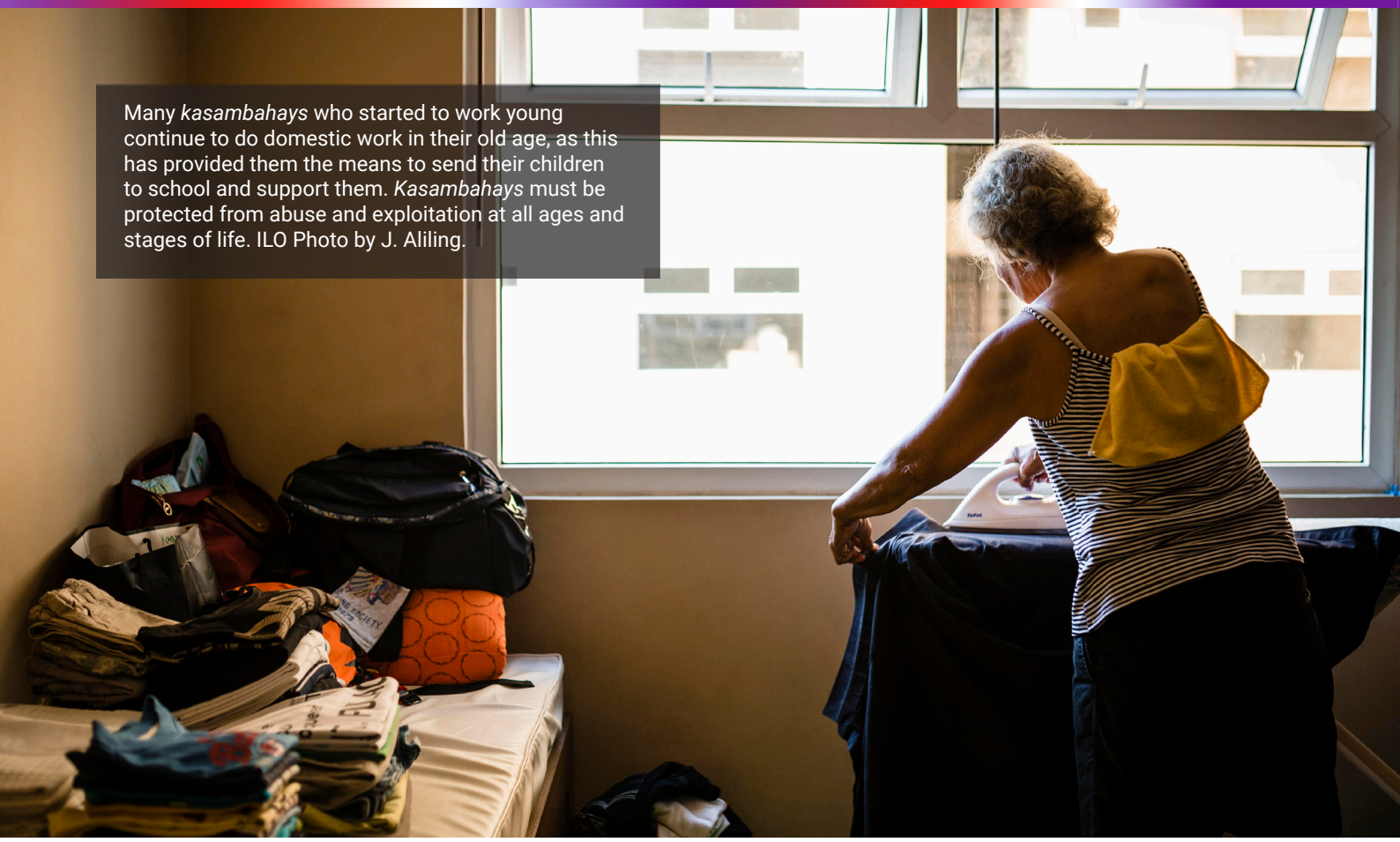
(g) Review and amend the Kasambahay Law to improve compensation, benefits and working conditions of domestic workers.

(h) Ensure decent work for all domestic workers, both local and overseas, including their right to fair compensation and to rest days (that is, not forcing domestic workers to work during holidays or rest days).

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Prioritize the provision of publicly funded, adequately staffed and universally accessible care systems.

- Provide free (or affordable) and widely accessible public services and adequate personnel to deliver services (such as day care or childminding facilities, school transportation, community laundry that may be managed by the community, elderly care, community or workplace-based canteens or kitchens, free vitamin supplements or health nutrients, free drinking water, and so on) and help ease the individual burden of care work on women.
- Ensure needs of displaced workers who still need to take care of their families by providing subsidies, assistance programs, child support and other needs of the family.
- Provide, at the community level, free internet access, recreation activities and facilities especially for the elderly and the sick who are mostly cared for by women.



Many *kasambahays* who started to work young continue to do domestic work in their old age, as this has provided them the means to send their children to school and support them. *Kasambahays* must be protected from abuse and exploitation at all ages and stages of life. ILO Photo by J. Aliling.

- Strengthen the role of LGUs in providing care services in the community.
- Tap GAD budget for care facilities and services in the communities and national-based government agencies.

(b) In the case of migrant workers, ensure provision of care facilities for families of Overseas Filipinos Workers (OFWs).

(c) Recognize BHWs, BNS and daycare teachers as workers entitled to fundamental labor rights to decent work, living wage and social protection.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Adopt and implement care policies in the workplace. Promote "work-family balance" to give workers time for care work and rest. Consider including travel time to and from work in the number of hours worked.

(b) Offer flexible work hours for workers who have a huge burden of domestic care work.

(c) Establish lactation stations and/or childminding centers in private and public sector workplaces as stipulated in existing laws.

(d) Comply with international labor standards and national laws and policies on care work.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Provide union education for workers on care as a human right and public good, and a shared responsibility of all genders.

(b) Integrate care work provisions in CBAs/CNAs.

### 7.4 Achieve gender equality and empower the LGBTQIA+ community

The ILO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report entitled "LGBTQIA+ People and Employment" in 2018 examined the extent of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in China, Philippines and Thailand. The study involved 1,571 respondents. Among the three countries, the Philippines has the highest rate of discrimination based on SOGIESC at 30 per cent compared to Thailand (23 per cent) and China

(21 per cent). The study found that 18 per cent of LGBTQIA+ Filipinos were denied jobs because of their SOGIE and 23 per cent were told they must first wear "gender-correct" outfits before they can be given a job.[143]

According to the study (table 6), transgender Filipinos are more likely to experience being harassed, bullied or discriminated against.

Among the biggest challenges in discussing the issues of LGBTQIA+ is the lack of data, hence the sector's invisibility in majority of policies and programmes. On the other hand, there have also been instances where gender profiling (like the "Oplan X-Men"[144]) has only exposed the LGBTQIA+ community to further discrimination, harassment and violence.

LGBTQIA+ respondents have reported experiencing discrimination during hiring and employment, curtailment of their freedom of gender expression, and lack of access to facilities, professional development opportunities and promotion. During hiring, they experience both non-preference due to their SOGIESC and preference due to the assumption that they will not get married and have children, thus saving the company from providing maternity and other health benefits. The freedom to express their gender remains a huge challenge that they face every day, because majority of company rules and regulations still require hair lengths and dress codes, with some explicitly stating that crossdressing is not allowed. There remains prevalent discrimination against LGBTQIA+ workers in terms of access to facilities such as comfort rooms, lockers and dressing rooms which are traditionally (binarily) segregated. LGBTQIA+ workers have also reported cases of exclusion from professional development opportunities like seminars, trainings and promotion solely based on their SOGIESC. In the services sector, LGBTQIA+ workers, many of whom work in the BPO industry, felt discriminated in the enforced non-inclusive dress codes and lack of facilities like break rooms or gender-inclusive comfort rooms. Wage discrimination also remains prevalent as LGBTQIA+ workers have less access to promotions. There were also reported incidents wherein employees were discriminated after having a gender-reassignment surgery, as well as some cases of workers who were discriminated after being discovered as HIV positive.

Table 6. *Vulnerable groups among LGBTQIA+ people and association with experience of harassment, bullying and discrimination*[145]

| | | | Cisman | Ciswoman | Trans woman | Trans man | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **China** | Experienced being harassed, bullied or discriminated against | **Yes** | 25 (19.4%) | 9 (13.8%) | 8 (32%) | 9 (40.9%) | 5 (27.8%) | **56 (21.6%)** |
| | | **No** | 68 (52.7%) | 37 (56.9%) | 10 (40%) | 7 (31.8%) | 6 (33.3%) | **128 (49.4%)** |
| | | **Not sure** | 36 (27.9%) | 19 (29.2%) | 7 (28%) | 6 (27.3%) | 7 (38.9%) | **75 (29%)** |
| **Philippines** | Experienced being harassed, bullied or discriminated against | **Yes** | 14 (20%) | 5 (10.2%) | 12 (54.5%) | 11 (61.1%) | 64 (32.3%) | **106 (29.7%)** |
| | | **No** | 48 (68.6%) | 35 (71.4%) | 7 (31.8%) | 3 (16.7%) | 112 (56.6%) | **205 (57.4%)** |
| | | **Not sure** | 8 (11.4%) | 9 (18.4%) | 3 (13.6%) | 4 (22.2%) | 22 (11.1%) | **46 (12.9%)** |
| **Thailand** | Experienced being harassed, bullied or discriminated against | **Yes** | 14 (18.2%) | 19 (13.6%) | 21 (43.8%) | 24 (40.7%) | 14 (20%) | **92 (23.4%)** |
| | | **No** | 51 (66.2%) | 95 (67.9%) | 24 (50%) | 22 (37.3%) | 35 (50%) | **227 (57.6%)** |
| | | **Not sure** | 12 (15.6%) | 26 (18.6%) | 3 (6.3%) | 13 (22%) | 21 (30%) | **75 (19%)** |

At present, several unions have established gender committees and have been holding regular gender and sensitivity trainings. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of incorporating gender provisions in their CBAs. Employers, on the other hand, have no policies and programs to protect the rights of LGBTQIA+ workers. More positive efforts have been noted from LGUs, as in the cases of Quezon City and Iloilo City, where there are anti-discrimination ordinances and gender affairs offices that promote the welfare of LGBTQIA+ workers.

The proliferation of discrimination on LGBTQIA+ workers can be attributed to the Philippines' patriarchal culture, strong religious beliefs and traditions, and the lack of mainstream information and awareness on SOGIESC.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Immediately pass into law the SOGIESC Equality and the Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Bill.

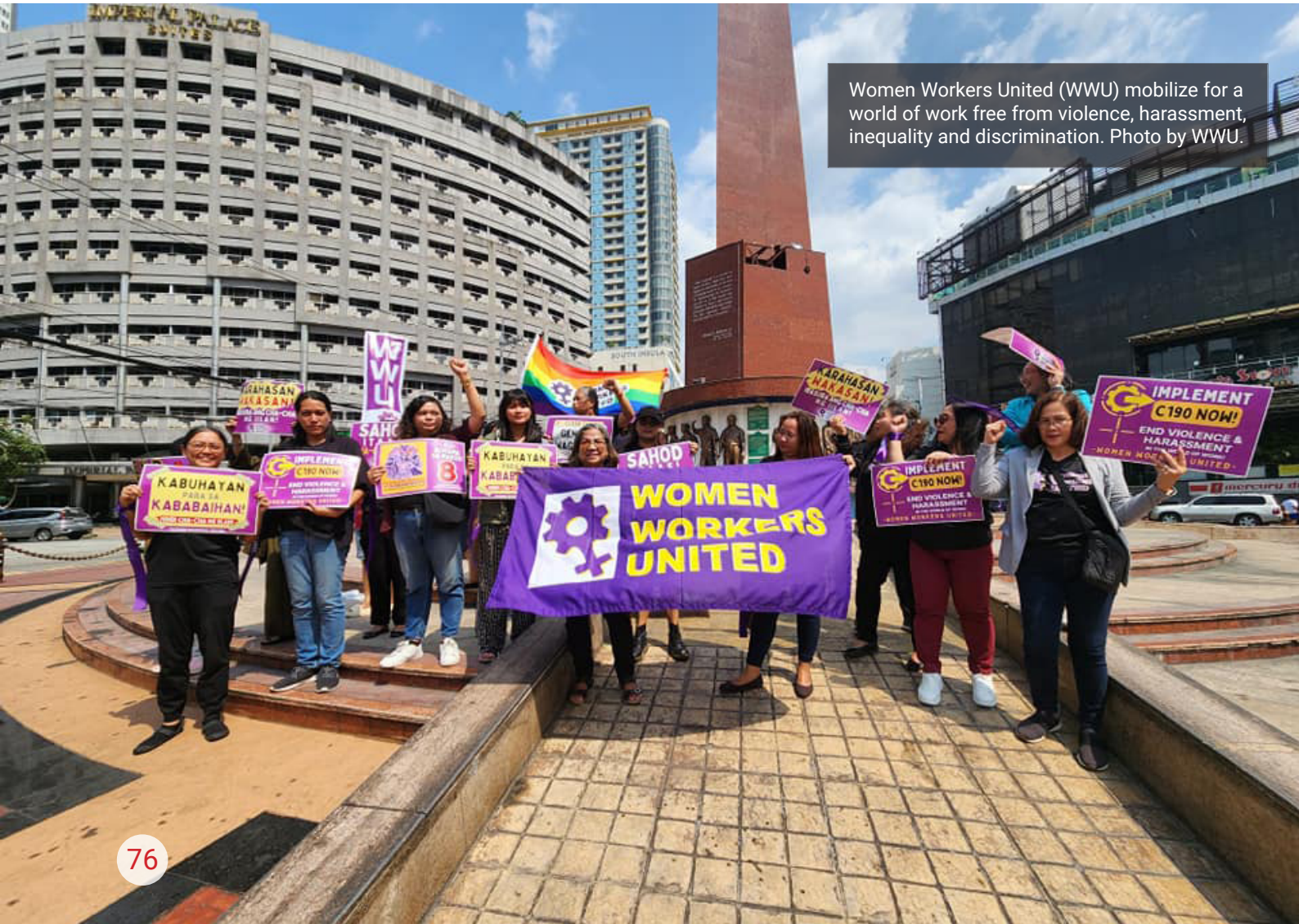
Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Issue DOLE and CSC orders on SOGIESC Equality in the private and public sectors.

(b) Enforce criminal and administrative liabilities to those who violate the rights of LGBTQIA+ workers.

(c) Raise awareness on SOGIESC equality at workplaces.

(d) Promulgate anti-discrimination ordinances and establish gender affairs offices that ensure social protection and promote the welfare of LGBTQIA+ workers in all LGUs.




Women Workers United (WWU) mobilize for a world of work free from violence, harassment, inequality and discrimination. Photo by WWU.


Diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) practices are also linked to demands for decent jobs, wages, social protection and better working conditions. Photo by WWU.



(e) Provide trainings for LGBTQIA+ workers in the informal sector.

(f) Engage the Special Committee on LGBTQIA+ Affairs to promote gender equality and address LGBTQIA+ concerns.

(g) Ensure access of LGBTQIA+ to safe gender-affirming health care services.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Adopt SOGIESC Equality workplace policies in consultation with the unions.

(b) Promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in workplace trainings, policies, programs and organizational culture and practices.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Create LGBTQIA+ committees and conduct regular gender and sensitivity trainings.

(b) Incorporate gender equality provisions and LGBTQIA+ issues in CBAs/CNAs.

(c) Create LGBTQIA+ Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) as a step towards engaging LGBTQIA+ workers in union organizing.

(d) Include LGBTQIA+ groups and their issues in union campaigns and advocacies.

(e) Strengthen partnerships with LGBTQIA+ groups.

(f) Endeavor to implement gender-inclusive data collection practices in union research and education.

Aftermath of Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda in Tacloban, Leyte. ILO Photo by Marcel Crozet.

# 8 Adopt and implement a resilient, equitable and sustainable development path for communities by integrating climate change and peace and reslience measures into national policies, strategies and planning

As the climate crisis has exacerbated through the years, its impacts have continuously put women workers at heightened risk – amplifying existing inequalities and vulnerabilities in the workforce. The compounding effects of the climate crisis, including extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and environmental degradation, have disproportionately affected workers, particularly those in marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities.

As climate-related challenges intensify, workers face a myriad of issues, such as increased exposure to hazardous working conditions, job insecurity and disruptions in livelihoods in times of climate-related calamities. Industries reliant on natural resources, such as agriculture and fisheries, experience direct impacts from changing weather patterns, affecting the availability and quality of work.

It worsens social and economic disparities as marginalized groups, including women and indigenous communities, often bear the brunt of its consequences. Women, in particular, may face heightened challenges due to their roles in vulnerable sectors, coupled with existing gender inequalities. The increased burden on caregiving responsibilities, exacerbated by climate-related disasters, further entrenches gender disparities in the workforce.

In addition to immediate threats to employment and income, the long-term impacts of the climate crisis pose risks to workers' health and well-being. Exposure to extreme temperatures and air pollution and the spread of vector-borne diseases can lead to adverse health effects, creating an additional layer of vulnerability for workers in sectors with heightened environmental risks. Studies on the intersection of climate and health found out that disasters and environmental changes impact on mental health – leading to heightened emotional stress that manifests through anxiety, depression, trauma and stress. It especially affects marginalized communities, women and children.[146]

Climate justice is gender justice. Photo by WWU

In agriculture where women workers can be found, shifting planting seasons disrupt crop cultivation, while extreme heat leads to health issues among rice and sugarcane workers in the Northern Philippines. Unpredictable weather conditions increase burden for agricultural workers due to replanting and coconut production dwindling. Filipino fisherfolk face worsening sea conditions during storms, resulting in income loss or, worse, loss of livelihood. They also face health problems due to oil spills and pollution. As the worsening climate crisis impacts the yield of crops and number of fishes caught, women workers in fisheries and agriculture have received fewer workload, resulting in lesser income – to the extent that it leads to displacement and informal job transitions.

Women working in food manufacturing endure health problems from erratic weather, while floods destroy both homes and livelihoods. Transportation workers, particularly in the phase-out of jeepneys, encounter inadequate livelihood opportunities. There are no adequate programs and services to support just transition in affected sectors and communities, especially in Visayas and Mindanao.

The digital economy, which has grown significantly in recent years with the rising e-commerce, witnessed the increasing number of workers, including women, participating in services such as courier service. Digital or platform delivery workers face unpredictable weather conditions affecting both work and health. Public education workers including teachers and non-teaching personnel – majority of whom are women – grapple with worsening floods, as well as extreme classroom heat. Workers in steel pipes industry experience adverse weather conditions affecting accessibility to their workplaces.

Coal power plant workers face health issues and displacement. Aside from its emission, coal-fired power plants in Lanao have contributed to health issues, environmental degradation, and loss of income among women in urban poor communities. Women workers reported that the said coal operations impacted their yield in crops. Farmers in the locality have also switched to working as tricycle drivers, while others resorted to selling their lands. Because of these issues, opposition to coal power plants intensifies. Companies who are often responsible for the emissions and environmental impacts have offered limited to no assistance and programs to the affected communities. Meanwhile, the aftermath of disasters like typhoon Yolanda and Odette resulted in the displacement and loss of livelihoods, especially among women. Based on experiences of women and LGBTQIA+, policies of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

An ILO team assesses livelihood support needs of Typhoon Haiyan victims. ILO Photo by Marcel Crozet.

(DRRM) remain gender-blind as manifested in the limited provision of gender-inclusive aid and assistance (like portalets, sanitary napkins, and so on). Experiences of GBV have also been reported during disasters.

As the climate crisis intensifies as evidenced by the increasing frequency of natural disasters, women bear the brunt of household loss and damages. However, support and financial aid are mostly directed towards men, who are considered family/household heads. It is important to review gender-responsive climate policies such as increased participation of women in climate response, financial aid and support policies. These gender-based challenges highlight the urgent need for gender-sensitive policies addressing the nexus of climate change and gender inequalities. There is no climate justice without gender justice.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Create a Just Transition Commission with tripartite representation, ensuring the inclusion of women representatives.

(b) Review and amend existing laws, such as the Mining Act of 1995 (Republic Act 7942), Indigenous Peoples' (IPs) Rights Act of 1997 (Republic Act 8371), Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 or EPIRA (Republic Act 9136) and Renewable Energy Act of 2008 (Republic Act 9513) to promote sustainable development and just transition.

(c) Develop gender-responsive National Just Transition policies.

Executive-level recommendations

(a) Develop gender-responsive disaster response policies and programs (like in terms of finance, facilities and services that include mental health-related ones) for the DRRM to implement in times of disasters.

(b) Increase capacity of women participation in disaster policy-making and just transition programming beyond stakeholder consultations.

(c) Ensure women's access to skills training that will enable them to access jobs in low-emitting and renewable energy sectors.

(d) Expand social protection programs to address climate change vulnerabilities of workers and their communities.

(e) Increase participation of women workers in climate resilience actions and programs, such as disaster and displacement response, recovery programs, and so on.

(f) Simplify requirements to access financial aid and assistance during disasters.

(g) Initiate tripartite processes to design comprehensive just transition programs for specific industries, ensuring that there is gender balance in all the activities to be conducted.

(h) Promote community-based solutions like renewable energy systems; climate-resilient infrastructure, such as solar-powered and gender-responsive evacuation centers that respond to women's needs; and adequate mitigation and adaptive capacities of workers.

(i) Stop reclamation projects in seas (such as the one in Manila Bay) that harm the environment and destroy people's livelihoods.

Workplace/Enterprise-level and union-level recommendations

(a) Integrate climate, gender, and just transition provisions in collective bargaining (through awareness-raising programs, emergency/calamity fund, participation in planning, emergency/calamity leave, reskilling/upskilling/social protection for affected workers, and the like).

(b) Raise awareness and build capacity of workers in just transition and climate justice.

(c) Integrate addressing climate hazards in OSH programs.

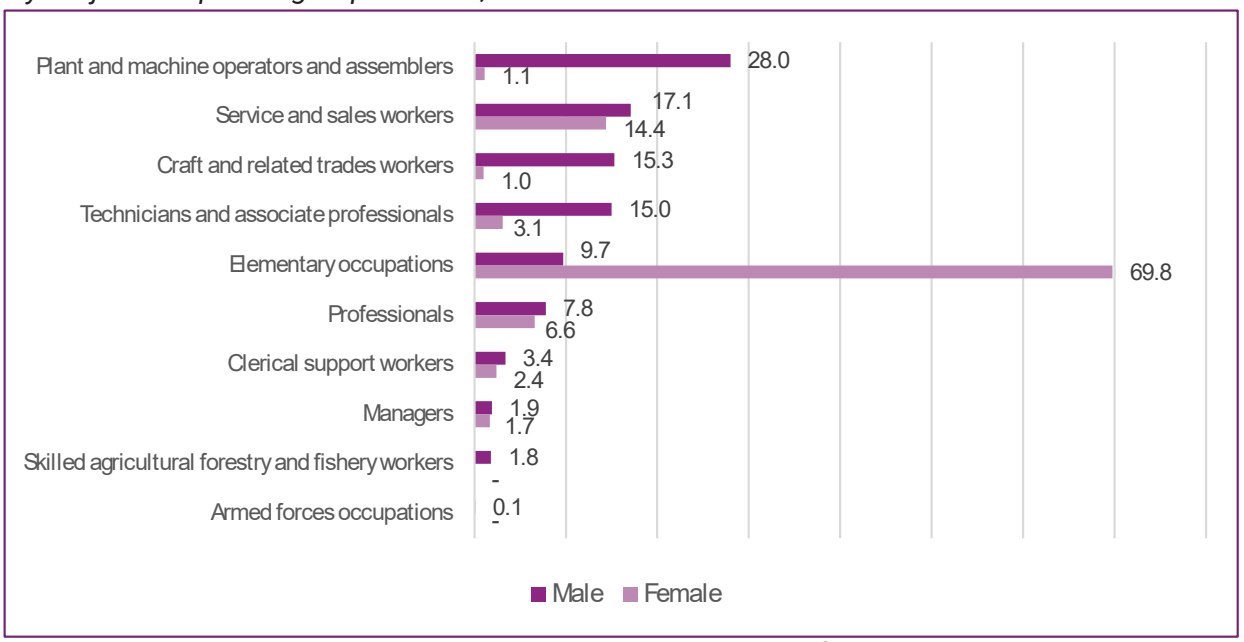

A group of women leads the Migrants/ Women Workers Oath ("Panata") to protect, promote and defend their rights as women, as workers, and as migrants. ILO Photo by Moist Communications

# 9 Protect the rights and ensure the well-being of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), including undocumented workers

The latest PSA survey on OFWs, which was released in October 2023, estimated that 1.96 million Filipinos were working abroad in 2022 – a substantial increase from the 1.8 million estimates in 2021. Majority of Filipino overseas workers are women at 1.13 million (57.8 per cent) compared to 828 thousand (42.2 per cent) men. The majority of women OFWs can be found in elementary occupations,[147] at 69.8 per cent (figure 8). These jobs are paid lower compared to that of middle/high-skilled and professional occupational groups.

The Philippine government's promotion of labor export has greatly endangered the lives of OFWs mostly composed of women. Migrant women workers are vulnerable to violence and discrimination from the pre-employment to the repatriation process. In the pre-employment and pre-departure process, women workers have to shoulder the high costs of securing legal documents and accomplishing applications, as well as having to pay for placement fees. Furthermore, women migrant workers who are mostly placed in low-wage and elementary occupations abroad take longer to recoup the costs of migration. Exploitation already happens even while waiting for deployment wherein these women are forced to work (as in to iron clothes, for instance) by their recruiters. While working abroad, they face multiple forms of violence and abuse, such as long working hours, working for multiple employers, physical and verbal abuse, sexual harassment, rape, inadequate food and

Figure 8. *Per cent distribution of overseas Filipinos by major occupation group and sex, 2022*[148]




Note: The estimates cover overseas Filipinos whose departure occured within the last five years and who are working or had worked abroad during the past six months (April to September) of the survey period.


A woman domestic worker and leader shares her testimony during a public forum on ending VAW and discrimination, and empowering women OFWs. ILO Photo by Moist Communication.

proper sleeping quarters, lack of days off, lack of social protection, lack of privacy with their mobile devices, passports being confiscated, and vulnerability to human and sex trafficking. Other forms of vulnerabilities of Filipino women migrants include those that are considered marriage migrants whose visas are tied to their spouses, as well as Filipino student migrants who are without scholarships and are forced to work abroad. In the event that Filipino migrants are repatriated, they return to the country with neither savings nor source of income awaiting them.

Aside from the multiple rights violations that migrant women workers face in the hands of their recruiters and employers, migration also comes with social costs to families and children left behind. The unabated outmigration of predominantly women health workers, including nurses, also have negative impacts on the country's health system and ability to deliver UHC.

The Philippine government needs to acknowledge and address the fact that women workers are forced to migrate mainly because of the country's failure to provide decent and regular jobs; poverty wages; lack of quality public services; lack of social protection; and disrespect for labor and human rights, among many others. Instead of promoting labor export, the Philippine government is being called to re-channel its efforts and resources into national industrialization, the creation of decent and regular jobs, provision of living wages, ensuring accessible and quality public services, the grant of social protection for all, and the protection and promotion of labor and human rights.

Although the Philippine government argues that there are services and programs available for migrant women workers, there are multiple challenges in accessing them. Some of these challenges include the lack of information and awareness, inaccessibility of Philippine government agencies abroad (particularly embassies) and the inadequacy of available and functioning shelters. In cases where legal intervention is necessary, migrant women workers cannot afford legal assistance and face difficulties in accessing free legal support. Thus, the pursuit of justice becomes elusive and almost impossible.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Forge rights-based BLMAs with countries where there are migrant women workers to ensure fair and ethical recruitment, fair wages, portability of social protection and gender-responsive provisions.

(b) Prioritize addressing structural drivers of labor migration, such as lack of decent jobs, instead of promoting labor export policies and programs.

(c) Support the abolition of the Kafala System and similar sponsorship schemes that violate migrant workers' rights.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Review and strengthen recruitment regulations. Implement strict compliance to Philippine recruitment policies with enforcement of sanctions and criminal liabilities for recruitment agencies and employers that violate migrant women workers' rights. Conduct regular inspections of recruitment agencies to ensure compliance with fair recruitment practices.

(b) Enforce zero recruitment fees and other related costs charged to migrant workers.

(c) Provide accessible and free legal services and counseling services and improve the provision of migrant services by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Philippine embassies, Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) and Department of Migrant Workers (DMW).

(d) Implement measures to protect the rights of undocumented workers.

(e) Strengthen implementation of anti-trafficking policies and programs.

(f) Develop comprehensive, rights-based and gender-responsive Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar (PEOS), Pre-Deployment Orientation Seminar (PDOS), Post-Arrival Orientation Seminar (PAOS) and reintegration programs.

(g) Establish more migrant shelters and welfare centers with adequately trained staff through the OWWA, Embassies, POLO/DMW services.

(h) Strengthen provision of services for OFWs and their families OFW families and simplify requirements.

(i) Ensure social protection programs and services for OFWs and their families.

(j) Provide quick and prompt repatriation. Automatically provide a repatriation subsidy for OFWs without the need to apply for it.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Comply with ILO Fair Recruitment Principles and Operational Guidelines.

(b) Provide adequate information to migrant workers prior to departure.

(c) Ensure transparent and fair employment contracts.

(d) Establish effective grievance and redress mechanisms and provide assistance to victims of illegal recruitment, trafficking and other labor rights violations especially for migrant domestic workers.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Support organizing of migrant workers. Advocate for global, regional and national policies ensuring the right to FOA of migrant workers.

(b) Strengthen partnerships and collaboration between unions from countries of origin and destination and promote union membership portability.

(c) Build capacity of unions to campaign for rights-based migration policies and fair and ethical recruitment.


Filipino women migrant workers and former OFWs call for a gender-responsive reintegration program. ILO Photo by Avic Ilagan.

At work at the Tagum Agricultural Development Company, Inc. (TADECO), the Philippines' largest exporter of banana products. ILO Photo by J. Dumbrique

# 10 Adopt and implement a sustanable industrial policy that combines economic upgrading and social upgrading

Industrial policy refers to the State's intervention in its industries, based on its macroeconomic goals and development agenda. Industrialized and rich countries became what they are because of State intervention in industrial development. However, there are debates on how to define industrial policy because current perceptions have lumped all policies affecting industry as under industrial policy. From government loans/ subsidies for industries, adequate infrastructure, regulating monopolies, developing an education system geared towards industrialization, upgrading of labor-intensive industries, fiscal incentives for Research and Development, to supporting small firms and national champions, manpower policy, and many others – all of which are considered under the purview of industrial policy. A country's industrial policy determines the sectors to be championed that generate high-value and decent employment. Public services are likewise focused and anchored on the overall industrial policy of the country.

The Philippine economy accumulates income (or wealth) from the country's economic sectors, comprised of the industry, agriculture and services sectors. As of 2022, the Philippines' agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP stood at 9.55 per cent, the industry sector at 29 per cent and services sector at 61 per cent. In the last 10 years, the agriculture sector's share in the country's GDP has been steadily declining from 13.1 per cent in 2012 to only 9.55 per cent by 2022. However, the productive sectors did not shift to the industry sector, which also shrunk from 31 per cent in 2012 to 29 per cent by 2022. The growth of the country's productive sector has shifted to the services sector, which grew steadily from 55 per cent in 2012 to 61 per cent by 2022 (figure 9). This trend indicates an increasing shift of the country's economy to the services sector.

The Philippine's chosen industrial policy and development trajectory determine the country's trade policies. The significant shift to export-oriented industrialization beginning in mid-1970s until the present has considerably shaped Philippine trade and investment policies towards liberalization. Under the rubric of further liberalization, the Philippines has undertaken unilateral liberal trade and investment policies and provided full support to regional and multilateral free trade agreements (FTAs)[149] under the World Trade Organization (WTO), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), among others. As a consequence, substantive reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers had been undertaken in agricultural, mining and manufacturing products since the 1970s until 2004, as can be seen in table 7.[150]

In Maguindanao, women weave Inaul fabrics, which represent their rich, royal culture. ILO Photo by Remar Pablo.

Figure 9. *Share of economic sectors in the GDP: 2012-2022*[151]

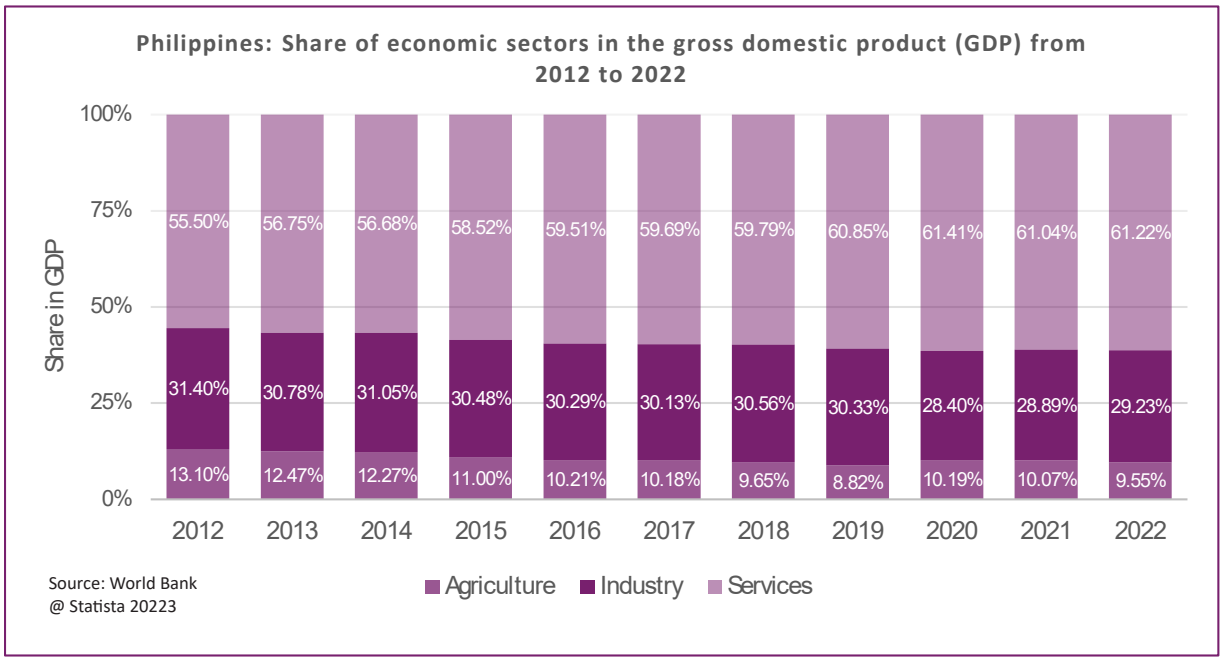



Table 7. *Average nominal tariff rate, 1975-2004 (in %)*[152]

| Sectors | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2002e | 2004e |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Agriculture** | 67.2 | 62.0 | 35.9 | 34.6 | 28.0 | 14.6 | 12.2 | 9.3 |
| **Mining** | 19.9 | 18.4 | 15.7 | 14.2 | 10.8 | 3.3 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| **Manufacturing** | 41.4 | 39.1 | 27.1 | 27.1 | 14.0 | 7.0 | 5.0 | 3.3 |
| **Overall** | **44.32** | **41.4** | **27.6** | **27.8** | **15.9** | **8.1** | **6.0** | **4.2** |

Note: For 2002 and 2004 the tariff rates are expected.
Source: Philippine Tariff Commission (2002, unpublished).

ASEAN Economic Bulletin, Vol. 22, No. 1, April 2005

The importation of cheap foreign goods negatively impacted the development of Philippine local industries and domestic job creation, that then further widened job and wage disparity against women workers. As of 2015, the country had 27 FTAs.[153] Trade liberalization has been structurally entrenched, likewise continuing the gendered wage and job inequalities in the Philippines.

The Philippines has entered into FTAs or preferential trade agreements, either individually or in a group, with the United States, Europe, China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, among others. The European Union (EU) has given an extension of another four years (until 2027) to the Philippines and all other countries that are beneficiaries of the Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), which involve two-thirds of Philippine exports to the EU markets at zero-tariff rate. It has benefited from this scheme since 2014. However, studies have shown that though the favorable scheme led to increased exports for the Philippines to EU markets, benefits in terms of export diversity and inclusivity have been limited. Admittedly, the EU GSP+ scheme has nurtured emerging sectors (such as footwear and headgear, animals and animal products, animal or vegetable fats, foodstuffs and mechanical appliances). However, other sectors (like wood and wood products, measuring and musical instruments, among others) have been declining in value despite the economic incentives.[154] In terms of diversity, majority of beneficiary export sectors remain agricultural-based with low productivity and inclusivity; the sectors located in the north and center of the Philippines stand to gain

more than export sectors from Mindanao.[155] Among the causes limiting the benefits from the economic incentives offered through the GSP+ are the Philippines' continued reliance on trade liberalization, foreign investment, private consumption, special economic zones, income and political power inequalities that stunted the development of local supply chains and infrastructure.[156]

A unique attribute of the EU GSP+ scheme is not only purposed to increase employment and alleviate poverty through economic incentives, but also introduce a "values-based economy" through compliance with 32 social, environmental and political conventions. The conventions include the ILO core conventions on labor rights and UN conventions on human rights, environmental protection and governance. Significantly, the UN conventions included in the GSP+ for compliance include:

- UN CEDAW;
- ILO Convention No. 87 concerning FOA and protection of the right to organize;
- ILO Convention No. 98 concerning the application of the principles of the right to organize and to bargain collectively;
- ILO Convention No. 100 concerning equal remuneration of men and women workers for work of equal value; and
- ILO Convention No. 111 concerning discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

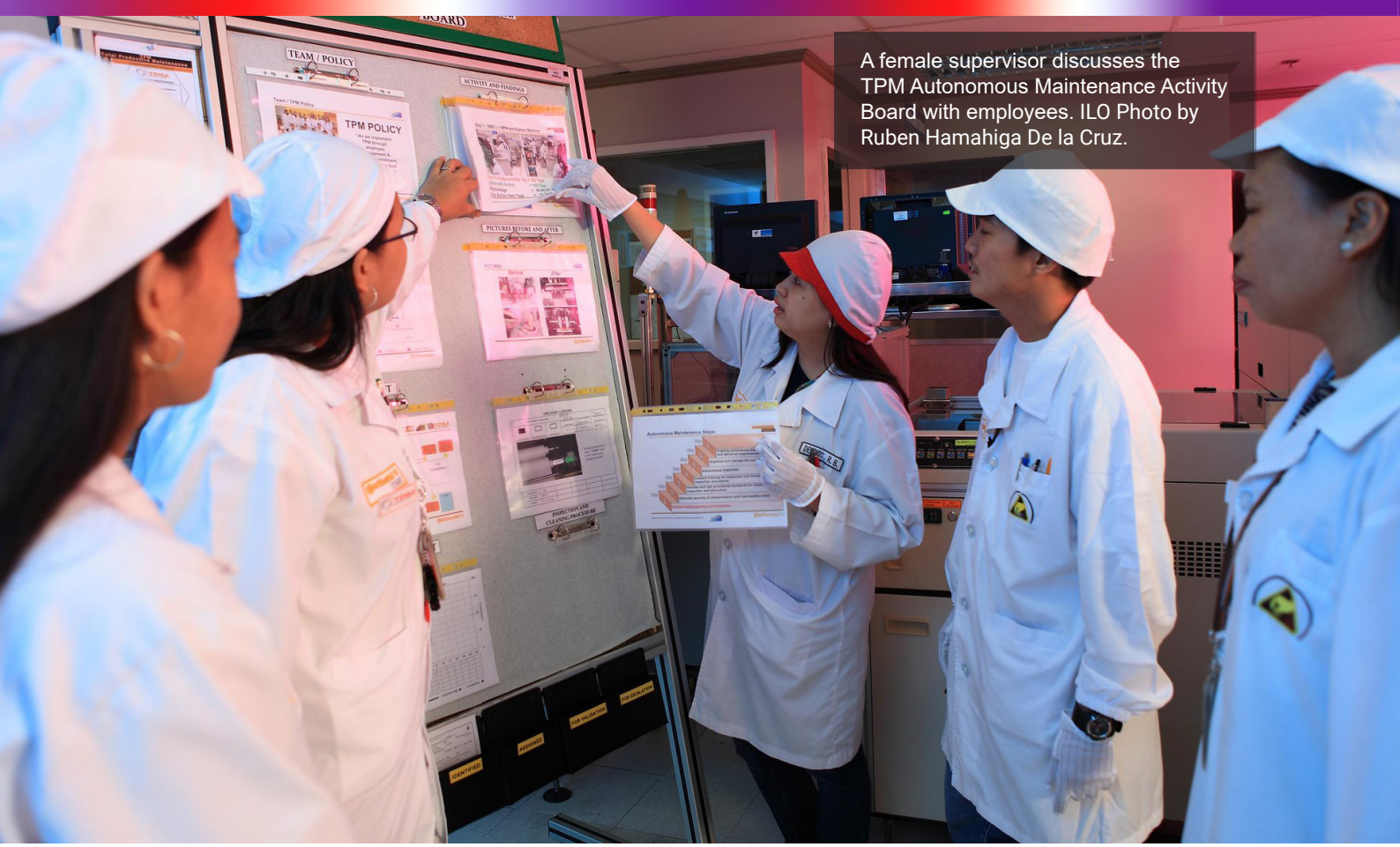
From a strategic point of view, Filipino women and the LGBTQIA+ workers can leverage on these international standards by demanding full compliance from the Philippines in order to benefit from EU GSP+ arrangements which seek to normalize standards on gender equality and elimination of workplace discrimination and harassment through economic incentives. However, much needs to be done in ensuring compliance by the Philippine government with the labor and human rights conditionalities under EU GSP+.

Nonetheless, during the WWU pre-summit and island-wide consultations, women leaders criticized the country's dependence on free trade agreements and foreign investments.

- Free trade agreements favor cheap imported goods than locally produced products and puts the country under obligation to import rice.
- FTAs entail low wages of women workers to encourage foreign investments.
- WTO agreements such as the 1994 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) put the country in a disadvantaged position in competing with highly industrialized countries and encourages unfair and colonial trade.
- The Philippines' dependence on foreign investments shape and influence the kind of industries/businesses that emerges in the Philippine economy, which are mostly meant to meet global supply production. Foreign investments in the country not only extract natural resources and cheap labor, but also affect how national industries are developed, which are mostly low-value added, low-paid and require low to medium skills, particularly in the electronics and services sectors.

Women workers have also underscored how discussions on industrial policy in the Philippines have not been participatory and mostly happen among the economic policymakers in the country. They have also identified other issues and challenges that constrain the strengthening of industries, especially where women workers are concentrated:

A female travel agent entertains calls and queries over the phone. ILO Photo by Antonio Ganal.




A female supervisor discusses the TPM Autonomous Maintenance Activity Board with employees. ILO Photo by Ruben Hamahiga De la Cruz.

- The Philippines remain weak in manufacturing and processing goods. A substantial portion of the country's economic sectors remain suppliers of raw materials and devoted to service provision. Raw materials are cheaper than the processed manufactured good.
- Agricultural products are produced not for domestic needs but for export, such as banana, asparagus, sunflower and palm oil.
- Agricultural production of small firms continues to use low technology because big companies control the high technology.
- Fisherfolks face unequal competition not only with commercial fishing companies that are constantly intruding on municipal waters, but also with foreign fishing vessels, including Chinese fishing vessels, especially in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).
- The steel industry has been affected by globalization and privatized. The country has rich iron ores; however, multinational mining companies are the ones benefiting from extraction and processing.
- When women workers, relegated to low-paid occupation groups, receive low income, they have low productivity.
- Women workers occupy positions in agriculture with low labor standards, low pay, insecure jobs and with high health risks.
- Women workers have no time to attend to skills training program, even if these are free, due to unpaid care work and reproductive responsibilities.
- Informal women workers cannot enter the BPO sector to work since this requires skills that women in agriculture, informal sector and fishery lack.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Develop and adopt a sustainable, progressive and gender-responsive national industrialization and modernization program that is focused towards domestic production (that is, processing and manufacturing) with meaningful participation of women.

(b) End export-oriented industrialization strategy and re-orient the economy towards developing strong local production to meet people's needs. Regulate importation of products in the local market. Adopt tariffs to protect locally produced products.

(c) Promote renewable sources of energy (like wind, solar and so on). Just transition to renewable energy should ensure decent work and public employment creation for all.

(d) Review and amend the EPIRA towards lowering the cost of electricity and reclaiming the power sector – from private corporations back to the public – to fast track the shift to renewable energy.

(e) Review all trade agreements in view of supporting national industrialization and ensuring fundamental labor rights and protection, and assess their potential to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

(f) Promote trade justice policies, reject neoliberal frameworks and uphold fundamental labor rights in trade, labor, and economic agreements.

<u>Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs</u>

(a) Strengthen the agricultural sector:

i. Implement genuine agrarian reform and modernize agricultural production.

ii. Stop land use conversion of agricultural lands into residential subdivisions, commercial establishments and big infrastructure projects.

iii. Provide agricultural subsidies for farmers and women workers, as well as seedlings, fertilizers, and other production needs.

iv. Provide subsidy to fisherfolks, fishing nets and alternative sources of income, such as construction.

v. Give free seminars and training to all farmers and fisherfolk on the latest agricultural or modern agricultural production and fishery methods and production.

vi. Build more water irrigation systems.

vii. Ensure fair trade of agricultural products.

(b) Explore policies that protect local/ domestic industries, such as import protection for infant industries in selected industries (like solar energy production, among others).

(c) Create and immediately convene the Mining Industry Tripartite Council. Observe the Just Transition framework in the discussion of transforming the current minerals regime.

(d) Provide safety nets for workers in companies owned by multinational corporations (MNCs) that shift their investments within and outside the country.

(e) Raise awareness of MNCs on the guidelines on good business conduct and practices as discussed in the Tripartite declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy (ILO MNE Declaration) and the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Human Rights and Business framework. These guidelines enjoin MNCs to practice due diligence in compliance with international labor standards and increasing workers' participation in company policy-making, better environment, social and governance (ESG) adoption and practice.

(f) Ensure decent work for women workers in the agriculture sector:

i. Enforce labor standards and union rights for women workers in agriculture.

ii. Provide or extend social protection measures and programs, such as SSS, pension, health insurance, unemployment insurance, among others.

iii. Simplify livelihood application processes for women rural workers.

iv. Address gender pay gap and increase wages in the agriculture sector.

v. Upgrade and develop women agriculturists.

vi. Provide leadership training for women workers in agriculture.

(g) Ensure skills training especially for vulnerable groups, including women, PWDs, IPs, seniors and youth.

(h) Enable women workers to avail of online training, by facilitating access to mobile phones, internet connection, free community facilities, among others.

(i) Improve women's access to land ownership. Allow women ownership of land in agrarian reform.

(j) Develop agricultural research and technology, and encourage more women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

(k) Ensure that drivers and operators affected by the PUV Modernization Program are fully supported by protecting them against corporate takeovers, providing them various subsidies including the institutionalization of service contracting, by promoting manufacture of domestic vehicle production, among others.

(l) Improve public transportation by making it more efficient, accessible, people-oriented and sustainable. This includes investing in active transportation systems and effective and green mass transit systems. Stop corporatization of public mass transportation.

(m) Control price increases in energy and oil.


Female and male workers collaborate, as local community benefits from a new water system built by indigenous peoples under the Japan-funded ILO Water and Sanitation Project in South Upi, Maguindanao. Photo by ILO.

# 11 Tax wealth of the super-rich to fund universal social protection and economic recovery

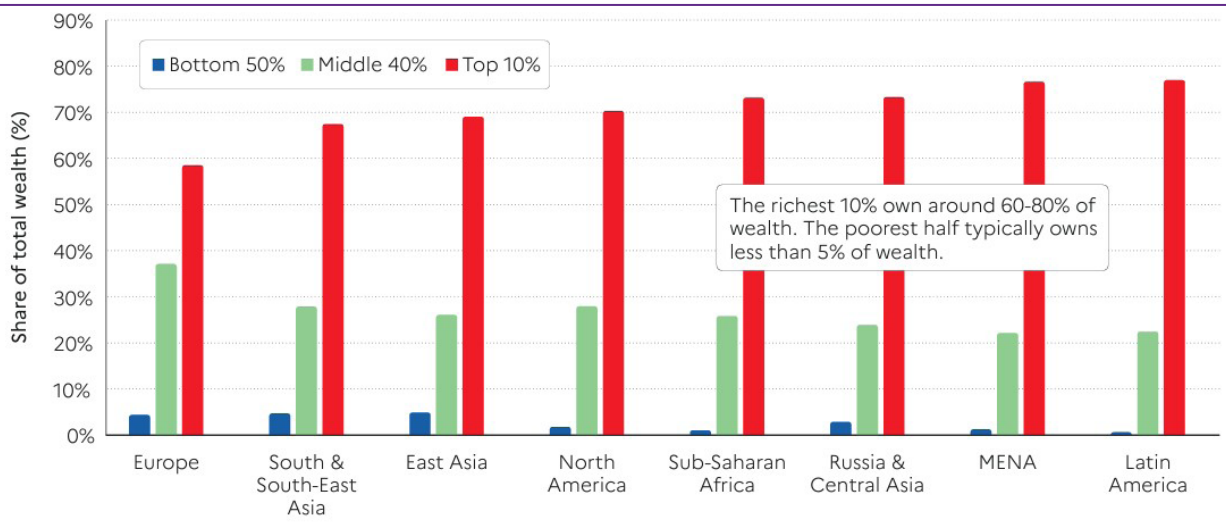
Inequality has reached alarming proportions in recent decades. The top 1 per cent, or the world's billionaires, have doubled their wealth in the last 10 years, or 74 times more wealth than the bottom 50 per cent of the world combined.[157] During the pandemic in 2020, "the top one per cent have captured almost two-thirds of all new wealth" which was "almost twice as much as the rest of the world put together, and six times more than the bottom 90 per cent".[158] The sharp deterioration of the equality index within and between countries has likewise raised attention in the international community.

The World Inequality Lab illustrates the concentration of wealth in the top 10 per cent of the population, while the bottom 50 per cent only share 5 per cent of the wealth of the world (figure 10).

Wealth inequality is only one of many inequalities, including income, global carbon emissions and gender disparities, that have been increasing worldwide. The 2022 World Inequality Report (WIR) provided the "first estimates of the gender inequality in global earnings", which reported that "women's share of total incomes from work (labor income) neared 30 per cent in 1990 and stands at less than 35 per cent today".[159] As of 2022, the World Bank calculated that the Philippines has the highest inequality with a Gini ratio of 42.3 among 27 countries in the Asian region.[160]

Women participants in the WWU pre-summit workshops and island-wide consultations pointed out that tax systems and policies have an impact on gender equality. However, the current tax system in the Philippines is regressive and inefficient. A regressive tax (like indirect taxes, VAT or taxes on basic goods) burdens the lower income and the poor more than the higher income section of the population; whereas, a progressive tax has more impact on the higher-

Figure 10. *Extreme concentration of capital: wealth inequality across the world, 2021*[161]



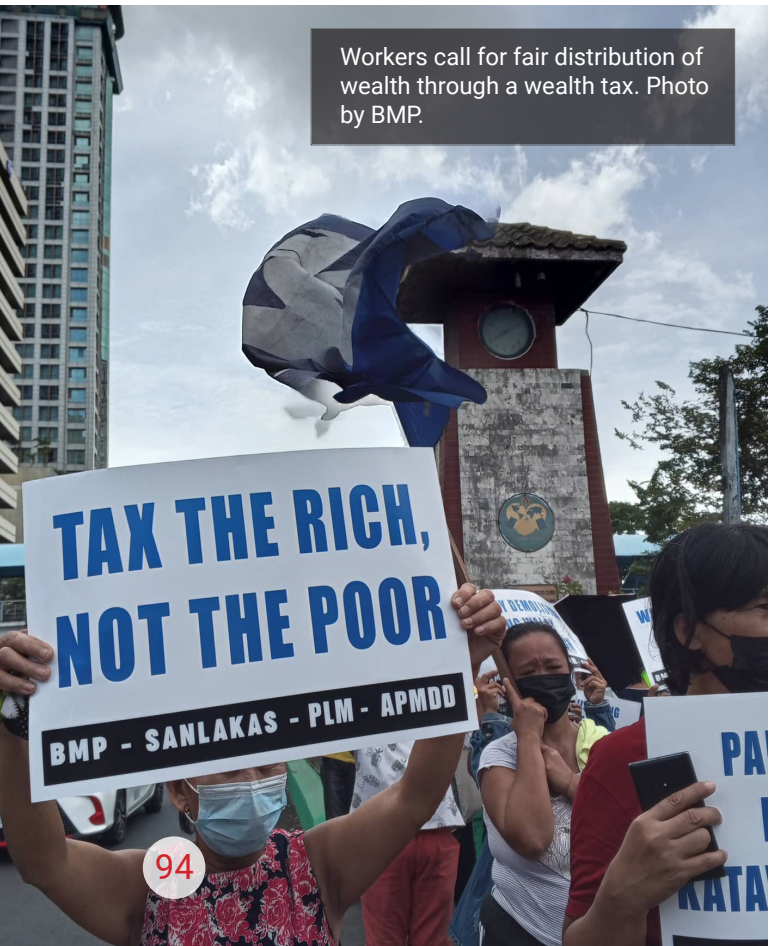

***Interpretation:*** *The top 10% in Latin America captures 77% of total household wealth, compared with 1% captured by the bottom 50%. Net household wealth is equal to the sum of financial assets (e.g. equity or bonds) and non-financial assets (e.g. housing or land) owned by individuals, net of their debts.* ***Sources and series:*** *wir2022.wid.world/methodology.*

earning population such as through the direct income tax. Women face the heavier burden of unfair taxation systems. A holistic approach to fiscal policy planning to examine gender bias in income, taxation (including capital/inheritance tax) and in government expenditure need to be undertaken to promote gender equality.[162]

Moreover, tax collection in the country is inefficient and weak, resulting in the government losing billions to tax leakage and evasion. Public funding that should have been used to support quality public services and social protection are lost to corruption and tax evasion by corporate elites.

Wealth tax is one of the proposed measures to reverse the trend of the rising and unabated increase in wealth and incomes inequalities. It is different from income tax and goes beyond real estate tax. It is the tax imposed on the "wealth possessed by individuals and is based on the market value of owned assets, minus debts and other liabilities – in other words, one's net worth".[163] Wealth tax is also called "capital tax" or "equity tax".

Taxing wealth is one of the strategies to ameliorating social inequality and possibly reversing the trend to widening inequality in the country. Even conservative institutions, such as the World Bank and the OECD have acknowledged that imposing wealth tax can be an option in mitigating the negative impacts of inequality. Thus, the Philippine government needs to seriously consider the institutionalization of wealth tax in its poverty alleviation and wealth redistribution strategies.



Workers call for fair distribution of wealth through a wealth tax. Photo by BMP.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Reform the current regressive tax system in the Philippines and make it more progressive.

(b) Legislate and judiciously implement a wealth tax system as part of the tax justice dimension in order to reverse the widening inequality in the country.

(c) Income derived from the wealth tax should fund quality public services, social protection, decent work creation and care work.

(d) Support a fair, rights-based and gender transformative UN Tax Convention.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Address tax evasion, especially by big corporations, and improve tax collection efforts.

(b) Develop efficient mechanisms of tax collections, such as simplifying procedures and conducting effective investigation of tax evasion cases.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Comply with existing tax laws and regulations and support initiatives to promote fair, transparent and accountable tax and financial systems.

Union recommendations

(a) Raise awareness and build capacity of unions and workers to campaign for tax justice and wealth tax.

(b) Undertake studies and joint campaigns to support tax justice and wealth tax advocacy in the country.

# 12 Strengthen and deepen social dialogue

Social dialogue is one of the four fundamental pillars of ILO's framework on Decent Work, together with employment, workers' rights and social protection. Social dialogue is both a tool and a process. A tool that helps promote democracy and an inclusive process to improve quality, legitimacy and ownership of public policies, including labor policies considered as both social and public policies. As the Philippine industrial relations adhere to the tripartite labor relations framework, social dialogue has been exercised as they are embedded in the country's Labor Code and other industrial relations policies. Social dialogue may happen on different modes (like information exchange, consultations, negotiations), in varying forms (such as bipartite, tripartite or tripartite+), at different levels (as in enterprise, national, regional), and could be informal or institutionalized involving the State, employers and workers, and may include other stakeholders. Functioning social dialogue mechanisms are imperative in formulating labor policies, mitigating labor conflicts, and strengthening democracy in industrial relations.

During the WWU consultations/workshops, the participants decried the lack of gendered lens on the social dialogue processes and the general lack of more meaningful women's representation/ participation in social dialogue mechanisms. They pointed out that the role of women workers in social dialogue mechanisms at the workplace level seems to be reflective of how women are regarded in our society – secondary, invisible and voiceless.

Due to the lack of women workers who are leaders, only a minority of women are represented in tripartite mechanisms. This results to exclusion or limited inclusion of women workers agenda in social dialogues. Sometimes the quota representation of women in social dialogue mechanisms result in "token" participation of women workers in order to comply with the policy on said quota.

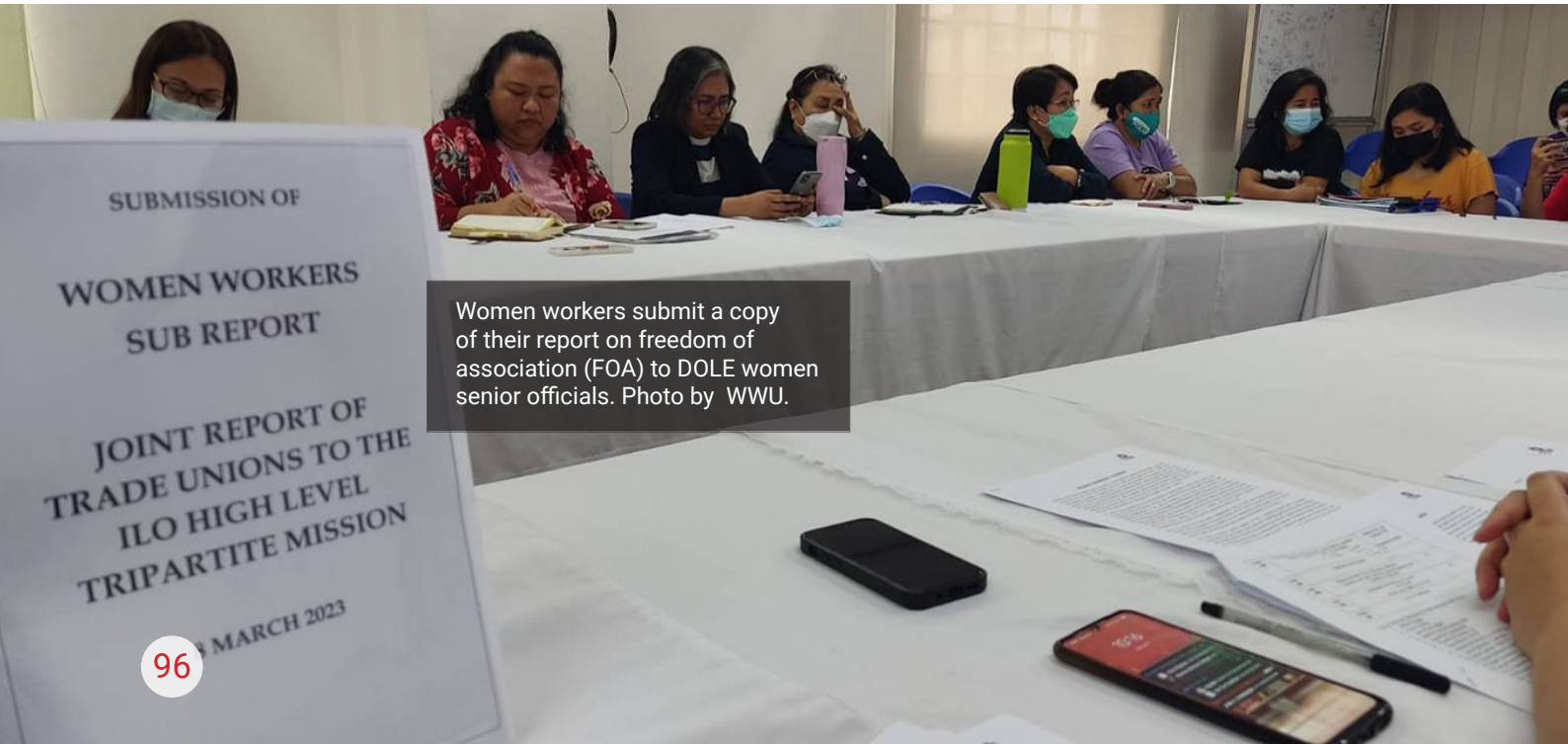

Leaders of Women Workers United (WWU) engage in social dialogue with women senior officials of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). Photo by WWU.

Women also lack time to spare in participating in activities outside the union. Women are overburdened by their reproductive roles and unpaid care work in their families; thus, they lack time to be involved in social dialogue and other union activities.

The low regard for women workers in social dialogue is manifested through the following concrete experiences shared by the participants of the WWU pre-summit workshops and island-wide consultations:

- When consultations are conducted during social dialogue at the workplace, more often than not, the major decisions have already been made. The practice becomes perceived as "token" consultations wherein there is no role anymore for women workers in the decision-making process. Also, consultations, as a form of social dialogue, are not exhaustive.
- At the workplace or local level, women workers are excluded or seldom nominated in the selection of representatives in social dialogues. The lack of experience in social dialogue policies results in women workers' lacking confidence or, most often, shying away from engaging in social dialogue processes. Women workers are participative at internal union-level engagements; however, they feel insecure in being active outside the union.

  Social dialogues are conducted without gender lens. Women-specific issues, such as dysmenorrhea and other reproductive issues, are not mainstreamed in social dialogues. It is important to ensure that women workers have access to information before they participate in social dialogues, as well as provided an environment where women can freely discuss and share their opinions without apprehension and discrimination.
- In banana plantations where there are more women workers in the packing section, the union leaders are still men. Women workers are still expected to fill in union positions that fit the gender stereotypical roles for women, such as union secretary or treasurer.
- In highly militarized and conflict-ridden areas in Mindanao, women took leadership positions in the union to dissipate the attacks on the union. This is still premised on the perception that women leaders are weaker than men, thus, anti-union forces should not target women union leaders.
- Based on many experiences, male management representatives treat women workers harshly and lowly during social dialogue to intimidate them.
- It is very difficult to hold social dialogue with government agencies. Most often, it is crucial that workers have contacts in a government office to secure a schedule for a dialogue. Further, there are no follow-ups after the dialogue. Women workers in the informal sector would even need to conduct collective actions and mobilizations to




Women workers submit a copy of their report on freedom of association (FOA) to DOLE women senior officials. Photo by WWU.

force government authorities to have social dialogue with them.

- Some of the women workers reported experiencing being red-tagged for their social dialogue activities, which discourages women workers' further participation and exposes them to vulnerabilities in terms of their working conditions.[164]

Unionization is central for social dialogue to be meaningful. However, in official social dialogue mechanisms, only the "most representative" and registered workers' organizations can engage in social dialogue. As such, low unionization further hinders social dialogue for workers. In non-unionized enterprises, particularly in the BPO sector, there is an absence of genuine social dialogue. For most BPOs, there are no face-to-face social dialogue mechanisms in place with the management. Instead, workplace issues and complaints are lodged online on the company website. Workers likewise wait for the response and action of the management online. When there is no union or workers association in the enterprise, no organization will be able represent women workers and LGBTQIA+ issues in the workplace.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Amend the tripartism law, ensure the transparency in the selection process of labor representatives and ensure parity in women's representation and accountabilities of those appointed in National/Regional Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (NTIPCs/RTIPCs), tripartite bodies and other social dialogue mechanisms.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Institutionalize social dialogue in government agencies by adopting an EO institutionalizing social dialogue in the public sector at the national, regional and local levels.

(b) Provide training for women to raise their awareness on social dialogue. Women also need skills training on how to participate and engage in social dialogue processes. Other trainings for women leaders should be geared towards developing them to be assertive through leadership training, communications, public speaking, and so on.

(c) Implement gender quotas to promote women's participation in social dialogue mechanisms and representation in tripartite bodies.

(d) Recognize the right to organize and unionize within the right to FOA of women workers, so that they can sit in social dialogue mechanisms. Include women workers in the nomination processes and policies for worker delegation in social dialogues. Recognize union leaders as workers' representatives and independent from the management in social dialogue mechanisms.

(e) Recognize and provide support for the unpaid care work and reproductive responsibilities of women workers who will be participating in social dialogue processes.

(f) Ensure inclusiveness and transparency in the selection process, and parity in women's representation and accountabilities of those appointed in NTIPCs/RTIPCs, tripartite bodies and other social dialogue mechanisms.

(g) Labor-Management Councils at the Workplace/Enterprise-level should cover women's issues and concerns in the workplace.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Institutionalize women's representation in union leadership structures and social dialogue activities.

(b) Mainstream gender in social dialogue agenda and processes. Conduct consultations to determine women's needs from the grassroots up (such as the prioritization of women's health). Integrate gender provisions in existing CBA/CNAs that go beyond mere compliance to laws.

For faster and more effi cient transactions, SSS has installed a Self-Service Computer Inquiry System. Technology can help also expand women's access to social protection. ILO Photo by Ruben Hamahiga De la Cruz

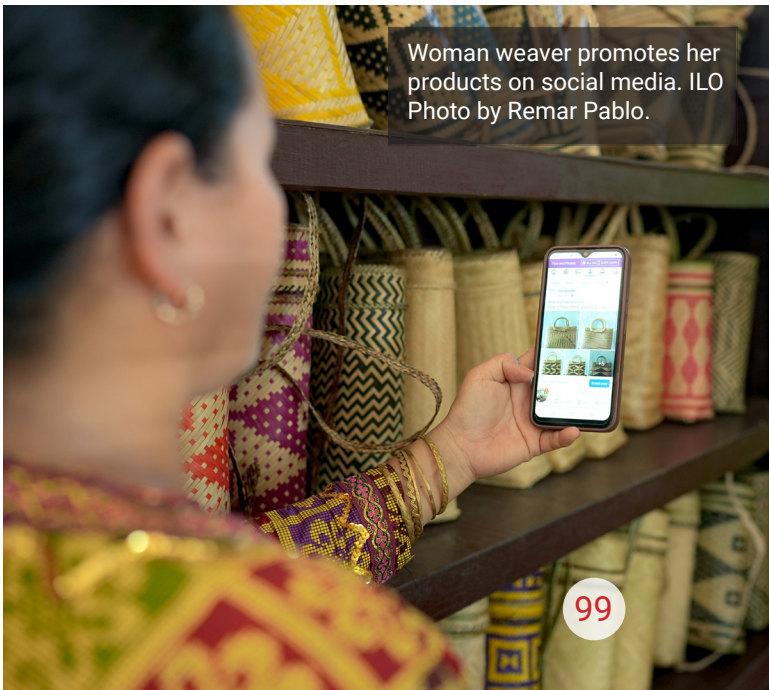
# 13 Adopt policies and measures aimed at protecting workers in the digital economy and those that perform work remotely using digital tools and platforms

In the current digital economy, women workers can be found in web-based or location-based digital platform work – such as BPOs, freelance writing, crowd-working, virtual assistance, online selling, digital platform employment, and as delivery drivers in digital platforms, among others. The shift to online work offers increased flexibility for workers; however, it also brings about various socio-economic issues and forms of discrimination and VAW in the digital economy. Examples of which include the lack of adequate access to internet service, cyberbullying, online sexual harassments, cyber prostitution and so on.

In the BPO industry, issues include surveillance and security risks in work-from-home (WFH) setups, inconsistent working hours, multiskilled but uncontracted status, and a lack of additional pay for upskilling, especially for women and LGBTQIA+ workers. Gender bias in employment (such as in terms of promotion) and cultural aspects, coupled with instances of abuse, further compound the problems. Some algorithms in digital platforms often impose unreasonable demands on workers, disregarding their welfare and rights.

Gig riders bear the brunt of the latest evolution of contractualization. In this set up, employer-employee relations are no longer blurred, but outrightly denied. Platform companies can change everything from fare rates to employment status in a flash. This unchecked corporate power is used not only to maximize the extraction of profits from its gig riders, but also against union organizing where targeted illegal suspensions and terminations of union organizers and leaders have been observed. In this sector, women and LGBTQIA+ workers experience difficulties ranging from facing all types of calamities to inadequate mobile devices for job applications. They grapple with multitasking, handling deliveries and interacting with customers. Instances of violence – such as a customer threatening a delivery worker with a gun – have been reported, raising concerns about the lack of resolution to the incident and the company's response to scams by sellers. Women workers in digital work also become more vulnerable due to their reproductive need, such as needing to urinate/change sanitary napkins while trying to meet their quota on deliveries.

Respondents from different industries presented many issues concerning strict sick leave processes, slow and problematic government websites, and difficulties with the use of internet portals. In agriculture, women workers face surveillance and indirect threats through calls and texts. In education, teachers struggle with online learning processes and the online grade encoding system. Slow and problematic government websites, technical issues and the risk of cyberattacks add to these challenges.



Woman weaver promotes her products on social media. ILO Photo by Remar Pablo.

Limited access to the internet, potential verbal abuse, night shift schedules, safety concerns, harassment and assault also affect female workers' well-being. BHWs encounter challenges like the absence of free internet access (forcing them to shoulder internet access costs), delayed services due to the reliance on Facebook chat for health work-related inquiries, among others.

Issues related to health, limited access to the internet, lack of benefits, low salaries and the perception of job-hopping due to income constraints contribute to a challenging work environment in the digital economy. Cultural isolation, leading to extramarital affairs and workplace harassment – most of which are unreported – are additional concerns. Overall, these challenges underscore the urgent need for policies and interventions to address gender-based discrimination in the digital workforce.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

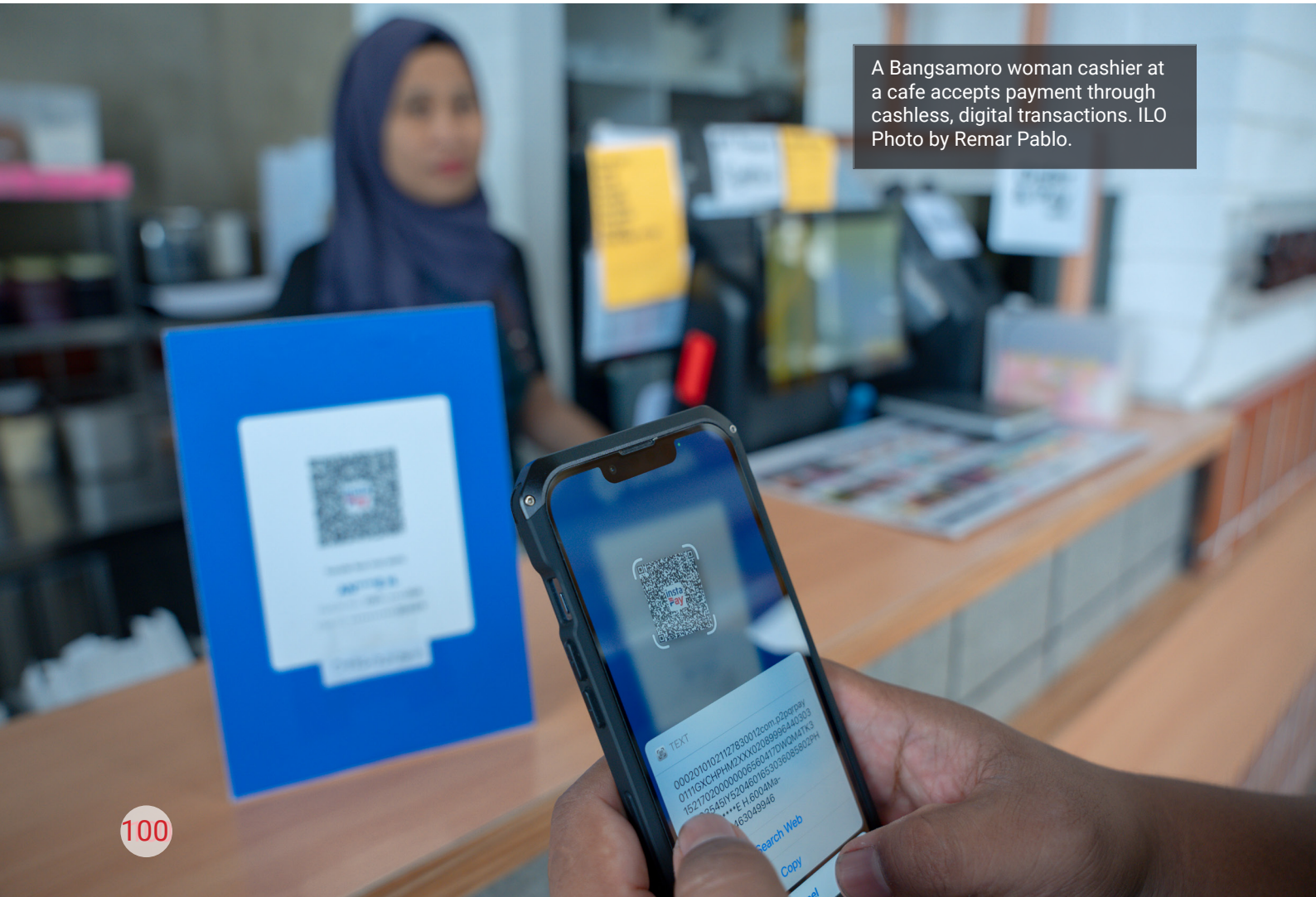
(a) Recognize employee-employer relationship in the gig economy.

(b) Ensure decent work, fair pay and social protection for platform workers and other workers in the digital economy.

(c) Develop a gender-responsive legislation regulating employment relations and welfare of workers in the digital economy.

(d) Legislate a charter of rights for all delivery riders to ensure that all riders, irrespective of employment status and SOGIESC, are covered by all the rights and benefits accorded by the Labor Code, including fair pay, social protection and the right to be represented by a union.

(e) Ensure the protection of women workers' rights in the digital economy and e-commerce. The policy should include improved and gender-inclusive algorithms for digital platforms, such as providing



A Bangsamoro woman cashier at a cafe accepts payment through cashless, digital transactions. ILO Photo by Remar Pablo.

women gig workers an option to choose work time and customers).

(f) Specify the OSH policies in legislations for digital workers, taking into account the different work structure and working hours in this particular sector (for example, regular night shifts due to the company's foreign clientele).

(g) Include grievance mechanisms and social protection for digital workers, such as content moderators, animators, online tutors, and so on.

(h) Provide mechanisms for industry-wide bargaining in the digital economy sector.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Acknowledge precedent Supreme Court rulings recognizing gig workers with employee-employer relationship, such as the case of Lazada riders in 2021.[165]

(b) Issue a DO for delivery riders to ensure fair pay by instituting a standard delivery rate. Provide delivery riders with insurance, grievance mechanisms and the right to be represented by their union, among others.

(c) Clarify guidelines for processing documents using digitalized technologies.

(d) Address concerns about benefits, such as clumped allowances, extended shuttle services and increased allowances.

(e) Advocate for freedom of choice in work arrangements and tailoring benefits according to women and LGBTQIA+ workers' needs.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Provide workers free internet access. Provide free data or load for jobs requiring internet access. Ensure free Wi-Fi in workplaces.

(b) Enhance women's capacity and skills on information technology or IT, through comprehensive training and capacity-building programs.

(c) Ensure unrestricted access to devices that enable workers to use their personal setups, particularly in the case of virtual assistants.

(d) Open the option for a hybrid or work-from-home setup for all employees, including those in rank-and-file positions.

(e) Develop user-friendly applications and inclusive platforms by simplifying technological processes.

(f) Institutionalize inclusivity in facilities, such as LGBTQIA+-friendly work spaces, particularly in the BPO industry.

(g) Integrate and place human resources concerns within the community towards building an accessible and community-centric support.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Organize workers in the digital economy into unions or workers associations.

(b) Campaign for decent work for workers in the digital economy, particularly in terms of recognizing their employee-employer relationship, job security and social protection.

(c) Ensure representation of workers in the digital economy, including women, in social dialogue mechanisms.


A female guide helps young workers from economic zones as they try the OSH app. ILO Photo by K. Brimon

With the help of new technology, women can have a greater role in promoting occupational safety and health. ILO Photo by G. Carreon.

# 14 Agenda for the future of work, workers and workers' power

The emergence of new working arrangements and cutting-edge technologies has caused labor markets to reconfigure. As a result, education and skills increasingly influence workers' access to work, their ability to balance unpaid care work around paid work, and their employability, productivity, and wages.

The changing world of work and the future of work undoubtedly impacts women workers disproportionately, given the current realities of women's work: concentrated in low-skilled and low-paid jobs, largely contractual, and highly precarious and often dispensable in the face of labor market shocks and shifts.

In the future of work, STEM fields are said to provide a valuable range of jobs that are projected to expand in importance and scope over time. However, women, in general, and Filipino women, in particular, have lower labor force participation in STEM-related employment, which accounts for only 36.3 per cent (over 3 out of 10) of the workforce.[166]

Beyond the world of technology, there are significant ramifications also associated with the gender gap in the future of work, especially in relation to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) across various industries. As the use of AI technology and talents expands quickly across industries, gender inequality in the workforce is seen to worsen. The under-representation of women in AI can obstruct the realization of the innovation premium associated with diversity, as AI is disrupting critical solutions in knowledge work, supply chains, hiring, education, health and the environment, among other areas. Moreover, if women's viewpoints, experiences and insights are not sufficiently taken into account during the development and application of AI, biased algorithms and technologies run the risk of being maintained, which will increase the likelihood of biased and inadequate responses to new problems, as well as an even shrinking space for women's participation in the workforce.

Women workers are, however, not usually involved in discussions about the future of work and how to mitigate impacts of digitalization and automation in their work. Workers can sometimes participate in discussions and demand rights through unions; so, workers stand on lesser ground when they do not have unions or when unions are not involved in negotiations.

A woman tech executive and director of a data coding company shares how the ILO opens more opportunities for women in STEM during the 2019 ILO Centenary celebration in Manila. ILO Photo by J. Villaruel.

According to some of the women leaders who participated in the WWU pre-summit workshops and island-wide consultations, the introduction of AI technology, digitalization and automation in the workplace are often seen as threats to women's employment, resulting in loss of jobs, declining wages, fewer hours of work and overall worsening of economic conditions for women. Women workers in manufacturing, services and IT industries are more prone to losing their jobs because the work that women do in these industries are easily replaceable by AI. Those who are able to keep their jobs cite worsening work conditions as work becomes more intensive, difficult and uncomfortable because of the use of AI surveillance against workers (infringing on right to privacy). For BPO workers, difficult and heavy demands are imposed on workers' productivity through the use of inhumane AI metrics and AI-based algorithms (BPO workers).

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Create a future of work that upholds FOA and gender equality, and allow the formation and sustainability of trade unions in order to protect workers' rights.

(b) Ensure protection of workers in the future of work; specifically, protection against surveillance, infringement of privacy and more humane and gender-responsive algorithms in the digital world.

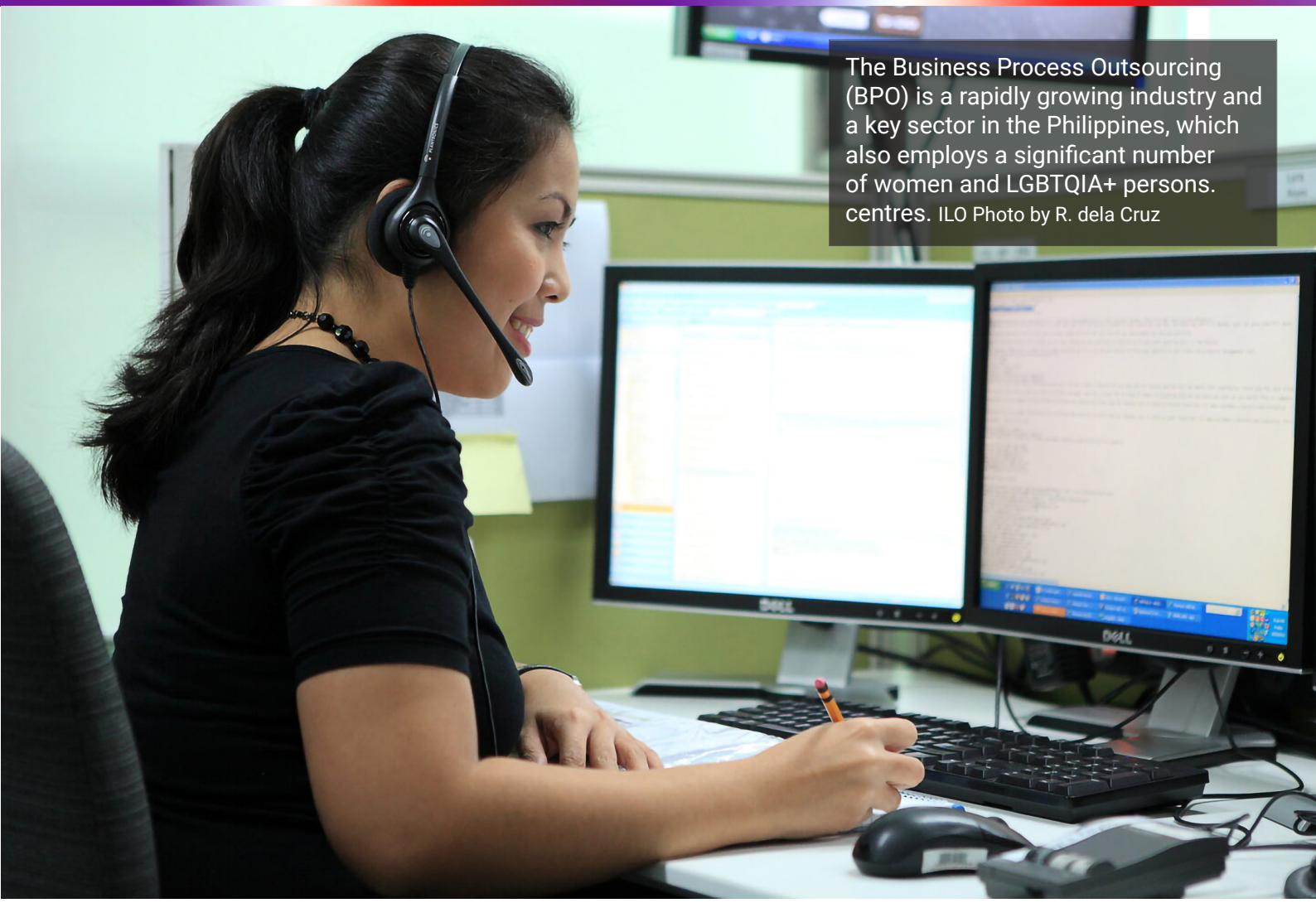
Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Ensure that the High-level Commission on the Future of Work, with permanent trade union representation, has gender balance and promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in all its outputs.

(b) Ensure inclusivity in the future of work by balancing initial hiring qualifications (like educational attainment, previous work experience and the like) with a program for continuing training and education to increase capacity and skills of women workers.

(c) Provide programs and trainings for workers to acquire skills, reskill and upskill, especially for women workers to


"Women should not be afraid of technology," says a Game Development Graduate during the 2019 ILO100 event in Manila. ILO Photo by J. Villaruel.



The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is a rapidly growing industry and a key sector in the Philippines, which also employs a significant number of women and LGBTQIA+ persons. centres. ILO Photo by R. dela Cruz

increase women's employment in STEM. Provide opportunities to enable women to take on careers in jobs and sectors that are not traditionally occupied by women (such as IT and STEM)

(d) Ensure decent jobs for women who will be displaced due to transitions and mechanization, and provide assistance to workers looking for new jobs.

(e) Provide subsidy/support to women on technology-related concerns and the digitalization of work.

(f) Create new employment opportunities for workers in danger of jobs displacement, through reskilling or upskilling, to assist them in transitioning to new jobs in other industries.

Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations

(a) Create new jobs for workers who will lose their jobs (for instance, through creation of new accounts or new departments).

(b) Reskill or upskill workers in danger of job displacement.

(c) Provide compensation to workers who are asked not to work on particular days or during the time when the company reconfigures work arrangements.

Union-level recommendations

(a) Organize and strengthen unions and associations, and encourage women's participation in unions, to provide venue for surfacing work-related grievances and to protect women workers' rights.

(b) Review union governance mechanisms (such as in terms of integration in unions, dues and collection, representation, and so on) to ensure equitable participation of those in platform work and in the digital economy joining unions.

Fresh galunggong (blue mackerel scad) at a Bol-anon fish market that lies right beside the fishermen's dock. ILO Photo by Viggó Hansson.

# 15 Assert the Philippines' sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea and ensure the demilitarization in the area in order to defend the livelihood of our fishery workers, agricultural workers, and other rural workers living in the islands surrounding the area

The WPS issue refers to the on-going maritime conflict between the Philippines and China in the sovereign use and territorial integrity of disputed waters also called South China Sea. The discussion on the maritime conflict has always been at the domain of state-level foreign policy, that it has been considered a 'state-centric' issue. The high-road and high-level discussions, and most often in legalistic jargon, obscures the impacts of the maritime dispute to the local stakeholders that are most affected on the ground. A 2023 study on "Women, Peace and (Maritime) Security in the Philippines (Manila)" attempted to integrate issues of gender equality in the high-profile maritime dispute in the Asian region.[167] The findings of the study conclude that despite the Philippine Navy (PN) and Philippine Coastguard's (PCG) adherence to gender equality laws in the Philippines (that is, the 2009 Magna Carta of Women Act), women's participation in the field of maritime security sector remain limited due to existing gender stereotypes. Expectations on women to fulfill family obligations conflict with career development within PN and PCG, thereby "narrowing the pool of women eligible for leadership positions".[168] The study further identified that gender imbalance in the workforce create "unsafe conditions for women", especially when sexual abuse cases are not prosecuted efficiently. The nature of work in the sea with offshore bases and "equipment lacking gender-inclusive design", such as separate billeting facilities, discourage women to join the PN and PCG. Thus, it is important to address women's participation and the professionalization of maritime security practitioners, which could be done through support from the GAD programs of PN and PCG.

Furthermore, the 'state-centric' discourse on the WPS has failed to inject a gender lens, resulting in less effective state-based policies. For example, the study stated that women and children are substantially affected by national maritime security policies, as they form half of irregular migrant populations traveling by sea, victims of human trafficking, unpaid labor and sexual abuse in the fishing industry. While the PN and PCG have instituted women helpdesks, gender sensitivity trainings and safe spaces programs for women navy and coastguard personnel, the study stated that it is still a long way before gender equality in the maritime security sector can be fully realized. The recommendations of the PN and PCG to mainstream gender equality include: additional financial support to women personnel for family obligations and healthcare; the institution of anti-sexual policies for cases to be resolved quickly; requiring all maritime personnel to undergo gender trainings; ensuring gender-inclusive designs on maritime hardware and facilities; and expansion of the role and participation of women in the seas.

Women leaders who participated in the WWU island-wide consultations highlighted the impact of militarization in the WPS on the farmers and fisherfolks in the area. Among the issues they cited are the displacement and loss of land, livelihood and lives due to the increasingly militarized conflict at sea. This is exacerbated by the continuing Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) military exercises in the WPS, as well as the continuing military exercises from different countries that have resulted in critical damage to marine resources and the rise of prostitution in nearby places.

## Recommendations

National legislation-level policy recommendations

(a) Uphold United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325,[169] recognizing the impact of violent conflict and war on women and girls, as well as the crucial role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

(b) Monitor government commitment in promoting gender equality and women empowerment in peace and security, integrating them in the WPS agenda as stipulated in Support Pillar 3 of the Fourth Generation National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWPS).[170]

(c) Review existing and proposed mutual defense treaties with other countries (such as the VFA or Visiting Forces Agreement with US and Australia, Military Access Agreement with Japan, among others), the EDCA and all other military agreements and associated exercises (like the Balikatan exercises). Take into account the impacts of these agreements and exercises on women workers, their families and communities.

(d) Uphold the laws that protect women and children and address the issue of prostitution and trafficking of women, LGBTQIA+ and children in areas of EDCA and Balikatan exercises.

Executive department-level regulations, issuances and programs

(a) Uphold the right to our territory (land and sea). Implement the decision of the United Nations Convention on the

A local woman fish worker happily shows her fresh catch in General Santos City. ILO Photo by J. Dumbrique.ILO Photo by J. Dumbrique

An outrigger boat full of fishers coming home to the shore. ILO Photo by Viggó Hansson

Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that granted sovereignty to the Philippines in the WPS as within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines.

(b) Work for an independent foreign policy and a demilitarized WPS, while calling for a peaceful solution to the brewing crisis.

(c) Work for a demilitarized WPS that all nations, including China, should respect.

(d) Uphold the rights and interest of fisherfolk to benefit from the WPS resources, support their rights to fish in the Philippine territorial water and ensure their protection.

(e) Provide livelihood and support to the communities displaced by the continuing WPS conflict.

(f) Establish decent evacuation sites/ areas for the displaced and affected communities due to the conflict in WPS.

(g) Activate regional (Southeast Asian) mechanisms to promote cooperation and resource-sharing in the WPS dispute (WPS as "commons").

<u>Workplace/Enterprise-level recommendations</u>

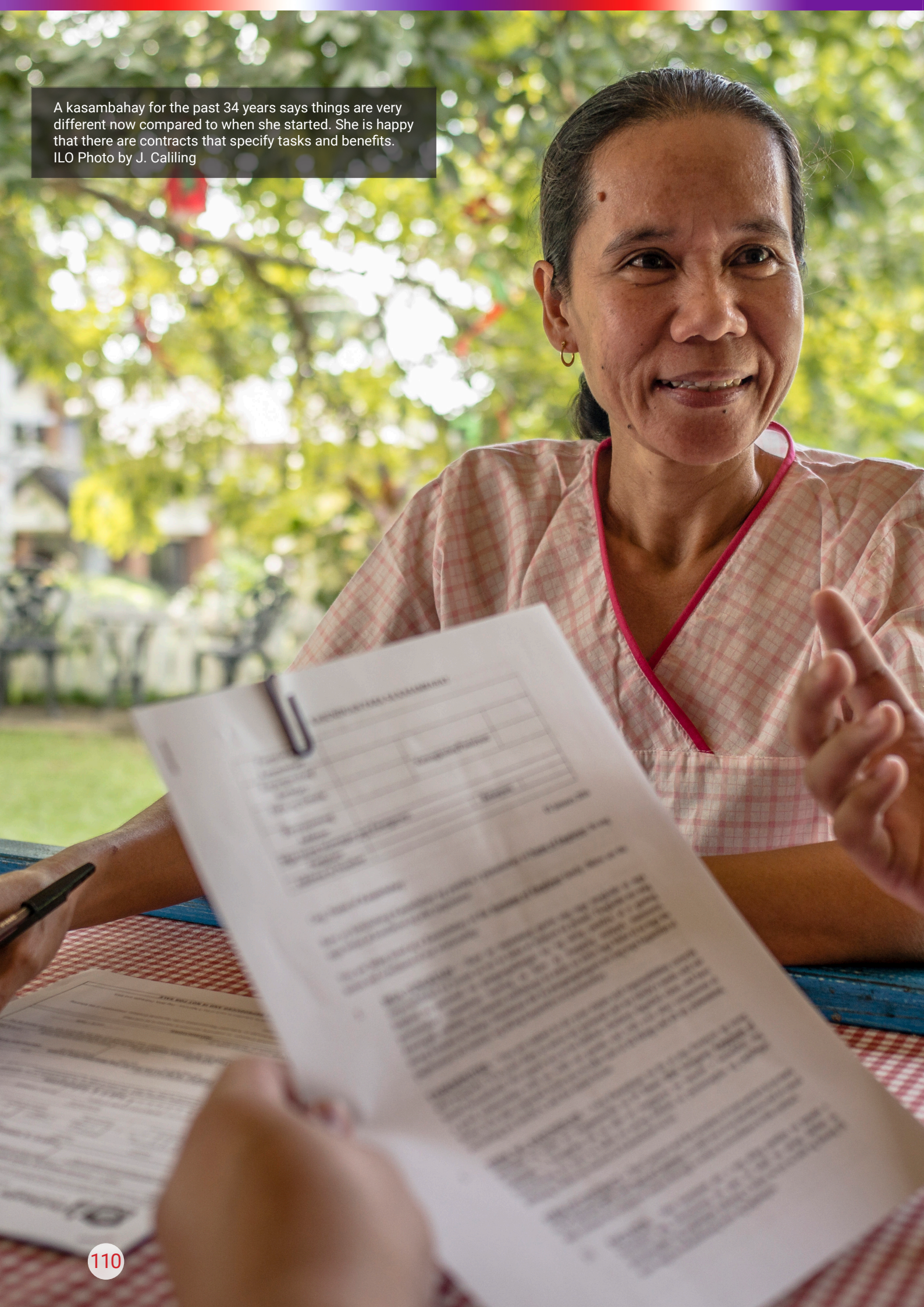
(a) Owners of large fishing vessels should comply with existing labor standards for fisherfolks and ensure their protection amid the WPS conflict.

(b) Support calls for a peaceful resolution to the WPS crisis.

<u>Union-level recommendations</u>

(a) Develop and popularize a trade union response with gender lens to the WPS crisis.

(b) Conduct massive education among members about the dangers of the arms race, especially nuclear arms race, and exert efforts to help build a constituency for peace.



A kasambahay for the past 34 years says things are very different now compared to when she started. She is happy that there are contracts that specify tasks and benefits. ILO Photo by J. Caliling

## Endnotes

1 World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2023*, 5.

2 WEF, 30.

3 WEF, 15.

4 All data can be accessed at: WEF, "Economy Profiles," Data Explorer Tool.

5 United Nations Development Programme, Breaking Down Gender Biases, 3.

6 World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2023*, 5–8.

7 For example, while the Philippines maintains full parity in senior officer and technical workers in the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex, women's income stands at only 71.6 per cent compared to men. World Economic Forum, 30.

8 Federici, *Patriarchy of the wage*.

9 Federici, 67.

10 The LFPR in the Philippines is the percentage of the population 15 years and older that is working or actively looking for work.

11 Epetia, "Explaining the Gender Gap," 30–38.

12 Cabegin and Gaddi, *Female Labor Force Participation*, 2.

13 Philippine Statistics Authority, *Labor and Employment Indicators*, 2.

14 Cabegin and Gaddi, *Female Labor Force Participation*, 45.

15 Cabegin and Gaddi, 1.

16 The graph was constructed using the Labor Force Survey data from October 2007 to October 2022, from which yearly percentages were derived.

17 It is to be noted that, although overseas Filipino workers are excluded from the statistical data on the labor force, they are also excluded from the data on the number of persons not in the labor force. Between April and September 2022, of the 1.96 million Filipino workers who worked abroad, it is estimated that 1.13 million (57.8 per cent) were females, while 828,000 (42.2 per cent) were males. Philippine Statistics Authority, "Employment Situation in October 2020."

18 Philippine Statistics Authority, "Employment Rate in March 2023."

19 Ibid.

20 Cabegin and Gaddi, *Female Labor Force Participation*, 42.

21 Philippine Statistics Authority, *Labor and Employment Indicators*.

22 Philippine Statistics Authority, "Integrated Survey of Labor and Employment," OpenSTAT Database Explorer Tool.

23 The graph was constructed using data from the PSA ISLE. Ibid.

24 The numbers of rank-and-file employees and regular and non-regular employees were taken from the same PSA ISLE. Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 See table D in: Philippine Statistics Authority, *Unemployment Rate in September 2023 was Estimated at 4.5*. Percent. https://www.psa.gov.ph/content/unemployment-rate-september-2023-was-estimated-45-percent

27 Calculations were done by authors. PSA, "Number of Persons Engaged," OpenSTAT Database Explorer Tool.

28 In 2018, labor productivity, computed as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per employed person, in the services sector amounted to 448,278 pesos (at current prices) while in industry it was 682,901 pesos. PSA, *Labor Productivity by Sector*, 3.

29 PSA, *2024 Fact Sheet*, 1.

30 PSA, Decent Work in the Philippines, 2.

31 Graph reproduced from PSA. Ibid.

32 Ibid., 3.

33 Ibid.

34 Sy et al., "Occupational Gender Segregation."

35 PSA, *2024 Fact Sheet*, 1.

36 Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work," 1–43.

37 Fausto, "Gender pay gap."

38 Cabegin, Widening Gender Wage Gap a series.

39 A negative wage gap means that the average daily wage rates of women are higher than their male counterparts.

40 PSA, "Decent Work in the Philippines."

41 Table reproduced from: PSA, "Decent Work in the Philippines," 5.

42 PSA, *Decent Work Statistics*, 102.

43 Data for 2021 can be accessed at: ILO, "Country Profiles," ILOSTAT Explorer Tool.

44 PSA, "Decent Work in the Philippines," 6.

45 Asian Development Bank, *Gender equality*, x.

46 ADB, 15.

47 Peña and Yao, *DigitALL for Her*, 15.

48 PSA, *Decent Work Statistics*, 30.

49 The data can be accessed at: WEF, "Economy Profiles," Data Explorer Tool.

50 PSA, *Decent Work Statistics*, 38.

51 PSA, 42.

52 The LFPR is a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labor market, either by working or looking for work. The LFPR is related to the employment rate. If the participation rate increased, then the number of people employed must also have increased.

53 PSA, *Decent Work Statistics*, 33.

54 PSA, "Total Employment of Establishments," OpenSTAT Database Explorer Tool.

55 PSA, *Decent Work Statistics*, 51.

56 Cabegin and Gaddi, *Female Labor Force Participation*.

57 Graph was constructed using data from: PSA, *Decent Work Statistics*, 26.

58 PSA, "Errata on the 2023."

59 PNP-CIRAS stands for the PNP's Crime Information, Reporting and Analysis System.

60 ILO, Lloyd's Register Foundation, and Gallup, 8.

61 ILO, Lloyd's Register Foundation, and Gallup, 8.

62 PhilStar.com, "Around a fifth of Filipino."

63 ILO, Lloyd's Register Foundation, and Gallup, *Experiences of violence*.

64 International Trade Union Confederation, *Global Rights Index*. Note: The ITUC Global Rights Index depicts the world's worst countries for workers by rating countries on a scale from 1 to 5+ on the degree of respect for workers' rights, with 5+ as the worst score. Violations are recorded each year from April to March.

65 ITUC, 36.

66 For a brief account of the cases, see: Ibid.

67 All Philippine Trade Union, *Joint Report*, 15.

68 Ateneo Human Rights Center, *Unraveling the Web*, 8.

69 AHRC, 8.

70 The guidelines include the "Joint DOLE-PNP-PEZA Guidelines in the Conduct of PNP Personnel, Economic Zone Police and Security Guards, Company Security Guards and Similar Personnel During Labour Disputes", issued on 23 May 2011, and the "Guidelines on the Conduct of the DOLE, DILG, DND, DOJ, AFP and PNP Relative to Exercise of Workers' Right and Activities", which was issued on 7 May 2012.

71 All data can be accessed at: PSA, "Labor and Employment," OpenSTAT Database Explorer Tool.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 For a discussion of these factors, see: Serrano and Viajar, *Transformative Strategies*.

76 ILO, *Bird's eye view*.

77 PSA, "Labor and Employment," OpenSTAT Database Explorer Tool.

78 Delerio et al., "Analysis on Women's Participation," 36.

79 Delerio et al., 37.

80 Extracted from: Delerio et al., 40.

81 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual.

82 ILO, "ILO reaches agreement."

83 The Graph constructed using data from: IBON Foundation, "Stagnant real wages."

84 Public Services Labor Independent Confederation, "World Day for Decent Work."

85 Civil Service Commission, *IGHR: Career and Non-Career*.

86 IBON Foundation, "PH minimum wages."

87 Data taken from: ILO, "Statutory nominal gross," ILOSTAT Explorer Tool.

88 IBON Foundation, "Family Living Wage."

89 "Five-six" is a shady and quick lending scheme that imposes above-market interest rates of about 20 per cent. The name comes from the explanation of how it works: if one takes a loan of five pesos, the borrower will pay a total of six pesos, including interest.

90 Tabuga and Cabaero, "Inclusive Social Protection," 34.

91 Tabuga and Cabaero, 22–34.

92 Coombs, "Paid Leave is Essential," 2.

93 CSC, *IGHR: Job Order*.

94 ILO, "On SDG indicator 1.3.1," ILOSTAT Explorer Tool.

95 ILO, *Understanding child labour*.

96 Tabuga and Cabaero, "Inclusive Social Protection."

97 Lu, "State and Trends," 63.

98 Lu, 65.

99 Report is based on an unpublished survey conducted by PIGLAS-SENTRO in Metrowear in the MEPZ.

100 PSA, *Decent Work Statisics*, OpenSTAT Database Explorer Tool.

101 Ines, "Still a long road ahead."

102 A significant number of vendors are women, and providing them with a more secure place for vending helps stabilize their income and reduces harassment by police.

103 The World Bank, "Government health expenditure," World Bank Open Data Explorer Tool.

104 Ibid.

105 The World Bank, "Out-of-pocket expenditure," World Bank Open Data Explorer Tool.

106 The World Bank, "Government expenditure on education," World Bank Open Data Explorer Tool.

107 Ibid.

108 Center for Women's Resources, *Ulat Lila 2024*, 10.

109 Center for Women's Resources, 10.

110 United Nations Human Settlements Programme, *Philippines Country Report*, 5.

111 Habitat for Humanity, *Ensuring inclusivity, resilience*, 1.

112 CWR, *Ulat Lila March 2024*, 14.

113 CWR, 14.

114 CWR, 14.

115 See examples of successful remunicipalization initiatives at: Pavanelli, "Place of public services."

116 See par. 12, p. 6 of the ILO's *Revision of the 15th ICLS resolution concerning statistics of employment in the informal sector and the 17th ICLS guidelines regarding the statistical definition of informal employment* (2018). https://www.ilo.org/media/211786/download.

117 See: Ibid., par. 18, p. 7.

118 See: par. 5, p. 78 of the ILO's *Report III: Statistics of employment in the informal sector* (1993). http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/1992/92B09_385_engl.pdf

119 Backward participation implies that a country is using outputs, including goods, parts, resources and services provided by countries in prior segments of the value chain.

120 Asian Productivity Organization, *APO Productivity Outlook 2024*, 165.

121 CWR, *Ulat Lila 2024*, 4.

122 See: par 1.1.2, p. 3 of ILO's *Report V (1): Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy* (2014). https://www.ilo.org/media/168591/download.

123 ILO, *Building Back Better*, 5–6.

124 ILO, 5–6.

125 Chen, *Rethinking the Informal Economy*, 3–4.

126 Chen, 3–4.

127 Islam et al., "Labor Productivity Gap," 228–58.

128 ILO, *Building Back Better*, 8.

129 This does not include the cost for transportation, food, water, other documents and photocopying that may be needed in securing the required documents.

130 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, art. II, sec. 14.

131 For further discussion on gaps on gender equality laws, see: International Development Law Organization, UN Women, and the Philippine Commission on Women, *Strengthening Gender Equality*.

132 International Development Law Organization, UN Women, and the Philippine Commission on Women, *Strengthening Gender Equality*, 21.

133 It is important to note that there are also gender-explicit Labor Code provisions that further entrench gender stereotyping. For instance, art. 132 (Facilities on nursing for women only) strengthens the stereotype that only women need childcare and nursing facilities when there are also men and LGBTQIA+ workers that need these facilities.

134 Arain et al., "Maturation of the adolescent brain."

135 Center for Women's Resources, *Ulat Lila July 2023*.

136 CWR, *Ulat Lila 2024*.

137 As an example, the Quezon City LGU launched the first market one-stop-shop (MOSS) system that simplifies and makes accessible processes for vendors applying to setup shop in the city. See: Marcelo, "Philippines first market one-stop-shop."

138 Even though the PEZA Charter provides autonomy to manage the special and industrial economic zones nationwide, zones are not exempt from complying with national and international labor standards. See: PEZA's *2024 Citizen's Charter*, 2nd Edition. https://www.peza.gov.ph/charter/coccharter052021.pdf.

139 ILO, *Care work*.

140 Cabrera, "Women still bear the brunt of unpaid care work."

141 For further information, see: Oxfam Philippines, "Survey."

142 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Valuing and Investing*, 13.

143 United Nations Development Programme and ILO, *LGBTI People and Employment*.

144 For more information on this incident, see: Macaraeg, "Groups condemn discrimination."

145 UNDP and ILO, 50.

146 For further discussion on the impacts of the climate crisis on health, see: Ghosh and Dutta, *Health threats of climate change*.

147 Elementary occupations include the performance of simple and routine tasks which may require the use of hand-held tools and considerable physical effort. PSA, "Survey on Overseas Filipinos."

148 PPSA, "2023 Overseas Filipino Workers."

149 Tongzon, "Trade Policy," 35–48.

*150* Tongzon, 38.

151 This figure was generated by Statista, using data from World Bank.

152 Tongzon (2005: 38).

153 ADB, "Free Trade Agreements."

154 Julia, "Analyzing the Diversity."

155 Julia, 41.

156 Julia, 41.

157 Oxfam, *Survival of the Richest*, 15.

158 Oxfam, 2.

159 Chancel et al., 16.

160 Tadem, *Inequality, Tax Justice*.

161 Chancel et al., *World Inequality Report 2022*, 12.

162 For further discussion, see: Kolovich, *Fiscal Policy and Gender Equality*.

163 Tadem, Inequality, Tax Justice, 26.

164 The Department of Education (DepEd) even released an order (DO No. 48, s. 2018) that warns teachers who join rallies (as part of the social dialogue) or become union members of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) – a coalition organizations of various teachers' organizations nationwide – that they will not receive their salaries.

165 The Supreme Court ruling promulgated on 21 September 2022, that involves Lazada and its five former riders, established that the riders were directly employed by Lazada, because all four factors of an employment relationship (namely, employer's selection and engagement of the employee; payment of wages; power to dismiss; and power to control the employee's conduct) existed. The case also passed the economic-dependence test, such that riders were economically dependent on Lazada for their livelihood. For more information about the ruling, see: Abad, "Supreme Court rules."

166 ETHRSEA, "Only 3 in 10."

167 Pacific Forum, *Women, Peace*.

168 Pacific Forum, *Women, Peace*.

169 United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1325 (2000)*.

170 Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, *Philippine National Action Plan*.

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Young Filipino professionals, especially women, are at the forefront of providing healthcare services not only at home but also abroad. ILO Photo by R. Cabangal.


Women workers are clear: End gender-based violence in the world of work. Photo by WWU.

WOMEN WORKERS UNITED

An indigenous woman demonstrates her weaving skills. ILO Photo by Allan Barredo.

Women workers in garments sectors, especially pregnant women, need maternity protection. ILO Photo by E. Tuyay.

An elderly woman domestic worker continues to actively work. ILO Photo by J. Aliling.