

الشبكة العالمية
للحقوق الاقتصادية
والاجتماعية والثقافية



ESCR-Net
Red-DESC
Réseau-DESC



SRE
SECRETARÍA DE
RELACIONES
EXTERIORES

The Right to Social Security for Unpaid Care Workers

CSW63 Side event

Date: Friday, March 15, 10:00-11:15 a.m.

Location: United Nations Headquarters, New York, Conference Room "A"

Context

Care work, both paid and unpaid, is vital to the sustainability of life and the survival of economies. Worldwide, women and girls perform more than three-quarters of the total amount of unpaid care work, and two-thirds of those who perform care work are women.¹ The unjust social distribution of care work repeats many of the situations that have historically kept women in subservient positions and disempowered,² among them lack of access to social security. Because social security systems are commonly structured around full-time participation in the workforce, millions of women engaged exclusively in unpaid care work are denied this right in practice. Moreover, those who are paid workers and have care responsibilities are often forced to interrupt their contributions or move into the informal economy, where there is generally no social security coverage.

Social security is enshrined as a human right in Art. 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). In its General Comments, the Committee on ESCR pointed out that States should take measures to eliminate such factors which prevent women from enjoying this right on an equal footing in practice, bearing in mind that women are more likely to live in poverty than men and are often the sole caregivers of children and other members of the household³. It also stated that people engaged in unpaid work have the right to just and favorable working conditions and should be protected by social security laws and policies.⁴ In its recent rulings, and in particular the decision in the case of *María Trujillo v. Ecuador*, it ordered measures

¹ International Labor Organization, ILO (2018). Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work. Geneva: ILO

² UN Women (2018). Care work: A matter of human rights and public policies. UN Women: Mexico.

³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (2007) General Comment No. 19 on the right to social security.

⁴ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2016). General Comment No. 23 on the right to just and favorable conditions of work

be taken to address the factors that prevent women who perform care work from enjoying this right, including through non-contributory benefits.⁵

Lastly, given social security's transformative potential towards redistributing models of care, the Sustainable Development Goals call for recognizing and valuing unpaid domestic and care work by providing public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and promoting shared responsibility both within households and families, as well as at the national level.⁶

Objectives and expected outcomes

- Analyze the recommendations in recent CESCR jurisprudence and the challenges towards their implementation in relation to social security coverage of unpaid care work.
- Explore the general challenges surrounding the issue as a crucial matter for gender equality and sustainable development, including some thoughts and policy recommendations from the Uruguayan and Mexican experiences, as well as from some feminist organizations from different regions.

Meeting format

The event will begin with a keynote address by the CESCR, followed by panelist presentations and a discussion with the multiple stakeholders present. There will be simultaneous interpretation during the meeting (TBC).

Participants

- Heishoo Shen (Committee on ESCR - CESCR)
- Christian Mendoza (Simón de Beauvoir Leadership Institute, Mexico)
- Silvia Nori (Ombudsman of Ecuador)
- Julio Bango (National Secretary of Care of Uruguay)
- Nadine Gasman Zylbermann (Inmujeres Mexico)

Moderated by: Viviana Osorio (ESCR-Net)

⁵ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Case of Trujillo Calero vs. Ecuador. Ruling dated March 25, 2018.

⁶ United Nations. Sustainable Development Objectives. Target 5.4.