



Gender Equality and the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQI persons

There is widespread recognition that COVID-19 has disproportionate impacts on underserved individuals, including women, girls, and LGBTI persons due to historically rooted inequalities. The pandemic threatens to roll back the hard-won global gains made in gender equality and human development.¹ Impacts of the virus include more barriers for women and girls, and LGBTQI persons, who may also be migrant workers and belong to ethnic minorities, in being able to claim their rights. It is the responsibility of companies to identify these barriers to assess and mitigate adverse human rights impacts for the most underserved. Note: The term “woman” refers to transwomen as well.

Measures to protect women’s rights

- ✓ Conduct a gender-based analysis (GBA+) for all COVID-19 measures and ensure needs are mainstreamed into initiatives, with its effectiveness monitored and evaluated
- ✓ Provide options to work from home or at the regular workplace.
- ✓ Provide sexual harassment and violence against women and girls resources at work.
- ✓ Expand company housing for women so that it is adequate and safe.
- ✓ Provide flexible working arrangements for women that meets their needs.
- ✓ Encourage men to take on unpaid care work at home and provide flexible working arrangements for them.
- ✓ Provide flexible working arrangements to allow women to claim their right to health and quality of life.
- ✓ Enforce anti-harassment policies that prohibit workers from sexual harassment and gender-based violence and provide a channel for remediation
- ✓ Ensure all policies are promoted and provided in a way that is understood by workers with the lowest literacy level
- ✓ Ensure that women have the right to freedom of expression, freedom of movement, freedom of choice over measures that violate their individual rights.
- ✓ Involve women’s rights organizations to assist businesses in understanding and advocating for women’s rights.

Measures that violate women’s rights

- ✗ Force women who experience domestic violence to work from home due to physical distancing policies.
- ✗ Fail to provide adequate company housing for migrant women workers.
- ✗ Fire women due to increased responsibilities to care for family members or care for children affected by confinement measures.
- ✗ Deny women time off to access sexual and reproductive health services, which has been reduced due to resources diverted to COVID-19 response
- ✗ Fail to protect women against sexual harassment and violence from security guards and others enforcing COVID-19 measures
- ✗ Fail to raise awareness and provide accessible work policies that empower women to claim their rights due to low status and low literacy relative to men
- ✗ Fail to monitor the effectiveness of COVID-19 measures for women and/or put in place measures that do not reflect women’s needs

¹ This human right is protected under a number of international treaties including the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)