



## **Coronavirus: A global pandemic that affects women differently**

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*March 21, 2020*



The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Coronavirus a global pandemic. This virus has profoundly changed our approach to health, the economy, the dynamics and the ways of living together, both in the workplace and in the family. However, once again the differentiated impacts on women's lives have been very little addressed, especially regarding the distribution of money, the times and the right to live free from violence.

According to the United Nations, 87,000 women were killed in 2017 worldwide and of this number, more than 50,000 were killed by their partners, former partners, or a member of their family. On the same issue, the WHO notes that 30% of women throughout the Americas have suffered physical or sexual violence from their partner and that 38% of women are killed by their partner or former partner. Furthermore, the ILO points out that 78.4% of single-parent households are headed by women who assume the financial responsibilities and the care of children and adults who are sick or who have a disability. Women carry out the bulk of non-paid caring work worldwide, spending 3.2 times more time than men.

In times of COVID-19, of teleworking, of increasing times of coexistence and of uncertainties and fears, what happens to women victims of violence who must face their attackers full time? How do we guarantee the safety of women and girls in times of quarantine and home isolation? What impact will it have for women victims of violence to be confined to the home, when it is the most dangerous place for victims of violence?

Additionally, can women reconcile teleworking with care? What about the informal economy, when many women are in the service sector or in the care economy and earn for every job they do? What about those who must carry out productive and reproductive work in parallel? How to incorporate men in the shared responsibility of care?

Collaboration with States and the community is required to put these questions on the table and to make visible the particular situations that women face. To facilitate essential care and protection services for victims of violence, risk assessment of death of women and guarantee their right to integrity and life, as well as to accessible information for women victims of violence.

Measures must be taken to minimize the economic impact on women in the informal economy, especially when they are heads of single-parent families and stop receiving income and/or must dedicate themselves to caring for their children due to the closure of educational centers. Also, on the equitable distribution of domestic work and childcare. And of the policies so that men contribute to the care work, virtual education of their children and household responsibilities in an equal way.

It is essential to listen to women whose voices are not heard, those who are on the street, deprived of liberty, in shelters or in extreme poverty, who suffer greatly from being a woman. And those whose questions are about the bare minimum, the access to hygiene measures such as drinking water and soap to face their self-care and collective care.

We have the challenge today of looking at the least privileged people, their needs and specificities, so that the actions and policies that are designed do not deepen the precariousness of their living conditions. This virus imposes new challenges that must be read in terms of human rights and with a gender focus, in terms of the women's agenda that we have been leading and in the line with the demands made collectively in the framework of International Women's Day. Today we must make women visible and to progress from words to actions.

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*The [CIM/OAS](#) is the main political forum in the region for the recognition of the human rights of women and gender equality. Since its creation in 1928, the CIM has played a prominent and strategic role in the promotion of women's rights in the hemisphere.*