



# Economic and Social Council

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## 2024 session

Agenda item 19 (b)

**Social and human rights questions: social development**

## **Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 5 June 2024**

[on the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development (E/2024/26)]

### **2024/4. Promoting care and support systems for social development**

*The Economic and Social Council,*

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which the Assembly adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets and affirmed its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030 with a view to leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, and its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development,

*Noting* General Assembly resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

*Reaffirming* that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development<sup>1</sup> and the further initiatives for social development adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session<sup>2</sup> constitute the basic framework for the promotion of social development for all at the national and international levels, encouraging the continued global dialogue on social development issues, and reaffirming also all previous resolutions on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development,

*Recognizing* that the three core themes of social development, namely, poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for all and social

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution [S-24/2](#), annex.



integration, are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and that an enabling environment therefore needs to be created so that all three objectives can be pursued simultaneously,

*Recalling* the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals and targets, including target 5.4, which recognizes and values unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate,

*Taking note* of all relevant international human rights instruments and relevant international labour conventions, which contain provisions relevant to persons providing and receiving care and support,

*Recalling* the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action<sup>3</sup> and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,<sup>4</sup> and the outcome documents of their review conferences, as well as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing,<sup>5</sup> and recognizing that the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

*Taking note* of General Assembly resolution [77/317](#) of 24 July 2023 and Human Rights Council resolution [54/6](#) of 11 October 2023,<sup>6</sup>

*Taking note also* of international, regional and national initiatives as well as multi-stakeholder initiatives related to care and support systems, including those that aim to guarantee the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work and the reward and representation of care and domestic workers, to increase commitments toward economic and social justice and rights for all, including by promoting the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons,

*Recognizing* that the provision of care and support comprises, inter alia, meeting the physical, psychological and emotional needs of care receivers, which contributes to the enjoyment of their rights, and respect for their dignity, agency and well-being,

*Recognizing also* that support is an integral part of being able to live independently and being included in the community, and recognizing further the importance of increasing the resilience of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons living with mental health conditions by ensuring legal and social protection, adopting employment measures, providing better care and support services and promoting long-term care and support at home and in the community, facilitating access to and sharing of accessible and assistive technologies, especially new and emerging ones, including information and communications systems, mobility aids, assistive devices and other assistive technologies with a view to guaranteeing their empowerment, autonomy and independence,

*Acknowledging* that strengthening intergenerational relations, through such measures as promoting intergenerational living arrangements and encouraging extended family members to live in close proximity to each other, has been found to promote the best interests of the child, as well as the autonomy, security and well-being of older persons, and that initiatives to promote involved and positive parenting

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<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8–12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

<sup>6</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-eighth Session, Supplement No. 53A (A/78/53/Add.1)*, chap. III, sect. A.

and to support the role of grandparents have been found to be beneficial in advancing social integration and solidarity among generations, as well as in promoting and protecting the human rights of all family members,

*Recognizing* that women and girls, including adolescent girls, undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, which further exacerbates gender inequality by limiting women's agency to decide how to spend their time and their ability to participate in decision-making processes and occupy leadership positions, and that it poses significant constraints on women's and girls' education and training and women's economic opportunities, and that this kind of entrenched inequality and social exclusion is an obstacle to broad-based and sustained growth, and recognizing further the need to adopt a comprehensive and intergenerational approach in the design and implementation of care and support policies, including by accounting for it in national statistics, and economic and social policymaking,

*Recognizing also* that women often make up a large portion of the workforce in self-employment and part-time or temporary work and continue to bear most of the responsibility for unpaid care and support work, having, as a result, lower rates of labour force participation and shorter formal working careers, which limits their ability to contribute to social security schemes, and contributes to the feminization of poverty, and noting in this regard that mechanisms to build social protection which value and account for periods of unpaid work over their life course, including care and support systems, can help to address this situation,

*Stressing* the need to recognize and value paid care work and care workers as essential workers and the need to adopt measures that combat gender stereotypes related to care and support, as well as those related to, inter alia, race, disability, ethnicity, age and migratory status, to reduce occupational segregation for care work, while recognizing the need to improve working conditions and reduce precarious employment in paid care work,

*Acknowledging* the accelerated global demographic trend of ageing of the population, which will result in an increased need for health-care and social services and require more care work and support, and stressing the need to promote and strengthen the estimation of the caregiving contribution of older persons to care and support systems, including recognition of unpaid care for family members, in particular by older women, and to ensure that national statistics in this regard inform policymaking,

*Noting* that those providing domestic care and support constitute a significant proportion of the workforce and that, globally, care work is carried out in most cases by women, many of whom are migrants or persons who are in particularly vulnerable situations, exposing them to discrimination in respect of conditions of employment and of work,

*Acknowledging* that States should render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and should ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children, and noting that children's development depends on the existence of, and access to, a set of adequate family-oriented, community and State care policies and adequate living conditions, including basic infrastructure and the provision of sufficient, safe and nutritious food, to support healthy growth and development, and access to quality education, including early childhood education, as well as stimulating environments and social interactions with attentive caregivers,

*Recognizing* the need to adopt measures to reduce, redistribute and value unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within the household and by prioritizing, inter alia, sustainable

infrastructure, social protection policies and accessible, affordable and quality social services, including care and support services, child care and maternity, paternity or parental leave, as well as the need for adequate maternity leave and protection for working mothers, and further recognizing that paid paternity leave and parental leave, especially for fathers, are necessary care policies to support father-child bonding and greater sharing of responsibilities between parents, and that these should be complemented by targeted adequate working arrangements,

*Mindful* of the need to create robust, resilient and gender-responsive, disability-inclusive and age-sensitive care and support systems with full respect for human rights, with a view to recognizing, valuing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care, domestic work and support,

*Acknowledging* the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the importance of respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge, in accordance with each corresponding social and cultural system and cultural values, including in the context of community care and support systems,

*Recognizing* that civil society organizations, in particular those working on the issue of care and support, including workers' and employers' organizations, women's and community-based organizations, youth-led organizations, feminist groups, faith-based organizations and other relevant stakeholders and networks, are contributing to putting the need for care and support of people at the centre of relevant national policies,

1. *Urges* States to ensure the creation of enabling environments for promoting care and support systems for social development and implement all measures necessary to ensure the well-being and rights of care recipients and caregivers, to recognize and redistribute care work among individuals, as well as families, communities, the private sector and States, and to contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;

2. *Stresses* that Member States, which bear the main responsibility for social integration and social inclusion, should foster a care society in which all receive the care they need, promoting their rights and well-being, based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination, access to basic social services and promotion of the active participation of every member of society as well as a collective responsibility, involving individuals, families, communities, States and the private sector, including through poverty eradication measures, labour policies, public services and gender-sensitive social protection programmes;

3. *Also stresses* the crucial role of Governments in designing and implementing care policies, as well as the need for social dialogue, representation and participation of caregivers and of care receivers in such policy design, to ensure that such policies are empowering and respect their dignity, rights, agency and well-being;

4. *Recognizes* that both paid and unpaid care and support work benefits societies, economies, families and individuals alike, considering that investing in the provision of care and support services would increase the well-being of both care recipients and paid and unpaid caregivers, generate new decent jobs in the care sector and support economic prosperity;

5. *Urges* States to consider investment in care and support and promote legal systems or frameworks in care and support policies and infrastructure, and promote national legislation and capacity-building to ensure universal access to affordable and quality services for all, including childcare, in the health and support sector for persons with disabilities and older persons, which is necessary to address care needs for persons throughout their life course, and to ensure universal access to paid

maternity, paternity and parental leave and social protection for all workers, including for both informal workers and those in non-standard forms of employment;

6. *Stresses* that social inclusion policies, including care policies, should promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, considering that those providing domestic care and support constitute a significant proportion of the workforce and that care work is carried out mainly by women, and therefore calls for equal access to opportunities and social protection for all, in particular for those in vulnerable situations, including women and girls who experience violence and discrimination, considering that the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;<sup>7</sup>

7. *Encourages* Member States to consider the multiplier effects of the care economy in terms of increasing labour participation, facilitating the transition from informal to formal work and decent working conditions in the care sector, investing in social infrastructure and strengthening social protection, as well as the returns on the investments in care policies and systems;

8. *Stresses* the need to address the challenges in paid care work such as lower wages, poor working conditions, precarious employment and the increased risk of harassment, including sexual harassment in-the workplace;

9. *Encourages* Member States to invest in family-oriented policies and programmes that enhance strong intergenerational interactions, such as intergenerational living arrangements, parenting education, including for family caregivers, and support for grandparents, including grandparents who are primary caregivers, in an effort to promote inclusive urbanization, active and healthy ageing, intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion;

10. *Also encourages* Member States to promote and strengthen the estimation of the caregiving contribution in national statistics, including recognition of unpaid care for family members, and to support studies and research for more informed, evidence-based policymaking decisions, ensuring that investments in care and support systems are enshrined in national plans;

11. *Decides* to request the President of the Economic and Social Council at its 2024 session to organize, within existing resources, an informal intergovernmental interactive dialogue, in an accessible format, with the objective of evaluating experiences, good practices and main challenges regarding the promotion of and investment in care and support systems and their contribution to individuals, families, societies and economies, considering the role of caregivers and receivers;

12. *Also decides* that the Commission for Social Development will consider the issue of care and support systems at its sixty-fourth session.

*20th plenary meeting  
5 June 2024*

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<sup>7</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1.