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# Valuing and Investing in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work

COUNTRY  
CASE STUDY **Indonesia**

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The report was developed through collaboration between the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in the United Kingdom, under the overall direction and guidance of Srinivas Tata, Director of the Social Development Division with ESCAP.

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## Explanatory notes

The analyses in the *Valuing and Investing in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work in Indonesia* report are based on data and information available up to the end of November 2022. Groupings of countries and territories or areas referred to are defined as follows.

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## Abbreviations

ACW	ASEAN Committee on Women
AIPEG	Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GED	Gender Equality and Diversity
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDR	Indonesian Rupiah
ILO	International Labour Organization
J-PAL	Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
KSBSI	Confederation of Indonesian Prosperity Trade Union
KSPI	Confederation of Indonesian Trade Union Congress
KSPSI	Confederation of All Indonesia Trade Unions
MoEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoWECP	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
PKH	Program Keluarga Harapan
RPJMN	Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNAP	Social Norms, Attitudes and Practices
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
VNR	Voluntary National Review

## Section 1

# Introduction

The global pandemic has affected every aspect of human life, from public health to livelihoods as well as income, education, international trade, economic growth, and social cohesion. The pandemic has drawn attention to the centrality of care — be it health care, essential care services, or domestic work, childcare, and care of other dependents and vulnerable populations. The care economy is described as consisting of both paid care work and unpaid care work, encompassing the breadth of care services provided for pay in sectors like education, healthcare, childcare, personal care as well as paid or unpaid domestic work, cooking, cleaning, household chores, collection of fuelwood and water, and care of dependents within the family (ESCAP, 2021c). Before the outbreak of COVID-19, women were already performing a disproportionate amount of unpaid care work compared to men. This gender difference was more pronounced in the Asia-Pacific region, where women spent up to four times more hours than men on unpaid care activities, compared with the global average of 3.2 times (ILO, 2018, p. 56). Lockdown measures announced by governments around the world in response to the pandemic, resulted in an intensification of both the number of activities and time spent by women in care work, especially cooking, cleaning, and childcare (UN Women, 2020b).

Soon after the onset of COVID-19, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) commissioned research to assess the pandemic's gendered implications on the care economy in Asia and the Pacific, focusing primarily

on unpaid care and domestic work. A caring economy is one which recognizes care as foundational to human life and values both paid and unpaid care work, performed largely by women and girls the world over. Ensuring recognition of and investment in care work is central to building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies and economies. This allows countries to advance gender equality, rights-based human development and a sustainable economy (Utari, 2017; Women's Budget Group, 2020). Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality has spelled out target 5.4 that seeks to recognize and value 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.<sup>1</sup> Achieving SDG 5.4 requires a multi-pronged approach to embedding care responsiveness across several policy categories in order to comprehensively address the disproportionate burden of care work on women and girls (ESCAP, 2021b).

ESCAP's research underscores the valuable contribution of unpaid care work to societal wellbeing and economic growth. In addition to the regional review across Asia and Pacific member States, and a sub-regional analysis of ASEAN countries,<sup>2</sup> four country-level case studies explore the manner in which the unpaid care work agenda is being addressed and implemented in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Uzbekistan. This report offers a fine-grained analysis of the unpaid care work policy agenda in the Republic of Indonesia.

<sup>1</sup> Goal 5: Gender Equality | The Global Goals.

<sup>2</sup> See ESCAP publications: *COVID-19 policy responses to unpaid care in Asia and the Pacific*, available at <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2021/covid-19-and-unpaid-care-economy-asia-and-pacific> and *Valuing unpaid care work in ASEAN countries*, available at <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2021/addressing-unpaid-care-work-asean>

Since the start of its G20 presidency in 2022, Indonesia has been focusing on three core themes — global health architecture, digital transformation, and sustainable energy transition.<sup>3</sup> Cross-cutting these crucial development challenges is the issue of care — both paid and unpaid care work as well as broader investments in care focused sectors — as succinctly noted by the ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy. This framework outlines the central importance of rebuilding societies and economies, within the ASEAN region, by incorporating a care-sensitive lens in policymaking. The framework identifies six strategic priority areas, namely, promoting healthy ageing societies, enhancing the role of care economy in disaster resilience, accelerating the digital transformation of the care economy, building stronger and more resilient families, enhancing social protection, and increasing care for the environment (ASEAN, 2021). In addition, in 2022, Indonesia is chairing the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) which has adopted the *ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework* to advance gender equality commitments across ASEAN member States (ASEAN, 2022).

Despite impressive strides undertaken by Indonesia in gender mainstreaming and addressing gender-based violence, more work across other areas of women's empowerment and gender equality is needed. For example, Indonesia ranks 101 out of 156 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum, 2021). Indicators across health and education attainment are steadily improving in the country with a clear policy road map in place on improving access to family planning and reproductive health services to women (Ministry of National Development Planning, 2019). However, female labour force participation remains at 53.81 per cent compared to men's labour force participation which is 82.17 per cent (ESCAP, 2021c, p. 17). Women's political representation in parliament is also 20.4 per cent, despite the adoption of a quota policy that aims to encourage at least 30 per cent political representation for women across different levels of government (ibid, p. 15). This suggests that more work needs to be done in Indonesia to address the gender equality agenda.

President Joko Widodo has committed to furthering the rights of Indonesian women by incorporating all the SDGs into Indonesia's five-year medium term national development plans, *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional (RPJMN) 2020–2024*. His Cabinet has the highest number of women in the country's history (Bhardwaj and Dunstan, 2019) and important bills affecting women with disabilities and violence within the household have been passed or are in passage (Bexley and Bessell, 2022). The third Voluntary National Review (VNR) by the Government records significant progress towards nine SDGs and notes the efforts made toward collecting gender disaggregated data (Ministry of National Development Planning, 2021a). However, under SDG 5 progress has been made towards only 33.6 per cent of the indicators, with target 5.4 remaining as yet largely unrealized (UN Women Data Hub, n.d.).

This report pays close attention to how far Indonesia has progressed on the unpaid care policy agenda and advances recommendations for what more can be done to make policies care-sensitive and gender-differentiated. It begins with an overview of the macro socioeconomic and political context in Indonesia, and then moves to discuss the institutional and legislative context in the country, that supports gender equality and unpaid care work. Next, it elaborates the policy framework to address unpaid care and domestic work and the measures taken by Indonesia under four care-sensitive policy categories — care infrastructure, care-related social protections, care services, and employment-related care policies. The report concludes with specific recommendations to support policy planning by identifying key levers of change that can help the country advance the cause of women's empowerment by recognizing, reducing, and redistributing care work across various stakeholders in society. This requires giving due importance to the rights of both care givers and care receivers as well as involving all stakeholders such as the State, businesses, families, and the community in care provision.

3 G20 Bali Leaders Declaration.



## Section 2

# Macro socio-economic-political context

Indonesia is a diverse archipelago nation with more than 300 ethnic groups. It is one of the largest economies in Southeast Asia and the fourth most populous country in the world. After a period of political regime change and weathering the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s, Indonesia has emerged among the top ten global economies in terms of purchasing power parity (World Bank, 2022). It has translated this economic progress into social gains by cutting the poverty rate from 16 per cent in 2005 to under 10 per cent in 2018 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2020).

However, this progress has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with the country dropping from being an upper-middle income to lower-middle income status (World Bank, 2021). Urban centres and people employed outside the agricultural sector are more prone to experience poverty as a result of pandemic setbacks (World Bank, 2020a). The Voluntary National Review of progress towards the SDGs reported adverse effects on the following economic indicators between 2019 to 2020: income per capita fell from USD 4,174.9 to USD 3,911.7, economic growth

contracted from 5.02 per cent to -2.07 per cent, informal sector economy grew to 60.47 per cent, unemployment rate increased from 5.23 per cent to 7.07 per cent, youth not in employment, education or training rose from 21.21 per cent to 23.85 per cent, and foreign tourist arrivals declined from 16.1 million to 4.1 million (Ministry of National Development Planning, 2021b).

The pandemic has also had gendered effects. More women than men lost their jobs due to the closure of export-oriented manufacturing, especially in garment factories, where women make up 80 per cent of the workforce (UN Women, 2021). COVID-19 increased the unpaid care and domestic workload on women with 19 per cent women noting an increase in the intensity of unpaid domestic work, compared with 11 per cent men (UN Women, 2020a). These twin effects of job and livelihood loss, coupled with rising care work, have enhanced Indonesian women's vulnerabilities resulting in physical depletion, mental and emotional stress as well as deepening pre-existing inequalities (ESCAP, 2021b).

## Section 3

# Institutional context for gender equality in Indonesia

The Republic of Indonesia draws its domestic laws and standards from international frameworks and conventions such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979 and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), 1995. Since the 1990s, the government has encouraged a larger role for women in national development activities and public life.

### 3.1 Legislative frameworks

Discrimination on the basis of sex is prohibited both by the Constitution and Law No. 39/1999 on human rights (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). A national gender mainstreaming policy was enacted in 2000 through a Presidential Decree which obliged all government bodies to integrate gender concerns into their planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, and budgeting processes (Directorate General of Customs and Excise, Indonesia, 2021). Several laws have consequently been made gender sensitive, such as the Population Growth and Family Development Law No. 52/2009. This law specifies that demographic data should be disaggregated by gender and that poverty should be eradicated among female-headed households. Other laws include the Elimination of Domestic Violence Law No. 23/2004, which strengthens efforts to eliminate domestic violence and makes provision of services for victims; the Citizen Administration Law No. 23/2006, which adopts a non-discriminatory principle in serving citizens; and the Human Trafficking Law No. 21/2007, which focuses on countering and criminalizing trafficking in persons (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016).

In a significant move to increase women's political representation, the Political Party Law No. 2/2008 and General Election Law No. 10/2008 were amended in 2011 and 2012 respectively to require the nomination of at least 30 per cent women candidates for national, provincial, and district/city level parliaments. This resulted in women's representation increasing to 20 per cent of the total seats in parliament in 2019 (Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2020, p. 13). As many as 76 women were elected as Regent/Mayor and Deputy Regent/Deputy Mayor in local government elections and the executive level in 2015, while female civil servants in 2019 were close to half of all civil servants in Indonesia (ibid).

Gender-based violence has been identified as a priority area for accelerating gender equality. The Government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards gender-based violence. Several laws provide the necessary legal framework to uphold women's rights and protect them. These include the Law on Domestic Violence (2004), the Victim Protection Law (2006), the Law on Anti-Trafficking (2007), and the Law on the Protection of Women and Anti Gender-based Violence (2009) (UNDP, n.d.). The Law No. 12/2022 about Sexual Violence Offences was enacted in April 2022 after years of deliberation and resistance from conservative groups. The law provides victims with access to the judicial system, implements mechanisms for the protection and recovery of victims, prevents the actual occurrence of sexual violence, and involves the community, state, family, and business in creating a sexual violence-free environment (Widianto, 2022).

Box 1 summarizes the key laws and regulations to support breastfeeding to and enable women workers in paid employment to continue their jobs after maternity leave.

**BOX 1 Laws and regulations on breastfeeding****LAW NO. 49/1999 ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

Women are entitled to special protection in the undertaking of work or a profession that can threaten their safety and/or reproductive health including menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and opportunities to breastfeed children.

**ACT NO. 13/2003 ON MANPOWER**

Article 82, Paragraph (1): Female workers/labourers are entitled to a 1.5 (one-and-a-half) months period of rest before the time at which they are estimated by an obstetrician or a midwife to give birth to a baby and another 1.5 (one-and-a-half) months period of rest thereafter.

Article 83: Entrepreneurs are under an obligation to provide proper opportunities to female workers/labourers whose babies still need breastfeeding to breastfeed their babies if that must be performed during working hours.

**LAW NO. 36/2009 ON HEALTH**

Article 128: Every child has the right to receive breast milk exclusively from birth for a minimum of 6 (six) months unless there is a medical indication to the contrary. During the breastfeeding period, the family, the Government, the Local Government and the community must give full support to the mother's infant by providing time and special facilities. Provision of specialized facilities shall be implemented in the workplace and in public facilities.

**GOVT REGULATION 33/2012**

Article 2: Enhance the role and support that the family, society, local government and Government provide to exclusive breastfeeding, by guaranteeing the child's right to be exclusively breastfed from birth to 6 (six) months and protecting the child's right to be exclusively breastfed from birth to 6 (six) months.

Article 30: Workplace and Public Facilities must support exclusive breastfeeding in accordance with company regulations that govern relations between employers and workers or through agreements between union workers and employers.

**MINISTER OF HEALTH DECREE NO. 450/MENKES/SK/VI/2004**

To endorse exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia for 6 (six) months, with a possibility of continuing until the age of 2 (two) years together with complementary foods. Health care staff must inform all mothers who have just given birth to breastfeed their infants exclusively with reference to the "10 (ten) Steps to Successful Breastfeeding".

**JOINT REGULATIONS OF 3 MINISTERS**

Minister of Empowerment of Women and Child Protection, Minister of Manpower and Transmigration and Minister of Health on allowing mothers to express breast milk during working hours in the workplace.

*Source:* Better Work Indonesia, n.d.

Indonesian tax laws conceive of the family as one economic unit. This results in an inconsistent treatment of married women's taxable income in the calculation of household tax liabilities (AIPEG, 2017). A controversial Family Resilience Bill was tabled in early 2020 prior to the pandemic which aimed at reinforcing traditional gender norms on division of household labour in order to protect the notion of 'family' (Cayha, 2020). However, its passage was stalled when several political factions came together to reject its deliberations in the House of Representatives. Another controversial law is the recent Omnibus Law, also known as the Job Creation Bill. It was officially passed on 5th October 2020. Though aimed at attracting foreign and domestic investments

and increasing ease of business in hiring staff, local workers feel it will compromise their social security, income security, and job security even though it may boost foreign investments (Nanwani, 2021). In particular, aspects like removing sectoral minimum wages and reduced severance pay could hit women workers harder as they are often concentrated in lower skill and lower pay jobs.

Laws provide a legislative framework within which the State, and non-state actors can implement policies and programs to realize gender equality and women's rights. The next section discusses the implementation architecture underpinning the legal framework.



Sixteen days of activism in Indonesia against gender-based violence. Photo © Putra Djohan / UN Women Indonesia

### 3.2 Implementation machinery

The Ministry for Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection (MoWECP) is the main national machinery entrusted with the task of advancing the rights of women and children. It closely liaisons with other ministries to support their gender mainstreaming activities. Each ministry has established focal points and gender working groups to coordinate gender-responsive planning and budgeting throughout all divisions. For example, the Ministry of Finance set up a Gender Equality and Diversity (GED) task force in 2006 to ensure effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. The task force consisted of high-level representatives who were assigned the role of “Gender Champions”. Members had the mandate to develop an action plan for GED, coordinate GED-related activities, monitor their implementation, and evaluate the progress towards gender mainstreaming (Directorate General of Customs and Excise, Indonesia, 2021).

Indonesia is guided by the National Long-term Development Plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional* or RPJMN) 2005–2025. This plan underscores the Government’s commitment to gender equality by aligning the national development agenda with SDG 5 on gender equality. The National Medium-Term Development Plan (2015–2019) stipulated gender-mainstreaming efforts in all policies and programmes.

Five key presidential directives were issued to the MoWECP under this plan (ESCAP, 2021c):

- i improving women’s empowerment in entrepreneurship using a gender perspective,
- ii improving mother’s and the family’s role in children’s parenting and education,
- iii decreasing violence against women and children,
- iv decreasing child labour, and
- v prevention of child marriage.

In response to the stagnant female labour force participation, MoWECP in collaboration with the Ministry of Village, launched a “Women and Children Friendly Village” programme. This is aimed at improving Women and Children Friendly Village program which aimed at implementing the five presidential directives in addition to helping women win seats in village councils thereby improving their leadership capacity in the village (Dwitami, 2021). Other major issues taken up by the MoWECP include emergency responses to women in disasters and conflict situations and improving the condition of older women and women with disabilities who are considered most vulnerable.

International partners and donor agencies also work closely with the Government of Indonesia to support the gender equality strategy and action planning.

For example, the UNDP in Indonesia supports ministries to promote women in peacebuilding, gender sensitive budgeting for climate change adaptation, gender sensitive law-enforcement in environment crimes-handling, and gender equality in economic empowerment. The UNDP has identified four interrelated outcomes for country level programming. First, empowering women to have an adequate standard of living with decent, sustainable income and employment. This requires inclusive and sustainable growth development and opportunities for women. Second, working with local service providers to ensure the rights of women are protected without stigma or discrimination, especially in the provision of basic health services. Third, supporting the greater participation of women in the sustainable management of natural resources, to promote a gender inclusive and responsive green economy and disaster management responses. And fourth, strengthening access to justice through responsive and accountable public institutions, especially for poor and vulnerable women (UNDP, n.d.).

Thus, collaborations across national, regional, local level government, including non-state actors, community-based organizations and international non-government organizations have been instrumental in advancing the agenda of women's human rights and gender equality in Indonesia.

### 3.3 Social and cultural norms

Despite the policy commitment discussed in the preceding sections, entrenched gender norms continue to shape the participation of women in public and private life in the country. These gender norms frame women as primarily wives, mothers and daughters responsible for the care of husbands, children and parents (Ford, 2018).

The Social Norms, Attitudes and Practices (SNAP) survey conducted across Indonesia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam in 2018 and again in 2020 throws light on gender norms (Investing in Women, 2020a). The survey gathers perceptions affecting childcare and

housework, breadwinning and family income, job segregation and leadership at work. In Indonesia, more than half of women participants reportedly believed that women were best suited to take care of children and about half agreed that women were better at taking care of dependent adults. This view was shared by men as well. Further, 65 per cent of female respondents and 83 per cent of male respondents held traditional or leaned towards traditional views confirming gender role stereotypes of male breadwinner and female caregiver. On a positive note, for equitable sharing of care work, 50 and 60 per cent of men and women, respectively, reported an increase in time they and their partner spent on domestic responsibilities and reported they put pressure on themselves to do more in this area (ibid).

Across generations a positive trend towards gender equality was observed with an increasing number of younger women reporting they wanted their partners to share in childcare more as compared to the present or previous generations (ibid). However, regression analysis showed that respondents who identified as followers of Islam were less supportive of equality on caregiving, family income earning and leadership than those who were non-religious or followed another religion. Childhood influences along with religious belief systems were found to influence attitudes towards gender equality (Investing in Women, 2020b). These findings are confirmed by reports which show a conservative push back on gender equality, and efforts to regulate access to sexual health and reproductive services in the name of religious values (Bexley and Bessell, 2022).

Media were found to be an important source of influence for changing gender norms. Indonesian men reported a link between seeing more equal media images (where women and men are equally seen taking care of children, doing housework and in leadership roles at work) and their own behaviour of practising more equitable caregiving at home. This bodes well for strategies to influence norm shifts by creative use of social, printed and electronic media discussed further in the recommendations section.

## Section 4

# Addressing unpaid care work in Indonesia

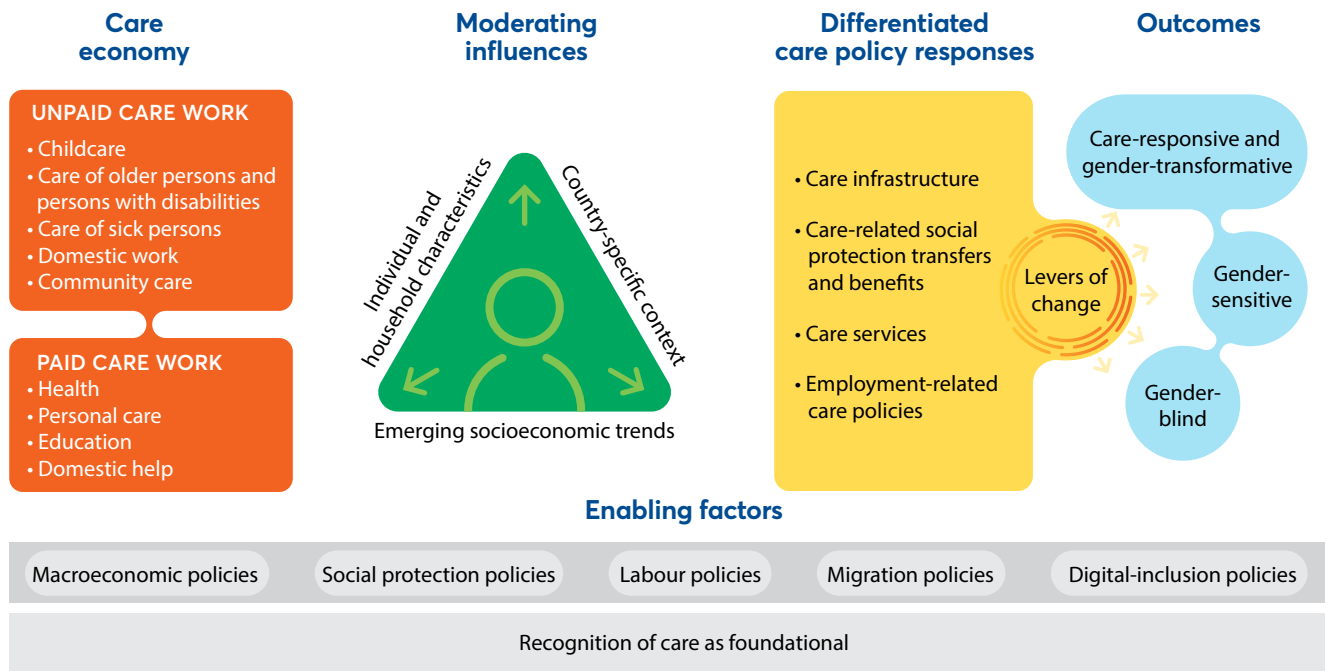
SDG 5.4 sheds light on the need to recognize and value care work to achieve the objective of a gender egalitarian society and economy. This recognition needs to go hand-in-hand with a reduction in the drudgery, time and energy intensity of care work, as well as a redistribution of unpaid care from women to men and households to State, markets or communities. The strategy to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work is known in development discourse as the Triple R framework (Elson, 2008). The ILO in 2018 expanded this conceptualization to incorporate Reward and Representation of paid care workers through an emphasis on decent working conditions, adequate wages and social security benefits, social dialogue and collective bargaining for rights. This is now widely known as the 5R framework (ILO, 2018). These frameworks offer the necessary conceptual foundations on which practical strategies need to be operationalized.

This report draws on the care-sensitive policy framework developed by ESCAP in its previous regional and sub-regional work on the care economy (ESCAP, 2021b; 2021c). This is depicted in Figure 1. While the care economy is composed of both paid care and unpaid care, the focus of this report is on analysing the state of unpaid care and how to promote its recognition and valuation. Unpaid care specifically consists of the care of children and of older persons, the sick, and persons with disabilities, household and domestic chores as well as voluntary community services. The time, extent, quality, and outcomes of care provision are mediated by individual household characteristics, country-specific contexts, and emerging socioeconomic trends. Women's intersectional identity across multiple axes such as geographical location, income level, ethnicity, age, marital status, disability, employment type, etc. These can further accentuate their marginalization in policy responses.

The recognition of care as foundational to human life forms the bedrock of the framework. It also underscores the importance of an enabling legislative and policy environment across domains such as labour market, social protection, migration, digital inclusion, and the macroeconomy. The extent to which policy responses account for women's differentiated care needs determines the extent to which a country can create care-responsive and gender-transformative outcomes. Four policy categories that must be addressed in order to comprehensively recognize and value women's disproportionate load of unpaid care work are identified, namely —

- 1 *Care infrastructure* which addresses water, sanitation, energy, transport, food services, health care for the sick (HIV patients, COVID-19 patients), persons with disabilities and/or pregnant women.
- 2 *Care-related social protections* which covers cash transfers, cash-for-care, vouchers, tax benefits and non-contributory pension schemes aimed at women directly or at their care roles like food provisioning or care of dependents.
- 3 *Care services* which include childcare, older person care, care for persons with disabilities or who are sick, through the State or markets.
- 4 *Employment-related care policies* which refers to leave policies, family-friendly working arrangements, flexitime, career breaks, sabbaticals, severance pay, employer-funded or contributory social protection schemes like maternity benefits.

FIGURE 1 Care-sensitive policy framework



Source: ESCAP, 2021c, p. 8

### 4.1 Estimating unpaid care work

Official national level time-use survey data is not available for Indonesia (ESCAP, 2021c), thus, it is difficult to track or estimate the time spent by sex, age or location, on different care tasks. However, a small-scale survey was conducted by the Government as a pilot in 1998–99. 100 villages in rural areas made up the sample. Later, in 2004–05, an urban sample of five municipalities in four urban centres was surveyed. The 24-hour time diary was required to be filled in by respondents aged 15 years or older in the selected households. Since literacy levels are low, only those who could read were sampled. Some challenges noted by the national statistics organization were that rural people did not concern themselves with time and were not interested in filling the time diaries. Some independent research studies and estimates on men and women’s time use in domestic chores and care activities can be used to surmise the gendered nature of this work.

One study notes how women’s engagement in market work is often limited due to childcare responsibilities (Schaner and Das, 2016). Even when women increase their labour force participation, the unpaid domestic care does not decrease. Women and girls within households in Indonesia, mostly wives and daughters-in-law, continue to do the majority of the unpaid care work activities, which is

often three to six times that of men’s contribution (Utari, 2017). Another study conducted in 2018, confirmed findings that more women than men were engaged in unpaid care work, even when they undertook paid work. Men reported being engaged in paid work only, and often spent no time in unpaid domestic work and care (Bexley and Bessell, 2022). Even when women migrate out of the home for work, the transfer of care, particularly childcare happens from women to women, notably grandmothers (Utari, 2017). This gendered trend has been further deepened during the pandemic.

A survey of 12,216 nationally representative households across all 34 provinces was conducted during October–November 2020, to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Indonesia’s households. Findings observed that mothers were three times more likely to care for children than fathers. 71.5 per cent of households reported the woman as supporting children with home schooling compared to only 22 per cent of households who indicated the father. Half of these women were also engaged in paid work to support their families, indicating that they struggled to balance the workload in the face of additional responsibilities posed by school closures (UNICEF and others, 2021). Rapid gender assessments during the early months of the pandemic confirmed the influence of gender norms in intensifying women’s care roles (Care International, 2020; UN Women, 2020a). One

study showed that 50 per cent of women reported spending between 3–5 hours on household/domestic work, while 71 per cent men reported spending less than 2 hours on domestic chores. Respondents of the online survey also reported an increase in gender-based violence on account of financial distress and loss of income (31 per cent), unemployment (23 per cent), unpaid care tasks (7 per cent) and domestic work (7 per cent) respectively (J-PAL and UNDP, 2021).

While Indonesia has reported moderate improvement on SDG 5 on gender equality,<sup>4</sup> it is noteworthy that this mostly stems from a reduction in the number of child marriages, better access to family planning services and availability of high-quality social protection programmes (Ministry of National Development Planning, 2019). The national review for Beijing Platform for Action+25 reports supportive steps that Indonesia has taken to protect the rights of female workers, especially work-family balance guarantees for maternity leave, flexible working hours for pregnant women, support for breastfeeding (see [Box 1](#)) and providing lactation rooms and childcare rooms in office buildings (Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2020, p. 27). However, no specific measures or metrics of progress are reported towards SDG 5.4, indicating the need for explicit attention to be focused by policymakers on the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid domestic and care work of women.

## 4.2 Care-sensitive policy measures

### 1. CARE INFRASTRUCTURE

The gender-based Human Development Report (2021), discusses the wide regional variations in the extent of human development indicators for women in Indonesia. Nineteen provinces report values below national figures. These include six provinces on the island of Sumatra, one province on the island of Java, one province on the islands of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, five provinces on the island of Kalimantan, three provinces on the island of Sulawesi and three provinces on the islands of Maluku and Papua (Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2021). Uneven infrastructure development and access to care-linked services especially health,

education, housing, water, and fuel have severe impacts on women given the nature of their roles and responsibilities. The proportion of urban households with access to basic sanitation and hygiene facilities exceeds households located in rural areas (Ministry of National Development Planning, 2021a). This directly impacts women and girls more severely as they not only have personal hygiene requirements but also are most often responsible for meeting the family's sanitation and hygiene. These gendered effects are further exacerbated by intersectional identity factors such as age, class, ethnicity, geographical location, marital status, household structure, disability, etc. (ESCAP, 2021c). For example, more than half of the poorest women living in the rural Papua province lack skilled assistance during childbirth, while all women in the richest urban households in Bali have access to it (ASEAN and UN Women, 2021). Similarly, the road map for the meeting the SDGs acknowledges the need to invest in better healthcare infrastructure targeting women's sexual health and reproductive needs.

### 2. CARE-RELATED SOCIAL PROTECTIONS

High quality, gender responsive social protection systems are one of the priority areas for the MoWCEP. The government's Family Hope Program or *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH) is a flagship conditional cash transfer program reaching close to 10 million beneficiary families (or 15 per cent of the population) (ESCAP, 2021c, p. 43). The program targets pregnant and lactating women and provides specific services for women. It encourages the poorest beneficiary families to use maternal and child-related health and nutrition services. Family development sessions and learning materials to beneficiary mothers equip them with a better understanding of health and nutrition, good parenting practices, child protection, and financial management. However, the emphasis is more on child health and educational outcomes and less on gender equality as a mother's role in childcare provision is reinforced. The program coverage expanded during the pandemic with the top-up of cash transfers to existing PKH beneficiaries under a new temporary emergency scheme. The PKH program budget increased by nearly 29 per cent to reach IDR 37.4 trillion (USD 2.5 billion) and benefit payments were made monthly instead of quarterly (ESCAP, 2021b; World Bank, 2022).

4 See country dashboard at [Sustainable Development Report 2021](#).



### 3. CARE SERVICES

The care of dependents (young children, older persons or persons with disabilities) often falls on the women in the family. Women are not only vulnerable as the primary or sole care providers for dependents but may themselves be needing care as in the case of women with disabilities or older women. According to the 2015 National Inter-Census Population Survey (Susenas), there were 11,387,730 women with disabilities in Indonesia. This included a number of women with cognitive impairment and mobility issues. These women experience multiple discriminations of account of their gender, disability, and class. The Government of Indonesia passed Law No. 8/2016 concerning people with disabilities to recognize the vulnerability of such women. The Ministry of Labour reported that 2,084 women with disabilities were employed in 2019 indicating some avenues of progress (Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2020).

Similarly, women comprise a majority of older and ageing persons above 60 years. This number is expected to rise proportionately among higher age groups in future. A feminization of ageing is explained by the higher life expectancy women enjoy in Indonesia (UNFPA Indonesia, 2014). Women's lower labour force participation has implications for absence of social security and pensions linked to waged employment. With fewer social security provisions available to women in old age, both unconditional social protection transfers as well as institutional care services are needed.

Early childhood care and education has been a policy priority for the Government of Indonesia following Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education. The emphasis on care and education varies based on the type of facility. Kindergartens and playschools cater more to educational goals while integrated care facilities or standalone day-care centres address the care and health needs of young children. The childcare service provision is highly decentralized and varied, catered to by communities, religious institutions, and private providers (World Bank, 2020b). The central government is largely responsible for issuing standards, curriculum, and accreditation, while district governments manage the financing and implementation of services. Box 2 shows a glimpse of the laws and regulations pertaining to the provision of childcare services in Indonesia.

Between 2016 to 2019, while the number of kindergartens grew by 4 per cent and the number of playgroups by 5 per cent, the number of day-care and other early childhood care and education services grew by a smaller percentage and even fell slightly in 2017–19 (World Bank, 2020b, p. 34). This inadequate attention to childcare services is explained by the prevalence of a patriarchal conception of the family, emphasis on women's central role as mothers, and a middling female labour force participation rate. In line with regional variations observed in other infrastructure and service provision, more than 13,800 villages (17 per cent) lack any childcare services. Additionally, there are substantial variations in pupil–teacher ratios and teacher qualifications across provinces (ibid, p. 38). Lack of sufficient full time day-care facilities limits parents, especially mothers, from taking up paid work or restricts them to part-time, flexible, informal sector opportunities.

#### BOX 2 Laws and policies on daycare

- Law No. 20/2003 of the National Education System
- MoE Regulation 58/2009: early childhood education
- MoE Regulation 137/2014: academic qualification for early childhood teachers
- Technical Guidance of the Directorate of Early Childhood Education of MoEC of 2015: standards of daycare management
- Joint publication of ILO Indonesia, Bappenas, MAMPU, AusAID of 2015: community-based child caring training manual
- MoSA Regulation 30/2011: national standard on childcare in institutions (foster care)
- MoH 79/2014: geriatric daylight-care clinic in the hospital
- MoHA Circular Letter No. 420/9239/SJ 2018 on implementation of school literacy education in the regions

Source: Utari, 2017; World Bank, 2020b

# Pelatihan Menjahit CFW

UNW 1-8 & TIM U  
26 & 27 Januari 2021



Gender Sensitization Training, UN Women, 21 February 2021, Sukabumi, Indonesia. Photo © Putra Djohan / UN Women Indonesia

#### 4. EMPLOYMENT-RELATED CARE POLICIES

Workplace gender equality is a goal towards which Indonesia has more distance to cover. Compliance to most labour regulations is weak as found by the World Bank's Women, Business, and the Law index (Setianto, 2020). The government has ratified only three Conventions of the International Labour Organization; the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Other labour standards that have an impact on women and care responsibilities have not yet been ratified (ESCAP, 2021c, p. 36).<sup>5</sup> Additionally, inequitable tax laws inadvertently contribute to low female participation rates in the workforce by placing a higher tax burden on married women who may be secondary earners in the family. This leads to financial choices by families where women opt not to work (Dwitami, 2021).

Comprehensive regulations that support women to address their care responsibilities, such as generous maternity leave entitlements and government-sponsored childcare, are critical in retaining women in the workforce (Dwitami, 2021). Employer-paid maternity leave in Indonesia is three months in duration. Though paternity leave is mandated by the 2003 Manpower Law to all married fathers, it is only two days long at full pay for the birth of a child, or for miscarriage (Baird and Hill, 2019).<sup>6</sup> There are no provisions for parental leave, adoption rights or rights of workers with care responsibilities (Better Work Indonesia, n.d.). The Ministry of Manpower (*Kementerian Ketenagakerjaan*) has been engaged in efforts to socialize both public and private sector companies to allocate special integrated spaces for childcare and breastfeeding in offices, buildings, apartments and public places. Some ministries and the private sectors have begun to enact longer paternity leave for men (Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> These include the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118); Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156); Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175); Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177); Maternity Protection Convention, revised, 2000 (No. 183); and Domestic Workers' Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Other pertinent ILO conventions: Income Security Recommendation, 1944 (No. 67); Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102); Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964 (No. 121); Medical Care and Sickness Benefits Convention, 1969 (No. 130); Invalidity, Old-Age and Survivors' Benefits Convention, 1967 (No. 128); and Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

<sup>6</sup> As per the National Civil Service Agency Regulation No 24/2017, male civil servants in Indonesia are eligible for one month of paternity leave and receive their basic pay during this time (Baird & Hill, 2019).

## Section 5

# Recommendations for action planning

The technical recommendations suggested in this report mirror the broader framework for addressing unpaid care work put forward in previous reports published by ESCAP. This dovetails with the ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy that identified six strategic priority areas for ASEAN member States, namely, promoting healthy ageing societies, enhancing the role of care economy in disaster resilience, accelerating the digital transformation of the care economy in ASEAN, building stronger and resilient families, enhancing social protection, and increasing care for the environment (ASEAN, 2021). The implementation of SDG 5.4 calls policymakers' attention to the Triple R approach of Recognition, Reduction, and Redistribution of women's disproportionate unpaid care burden along with the need for just Rewards and Representation of the voices of care workers as acknowledged by the high road to care by the 5R framework (ILO, 2018). Governments must implement policies under each of the four care-sensitive policy categories identified in the conceptual framework shared in Figure 1. Apart from attention to policy design, comprehensive and efficient policy implementation is critical to ensuring gender transformative policy outcomes. Figure 2 depicts six levers of change that have been identified in ESCAP research as necessary for successful policy efforts. Each lever is discussed in detail in the context of Indonesia to enable policymakers across national, regional and local levels to adopt measures and activities that can together address the unpaid care economy.

### 1 Legislative frameworks that recognize care as foundational

The national development plans in Indonesia have not yet focused sufficient attention to the goal of SDG 5 for gender equality, especially SDG 5.4 on

**FIGURE 2** Levers of change to mainstream care policies



Source: ESCAP, 2021b, p. 57.

unpaid care work (Utari, 2017). This oversight must be corrected by making a conscious effort to focus policy attention onto the issue of unpaid care, which is a cross-cutting theme in gender equality, rights-based human capital development, economic growth, and a sustainable future. Gender equitable employment-related care policies can go a long way in emphasizing the importance of care responsibilities of all adult workers as well as levelling the field for men and women. For example, expansion of paternity leave in line with maternity leave or introduction of a gender-equitable parental and carer leave presents an opportunity to emphasize the care responsibilities of all workers irrespective of their gender. Another way of valuing care work is by expanding the working rights and social protections for various

groups of care workers, especially domestic workers and migrant care workers who are predominantly women. Adding care onto this agenda will be crucial to ensure adequate policy attention is given to the issue of unpaid care and domestic work.

## **2 Increase gender and care-disaggregated data**

The absence of time use data or household level statistics on unpaid care and domestic activities limits the ability of policy champions to argue for evidence-based policy change. It has been recognized that time use surveys can be expensive, time consuming, and often difficult to implement (Charmes, 2021; ESCAP, 2021a). The last small-scale time use survey in Indonesia was piloted by the national statistics authority in 2004–05. This must be updated to reflect current realities in the gendered division of labour. In some countries existing labour force and household consumption surveys are used to collect data by incorporating a standalone module to gather statistics on the way men and women spend their time on care activities – including household chores and care of dependents. Demographic parameters related to sex, age, geographical location, employment status, education, family size, dependency ratios, marital status and number of children can help analyse the specific needs of different women. Such data can ensure targeted design and delivery of social protection programs especially to pregnant and lactating women, women with disabilities, widows, and pensioners who are especially vulnerable groups that need to be supported through care-sensitive policies. Being a member of the ASEAN bloc, enables Indonesia to draw on regional cooperation towards national statistical data collection. The ASEAN Community Statistical System Committee is committed to working with the national statistical offices of ASEAN member States to strengthen capacity building of systems and personnel, designing better approaches to gender and care disaggregated data collection and implementing large scale surveys (ESCAP, 2021c, p. 57).

## **3 Gender-responsive budgeting and financing of policies**

Budgetary support and financial outlays are crucial for expanding investments in care infrastructure as well as publicly provided care services for children, the sick, older persons, and other dependents. The gender mainstreaming efforts in Indonesia can be strengthened by ensuring allocation of funds and monitoring and evaluation of gender budgets aimed at addressing women's differentiated care needs.

Interventions must particularly address, i) work-life balance measures; ii) care infrastructure in rural areas; iii) improvement of care work conditions (with a special focus on migrant workers); iv) expansion of care services for children and older persons. An example from the Philippines is illustrative here. Line ministries are committed to spending at least five per cent of the Gender and Development budgets on addressing the care needs of women. This is done through various measures such as setting up of childcare centres of public sector employees, nominating public officials for gender sensitization training, or allocating funds for establishing care infrastructure at the local levels (ESCAP, 2022). Other ways in which gender budgets can bring about change are through expansion of universal health coverage, accessible roads, clean water sources, efficient fuel and energy sources, and universal public childcare. An investment in clean drinking water in some ASEAN countries has shown to result in significant gains in terms of time saving for women as well as promoting better health and sanitation (European Investment Bank, 2019). The access to basic sanitation and hygiene in rural areas has already been identified as an area of policy attention for Indonesia. Alternative and innovative funding models and approaches, for example, through public–private partnerships and involving the private sector must be explored.

## **4 Challenging and changing gender norms**

Research on women's paid and unpaid work confirms the prevalence of patriarchal gender norms and gender roles in Indonesia. Any efforts to reduce and redistribute the care responsibilities from women in the household to either men or the State or markets will require a shift in mind-sets and gender norms. Normalizing the role of men in care through media campaigns on TV, in print, and social media platforms have been successfully harnessed by other countries. One such example is the Good Men campaign in Cambodia (United Nations Population Fund, 2015). This campaign was an initiative to reach out to men aged 15 to 49 years to deliver the message for a positive behaviour change. It produced TV and radio spots, posters, brochures, and other materials distributed among men to promote an understanding of being a "good man" by messages as "Good men give value to women." Such successful practices can be adopted in the national context of Indonesia to send cultural-relevant messages that aim towards an attitude change, especially among the younger generations. Education is found to be another important factor that can help in narrowing the gap between men and women when it comes to

household work (Utari, 2017). Indonesia's emphasis on early childhood education and learning can be leveraged to send gender equitable messages through study material and teacher's engagement as has been effectively experimented in schools in India (ESCAP, 2021c, p. 59). Past efforts at conducting gender equity workshops within schools have noted some resistance to the words such as 'feminism', being seen as a Western concept. However, persistent efforts can result in recognition of gender biased behaviours among teachers who then go one to create more gender equitable learning environments (Marpinjun and Ramsey, 2017).

### **5 Women carers' representation in decision making**

The ILO has laid heavy emphasis on the voice and social dialogue with paid care workers who are largely women in sectors such as early childhood care, education, health, and domestic work. There is a need to also make the voices of unpaid care givers visible in policy discussions and decision making. Boundaries between paid care and unpaid care work often blur, especially within the households and the needs and rights of all care givers are critical to ensure the quality-of-care services and the dignity of care recipients. The Women-headed Household Empowerment (*Perempuan Kepala Keluarga*), also known as PEKKA is a famous case study on how grassroots efforts can be mobilized for women's empowerment and economic advancement (Quak, 2019). These learnings can be translated to the issue of bringing recognition and value to women's unpaid care work. The MoWECP can play a crucial role in ensuring the inclusion and representation of the voice of the care and domestic work providers, not only the ones who work as paid carers but also the unpaid caregivers. For example, the expansion of sectors like early childhood education and care must be incentivized with increased public funding from central ministries, districts and villages along with protecting the decent work conditions and wages of the care providers (World Bank, 2020b). More research is needed on care provision for older persons and persons with disabilities, especially with regard to financial incentives to care workers and decent working conditions. The Ministry of Manpower is

the main government agency responsible for labour affairs. Trade union confederations such as the Confederation of Indonesian Prosperity Trade Union (KSBSI), the Confederation of All Indonesia Trade Unions (KSPSI) and the Confederation of Indonesian Trade Union Congress (KSPI) represent the voice of workers (ILO, 2019). Concerns of women workers and care related concerns of all workers can be brought to the policy table by the representative organizations.

### **6 Whole-of-government approach**

Not only is care a cross-cutting issue across several Sustainable Development Goals, but a comprehensive policy response requires actions across multiple policy categories including care infrastructure, care-related social protections, care services and employment-related care policies. These policies touch upon different government ministries and departments such as Ministry of Social affairs, Ministry of Health, ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transportation, and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, and Ministry of Manpower, to name a few. A whole-of-government approach is suggested to ensure care is held as a central concern alongside the gender mainstreaming agenda in order to ensure that every ministry incorporates a care focus in their policy and budgeting decisions. Presidential decrees have been effective in setting the goal of gender mainstreaming and strategic priority area. While the MoWECP plays a crucial monitoring, evaluation, and advisory role on gender and care related issues, the agenda of unpaid care and domestic work must be treated as a national socioeconomic issue to get necessary traction and support from a broad spectrum of policymakers through inter-ministerial collaborations. Not only the central government, but local governments too need to take ownership for evaluating the care needs of their citizens and investing in local levels infrastructure and services. Since decentralization of policy since 2001, local governments have their own authority to manage their regions. Other important actors include the private sector, state owned companies, local government owned companies, non-government organizations, and civil society.

## Section 6

# Conclusion

Governments around the world have been intent on not only building back better but also more equal, more resilient and sustainable after the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. A twin focus on gender equality and the green economy are key pillars in this recovery and rebuilding process. Indonesia is perfectly poised to advance the cause of SDG 5 on gender equality for Indonesian women by expanding its policy focus to include the care economy in its gender mainstreaming efforts. Any recovery process must address the central and crucial role that care work — paid and unpaid — plays in our societies and economies.

Changing gender norms towards caregiving and breadwinning, point to the need for policy commitments to accelerate the pace of change. Cultural, religious, and social mindsets in Indonesia still dictate that the women's place is more suited to the home and that care is naturally a woman's task. The overarching commitment to leveraging women's full potential in national development provides a conducive normative policy climate within which specific actions can be taken.

This report has highlighted the need to accelerate the crucial task of collecting sex- and care-disaggregated data and time-use statistics in order to provide the necessary evidence base upon which policymakers can act. There is need to increase the voice of carers, especially unpaid caregivers within households, to become visible to policymakers and thereby further their role and representation in policy making. The report also advocates for a whole-of-government approach to systematically address

four key care-sensitive policy categories — care infrastructure, care-related social protections, care services, and employment-related care policies. Suggestions for policy actions under each of the four care-sensitive policy categories provide a starting point for policymakers to begin incorporating a care-sensitive and gender-differentiated lens into social policies. Investments in basic sanitation and hygiene facilities, public childcare, and social protections for older women and women with disabilities are some important policy areas. Finally, the report exhorts the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection to lead the orchestration of this care agenda. ESCAP can partner closely with the MoWECP and other ministries like Finance to provide technical assistance in policy design and implementation. Leveraging the ASEAN regional cooperation network is another critical support mechanism available to the Government.

The emphasis of this report is on arguing for the need to value unpaid care and domestic work by recognizing the role and importance of this care work, reducing drudgery and depletion involved in arduous care tasks, and redistributing the load through expanded public provisioning and/or suitable market and community-based alternatives. Every country within ASEAN and the broader Asia and Pacific region is alert to the need to build caring societies, caring economies and caring democracies. Indonesia through its leadership role at G20 and ACW can enact transformative change for Indonesian women. It can set an example for other regional neighbours by placing unpaid care and domestic work high on the policy agenda.



Community Peacebuilding Discussions Indonesia. Madura island, East Java. Photo © Ryan Brown / UN Women

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