

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN

By Servas International Reps to the UN-NY



2020 was expected to demonstrate much progress for the world’s women. However, COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on women and girls: higher rates of poverty, increased care burdens, and greater exposure to gender-based violence. While confirmed deaths from COVID-19 are lower in countries with women leaders (Denmark, Taiwan, Finland, New Zealand, and

Germany), only 11% of world’s heads of governments are women and many other factors are involved.

According to a UN Policy Brief, the pandemic is affecting especially the poorest and most marginalized in society and those facing racial and ethnic discrimination.

Economic impact: In 2020, 47 million more women and girls were pushed into extreme poverty due to the pandemic. Domestic workers and those employed in the informal economy were especially hard hit. Read: “5 ways COVID-19 is exacerbating global poverty”.

Domestic violence: Gender-based violence is increasing exponentially as many women are forced to stay with their abusers and resources for shelters/services are decreased.

Health: 70% of front-line workers in the health and social sector are women. They are more exposed to Covid-19 yet have less access to care.

The policy brief emphasizes 3 priorities:

- Ensure women’s equal representation in all COVID-19 response planning and decision-making.
- Drive transformative change for equality by addressing the paid and unpaid care economy.
- Target women and girls in all efforts to address the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women: *“Women need to be front and center when governments turn their attention to recovering from the*

*economic and social impact of Covid-19. Already, the pandemic threatens to erase decades of progress on gender equality and women's empowerment.” Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka urges governments to do more as they try to rebuild their economies, and this time to ensure women are able to compete fairly with men by providing more child care and other support.*

Resources to become more informed:

“Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women”, 4/9/20 ([www.UNwomen.org](http://www.UNwomen.org)).  
“Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2020” ([www.UNwomen.org](http://www.UNwomen.org))  
“Op-ed: Women working on the front line”, UN Women Ex. Dir. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

As SERVAS Reps to the UN, we support UN Sustainable Development Goal #5 on Gender Equality and encourage all SERVAS members to:

- Raise awareness about gender-equality through conversations with friends and social media
- Become familiar with women’s organizations such as UN Women ([unwomen.org](http://unwomen.org))
- Learn about organizations in your community that support women’s empowerment and leadership
- Participate in CSW65

**This year, because of Covid-19 pandemia, the 65th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, CSW65, March 15-26, 2021, is totally virtual.** The major theme is “women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.”

SERVAS INTERNATIONAL, as a UN-affiliated NGO, has been able to register **27 representatives, from 18 countries** : Australia, Austria, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Iran, Mexico, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, Taiwan, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda and USA.

For more info about the conference, go to [www.UNwomen.org](http://www.UNwomen.org)

At any time of the year, remember that many UN sessions are open to the public and can be watched directly through **WebTV.un.org**.