

# MIND THIS GAP: WOMEN AND EQUAL PAY

*The International Equal Pay Day is commemorated on 18 September annually by the Equal Pay International Coalition. It was established in 2019 to raise awareness about the persisting gender gap in pay, and to demand equal pay for equal work.*



## Gender gap in pay? What's that?

The gender gap in pay means the difference between what men and women make from similar jobs or for work of equal value. Globally, women on average, are paid about 20 per cent less than men.

At this pace, it will take 257 years to achieve economic gender parity.

## What do you mean by equal pay for work of equal value?

This simply means that all workers, irrespective of their gender or social status has the right to be paid equally for work equal value. This sounds simple, right? But its implementation has been difficult in real life – with men often earning way more than women for the same position or job.

## What do you mean by work of equal value?

This simply means a job that is the same or similar, but also a job that is not the same but is of equal value. Why this is important is because women's and men's work may be of equal value and yet be different in terms of qualifications, skills, responsibilities, or working conditions. For example, jobs in female-dominated sectors might be of the same value as jobs in male-dominated sectors like construction but the former sector pays much less than the latter.

## Why does the gender pay gap persist?

- **Traditional gender roles** which burdens women with disproportionate care burden reducing the time they can devote to formal jobs, which means they end up working in the informal sector where wages are low and there are no social benefits
- **Gender stereotypes** keep women concentrated in jobs surrounding caregiving that is often regarded as “unskilled,” or “soft-skilled” and therefore, lower paid
- **Discriminatory hiring processes** that keep women away from leadership roles or highly paid positions

## Why is this an urgent issue?

Women have been among those worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have suffered serious setbacks in their livelihood options and income security. All of these have negatively affected women's employment, and has reversed decades of progress made towards gender equality.

## What is the UN Women doing to address this?

The Equal Pay International Coalition or EPIC is led by the ILO, UN Women, and the OECD. EPIC supports governments, employers, workers, and their organisations to make concrete and coordinated progress towards pay parity and is currently the only multi-stakeholder partnership working to reduce the gender pay gap at the global, regional and national levels.

