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2024 ASIA-PACIFIC CARE FORUM

**Transforming Care:
Building Alliances, Empowering Women, Reshaping Economies**

27 - 29th AUGUST 2024, IN DHAKA - BANGLADESH

Join us to empower women and create inclusive, caring economies to advance women's economic empowerment in Asia-Pacific.

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In collaboration with:



Transforming Care: Building Alliances, Empowering Women, Reshaping Economies

Co-organized by: Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Government of Bangladesh and UN Women

with the support of

the Global Alliance for Care, Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), International Finance Corporation (IFC), Visa Foundation & AYAT Care

Concept Note & Agenda (Draft)

Background

Care – for children, elderly and the vulnerable is a right and shared responsibility and essential for families, societies, and economies to function and thrive. However, globally as well as in the Asia-Pacific, women bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work compared to men. Caregiving responsibilities are one of the main reasons women do not join the labour market. The lack of care services contributes to women taking up precarious work or dropping out of their jobs. Similarly, paid care jobs, which often employ women, many of whom are migrants, do not offer decent working conditions, with low wages and limited labour and social protection. When [women's contribution to all types of care](#) is considered, they contribute a staggering **USD\$11 trillion** to the global economy. Yet, women and girls continue to bear the cost of undervaluation of care work and the underinvestment in care services, pushing us back on progress made towards achieving gender equality.

There is diversity both in care needs across Asia Pacific and the care responsibilities women bear across their lives. Relative to other regions, South Asia has one of the lowest female labour force participation rates in the world.¹ About 40 percent of young women in South Asia are not employed, in school, or receiving professional training. In the Asia-Pacific, women already did between 4 to 11 times more unpaid care per day than men before COVID-19, and data shows this has only been exacerbated by the pandemic.² Globally, an estimated more than 2 million working mothers left the labour force in 2020 due to increased childcare responsibilities,

¹ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/south-asia-needs-more-women-workforce>

² https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/2021_Regional_Report_Covid19-Care-Economy.pdf

and a post-COVID study conducted in the Asia-Pacific found that 32% of women left the labour market compared to 9% of men due to increased care and domestic responsibilities.³

At the same time every year around 18 to 20 million people join the working-age population in South Asia, but only a third to a half of them will be employed – highlighting the urgent need to create decent jobs for the future.⁴ Shifting demographics, urbanization and changing family structures and climate-induced migration and food distress mean that the demand for care services, such as childcare, elderly care and care of the disabled is expected to rise in the next decades. In other parts of Asia Pacific, projected demographic trends underscore the urgent need to build a strong care workforce, due to the rising elderly population associated with a shrinking working age population – with Eastern Asia recording the fastest pace. **This necessitates the provision of different types of care: child, elderly and care for persons with disabilities and reducing indirect care to meet diverse needs of families in Asia Pacific.**

The pandemic has drawn attention to a trio of interlocking crises that systematically undermine gender equality and threaten the survival of people and the planet: jobs, care and climate. [UN Women's Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice](#) highlights that public investments in the care economy should be a key pillar of economic recovery. Affordable quality care services are not only critical to support women's (re)entry into the labour force and the well-being of children and older persons but can also drive a job-rich recovery.

UN Women has been working in partnership with multiple organizations in the region on efforts to Transform Care aligned to the 5R Framework. At the global level, UN Women convened the [Global Alliance for Care](#) together with the Government of Mexico in 2021. With a membership of more than 200 organizations, the Global Alliance for Care is the first global multi-stakeholder platform that facilitates and fosters spaces for collective action and advocacy, communication, and learning about care, its recognition as a need, as work, and as a right. Members contribute to and shape the Alliance's direction and activities, ensuring global and regional visibility and recognition in advancing the care economy and gender equality.

In Asia Pacific, UN Women has spearheaded the care agenda. Key regional dialogues such as the [Bali Care Dialogue 2022](#) and the 2023 [Asia-Pacific Care Economy Forum](#) in Kuala Lumpur convened by UN Women and partners gave a call to action to create more accessible, affordable, quality care services with opportunities for decent paid work for care workers.⁴ UN Women's research showed fast emerging digitally-enabled care enterprises can be a solution to provide more decent work opportunities in the care economy captured in the [Pathways towards decent work in the digitally enabled care economy in Southeast Asia](#). Building further on the work to transform the care economy in the Asia-Pacific, in March 2023, UN Women joined forces with SAFEEM and Bopinc to launch the ['Gender-inclusive Care Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Programme' \(GICEEP\)](#), which is supported by the Visa Foundation and IDRC to strengthen a gender-inclusive care ecosystem through ['Better Skills Better Care'](#) piloting innovative low income child care models, the [Care Accelerator 2.0](#) for accelerating gender-responsive care enterprises across Asia Pacific and strengthening capacity of ecosystem players and policymakers to invest in an inclusive care economy. [Forthcoming research](#) in 2024 by UN Women is piloting, costing and mapping supply and demand for childcare models for low-income communities in India and Bangladesh, with a view to support government to invest in the care sector as well as expand care delivery.

With the deadline for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fast approaching, we urgently need a new social pact for the future. We need to re-envision care systems to empower women, especially the most vulnerable and leave no one behind. Diverse stakeholders need to come together to create inclusive and caring economies that provide a bulwark against economic and environmental shocks and address the specific risks and challenges faced by women and girls.

The year 2025 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the momentous Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). As the global community rethinks how to accelerate our progress to achieve gender equality and women's economic empowerment and the wider SDGs through the upcoming Summit of the Future 2024 and Commission on the Status of Women ([Beijing +30](#)) in March 2025 - the 2024 [Asia Pacific Care Forum](#) in Dhaka, Bangladesh provides a timely moment to crystallize our focus to Transform Care.

2024 Asia-Pacific Care Economy Forum

Transforming Care: Building Alliances, Empowering Women, Reshaping Economies

The **2024 Care Economy Forum** seeks to engage governments, policymakers, civil society, investors and care enterprises from across Asia-Pacific to learn, exchange and contribute to the global movement on transforming care.

³ <https://data.unwomen.org/features/more-2-million-moms-left-labour-force-2020-according-new-global-estimates>

⁴ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/boosting-job-creation-south-asia>

Set over three days, the Forum will build a shared understanding of care and its intersections with pressing issues faced by our region such as the need for job creation, building climate -resilient care systems, practical solutions for financing and implementing care delivery models, and enhancing their linkages with social protection. Core to this will be building multi-stakeholder alliances for taking action on care.

Objectives

The key objectives of the Care Forum include the following:

- Build a shared understanding of the care economy and consensus on its importance for advancing women's economic empowerment and gender equality;
- Highlight policies and actions for increasing investments in the care economy and identify key gender data to enable evidence-informed decision making in the care sector
- Showcase the diversity of care delivery models including the potential of care entrepreneurship to provide affordable, accessible, quality care whilst also creating more decent jobs for women in the care sector;
- Exchange knowledge and strategies for public and private financing and successful multistakeholder implementation of care delivery;
- Learn about policies, emerging practices, and new research for better planning and decision making on care;
- Increase multi-stakeholder partnerships and action from Asia Pacific to support the Global Alliance for Care towards Beijing +30 in 2025 and beyond.

Participants

The Forum will convene 150-200 participants from Asia Pacific with strong participation of South Asia stakeholders including:

- Policy Makers and Governments
- Private Sector and Entrepreneurs
- CSOs, Women's Organizations
- Investors, including development banks, philanthropies and foundations
- UN agencies and INGOs
- Subject matter experts and academia

Agenda & Objectives per day

Day 1: *Building Alliances*: Establishing Common Ground and Embracing Different Perspectives

Day 1 will focus on bringing together diverse stakeholders, listening to different voices of government, women's organizations, private sector, care enterprises and women themselves. It will focus on establishing a common understanding of care and breakout discussions will help to unpack different stakeholder perspectives on challenges and opportunities to transform the care economy.

Day 2: *Empowering Women*: Showcasing Care Delivery Models and Policies & Discussing Solutions for Innovation and Collaboration

Day 2 is the official opening of the Forum and will focus on future looking perspectives on how care and women's economic empowerment are closely intertwined, showcasing different and multistakeholder care delivery models, including care entrepreneurship to serve the needs of diverse women and communities in the Asia-Pacific region. Three parallel thematic tracks on (i) a life-cycle approach that takes into account women's needs as both care givers and recipients of care, (ii) a whole-of-society approach to transforming the care economy as well as (iii) financing care delivery will be explored from a gender-lens to ensure that these approaches contribute to women's economic empowerment.

Day 3: *Reshaping Economies*: Taking Actions for the Future

Day 3 will tie in insights from Days 1 and 2 and link it to actions for gender equality towards the Beijing+30 meeting in November 2024 in Bangkok and the Commission on Status of Women (CSW69) which marks 30 years since the Beijing Declaration. It will focus on

practical examples of good practices from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond that can inform national and multistakeholder actions on the care economy. The Care Forum will end with a closing ceremony to showcase membership of the **Global Alliance for Care** and looking ahead towards Beijing+30, thereby marking the official closing of the Forum.

DAY 1: BUILDING ALLIANCES	
Establishing Common Ground and Embracing Different Perspectives	
Time	Agenda Item
08.30AM – 09.00AM	Registration
09.00AM- 10.30AM	Session 1: Welcome Plenary
09.00AM-09.05AM	(1) Welcome Remarks , Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative Bangladesh
09.05AM-09.10AM	(2) Opening Remarks , Nazma Mobarek, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Government of Bangladesh
09.10AM-09.15AM	(3) Welcome Note , Edward Cabrera, First Secretary at High Commission Canada in Dhaka
09.15AM-09.20AM	(4) Opening Remarks , Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst
09.20AM-09.45AM	(5) Participatory Exercise: How has care touched your life?
09.45AM-10.30AM	Session 2: Fireside Chat: From unpaid to underpaid: Hearing the voices of caregivers on the road to gender equality Moderator: Susan Ferguson, Country Representative, UN Women India <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspectives on women's unpaid care work, Lynda Diseru Tabuya, Minister Fiji (tbc) • The role of the state in providing quality care for all, Amneet Kumar, Commissioner & Secretary, Women and Child Department, Govt of Haryana India (tbc) • The need for decent work opportunities for care workers, Oxfam (tbc) • Professionalizing care jobs, Sakyrah, Kiddocare (Malaysia) • Building a Global Movement on Care, Ana Moreno, Technical Secretary, Global Alliance for Care Session Closing: Invitation to Join the Global Alliance for Care
10.30AM-11.00AM	Tea Break
Primer on Care to advance Women's Economic Empowerment & Launch of 'Beyond GDP' Report	
11.00AM-11.45AM	Session 3: Care Primer (1) Participatory Exercise on Recognizing Care as Work (2) Primer #1 Reflections on Care as Work & the feminist building-blocks of a just, sustainable economy Jemimah Njuki, Chief of Economic Empowerment, UN Women
11.45AM-12.15PM	(3) Primer #2 Launch of Data Report in Asia-Pacific: Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment through Caring, Green and Inclusive Economies Cecilia Tinonin, Statistics Specialist – Women's Economics Empowerment and Research and Data, UN Women Opening the floor for Q&A
12.30PM-1.30PM	Lunch & Networking
Afternoon: Embracing Different Perspectives	
Breakout sessions: Identifying Issues, Opportunities, Progress per Stakeholder Group	
1.30PM-1.45PM	Session 4: How to Transform Care: UN Women in Asia Pacific

	From where I stand: Highlighting the Care Diamond and why a multi-stakeholder approach is crucial
1.45PM – 2.30PM	Breakout Room 1: Governments
	Breakout Room 2: Business & Investors
	Breakout Room 3: Civil Society/Women’s Organizations
	Breakout Room 4: Enterprises
2.30PM – 3.00PM	Tea Break
03.00PM-3.30PM	Presenting back Challenges & Opportunities to the plenary by Rapporteurs
3.30PM-4.10PM	Participatory Exercise: Working along the Care Diamond: What does a Transformed Care Economy Look Like?
04.10PM – 4.30PM	Presenting back to the plenary
04.30PM-4.45PM	Closing Day 1
<i>All Day</i>	UN Women Photo Exhibition Together with AYAT Care, Oxfam & Equimondo <i>Supporting Caregivers/Care Workers in Asia Pacific for Women’s Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality</i> Global Alliance for Care Exhibition Booth

DAY 2: OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 2024 ASIA-PACIFIC CARE FORUM
EMPOWERING WOMEN: SHOWCASING CARE MODELS AND POLICIES & DISCUSSING SOLUTIONS FOR INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

Time	Agenda Item
08.30AM – 09.00AM	Registration
09.00AM-10.30AM	Session 1: Official Opening Ceremony
09.00AM-09.15AM (5 min buffer)	Cultural performance
09.15AM-09.25AM	(1) Welcome Remarks, Christine Arab, Regional Director, UN Women ROAP
09.25AM-09.30AM	(2) Welcome Remarks, Edimon Ginting, Country Director, ADB Bangladesh/or nominated government ADB
09.40AM-09.45AM	(3) Opening Remarks, Minister, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of Bangladesh
09.45AM-09.50AM	Group Photo
09.50AM- 09.55AM	Session 2: Thought Starter Panel Discussion: Moving towards a New Future of Care in Asia Pacific Moderator: Katja Freiwald, WEE Technical Advisor, UN Women
9.55AM-10.30AM	Moving transformative care delivery to support women across their life-course: Nadira Yussof, CEO, Kiddocare Malaysia Moving People, Attaining Social Change by engaging men and boys: Jose Campi Portaluppi, Advocacy and Communications Director, Equimondo (Mencare Campaign) Moving Investments into Care: Bogota Care Blocks, Diana Rodriguez Franco (Video message) Moving Institutions through a care roadmap: Indonesia Planning Commission
10.30AM-11.00AM	Tea Break

Session 3: Solutions for Taking Actions on Care

Introducing the Three Track Approach

	Track 1: Women, Care and the Economy: A Life Cycle Approach	Track 2: Mobilizing Whole-of-Society through the Care Diamond [State-Community-Private Sector-Households]	Track 3: Financing Care in Asia Pacific & Emerging Priorities
11.00AM – 12.00PM	<i>Demographic Shifts in the Region, Jobs & Life-cycle approach to Care</i> Co-leads: UNFPA/ILO Bangladesh/UN Women Bangladesh	<i>State: 'How can we re-imagine urban spaces as 'caring cities'?'</i> Co-leads: UN Women	<i>Financing Care Part 1: Public Financing & Fiscal Space for Care/ADB to decide topic</i> Co-leads: ADB/IDRC/UN WOMEN
12.00PM-1.00PM	<i>Care & Social Protection: 'How can care be embedded into welfare and social protection systems in Asia-Pacific?'</i> Co-leads: UN WOMEN/IBC Social Protection/UNICEF	<i>Market/Private Sector: Employer-supported Care</i> Co-leads: IFC/UN Women	<i>Financing Care Part 2: Innovation and Blended Finance for Care – Part 2 (topic by ADB and IFC)</i> Co-leads: IFC/IDRC/ADB/UN Women
1.00PM-2.00PM	Lunch		
2.00PM-3.00PM	Session 4: The Power of Care Entrepreneurship in Redistributing Care Work & Driving Decent Work for Care Workers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Street Play on Care: Dharma Life and Community Members (5-7 min) (2) Pitching by Care Enterprises: The Spectrum of Care Delivery Models in Asia Pacific (BRAC-Dharma Life-Ubuntu-Fambear) (3) Launch of the Report of the Care Accelerator 		
3.00PM – 4.00PM	<i>Digitally-Enabled Care Work: 'How can digitally enabled care enterprises ensure decent work opportunities for women?'</i> <i>Lead: UN Women</i>	<i>Community: 'How can community-based care delivery models be supported to redistribute direct care?'</i> <i>Co-leads: Bopinc/UN Women</i>	<i>Migration & Care: Labour Flows, Women Care Workers and Migration Governance in Asia Pacific</i> <i>Co-leads: UN WOMEN/IDWF/UNOHCHR/ILO</i>
4.00PM-4.30PM	Tea Break		
4.30PM-5.30PM	<i>Skill Development & the Care Sector in Asia Pacific</i> <i>Co-leads: AYAT CARE/UN Women India</i>	<i>Households: Changing Social Norms from grassroots to institutions</i> <i>Co-leads: Equimondo/ Oxfam/ UN Women</i>	<i>'How can we better unpack the climate-care nexus and its impacts on women?'</i> <i>Co-leads: IDRC/UN WOMEN/ADB</i>
5.30PM-8.00PM	Evening Networking Reception <i>UN Women Photo Exhibition of Care in Asia Pacific continued from Day 1</i> <i>Global Alliance for Care Exhibition Booth continued from Day 1</i>		

DAY 3: RESHAPING ECONOMIES: ACTIONS TO TRANSFORM THE CARE ECONOMY			
Time	Agenda Item		
08.00AM-9.00AM	Registration		
09.00AM - 10.45AM	Session 1: Official Opening Day 3: Actions to TransformCare in Asia Pacific		
09.00AM-09.10AM	<p>(1) Opening Remarks, Reflections on Progress & Pitfalls towards achieving Women's Economic Empowerment, Jemimah Njuki, Economic Empowerment Chief, UN Women</p>		
09.10AM-09.20AM	<p>(2) Mobilizing subregional commitments & action on Care: Sharing on ASEAN Care Declaration, H.E. Datuk Dr. Maziah Che Yusoff, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia (tbc)</p>		
09.20AM-10.45AM	<p>(3) Joining forces towards Beijing +30: Identifying national entry points on care Remarks on Care & Beijing+30: Cai-Cai, Chief of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP Panel Discussion: Identifying national entry points on care, Moderator: Jamshed M. Kazi, Senior Advisor, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN Women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspectives on the care economy in the Fijian context, Lynda Diseru Tabuya, Minister, Ministry for Women, Children and Social Protection, Fiji tbc • The Maubisse Declaration & investing in time and labour-saving care infrastructure for rural women, Elvina Sousa Carvalho, Secretary of State for Equality, Timor Leste • Formulating a Strategy for India's Care Economy 2050, Secretary/Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India tbc • Importance of care provision as a pillar of social protection/to advance women's entrepreneurship, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - MOLISA (Social Protection Department and/or Gender Equality Department), Viet Nam tbc • Gender-Responsive Budgeting & Care, Hon. Dr. (Mrs.) Sudharshini Fernandopulle, Chairperson, Women Parliamentarians' Caucus of Sri Lanka; Member of Parliament, Sri Lanka tbc 		
Session 2: Building an Action Plan for Care: How to Get Started?			
11.15AM-12.00PM	<p><i>What works for Care? Practical Examples of Whole of Society Action [Ted-Style Talks]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for Care as the first members of the Global Alliance for Care, Philippines Commission for Women • Assessing Where you Stand: Policy Scorecard Findings from Southeast and South Asia, Myrah Nerine, Oxfam & Shonali Thangiah, UN Women • Whole of Government Care Working Group, Ram Kumar Phuyal, Planning Commission, Government of Nepal • Implementing Care Delivery through the Private Sector, tbc 		
12.00PM -1.00PM	Lunch		
Session 3: An Action Plan for TransformingCare			
1PM-3PM	Action Area #1	Action Area #2	Action Area #3
2.30PM- 3.00PM	Tea Break		
Session 4: Closing Ceremony			
03.00PM - 4.30PM	<p>Pathways for Transforming Care Recap Day 2 TransformCare & UN Women Output Video – Solutions to TransformCare Feroza Sanjana</p>		
03.10PM-03.30PM	<p>Global Alliance for Care Ceremony Ana Moreno & Christine Arab</p>		

03.30PM-03.35PM	<i>Passing the Baton for Beijing+30, Jamshed Kazi, UN Women and Cai Cai, ESCAP</i>
03.45PM-03.50PM	<i>Closing Remarks, MOFA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh tbc</i>
03.50PM- 03.55PM	<i>Reflections on the Way Forward, Syed Haider, First Secretary, Australian High Commission in Dhaka</i>
03.55PM-4.00PM	<i>Closing: Resident Coordinator, UN Bangladesh</i>
04.00-04.30PM	<i>Vote of Thanks & Closing of the Care Forum, Gitanjali Singh/Katja Freiwald UN Women</i>
	Group Photo

Official Closing of the Care Forum