

Grassroots Women Community Caregivers' Call to Action

Adopted at the Global Grassroots Women Community Caregivers' Summit convened by Huairou Commission, Inmujeres México, UN Women, and the Global Alliance for Care held in Mexico City from 28 to 30 June 2023

We grassroots community caregivers and domestic workers, gathered at the Global Grassroots Women Community Caregivers Summit, from 28 to 30 June 2023 in Mexico City hereby call upon governments, international policy makers, philanthropies, civil society and private sector to join us in advancing immediate practical actions that respect, resource and compensate local caregiver constituencies and organizations for our leadership in fostering caring society and just economies.

Noting with deep concern the long-standing demand we have made to recognize grassroots women community caregiver groups as essential to sustaining our households, communities, and the planet.

Underscoring that we, grassroots women community caregivers in all our diversity, have demonstrated our commitment and resilience by filling critical gaps left by governments' inadequate response to addressing the hardships imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is widely acknowledged that grassroots women leaders were in the frontlines providing essential support, care, and guidance to individuals and families struggling to survive the crisis - advocating for cash payments, community access to critical supplies (food, water, mobile clinics) and enhanced policing as GBV surged. Our ongoing roles in bridging the divide between poor affected communities and formal health and government institutions, increased significantly when pandemic losses and hardships surged.

Emphasizing that the COVID-19 pandemic underscored that grassroots women caregiver groups are now among the first to respond to climate/'natural' disasters, health pandemics-HIV-and other crises – filling gaps in emergency response/relief and public services and proactively building ways to address emerging needs. Acknowledging that care will remain critical due to the ongoing crisis and pandemics that have become our new norm. The historical record of the pandemic validates the disproportionate care burdens grassroots women assumed--without recognition or financial support- revealing the unsustainability of the current social and economic organization of care.

Affirming that the pandemic and lockdowns drove our groups to find alternative ways to organize and provide essential support—whether food, water, shelter, cash loans, medicine or looking after seniors, persons with disabilities and children-- in our urban and rural communities. And noting that we additionally fulfilled our care responsibilities to our own families - a just economic recovery requires recognizing and compensating grassroots women community caregivers for the critical and brave contributions we made.

Stressing our pledge to advancing women's empowerment, promoting resilient and inclusive economic recovery and societies, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – including SDG5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and SDG8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth as well as building upon the commitment of the United Nations Secretary-General vision of "Our Common Agenda" and the efforts towards the Summit of the Future in 2024 and the adoption of an action-oriented Pact for the Future, as well as the Generation Equality 2026 vision, the efforts of the Global Alliance for Care and the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights as means to accelerate progress towards

the realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, to facilitate women's economic inclusion, including investment in the care economy and support for women entrepreneurs.

Our caregiver constituencies from 24 countries, representing 49 active grassroots community caregiver organization and domestic workers call for: Multi stakeholder action to accelerate initiatives and financial investments in gender just local care economies and the grassroots community women and household workers' caregiver organizations anchoring them so that we are empowered to:

- improve the lives, livelihoods, working conditions and rights of our members; and
- ensure that the economic recovery from COVID-19 is inclusive and we reward unpaid and underpaid grassroots women community caregivers for the pro-active, effective emergency work and aid delivery we (s)heroically led for more 36+months.

We, the leaders of caregiver constituencies attending the Grassroots Women Global Caregivers' Summit in Mexico City, urge and invite member states, international governmental and policy agencies, philanthropies, private sector, civil society, local authority networks, academia, media, and other economic justice actors to:

1. **Recognize the constituency of local grassroots women caregiver organizations**, in our diversity, as essential workers and agents of development.
2. **Publicize the scope and value of grassroots women community caregivers' contributions to foster local and national economic development and the overall economy**, and ensure the national GDP incorporates care work.
3. **Develop and implement innovative policy and program frameworks that create sustainable revenue streams** to compensate caregivers organizations, finance underpaid work and women's organizing campaigns for economic justice.
4. **Promote and secure the inclusion of grassroots women caregiver organizations and leaders in decision-making processes related to social and economic policy and program development and budgeting** (especially those tied to post-COVID-19 recovery/stimulus plans, poverty reduction, and social protection investments to assist marginalized workers) at all levels of government).
5. **Ensure decent work and social protection** through comprehensive policies and tools that provide grassroots women community caregivers, domestic workers and other low paid care workers access to healthcare, income supplements, social security, retirement benefits, affordable social housing.
6. Compel nation-states to **guarantee essential services and infrastructure** for life such as water and sanitation, good quality public services, without these services care cannot be guaranteed.
7. **Provide access to productive capital - including land, credit, technology, internet and equipment; and invest in training and capacity building and other livelihood strengthening initiatives that**

produce **equitable opportunities** to access better markets and value chains and advance our economic independence.

8. Recognize and value care for the environment and natural resources, and protect the ancestral knowledge of our cultures.

And, we invite all stakeholders joining the Summit to join us in a One-Year Advocacy Campaign to partner with leaders of grassroots community caregiver organizations to advance a Just Care Economy by helping to:

- **Implement joint policy advocacy efforts and promote public dialogues** (locally/regionally/globally), to amplify the voice and agency of grassroots caregivers in decision-making processes that shape the care economy, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- **Secure flexible direct funding for grassroots women’s community caregivers’ organizations and their networks** to sustain their operations, accelerate organizing and advocacy efforts and transfer good practices nationally, regionally and globally.
- **Implement effective strategies and practices and adapt existing tools**, such as social protection, to deliver strategic outcomes that ensure grassroots caregivers are adequately supported, empowered, and integrated into economic and social development initiatives.
- **Develop grassroots policy and normative frameworks** and partner with multilateral organizations in order to ensure decent caregiver earnings as well as the right to care
- **Valorize Grassroots Community Caregivers Work** through compelling case studies and short videos; and collaborate with experienced feminist researchers to co-develop time use and other evidence gathering survey and data collection methodologies that capture the labor time and qualitative skills grassroots women’s community caregivers apply in their work(in crisis and non-crisis times).

Additionally we call upon all stakeholders, particularly governments, international organizations, development banks, philanthropists, and other financiers, to effectively contribute to realizing the priorities grassroots women caregivers have expressed in this Call to Action and jointly build political and financial support and momentum to grow just, inclusive care economies (locally to globally) that recognize and reward the vision, determination, ingenuity of grassroots women caregivers and their organizations groups.

By taking action to achieve the goals stated above, together we will be able to create more sustainable, inclusive, and caring societies. We call upon our members to utilize this Call for Action in their interactions with local officials and beyond, ensuring its impact for grassroots women caregivers worldwide. Together, we can realize our vision of a just and equitable world.