29 October 2021

Mr/Ms

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**REF: Investment and decent work in Care**

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The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the central place of care in our lives. Governments have to adequately fund public social care and protect the workers who deliver care services.

Millions of workers continue to deliver public health and social care services, under the most challenging circumstances, as the world still navigates the devastating health and socioeconomic crisis caused by the pandemic. The majority of these workers are women.

The working lives of care workers1 have been characterised by long hours of work, lack of access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and other health and safety measures, physical, emotional and mental exhaustion, poor working conditions, low wages and uneven access to vaccines.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how decades of under-investment in public health and care systems have severely affected the quality, accessibility, and safety of health and care services.

The pandemic has also deepened pre-existing national and global structural inequalities across gender, class and, in many cases, racial and ethnic lines.

There is an urgent need for adequate public investment to achieve universal quality public health and care, as well as, to rebuild the social organisation of care, integrating the recognition of the human right to care, and ensuring social care services are provided as a fundamental human right, and public good which is universally accessible.

On 29 October, the Global Day of Action on Care, we urge you to take action and invest in care and ensure decent work for care workers in *(name of the country)* by:

* Invest in universal, quality public health and care – including mental health, childcare, early childhood education, elderly care and other social care services - to ensure the creation of millions of jobs with decent work which includes fair wages, and humane working conditions; and to close gender gaps in labour force participation
* Ensure adequate wages and improvement in working conditions, including equal pay for work of equal value, training opportunities and occupational health and safety for workers in health, care and education, including home care and domestic workers
* Ensure equity and non-discrimination in recruitment, retention, access to training and promotion opportunities for workers across the health and care sectors
* Ensure that the rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining are respected for all workers in the health and care sectors, whether in the formal or informal economy, as well as their representation in the decision-making process.
* Fund universal, gender-responsive social protection accessible by all workers regardless of employment status or migrant status, racial or ethnic background, disability, gender, identity expression or sexual orientation, and inclusive of workers in the informal economy
* Ensure accessibility for all to quality public health and care services, including refugees and migrants, regardless of status.
* Shift from the "care economy" approach which has contributed to the commodification of care to "rebuilding the social organisation of care" where care needs and care work are not simply considered as economic issues but as human rights, which governments are dutybound to provide and safeguard.

We very much count on your political will to raise the banner of quality public care for all, and Decent Work for care workers.

Yours sincerely,

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