DATE

Political Representative

responsible for care services

and/or workers

Dear Minister/ Assembly Member/ Mayor/ Councillor/ etc

**Decent Work in Care Services**

**…….**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how decades of under-investment in our health and care system has severely impacted the quality, accessibility, and safety of health and care services which rely on low-paid and precarious care work. The pandemic has also deepened pre-existing national and global structural inequalities across gender, class and, in many cases, racial and ethnic lines. Governments must adequately fund public social care and protect the workers who deliver care services.

Millions of workers continue to deliver health and social care services under increasingly challenging circumstances and the spiralling cost of living. Our members in care experience long hours, poor working conditions, low wages and insecure contracts. Years into the pandemic and many still lack access to health and safety protections such as personal protective equipment. Care workers are physically and emotionally exhausted and as a result, are forced to miss work due to the stress and trauma.

Our care system is underfunded and under-resourced. Our members now have to care for more people with fewer resources. However, care needs will only continue to grow as our society does. Our members urge you to undertake an immediate review to ensure that there are enough staff to meet the growing demand for care. Without a workforce plan for the care sector, the care needs of service users will go unmet and the burden on workers will grow.

Care is an essential service and our members believe it is too important not to invest in it properly. Quality of care relies on well-paid, trained and supported workforce. A new model of care is urgently needed which prioritizes the workers caring for people.

This is why we are writing to you today. Our members urge you to take immediate action by investing 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.

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.

We very much count on you to ensure access to quality public care for all, and Decent Work for care workers.

Yours sincerely,

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