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## Press Release

**"The Research on the Effects of the Covid-19 Outbreak for Women Employees Has Been Unveiled. The Business World Is Taking Action For Equalist Practices In The Covid-19 Outbreak."**

*The findings of the "Effects of the Covid-19 Outbreak on Women Employees" Research, which was prepared to identify the possible effects of the Covid-19 epidemic on the private sector from a gender perspective in cooperation with TÜSİAD, TÜRKONFED and the United Nations Women Unit (UN Women) Turkey were shared with the public.*

The research, conducted by Ankara University Faculty of Political Sciences Faculty Member Associate Professor Emel Memiş and based on the survey conducted by businesses, aims to understand the possible effects of the Covid-19 epidemic on private sector from a gender perspective and contribute to the development of policies that will ensure gender equality in the private sector during crisis periods.

The opening speeches of the meeting were delivered by the Women's UN Women Country Director for Turkey Asya Varbanova, TÜRKONFED President Orhan Turan and TÜSİAD President Simone Kaslowski.

Following the opening speeches, the findings of the "Effects of the Covid-19 Outbreak on Women Employees" research, in which a total of 339 companies participated, were shared with the participants by Associate Professor Emel Memiş from the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara University.

The event was moderated by Member of the Board of TÜSİAD and Chair of the Social Policies Roundtable Nüket Küçükkel and continued with the "Is it Possible to Manage the Crisis Equitably?" panel with the participation of TÜRKONFED Vice President and Head of the Commission on Women in the Business Reyhan Aktar and Program Manager of UN Women Turkey Zeliha Ünalı. In the panel, in the light of the research findings, recommendations were suggested for taking gender-sensitive interventions in the Covid-19 period.

**Important findings of the research are as follows:**

**Main problems experienced by men and women in the Covid-19 period diverge.**

When examining the 3 issues that women and men employees consider as a problem in the Covid-19 period; It was noted that 99 percent of women mentioned increased housework and care responsibility, 97 percent mentioned increased workload with remote-home work, 95 percent mentioned anxiety, psychological stress and burnout, whereas 74 percent of men mentioned wage- income shortage during the epidemic, 69 percent mentioned limited access to communication and information technologies and 65 percent mentioned psychological stress and burnout.

**The biggest difference in the problems faced by women and men is related to home-work balance and increased violence.**

In the research, it was observed that the biggest difference in the problems experienced by female and male employees is related to the home-work balance and increasing domestic violence. In almost all of the enterprises participating in the study (99 percent), while the difficulties encountered by increasing housework and child / elderly / patient care were stated among the problems shared by female employees, this problem was reported by men in 25 percent of the enterprises. While women employees in 89 percent of the enterprises stated that domestic violence increased, this problem was pointed out by 19 percent of men.

**Adequate measures are not taken against the problems faced by women in the Covid-19 period.**

Since the Covid-19 epidemic and related restrictions began, 76 percent of the enterprises participating in the study stated that they took special measures to reduce the stress experienced by the employees and to support their general well-being, but only 26 percent stated that special measures were taken for female employees. In addition, the rate of companies collecting data on home and work balance is 14 percent, the rate of companies making internal communication is 13 percent, and the number of companies taking special measures on the same issue is 3. Similarly, the rate of companies collecting data on domestic violence is 1.5 percent, the rate of companies providing internal communication is 6 percent, and the number of companies taking special measures is 1.

**The higher the equality index value, the higher the tendency to take measures.**

Within the scope of the research an equality index was created, and the criteria of commitment/signatory towards the principles of equality, cooperating in equality activities and providing equal representation in managerial positions were taken into account. As the equality index

value increases, the tendency of companies to take measures against the increasing workload and against domestic violence increases. Following the research presentation, the meeting continued with the main theme speech of the Director of Strategic Partnerships of the United Nations Women Unit Dan Seymour, titled "The Role of the Private Sector and Examples of International Good Practices for the Empowerment of Women from the Crisis".

### **Recommendations presented in the study**

#### **Recommendations for gender sensitive interventions;**

1. Making crisis impacts visible: regularly collecting gender-specialized data and information on the effects of the epidemic
2. Crisis-resistant egalitarian interventions: Planning strategic (egalitarian and transformative) interventions that will not deepen gender inequalities while meeting the practical needs of the employees of companies in times of crisis
3. Dissemination of the Use of the "Equality Index": Dissemination of the use of the "Equality Index" and its components (WEPs commitment, number of female managers, etc.) created with the data of this research in evaluating the interventions in the Covid-19 process in terms of gender equality
4. Increasing Cooperation: Cooperating with external stakeholders (public and other companies) and NGOs
5. Review of legislation on gender-sensitive support mechanisms and policies
6. Community mobilization and public awareness: Mobilization of role models in the world of business, arts and sports in partnerships and collaborations to recognize and address gender-based violence and to strengthen the messages given for prevention

#### **Recommendations for national legislation and policies:**

1. Including gender equality as a goal in fundamental documents determining national policies and strategies
2. Observance of gender equality in incentives and support packages prepared during the epidemic and generally in crisis periods: For example, the incentive packages that provide parents with care leave, flexible work and access to services, or the design of rescue and incentive packages considering the possible effects on the home work balance, etc.
3. Evaluation of Permanent Change Decisions in Working Models in terms of Effects on Gender Equality: Discussing and addressing the possibility of permanent remote work after Covid-19

measures; considering that working remotely / from home poses different challenges and needs for women.

4. Establishing holistic policy steps and setting targets by examining international successful practices in combating inequality in home and care obligations.
5. Expanding care services, especially childcare institutions within the scope of the goal of harmonizing work and family life, as in international examples and in national policy documents.

The next steps are:

Based on the findings of the research, it was announced that an implementation guide on "managing the crisis equitably" for the private sector will be prepared and disseminated by TÜSİAD, TÜRKONFED and UN Women. This guide, which will also be based on WEPs commitments, aims to plan egalitarian and transformative interventions that will not deepen gender inequalities while meeting the practical needs of employees in companies in times of crisis. It is also aimed to adopt crisis-resistant sustainable management models.