

## Commonwealth social workers work for gender equality



Credit: UN Women/Yihui Yuan

On Commonwealth Day and International Women's Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work ([COSW](#)) endorses the Commonwealth's social media campaign [#SheLeadsTheWay](#), linked with the official UN [International Women's Day](#) 2021 theme: 'Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world'.

'The vast majority of social workers and people providing social service around the world are women', said Sylvia Daisy Romanus, Chair of COSW. 'Social workers understand the challenges facing women leaders around the world and salute the courage of women who take up the challenge', she continued. 'The pandemic has highlighted the uneven burden women carry and their critical leadership in homes and in communities.'

COSW joins the Commonwealth Secretariat in recognising that 'on one hand, domestic violence has risen rapidly, many girls may never return to school and decades of progress toward gender diversity is at risk. On the other, women have been leading COVID-19 responses to save lives, empower communities and put a focus on women's needs in relief and support measures.'

'However, women remain underrepresented in leadership roles across all sectors due to systemic barriers. For instance, only 13 Commonwealth countries have more than 30 per cent of female representation in parliament.'

'Evidence suggests a lack of gender diversity in leadership overlooks women's perspectives and their unique vulnerabilities, often leading to poor decisions.'

Against this backdrop, the Commonwealth Secretariat is holding [an event on 8<sup>th</sup> March](#) to focus on gender-sensitive policies, laws and budgets to ensure women have equal representation and decision-making power in building back better after the pandemic. UN Women is also holding an event.

Commonwealth registration email [gender@commonwealth.int](mailto:gender@commonwealth.int)

United Nations observance of International Women's Day 2021 registration [here](#)

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