

2024 ASIA-PACIFIC CARE CHAMPIONS

From Invisible to Invaluable

Concept Note and Programme



Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review
21 November 2024

10:30 AM-12:30 PM (Bangkok time, GMT+7)

Conference room 2, United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok

1. Introduction

Investing in the care economy is crucial to achieving gender equality, decent work, and economic growth as laid out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 5 and 8. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the critical role of care systems in sustaining societies and economies. It highlighted vulnerabilities and inequalities in existing care systems, including the undervaluation of care work, the lack of investment in care infrastructure, and the disproportionate burden placed on women, particularly in unpaid care. It revealed the precarious working conditions and risks faced by paid care workers, such as low wages and insufficient social protection.

In response, countries across Asia and the Pacific have increasingly recognized the imperative of investment in the care economy as a vital component of their development strategies. Governments, civil society, private sector, development partners as well as other stakeholders in Asia Pacific are taking increasingly coordinated action to address this challenge. Care work, though undervalued, contributes significantly to national economies as well as societal functioning and wellbeing. Women's contribution to all types of care work is estimated to contribute a massive [USD 11 trillion to the global economy annually](#). The demand for paid care services – including childcare, care for vulnerable populations (e.g. older persons and persons with disabilities), and healthcare– is growing due to demographic shifts, such as large and growing ageing populations.

Care work is a major driver of migration in and from Asia and the Pacific, in particular of women migrant workers. Estimates suggest that a quarter of all care workers globally are domestic workers. A survey of ASEAN countries of destination found almost all domestic workers (99 per cent) are doing indirect care work, with 62 per cent doing direct care work.

Globally and in Asia-Pacific, women take on a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. This is exacerbated by a lack of services which, combined with social norms ascribing caregiving roles to women, results in women using their time, energy, and resources to fill the gaps. This creates a powerful, persistent barrier to women's ability to participate in the labour market, reduces their leverage and options for decent work, and impedes their economic empowerment.

A variety of accessible, affordable, quality care services is crucial to free up women's time, encourage their participation in the labour market and improve overall societal well-being by ensuring that vulnerable groups, such as children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and the poor receive the care they need. It is crucial that states, civil society, the private sector and communities share the responsibility of reimagining care as a public good and a right that benefits all members of society. Investing in the care economy and advancing the rights of care workers to have decent work opportunities in the paid care sector is crucial to transform care systems.¹ The 5R Framework for Decent Care recognizes the critical role

¹ "Care systems" are broadly understood "to encompass the following components: legal and policy frameworks, services, financing, social and physical infrastructure, programmes, standards and training, governance and administration, and social norms. A "comprehensive care system" involves these components working in an integrated and deliberate way, with the aim of implementing a new social organization of care to assist, support and care for people and the environment, as well as recognizing, reducing and redistributing, rewarding and representing care work from a gender, intersectional and human rights perspective in a way that fosters co-responsibility between genders and between households, the State, the market, families and the community." UN (2024). Transforming Care Systems: UN System Policy Paper. Link: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/transforming-care-systems-un-system-policy-paper>

of paid and unpaid care work and seeks to promote decent conditions for care workers whilst ensuring decent services.²

The **2024 Asia-Pacific Care Champions event**, convened at the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review, will honour and celebrate trailblazers who have made pioneering contributions to building inclusive and sustainable care systems. These champions are at the forefront of driving transformative change, setting examples of best practices, and inspiring others to take bold actions that contribute to the broader goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By recognizing these champions, the event aims to galvanize further action, encourage the scaling up of successful initiatives, and foster a collaborative environment where a diverse range of stakeholders can work together to create resilient and equitable care systems.³

This special event will be hosted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and UN Women, with the support of the Global Alliance for Care and in collaboration with Oxfam and the World Bank.

2. Objectives

The event to celebrate the 2024 Asia-Pacific Care Champions will provide a platform for showcasing excellence, sharing innovation and good practices, and reinforcing the commitment of all stakeholders to building robust and equitable care systems across Asia and the Pacific. Specifically, the event aims to:

- **Recognize Contributions:** Acknowledging and celebrating the efforts of governments, civil society organizations, private sector, academia, and other relevant stakeholders including Global Alliance for Care members in advancing inclusive care policies through multistakeholder approaches
- **Showcase Innovation:** Highlighting innovative policies and practices that can serve as inspiration for replication and scale up across the Asia-Pacific region
- **Foster Collaboration:** Strengthening partnerships between governments, civil society, the private sector, international organizations and other diverse stakeholders towards an increasingly 'caring future'
- **Launch Key Resources:** Introducing new policy tools and briefs that can support policy development and on-the-ground initiatives
- **Inspire Action:** Encouraging others to draw from these examples and take bold steps that will drive the transformation of care systems across the region.

Celebrating Champions that Care

Recognizing and honouring initiatives that have made outstanding contributions to the care economy, in the following categories:

² The 5R Framework is structured around five key objectives: recognize the value of paid and unpaid care work to social, economic, and individual wellbeing, including the disproportionate burden placed on women. Reduce the burden of unpaid care work, particularly borne by women, by increasing investment in public care services and infrastructure. Redistribute unpaid care work across genders and between the state, families, and the private sector and encourage redistribution of paid care work. Reward care workers with improved conditions and remuneration, ensuring they have access to social protection and labour rights. Represent care workers and recipients in decision-making processes, including through collective representation, organization, and processes of social dialogue and collective bargaining.

³ Transforming Care Systems: UN System Policy Paper. Link: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/transforming-care-systems-un-system-policy-paper>

- **Policy Powerhouses: Crafting Tomorrow's Care Systems**

Recognizing forward-thinking policies that set new benchmarks in care

This category honours impactful and inclusive care policies developed by governments, institutions, and organizations. These forward-thinking initiatives are revolutionizing the care landscape, ensuring that care systems are sustainable, equitable, and accessible to all.

- **Care Innovators: Transforming Lives through Care Delivery**

Highlighting initiatives that reimagine care delivery through creativity and bold solutions

This category celebrates initiatives that have pioneered innovative practices or technologies that have revolutionized care delivery, providing scalable, transformative solutions. These cutting-edge approaches inspire replication across the region, driving the future of care.

- **Champions for Change: Breaking Stereotypes**

Recognizing initiatives led by men and organizations advancing gender equality in care

This category honours initiatives led by men and organizations who actively champion gender equality in care, breaking stereotypes and advocating for a shared responsibility. These efforts are inspiring others to follow suit in creating more gender-equitable care systems.

- **Knowledge Catalysts: Leading Care Research and Insights**

Recognizing trailblazing research that fuels care reforms

This category honours groundbreaking research initiatives that have provided critical insights into care systems. These initiatives produce the evidence that informs policies and shapes on-the-ground programmes and policies, driving sustainable care reforms in the region.

- **Partnership Architects: Building Bridges for Care**

Celebrating the power of partnerships in strengthening care systems

This category acknowledges strategic alliances across sectors—governments, civil society, international organizations, and private entities that have harnessed the collective strength of multistakeholder efforts to push forward a caring and inclusive future.

The recognition of Care Champions will further elevate the region's commitment to advancing the care economy and influencing global discourse on care policies, positioning all participants as *shareholders of our common, caring future*.

The 2024 Asia-Pacific Care Champions are expected to lead transformative change going forward, with an emphasis on:

- **Advocacy:** Raising awareness about the critical role of care systems in achieving social and economic goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- **Collaboration:** Fostering partnerships that strengthen care policies and sharing good practices and lessons learned
- **Innovation:** Promoting innovative approaches to care that can be scaled up and adapted to contexts across the Asia-Pacific region.

3. Programme

10:30-10:40 (10")	<p>Welcome & scene setting</p> <p>Master of ceremonies: Ms. Cindy Bishop, UN Women Goodwill Ambassador</p> <p>Reflections from the 2024 Asia-Pacific Care Forum</p>	
10:40-10:55 (15")	<p>ESCAP's Executive Secretary (Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana) presents ESCAP's Model Framework for Action and launches the Policy Toolkit on Advancing the Care Economy in Asia and the Pacific (5") and then presents tokens of recognition in the category "Policy Powerhouses: Crafting Tomorrow's Care Systems" with each champion reflecting on achievement (2" each)</p>	<p>ASEAN Declaration on Care, jointly received by Lao Women's Union (H.E. Aly Vongnorbountham, President of Lao Women's Union and Standing Vice President of the National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children, Lao PDR) for their multilateral leadership in achieving an ASEAN wide political commitment on care</p> <p>Care policy ecosystem, received by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Cambodia (H.E. Dr Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister of Women's Affairs, Kingdom of Cambodia) for instituting a whole-of-government, whole of society policy making process on care, driving forward results particularly on the community childcare agenda</p> <p>Gender-Responsive Social Protection for a resilient care economy, received by Government of the United Kingdom (Ms. Nabila Suria, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to ESCAP) for their work supporting gender-responsive and care-sensitive social protection systems that provide an essential foundation for inclusive social protection in the region.</p> <p>Investing in the Care Economy, received by the Government of the People's Republic of China (Mr. Ye Xuenong, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to ESCAP) for their financial contributions that have enabled significant policy progress in the Asia-Pacific region</p> <p>WE CARE ordinance of Municipality of Quinapondan, Eastern Samar Province Philippines, jointly received by the Chairperson of the Philippines Commission on Women (Ms. Ermelita Valdeavilla), the Municipality of Quinapondan (Hon. Leo Jasper M. Candido, Municipal Vice Mayor, Quinapondan Eastern Samar), Oxfam Pilipinas (Ms. Lan Mercado, Oxfam</p>

		<p>Pilipinas Board of Trustees) and PRRM (Mr. Raymundo Agaton Jr, Area Manager) for leading the way on folding in care at local level budget envelopes thus reaching the most vulnerable women at community level</p>
<p>10:55-11:10 (15")</p>	<p>UN Women Regional Director (Ms. Christine Arab) presents UN Women's "Action Brief to Transform Care Systems in Asia-Pacific" for women's economic empowerment in the context of the UN-wide care systems policy paper (5") and then presents tokens of recognition in the category "Care Innovators: Transforming Lives through Care Delivery" with each champion reflecting on achievement (2" each)</p>	<p>Advancing care entrepreneurship for on-ground care service provision for women and families and supporting the creation of decent care jobs in Asia Pacific received by Dharmalife, Visa Foundation and the International Development Research Centre (Ms. Panchalee Tamulee, Senior Chief Manager, Dharmalife)</p> <p>Investing in gender-transformative approaches for care received by Asian Development Bank (Ms. Samantha Hung, Director of the Gender Equality Division)</p> <p>Driving evidence informed care delivery received by the Government of Bangladesh (Ms. Sharmeen S. Murshid, Honourable Advisor Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh)</p> <p>Exploring pathways to transform care through private sector in by the Government of Malaysia (Datuk Dr. Maziah binti Che Yusoff, Secretary General Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia)</p> <p>Men care champion received by Fambear Thailand (Mr. Adrian Mangal, Co-founder) for implementing the NICE initiative which convenes entrepreneurs to advocate for better work conditions for care workers</p>
<p>11:20-11:35 (15")</p>	<p>GAC (Ms. Ana Moreno, Technical Secretary) presents an overview of the Alliance and initiatives from members in other regions (5") and then presents tokens of recognition in the category "Champions for Change: Breaking Stereotypes" with each champion reflecting on achievement (2" each)</p>	<p>Exploring efforts for cash for care interventions received by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Government of Philippines</p> <p>Men care champion received by The Gender Lab (Ms. Ayushi Banerji, Co-Founder/Director) for including care work by engaging adolescent girls and boys</p> <p>For membership to the Global Alliance for Care from both SEI and SEFOPE and whole of government approach to transforming care</p>

		<p>received by Government of Timor Leste (Ms. Elvina Sousa Carvalho, Secretary of State for Equality, Government of Timor-Leste)</p> <p>For disability-inclusive approaches to care received by Center for Inclusive Policy (Meenakshi Balasubramanian, Senior Advisor)</p>
11:35-11:50 (15")	Choir performance: Reach for the Stars	
11:50-12:05 (15")	<p>The World Bank, (Ms Helle Buchhave, Senior Social Development Specialist) presents recently released report on childcare and (5") and then presents tokens of recognition in the category "Knowledge Catalysts: Leading Care Research and Insights" with each champion reflecting on achievement (2" each)</p>	<p>Care is not a burden academic analysis, received by the Institute of Development Studies (Dr. Deepta Chopra, Professorial Research Fellow)</p> <p>Breaking new ground on care: Unveiling research that explores the interconnectivity of care and climate; and research on the power dynamics between care workers and care decision-makers in navigating equal representation in care policy received by the Asia Foundation (Ms. Elizabeth Silva, Associate Director for Women's Empowerment)</p> <p>Addressing the root causes of gender inequalities – research breaking down social norms and stereotypes by OECD (Ms. Hyeshin Park, Economist, Gender Programme Co-ordinator) (Social Institutions and Gender Index, 2024 Regional Report for SE Asia)</p>
12:05-12:20 (15")	<p>Oxfam Regional Director Mr. John Samuel presents on its advocacy work on promoting care responsive policies and investments, including its seminal report 'time to care' and various tools, including the rapid care analysis and care policy scorecard, highlighting the key role of local organizations in driving the care agenda forward (5") and then presents tokens of recognition in the category "Partnership Architects: Building Bridges for Care" with each champion reflecting on achievement (2" each)</p>	<p>Whole-of-society approaches to multilateral engagement to bolster the care economy received by IWWAGE (Ms. Sona Mitra, Director- Policy & Research)</p> <p>Coalition builders to amplify the voices of local movements, women groups and associations received by the Asia Feminist Coalition (Ms. Amuda Mishra)</p> <p>Championing the voices of women migrant workers across Asia-Pacific received by International Domestic Workers Federation (Ms. Sonia George, Executive Committee Member)</p>

12:20-12:30 (10'')	Closing	Passing of the baton to CSW performance (Thai cultural dance performance) Group photo with all presenters and champions evaluation
12:30-13:30	Cocktail Reception	

4. Background

ESCAP will convene the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review in collaboration with UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok, from 19-21 November 2024. The Conference will bring together Ministers, senior officials and representatives from relevant Ministries, civil society organizations, youth organizations, academia, the private sector, UN entities, independent experts and other key stakeholders from across the Asia-Pacific region to:

- Assess progress on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) in Asia and the Pacific over the past five years;
- Review current and emerging challenges, good practices, lessons learned, and priority actions required to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Provide a platform for member States and stakeholders to explore policy options and strategies, including innovative approaches, toward realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- Build regional consensus on priority actions to accelerate the implementation of commitments made in the BPfA, and;
- Consolidate regional inputs to the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women which will focus on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly.

2025 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). It is critical to re-envision care systems to empower women and create inclusive and caring societies and economies that benefit everyone, including the most vulnerable and to 'leave no one behind'. As the global community rethinks how to accelerate our progress to achieve gender equality and women's economic empowerment and the wider SDGs through the upcoming 69th Commission on the Status of Women in March 2025, the Care Economy Special Event provides a timely opportunity to reflect on the critical importance of transforming the care economy.

5. Useful links

United Nations (2024) [Transforming Care Systems: UN System Policy Paper](#)

UNESCAP

ESCAP Case Study Reports on the Care Economy: [Cambodia](#), [Indonesia](#), [the Philippines](#), and [Uzbekistan](#)

ESCAP and ASEAN (2021) [ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy](#)
ESCAP (2021) [COVID-19 and the Unpaid Care Economy in Asia and the Pacific](#)
ESCAP (2021) [Addressing Unpaid Care Work in ASEAN](#)
ESCAP (2023) [Regional Forum on Care Work in ASEAN Countries Meeting Report](#)
ESCAP (2024) [Investing in Our Common Future: Building a “Caring” Society](#)
ESCAP (2024) [Policymaker’s Toolkit on Valuing Unpaid Care and Domestic Work](#)

UN Women

UN Women (2021) [A guide to public investments in the care economy: Policy support tool for estimating care deficits, investment costs, and economic returns.](#)
UN Women (2022) [A toolkit on paid and unpaid care work: From 3Rs to 5Rs](#)
UN Women (2022) [Think Piece: Innovations in Childcare to Advance Women’s Economic Empowerment](#)
UN Women (2023) [The climate–care nexus: Addressing the linkages between climate change and women’s and girls’ unpaid care, domestic, and communal work.](#)
UN Women (2023) [Pathways Towards Decent Work in the Digitally Enabled Care Economy in Southeast Asia](#)
UN Women (2023) [Highlights and recommendations for practitioners: Asia-Pacific Care Economy Forum](#)
UN Women (2024) [Women’s Economic Empowerment and the Care Economy in ASEAN](#)
UN Women (2024) [Caring Societies, Inclusive, and Green Economies in Asia and the Pacific](#)
UN Women (2024) [Scaling Innovations for an Inclusive Care Economy](#)

Global Alliance for Care

[Design, Approval and Implementation of National Care Systems and/or National Care Policies Towards people-centered Comprehensive Care Systems and Policies: Dialogues between Latin America, the Caribbean, and the European Union](#)

Oxfam

Oxfam (2020) [Oxfam’s time to care report](#)
Oxfam (2023) [Gendered dimensions of Loss and Damage in Asia](#)
Oxfam (2020) [Household care Survey Toolkit link](#)
Oxfam (2016) [Rapid Care Analysis Toolkit](#)
Oxfam (2021) [Care Principles and Care-Responsiveness Barometer: Guidelines and toolkit for international financial institutions \(IFIs\)](#)
Oxfam (2021) Care Principles & [Barometer](#)
Oxfam (2021) [Care Policy Scorecard Toolkit](#)

World Bank

The World Bank (2022). [Economic Gains from Investing in Childcare: The Case of Indonesia](#)
The World Bank (2024) [The Care Economy in Indonesia: A Pathway for Women’s Economic Participation and Social Well-being](#)
The World Bank (2024). [Indonesia Gender Equality Program.](#)

6. Contacts

The **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)** provides an inclusive intergovernmental platform focused on advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls in the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP undertakes targeted programming, policy analysis, and technical support aimed at fostering women’s economic participation and addressing the challenges they face, such as the gender gap in labor force participation and the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work.

Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oguzhan, Social Affairs Officer, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP lindstromoguzhan@un.org

The **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)**, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and benefit women and girls worldwide.

Ms. Feroza Sanjana, PhD, Policy Coordinator- Care, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific feroza.sanjana@unwomen.org

The **Global Alliance for Care** is the first global multi-stakeholder community that facilitates and fosters spaces for collective action, advocacy, communication, and learning about care, its recognition as a need, as work, and as a right. It is an articulation between governments, civil society, union associations, the philanthropic sector, international organizations, and academia seeking to advance the care agenda from the local to the global level.

Yara Tarabulsi, Outreach and Advocacy Officer, Global Alliance for Care yara@globalallianceforcare.org

Oxfam is a global confederation (groups united in an alliance) that includes affiliates, or member organizations, each one an independent body contributing to achieve Oxfam's shared goals under the [Global Strategic Framework 2020–30](#). At Oxfam we respond to emergencies and advocate for people in crisis, partnering with local organizations to deliver essentials and help rebuild communities. We work with activists and partners to fight poverty and injustice. We campaign for economic, gender, climate justice and accountable governance, striving for sustainable growth and transformation. We fight for a future that is equal, just and fair – one in which people have more equal opportunities and rights, and one in which we can all flourish, not just survive.

Myrah Nerine Butt, Gender Justice Policy Advocacy Manager, Oxfam in Asia MNerine@oxfam.org.uk

The **World Bank** is a leading international financial institution that plays a pivotal role in addressing global challenges, including those related to care and gender equality. It actively engages in research and policy formulation to combat issues such as women's disproportionate burden in unpaid care work and the economic implications of human trafficking. Through its various programs and partnerships, the World Bank aims to empower women and girls by promoting equitable care policies and combating gender-based violence.

Mr. Emcet Oktay Tas, Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank Indonesia etas@worldbank.org