

Statement delivered by

**H. E. Mariana Vieira da Silva, Minister of State for the Presidency of
Portugal**

65th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

United Nations

**Roundtable “Creating an enabling environment for women's full and
effective participation and decision-making in public life”**

New York

Good afternoon New York, dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure to join you here in this roundtable, to share some views in such an important issue.

I would like to focus my intervention on what we must see clearly, to understand the impacts of the pandemic and make women more visible in our policy responses.

That is why underlying this roundtable, we find a question that is both relevant and challenging: how can we create an environment that enables, to the fullest, women’s participation in public life?

1) Firstly, we have to take into account the impact of COVID-19, support women’s economic independence and participation in the labour market.

For women, besides an aggravated risk of domestic violence, confinement led to increases in unpaid care work, a decrease in the number of hours worked in the main job and added difficulties in work-life balance. It is essential to assess the impact of the pandemic and:

- Account for women in most vulnerable situations, safeguarding access to minimum income and social protection;

- Ensure recovery measures include a strong gender perspective, especially those targeted to support employment and job creation;
- Invest in childcare facilities and services, and encourage a fair division of unpaid work, as well as more men taking parental leaves.

2) Secondly, we must tackle gender pay gaps and increase the number of women in decision-making positions.

Employment losses aggravate gender employment and pay gaps. Additionally, women are still lacking in decision-making positions. Looking forward, we must strive for the implementation of those policies that have proven to be the most effective, such as:

- Pay transparency mechanisms;
- Gender quotas in corporate boards;
- And Gender parity in electoral lists.

3) Finally, we must take a good look into the future and understand where changes are most needed in the present.

The pandemic accelerated our journey to an ever more digital world. Remote work, especially teleworking, brings about new challenges. Additionally, the debate on the future of work has to attend to the equality agenda. Here we should not forget to:

- Encourage more women and girls to engage in ICT related career paths, taking advantage of the opportunities of the digital economy;
- And increase the share of women and girls in digital training.

To conclude, I want to remember the importance of preventing this pandemic situation from further aggravating existing inequalities.

We must incorporate the principles of the Platform of Beijing in our policies and make women more visible.

Thank you.