

COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York



United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Inclusive Social Development



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Sixty-fourth Session of the Commission for Social Development

Panel discussion on Emerging issues

“Eradicating poverty and ensuring dignity through resilient care and support systems”

Wednesday, 4 February 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Conference room 4, UNHQ

Concept Note



1. Background

Care and support systems are increasingly recognized for their multifaceted contribution to accelerating social development. They enable societies to uphold dignity and equality, expand human capabilities and strengthen resilience to shocks. The Doha Political Declaration underscored their multiplier effects in terms of increasing labour participation, enabling decent work, facilitating access to social protection for caregivers and care receivers, improving income security, supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Economic and Social Council, through its resolution 2024/4, has highlighted the role of care and support systems in inclusive social development and poverty eradication, and decided that the Commission would consider this issue in the present session.

Indeed, evidence from across regions demonstrates that countries investing in comprehensive, well-financed and inclusive care and support systems achieve higher rates of female labour-force participation, improved income security and increased access to social protection, all of which contribute to the eradication of poverty and generate positive multiplier effects across the economy.

Well-designed systems can significantly contribute to gender equality. This includes tackling the undervaluing of care work and the unequal distribution of unpaid care work, with women often taking the role of primary caregivers. Measures such as parental leave and flexible working arrangements that promote the equal sharing of caring responsibilities can support women’s increased participation in the labour market and access to social protection, contributing to gender equality and more socially inclusive societies. For care and support recipients, comprehensive care and support systems lead to better developmental outcomes for children and enhanced well-being for older persons and persons with disabilities. They support the dignity of care and support recipients

through a universal approach that considers both care giving and receiving throughout the life course, and recognizes the fact that some may provide care while having their own support needs. The social and solidarity economy, including cooperatives, can contribute to addressing care and support needs in a people-centred way, enhancing the quality of care in addition to strengthening community ties and promoting decent work conditions for care workers.

In this sense, investment in care is not a cost but a strategic driver of inclusive social development. Progress in implementing care and support systems depends on a combination of policy coherence, institutional coordination, adequate public financing and sustained political commitment. Countries that link care and support systems with social protection, health, education and employment policies are better able to ensure continuity of support across the life course. Strategic integration also enhances the efficiency of public spending and the quality of services. Predictable and adequate financing, through general revenues, social insurance or mixed arrangements, remains essential to ensure that no one is left behind, including those in informal employment or rural areas.

The Commission for Social Development will convene its sixty-fourth session from 2 to 10 February 2026. On 4 February 2026, two segments of the panel discussion on the emerging issues will be convened. The first segment, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., will focus on *Eradicating poverty and promoting decent work through comprehensive care and support systems* while the second segment, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., will focus on *Comprehensive care systems as enablers of gender equality, social inclusion and dignity*.

2. Objective and structure

Both segments will provide an opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to discuss actions and policies to establish and strengthen care and support systems for inclusive social development. They will discuss policy options and best practices for comprehensive care and support systems that promote the dignity and well-being of those receiving care, support unpaid and paid caregivers and promote decent work.

Panellists are invited to structure their presentations into two parts, as per the guiding questions that will be proposed in advance by the moderator, focusing on lessons learned and policy recommendations. The outcome of the discussion will be reflected in the Chair's summary.

Segment I: Eradicating poverty and promoting decent work through comprehensive care and support systems

This panel will focus on the impact of comprehensive care and support systems in the labour market, for both paid and currently unpaid care work, as well as its multiplier effects in access to social protection and poverty eradication. It will address questions such as: What are the decent work opportunities unlocked by comprehensive care and support systems? How can policy coordination support equitable outcomes in care work? What is the role of the social and solidarity economy in comprehensive care and support systems? What are some good practices in financing for care and support?

Segment II: Comprehensive care systems as enablers of gender equality, social inclusion and dignity

The following panel will address the potential for social inclusion of gender-responsive and comprehensive care and support systems, as they contribute to redistributing unpaid care work and allow for increased participation in society and quality of life for persons with

disability and older person. It will discuss questions such as: How can care and support systems promote gender equality and tackle the undervaluing of care work? How can social inclusion be supported through care and support systems, considering that many of care workers are migrants? What types of care enable best developmental outcomes for children? What are the best practices to protect the human rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and older persons as support recipients? How can Governments ensure that care and support systems are inclusive of people living in poverty or in rural areas?

Proposed time allocation for each segment

Speaker	Suggested speaking time
<i>Chair:</i> Opening remarks	2 minutes
<i>Moderator:</i> Remarks and introduction	3 minutes
<i>4 Panellists:</i> Presentations and Q&A from the moderator	7-minute presentation per panellist, followed by one question each from the moderator with a 1–2-minute response per panellist
<i>Q & A:</i> From the floor	25 minutes
<i>Panellists:</i> Concluding remarks	2 minutes per panellist
<i>Moderator:</i> Summary and conclusion	3 minutes
<i>Chair:</i> Closing	2 minutes