Over 100 million women aged 25 to 54 years, with small children at home, were left out of the global workforce in 2020, including more than 2 million women who left the labour force due to the increased pressures of unpaid care work.

Working women accounted for 39.4 per cent of total employment before the pandemic in 2019, but made up nearly 45 per cent of global employment losses in 2020.

Accelerated progress is needed to strengthen gender-responsive budgeting to align public financing with gender equality objectives. According to data reported by 105 countries and areas for the period 2018–2021, only 26 per cent of countries have comprehensive systems in place to track public allocations for gender equality, 59 per cent have some features of such a system, and 15 per cent do not have the minimum elements of such a system.

Globally, over 1 in 4 (26 per cent) ever-partnered women aged 15 years and older—641 million women—have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a husband or intimate partner at least once in their lifetime in 2018.

The prevalence of child marriage has declined globally by about 10 per cent in the past five years. However, one in five young women worldwide (19 per cent) were married in childhood in 2021. Due to COVID-19 impacts, up to 10 million additional girls are at risk of child marriage in the next decade.

As of 1 January 2022, the global share of women in lower and single houses of national parliaments reached merely 26.2 per cent, up from 25.6 per cent in 2021.

Mobile phone ownership is an important tool for women’s empowerment. In 30 of 70 countries with data for 2017–2021, gender parity in mobile phone ownership has been achieved, and in 13 more countries, more women than men own a mobile phone.

Available data from 36 countries for 2009–2020 show that, in 30 countries, less than 50 per cent of women have ownership and/or secure tenure rights over agricultural land. In 18 countries, the corresponding share of men was twice as high.
Working with Governments, corporations and business organizations, the International Trade Centre (ITC)’s SheTrades initiative achieved its objective of connecting 3 million women entrepreneurs to markets in more than 20 countries. In addition, SheTrades has launched a 9-step action plan to ensure women entrepreneurship in build-back-better efforts and a digital tool that helps to assess, monitor and improve the policy ecosystem for women’s economic empowerment.

The project “Equipping gender-based violence response services to meet the needs of women and girls within the COVID-19 outbreak”, implemented by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (OSRSG-SVC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), works in close collaboration with local and national women-led organizations in Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon and seeks to strengthen the quality and accessibility of life-saving psychosocial and health services for conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence survivors and those at-risk.

The Catalysing Women’s Entrepreneurship programme led by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) has been instrumental in lifting the barriers to access finance for women-led Micro-, Small-, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) who are key to the economy yet more vulnerable to crises. In 2021, the programme introduced financing initiatives that help women entrepreneurs access funds and take advantage of digital innovations. Additionally, the programme provided fundings to pilot solutions that can help women entrepreneurs to access and adopt digital solutions and finance technologies.

In 2020, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) released a guide highlighting six critical actions to put gender equality at the center of the Covid responses. The guide is designed to provide recommendations to governments to confront the gendered and discriminatory effects of COVID-19.

UNFPA has introduced a number of disruptive innovations for women and girls in the past two years. For example, Safe YOU is an innovative, all-in-one platform launched in Armenia, Georgia, Iraq helping women connect with a community that supports survivors of gender-based violence. iCivil is a digital Civil Registration and Vital Statistics platform launched in Burkina Faso to register births in real-time. YouthConnect is a toolkit that helps countries adapt digital solutions to meet the needs of women, adolescents and the most vulnerable. The Geospatial Dashboard on Intimate Partner Violence is an open source platform that helps governments, researchers and service providers use data to better understand the connections between gender-based violence, poverty, education and SDG indicators related to UNFPA’s mandate.