



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: NO MORE 'STICKING PLASTER SOLUTIONS' FOR THE ECONOMIC GENDER GAP**

Gender equality will never become a reality until governments invest in breaking down the social constraints that prevent women living in poverty from progressing economically, Christian Aid says ahead of [International Women's Day 2017](#) (March 8).

The theme of this year's International Women's Day is #BeBoldForChange, with a particular focus on expanding opportunities for women to move forward in the workplace and the economy.

Christian Aid wants governments to address the structural barriers facing the tens of millions of women across the world who do work that is low paid, in poor and unsafe conditions, with limited employment rights and few opportunities to advance.

Christian Aid's Gender Policy Adviser Sophie Efange said: 'If we truly want to see the full and equal participation of women in the economy, we need to confront the root causes of gender inequality – especially in developing nations. Otherwise, all our efforts will amount to little more than a quick-fix sticking plaster.'

'That's why governments, through progressive taxation measures, must raise the funds to provide the types of social infrastructure that will empower women to take control of their financial futures: this includes improving opportunities for work that is decent, well-paid, secure and safe. It's also critical that we address the issue of unpaid care work: one of the biggest obstacles to women's economic advancement.'

'It is also imperative that governments introduce gender-responsive budgets to ensure that tax revenues are spent in ways that promote gender equality, including supporting women in the world of work, from education and skills training to health and care services; some of the cornerstones critical to securing women's rights and accelerating their participation in economic life.'

Ms Efange added: 'Policy makers cannot drag their heels on this. They need to enact progressive legislation that protects women's labour rights and their collective bargaining power – i.e. their right to organise. These rights are fundamental, especially for women in the informal sector (for instance, street vendors or domestic workers), who fall outside the protection of labour laws.'

Worldwide, hundreds of millions of women are part of an informal workforce, with no social and employment rights. Many are in occupations that reflect gender stereotypes. Women also take on three times more unpaid employment than men, according to the [United Nations](#).

Christian Aid will raise these issues at the annual [Commission for the Status of Women](#) (CSW), which runs from 13-24 March in New York. At the global event, the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment will release its final report.

'We look forward to following the discussions that will arise from this highly anticipated report,' said Sophie Efange. 'We are glad that the issue of women's economic empowerment is firmly on the table at CSW, and that faith communities and the private sector will be part of this conversation.'

This evening (March 7), Christian Aid will co-host an [International Women's Day event](#) at the House of Lords, in partnership with Bishop of Gloucester the Rt Revd Rachel Treweek and Restored, a charity working to end violence against women.

ENDS

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. Last month, Christian Aid published its updated [Gender Justice Strategy](#) for 2017.
2. Christian Aid works in some of the world's poorest communities in around 40 countries at any one time. We act where there is great need, regardless of religion, helping people to live a full life, free from poverty. We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance in tackling the root causes of poverty as well as its effects.
3. Christian Aid's core belief is that the world can and must be changed so that poverty is ended: this is what we stand for. Everything we do is about ending poverty and injustice: swiftly, effectively, sustainably. Our strategy document [Partnership for Change](#) explains how we set about this task.
4. Christian Aid is a member of [ACT Alliance](#), a global coalition of more than 130 churches and church-related organisations that work together in humanitarian assistance, advocacy and development.
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