

THIS BRIEF NOTE EXPLAINS HOW, AT THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) OUTBREAK, THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN CONTINUE ITS BUSINESS AND CONTRIBUTE TO EASY ACCESS OF MOST DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IN THE SOCIETY TO GOODS AND SERVICES. HENCE, IT AIMS TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO PEOPLE AND COMPANIES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, companies need to make radical changes in their approaches to business processes -very much like any other actors in times of pandemics. It will become increasingly difficult to ensure business continuity without taking any measures against the Covid-19 outbreak, following business as usual. During such times, companies must take protective measures to continue their businesses considering different conditions and needs of their employees, while also focusing on their employees' welfare and on recovery.

What can private sector companies do to ensure health and protection of their employees during this period?

- Apply working from home policy for all employees.
- If your employees are required to come to work, pay attention to hygiene at the workplaces in line with the advice of the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) and the Ministry of Health. Ensure that your employees have enough space between each other (at least 1.5 meters of space away from each other). Do not authorize any business travels for your employees, unless it is absolutely urgent and required.
- Organize webinars for employees on such topics as health and hygiene at times of pandemics, Covid-19, impacts of violence against women, coping with violence mechanisms and related mechanisms to apply for gender based violence.
- Make sure that your employees maintain a healthy work-life balance during this period. The burden of domestic and care work is different for men and women. Women perform such work three times more than men. Therefore, assess the needs of female employees under the new working conditions and adopt special measures to address such needs. In addition, actively advocate for equal share of domestic and care work for men and women.
- Inform the pregnant and breastfeeding women and women with young children about special measures that they may need to adopt in times of the pandemic. You may use UNFPA's [manual](#) for further information. Emphasize the message that childcare is a shared responsibility both for mother and father.
- Adopt special measures for your female employees who are exposed to gender based (GBV) violence or

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under the threat of GBV. According to the latest [information note](#) published by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), lockdown affects men and women differently because almost 75 percent of the female victims of GBV in Turkey are killed at home. Domestic violence drastically increases in countries where Covid-19 is widespread. Inform your female employees of [hotlines on domestic violence](#). Remind your employees of your company's policy on "Combating against Domestic Violence" or "Promoting Gender Equality" developed and being implemented within the scope of BADV (Business against Domestic Violence) Project and remind them that they can receive support under this policy in case of any domestic violence incident.

- Provision of family planning and other sexual and reproductive health commodities, including menstrual health items, are central to women's health, empowerment, and sustainable development and may be impacted as supply chains undergo strains from the pandemic response. Make sure that your employees are provided with products for family planning, sexual and reproductive health. Please see [UNFPA's information note](#) for more information.
- To ensure that you leave no one behind, adopt special measures for employees who are in the age most affected group by this pandemic or those with chronic diseases or pre-existing conditions. In addition, make sure that employees with disabilities receive the support that addresses their specific needs. Facilitate the access of these groups to health services and provide them with opportunities to enable them to meet their daily needs easily. The new working conditions shall not put them at a more disadvantaged position.



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How can we make a difference for the community during this period?

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- You may make direct financial contributions to service providers, public institutions, and international and humanitarian organizations who are at the forefront of the coronavirus relief efforts.
- You may provide special opportunities in your fields of business to health professionals that have a very heavy workload. For instance:
 - *If you are in the hospitality industry, you may make your rooms available to health professionals who cannot go back to their homes after work.*
 - *If you are a textile company, you may manufacture personal protection equipment for health professionals by obtaining necessary permits from the Ministry of Health and establishing quality assurance mechanisms.*
 - *If you are a logistics company, you may provide support for the delivery of various institution's needs.*
- You may carry out activities targeting disadvantaged groups (elderly, persons with chronic diseases or disabilities) and you may launch initiatives to help them use digital tools efficiently during social distancing and staying at home.
- You may contribute to activities that help integrate young people into social life through the digital environment, whose educational and daily life have been disrupted and whose lockdown is very crucial as they might unintentionally infect other people with the virus. Please see [UNFPA's note](#) on this topic.
- You may contribute to protective measures and information activities aimed at pregnant women, those who have recently given birth or breastfeeding women.
- You may contribute to scientific studies on Covid-19 disease.
- You may use your traditional and new media outlets to provide information and raise awareness on the following issues:
 - *On protective measures against the Covid-19 outbreak;*
 - *On existing hotlines on GBV for women who have been locked down in their homes and therefore may be more exposed to violence, and on raising awareness against domestic violence;*
 - *Messages of solidarity and cooperation as well as suggestions and activities to protect the community's mental health at times of this pandemic;*
- You may organize awareness-raising campaigns on Covid-19, gender based violence and special needs of disadvantaged groups during times of pandemics, etc. in collaboration with the celebrities you work with for the promotion of your company's goods and services.

To follow up the current developments concerning Covid-19 in the business world, you may visit the [web page](#) of the World Economic Forum and look at the International Chamber of Commerce's [guidelines](#).

Make sure that your contributions and supports are designed and used in line with the humanitarian principles such as impartiality, neutrality, independence and humanity.

You may find below other sources on this topic:

1. International Labor Organization, [COVID-19 and the world of work: Global impact and policy responses](#)
2. International Labor Organization, [New guidelines to help employers support families during COVID-19](#)
3. Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, [Measures to be Taken at Workplaces against New Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreak](#)
4. U.S. Department of Labor, [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)



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