

*DRAFT 20May2020 3:15 p.m.*

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**VIDEO MESSAGE TO EVERY WOMAN EVERY CHILD HIGH-LEVEL  
ROUNDTABLE: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE COVID-19  
RESPONSE TO PROTECT EVERY WOMAN AND EVERY CHILD  
28 May 2020**

I thank my co-chair of Every Woman Every Child, Her Excellency Kersti Kaljulaid, President of Estonia, for convening this important roundtable.

As the world addresses the COVID-19 pandemic, we must safeguard decades of progress on maternal and child health and well-being.

The United Nations estimates that six months of lockdown could lead to 7 million additional unintended pregnancies and 31 million cases of gender-based violence. Progress on children's health is equally at risk, with routine immunization services being put on hold, scaled back or shut down.

We must ensure that the pandemic does not push more women and children into poverty or further restrict their opportunities. Plans to respond and recover from the pandemic must prioritize their human rights, protect them from domestic violence and ensure access to services that support health, reproductive rights, access to clean water and sanitation, mental health and education.

While women have been among those most severely affected by the crisis, women have also been among the strongest and most decisive leaders in the response.

Global solidarity will be crucial. As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I am strongly committed to protecting the health and well-being of every woman and every child.

Thank you.