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tended to be disproportionately allocated to women and girls, it remained undervalued and unrecognized. The unequal division of caregiving responsibilities also cut across economic lines, as women from disadvantaged often provided care services to meet the needs of more privileged groups.

5. Participants pointed out the need to clearly specify “unpaid **care** work” rather than use the more general term “unpaid work”. An important distinction noted was that unpaid care work is not included in the system of national accounts. Time use surveys have indicated that women spend twice as much time as men on unpaid care work, over and above time spent at paid work. As a result, many women have a much longer working day than men.

6. Inequalities associated with paid care work were also recognized by participants. Most paid caregivers were women, reinforcing the stereotype that women were the natural choice as care providers. It was noted that paid care providers typically earned low wages and were afforded little or no social security or employment rights.

7. Unless society assigns more value to both paid and unpaid care work, and recognizes that it should be done by both men and women, women will continue to suffer economically and remain excluded from the public domain as a result of their disproportionate involvement in care work.

8. Possible policy interventions to give greater value to care work include cash payments in the form of allowances that government pay to caregivers, taxation allowances, different types of paid and unpaid leave from employment, social security credits, and the provision of subsidized care services. Participants noted, in addition to recognizing women’s unpaid work in the home, that it was important to provide opportunities for access to the labour market. Participants also provided examples of national laws and policies enacted to encourage more equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS.

9. Participants gave examples of national laws and policies on parental leave which promote equal sharing of family and caregiving responsibilities between women and men. The case of Iceland was highlighted, where recent legislative changes aimed to increase the role of men in child rearing. According to the law adopted by the Icelandic parliament in 2000, parents are afforded nine months of parental leave, at 80 per cent of their former wage, following the birth or adoption of a child. The nine months is to be divided between the parents so that three non-transferable months are reserved exclusively for the mother and the father, respectively, leaving the last three months to be divided between the parents as they see fit. Between 80 and 90 per cent of Icelandic men took advantage of this parental leave.

10. Under Iceland’s parental leave provisions, employees are protected against dismissal and the law allows for a certain amount of flexibility to enable parents to combine work and leave requirements. A stated goal of this parental leave legislation is to increase the participation of fathers in childcare, improve the position of women on the

labour market, increase fertility, and improve the economic situation of families with children.

11. Participants cited other national experiences in relation to parental leave policies. Despite legislative and other changes, results from recent surveys suggested that women continued to shoulder the double burden of engaging in paid employment and assuming the primary responsibility of caring for their families at home. Concern was expressed that the gendered division of labour would persist if provisions for parental leave in some countries remained considerably shorter for men than women.

12. The role of men and boys in sharing responsibilities, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS, was discussed. Even

16. Participants concluded by acknowledging the value of sharing experiences and good practices on equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, and welcomed further discussions on this topic during the 53