Public Services International (PSI) brings together more than 20 million workers, two-thirds of whom are women. PSI is a global trade union federation dedicated to social justice and fighting inequality, promoting human rights and universal access to quality public services for all. Achieving gender equality at the workplace and in society is one of PSI’s main objectives.

As trade unions we call for a real transformation of the world of work and gender relations, equal pay for work of equal value and the recognition of women’s work. We need a political, social and cultural shift based on pro-women and pro-worker policies and trade unions have a key role to play in this process.

Fighting gender inequity in the labour market requires policies and laws to protect all workers, whether in the informal or the formal economy, and to ensure compliance, instead of impunity, of anti-discrimination and minimum and living wage legislation as well as core labour standards. In addition, gender sensitive policies that take account of the constraints and the discrimination faced by women and of the unpaid care work carried out by women – must be designed and implemented.

We need targeted policies to address the pay gap, which otherwise will take decades to be bridged. It is through collective bargaining that unions can make a substantive difference to address the pay gap and the value of work by women, while also domestic violence and at the workplace can be addressed through collective bargaining.

Through the provision of quality public services and universal access to health, education and water, societies can be more inclusive, and secure a more balanced division of labour. At the same time, more and better jobs for women can be created while the segregation of wages should be addressed.

Challenging corporate power and demanding tax justice are key components in the struggle for economic and gender justice worldwide and require building a global coalition, capable of the mobilization of unions and social movements, including women’s rights and gender equality advocates at local, national and global level.

VAT and other regressive tax policies hit women hardest. The “tampon tax” is a striking example of that reality. Sanitary pads should not be taxed more than condoms. We must finish off the “triple inequality whammy”: the wage gap, social security and pension gap and the gender tax gap.

Through the integration of women in both trade union membership and leadership structures, trade unions lead the way forward to realize the political and economic autonomy of women. Women and men have a joint responsibility to ensure the economic empowerment of women – empowering women empowers societies.