

G7

Gender Equality
Advisory Council



RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENDER EQUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL 2021 TO THE LEADERS OF THE G7

June 2021

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Call to Action

We, the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC), welcome the open society values shared by the Group of Seven (G7) and the recognition that gender equality is integral to those values. We further recognise the strength of collective commitments made by G7 countries. Women and girls must have the same opportunities and rights - political, economic, social and cultural - as men. Just as women have been at the centre of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic as health workers, care workers, scientists and teachers, they must equally be at the heart of a recovery that ensures their rights, meets their needs and recognises their contributions. We challenge G7 Leaders to be ambitious for all women, including but not limited to those marginalised by race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and socio-economic status.

Our starting point this year is the mounting evidence that COVID-19 risks a step back for gender equality globally, unless governments take urgent action. Despite the centrality of women in the response, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls everywhere by exacerbating existing inequalities. The GEAC's analysis has focused in particular on three linked, core **themes**: girls' education and the participation of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); women's empowerment; and eradicating violence against women and girls.

GEAC members have pooled their experience, expertise and skills to develop recommendations that are practical, concrete and actionable. Across the three themes there are common **mechanisms**: measurement and accountability, representation, inclusion and legislation. We need to measure women's participation so that we know if action is needed. We need women to be visible in positions of authority, and to bring a diversity of experience to all organisations. We need to acknowledge and tackle the barriers to women's inclusion. And finally, we need governments to legislate in a way that supports increased gender equality. This all starts with a quality education for every girl on the planet.



The GEAC calls for:

1. An acknowledgement of the **disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on women and girls**, globally, and increased funding for, and dedicated action towards gender-transformative development programming, sexual and reproductive health services, and addressing the 'shadow pandemic' of violence against women and girls (VAWG).
2. A **pandemic response and recovery that takes account of the needs of women and girls**, and tracks the effect of recovery initiatives on men and women, taking into account factors such as age, income, disability and ethnicity.
3. At least 12 years of **gender-transformative education for all**, building on G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' commitments on girls' education and, domestically, supporting schools to implement gender-responsive policies to benefit girls' physical and mental wellbeing.
4. Strengthened domestic and international **social care infrastructure**, and access to affordable quality care, including childcare, through increased public investment to address gender imbalances in care work, both paid and unpaid.
5. **Equal access to capital and labour markets**, through removing barriers and creating opportunities for jobs and funding for women to thrive in the modern economy, and tailoring policies to support women-owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).
6. Recognition of the impact that **global trade** has on women as traders, workers and consumers, with G7 Leaders building trading relationships that benefit women and girls around the world.
7. A **gender-responsive approach to climate financing, investment and policies**, including at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26), and for G7 Leaders to target investment in girls' education, re-skilling of women, and lifelong learning to ensure that women and girls can benefit from the 'green revolution'.
8. Acknowledgement of the risk to global prosperity and women's economic empowerment caused by a gender imbalance in **STEM education and careers**, and commitment to prioritising progress towards gender parity through concrete action.
9. Action to address the **digital gender divide** by supporting initiatives that provide women and girls in all areas with affordable, reliable and safe internet and mobile services; and to counteract algorithm bias which puts women, girls and marginalised groups at a disadvantage.



10. An end to the **stereotyping and unequal treatment of women in the media**, including by endorsing the Generation Equality Forum Charter of Commitments for Cultural and Creative Industries.

11. Global action to end **violence against women and girls** through increased investment in prevention and response; the ratification of relevant conventions, including the Istanbul Convention; and enhanced support for eradicating female genital mutilation (FGM).

12. Action to tackle **online harassment and abuse of women and girls**, through the introduction of legislation that establishes a duty of care on technology companies to improve the safety of users online, including appropriate controls for online pornography sites.

13. Condemnation of **sexual violence used as a weapon of war** as an international red line, by developing an International Convention to denounce it, in line with other prohibited weapons in war such as landmines and chemical weapons.

14. Continued action to drive **monitoring of progress on gender equality, and accountability on commitments**, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, through the establishment of a G7 GEAC observatory mechanism to measure and report on G7 progress.

The GEAC also notes that women are under-represented politically, as voters and as leaders in international institutions, local and national governments; including G7 decision-making structures. We call on G7 Leaders to reconvene the GEAC under each G7 Presidency to ensure women's voices are hard-wired into the process, and to monitor gender balance among leaders and their delegations in future years.

We are pleased to present these recommendations to G7 Leaders ahead of a further report in the autumn. We look for greater horizons of opportunity for women and girls and the tearing down of barriers which impede them. We call on the G7 to take on board the recommendations and advice of the Women 7¹ and the Generation Equality Forum², and to make bold commitments and deliver game-changing results for women and girls in all their diversity to build back better.



Members of the Gender Equality Advisory Council

CHAIR: Sarah Sands, Former editor of the Evening Standard and BBC Radio 4's Today programme

- **Alice P. Albright**, CEO of the Global Partnership for Education
- **Prof. Jutta Allmendinger**, President of the WZB Berlin Social Science Centre and Professor of Sociology at Humboldt University Berlin
- **Hon Julie Bishop**, Former Foreign Minister for Australia
- **Prof. Iris Bohnet**, Co-director of Harvard's Women and Public Policy Program
- **Ursula M. Burns**, Former CEO of Xerox and leader of the White House STEM programme
- **Dr Fabiola Gianotti**, Physicist and Director General, CERN
- **Prof. Sarah Gilbert**, Lead researcher at Oxford University for the coronavirus vaccine
- **Isabelle Hudon**, Canada's Ambassador to France and Monaco
- **Dr (H.C.) Ritu Karidhal**, Deputy Operations Director to India's Mars Orbiter Mission, Mangalyaan
- **Bogolo J. Kenewendo**, Economist and former Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry in Botswana
- **Prof. Reiko Kuroda**, Professor of Chemistry and Biology at Chubu University and winner of the L'Oreal-UNESCO award for Women in Science
- **Dr Dambisa Moyo**, Global economist and co-Principal of Versaca Investments
- **Dr Denis Mukwege**, Gynaecologist, human rights activist and Nobel peace laureate
- **Marie-Christine Saragosse**, President and CEO of France Médias Monde
- **Emma Sinclair MBE**, Tech entrepreneur and Co-Founder of EnterpriseAlumni
- **Dr Aldijana Šišić**, Chief of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Women)
- **Dame Rachel de Souza**, Children's Commissioner for England
- **Jessica Woodroffe**, W7 Co-Chair and Director of Gender and Development Network



Recommendations

1. Resources to redress the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, in all contexts, domestic and international, with those impacts varying according to age, income, disability, ethnicity and other factors.³

Women are at the frontline of the COVID-19 response, as health workers, scientists, community volunteers and carers. They have taken on a greater burden of unpaid care work and home schooling, and are at increased risk of loss of livelihood and financial insecurity. COVID-19 response measures, including lockdowns and school closures, have contributed to the 'shadow pandemic', an increase⁴ and intensification of violence against women and girls (VAWG), by for example isolating survivors of domestic abuse with their abusers. Other forms of VAWG, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and early and forced marriage, have also increased. The mental health of women, particularly young women and girls, has been worse than that of men throughout the pandemic, exacerbating existing health inequalities.

In addition, critical services, including sexual and reproductive health care, antenatal services, safe delivery services, family planning and domestic abuse services have been reduced. This is likely to result in an increased risk of maternal mortality, unintended pregnancies and other adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes among women and girls. Research shows that maternal deaths have increased, due to women delaying attendance at hospital or concealing pregnancy, as well as decreased access to such services deemed non-essential by national or local governments.

This regression is an urgent driver to further increase investment in gender equality and women's empowerment, an area where both global and national efforts remain chronically underfunded, despite its importance for the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The threat of funding reversals comes at a time when strength and sustained support is most needed.⁵ Whilst women's rights organisations stepped up to fill the gaps in state service provision, their urgent funding is needed to continue essential service provision in a safe and sustainable way; to continue prevention programming; and to prevent closures of their organisations due to the COVID-19 crisis.



We call on the Leaders of the G7 to:

Domestically:

- Acknowledge the disproportionate and intersecting impacts of the pandemic on women, girls and marginalised groups, and commit to further monitoring the longer-term gendered impacts of the pandemic - for example by collecting and analysing data on direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 by gender and ethnicity at the least.
- Tackle structural inequalities by addressing the care economy, violence against women and girls, and the adverse impacts the pandemic has had on women, in particular those with caring responsibilities (*see recommendations 2, 4, 5 and 11 for further detail*).

Globally:

- Recognise that the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls is particularly acute in less developed countries - where services and support are subject to the double blow of reduced national and aid budgets - including by providing support to women's rights organisations.
- Renew commitments to 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) target for Official Development Assistance (ODA), ring-fencing commitments to programmes where gender equality is a significant objective,⁶ and support debt alleviation and gender-transformative financing initiatives.



2. A COVID-19 recovery and response that takes account of the needs of women and girls

In general, women are under-represented in decision-making on pandemic response and recovery.⁷ In many contexts, data on the impact of COVID-19 and response measures is inadequate in terms of taking account of gender differences, as well as other factors that exacerbate inequalities.

Robust gender equality impact assessments that also take account of age, income, disability, ethnicity, caring responsibilities and socio-economic background need to be mandated in the design and financing of fiscal stimulus packages and social assistance programmes to achieve greater equality. Services for victims and survivors of gender-based violence should be classed as essential and explicitly recognised in future pandemic preparedness plans.

We call on the Leaders of the G7 to:

- Ensure women's equal representation and leadership in all COVID-19 response and recovery planning and decision-making, so that policies are effective, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all women and men, girls and boys, particularly those from marginalised groups.
- Commit to the integration of gender equality in the design and implementation of future pandemic crisis response plans as well as COVID-19 recovery plans and economic support packages, aligned with international labour standards and intersectional approaches.
- Track the different effects of recovery packages on men and women, and on marginalised groups, taking account of other key factors including age, income, disability and ethnicity.



3. Access to at least 12 years of (gender-transformative) education

Evidence from the World Bank suggests that investments in school age girls have the highest returns in advancing gender equality.⁸ However, across the world girls' education has been adversely and disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with lockdowns and school closures exacerbating inequalities and costing an estimated 20 million additional girls their education. Being out of school puts adolescent girls at increased risk of different forms of abuse, including forced and child marriage, FGM, unintended pregnancies, domestic and child labour, and sexual and domestic violence. The lifelong impacts of missing out on education and learning are vast, not only in earnings and standard of living, but also safety and physical and mental health.⁹

Universal girls' education is a binding force which would drive progress against all G7 policy priorities, from increasing climate resilience, decreasing disaster-related deaths, adding trillions to the global economy and creating fairer, more equal, democratised societies. Girls' education is a key component of building back a more resilient society, with educated girls and women better able to prepare for, adapt to, and bounce back from crisis. But access to education is not the only challenge. Schools that entrench toxic gender stereotypes, or do not meet basic safety and sanitation needs, can be harmful to girls and prevent them from reaching their full potential. We must engage men and boys as a proven positive accelerant to the repositioning of girls and women in society.

We welcome the G7's commitment to mobilising financial and technical resources in support of girls' education this year, including through the Global Partnership for Education. To build on this, a comprehensive 'whole of child' approach is needed, which breaks down silos between child protection, education, health and other areas. Girls must be supported in every sphere to develop the skills and knowledge needed to claim and exercise their rights, and empower them to be leaders and decision-makers.



We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

Domestically:

- Introduce mandatory, age-appropriate, gender-responsive sex education for all pupils, and teaching on universal rights.
- Ensure schools have in place robust gender-responsive policies and learning environments and a rights-based approach to education.
- Support the participation of girl-led groups and girl activists in key education decision-making processes, including by ensuring accessible information and providing flexible funding.
- Eliminate stereotypes and unconscious bias at all levels of education by ensuring teacher training curricula empower teachers to understand and challenge gender stereotypes in learning choices.

Globally:

- Achieve the new global goals adopted at the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers and make bold pledges across the G7 to ensure a fully funded Global Partnership for Education with at least US\$5 billion.
- Promptly implement the G7 Declaration on girls' education agreed by Foreign and Development Ministers in London on 5 May 2021.
- Protect relevant bilateral and multilateral aid expenditure in support of securing at least 12 years of quality education for all girls globally, with a particular focus on marginalised adolescent girls and girls of colour.
- Build on the 2019 G7 Gender at the Centre Initiative and ensure adequate financing to unleash the transformative potential for gender equality in and through education around the world.



4. The care economy

In every country women are still less likely to engage in paid work than men, bearing the responsibility for the majority of unpaid care and domestic work.¹⁰ Unpaid work constrains women and girls in their ability to take up paid work and attend and achieve at school. The disproportionate share of unpaid work that falls on women has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹ Widespread and long-term closures of schools and day-care centres have increased childcare needs, which further increases the burden of care work. This has been particularly pronounced in sectors under high stress from the pandemic – such as health and social care – in which women are overrepresented in the workforce. Globally, women business owners also appear to have been disproportionately impacted by additional care work.¹²

We agree with the Civil Society 7, Women 7 and others that G7 governments must recognise the importance of the care economy in securing prosperity for all by investing an additional 2% of Gross Domestic Product into social infrastructure to create gender-responsive public health and care services that improve service provision for the most marginalised, reduce women’s unpaid care burdens and create decent work for women. We must eliminate systems which promote unequal care structures, and incentivise men and boys to participate equally in unpaid care and domestic work.

We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

Domestically:

- Prioritise strengthening domestic social care infrastructure, ensuring accessibility of affordable quality care, including childcare, through increased public investment.
- Hold employers to account on designing and implementing gender equal flexible working policies to unlock the multiple benefits of promoting better gender balance in paid and unpaid work, and set more positive gender norms for future generations.
- Require employers to offer shared parental leave as a minimum, while working towards a ‘use it or lose it’ model which provides for a period of equal paid leave for both parents.

Globally:

- In addition, G7 Finance Ministers should work with International Financial Institutions to ensure that fiscal consolidation and austerity conditions do not restrict investment in social care infrastructure in less developed partner countries that will be essential to build back better.



5. Access to capital and labour markets

Financial independence and access to capital and labour markets are crucial components of economic empowerment, and central to women's financial independence globally. Women more often face barriers to finance, insurance and business ownership, thereby hindering women's entrepreneurship and their advancement within corporate structures. Globally, women are overrepresented in informal and vulnerable employment, earn an estimated 77% of men's income, and are more likely than men to be unemployed. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated existing labour market inequalities.

Although gender pay gap figures and estimates vary depending on methodology, the average gender gap in labour income (GGLI) in OECD countries remains wide at 40%.¹³ The traditional gender wage gap for full-time employees further increases with age and especially during parenthood,¹⁴ making it important to further consider measures of lifetime earnings. Whilst companies are increasingly putting in place corporate policies and strategies on gender equality, it is evident that government legislation, policies and incentives are required to bring about systemic change.

We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

- Prioritise gender equality and women's economic empowerment in their domestic and international economic strategies, including economic recovery plans and aid and development policies that focus on gender equality programming among the poorest and most marginalised groups.
- Embed gender-responsive approaches in industrial strategies by reorienting job creation initiatives to women-led industries and tailoring policies to support women-owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).
- Introduce living minimum wages and mandatory gender pay gap reporting for all employers, and encourage employer-led voluntary initiatives to promote gender equal flexible working policies.
- Introduce gender equality criteria in public sector procurement and targets for public spending on women-owned and women-led businesses.
- Encourage financial stakeholders to leverage the power of capital markets and movements of resources to steer responsible business conduct and foster inclusive corporate cultures.
- Ratify International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on collective bargaining and freedom of association, as well as Convention 189 on domestic workers, and ensure these conventions are enforced throughout supply chains.



6. Trade

Global trade has an impact on women as traders, workers and consumers. An estimated 192 million women in OECD and middle-income countries work in global value chains, accounting for 42% of global value chain employment.¹⁵ Women tend to be concentrated in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). SMEs face particular barriers in participating in trade, such as having fewer resources to meet the high costs often associated with engaging in international markets, and less capacity to address complex regulatory requirements.¹⁶ Helping women take advantage of export opportunities, as well as upgrading women's production in the value chain, could maximise the gains from trade for women and the wider global economy.

G7 governments must work together to build mutually beneficial and sustainable trading relationships that benefit women around the world, and facilitate equitable growth for the G7's current and future trading partners. Identifying future trade patterns and ensuring women have meaningful access to those sectors will be vital.

We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

- Build on the ambition of the Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment on the Occasion of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017 at the next WTO Ministerial Conference, and seek ambitious commitments around improving data on women in trade and developing gender-responsive trade policies.
- Require existing and new Aid for Trade initiatives to include the tools for crafting gender-responsive trade policies and programmes for facilitating women in trade and economic empowerment; and work directly with women-owned businesses in developing countries to ensure these programmes meet women's needs.
- Progress trade facilitation reform and support the implementation of the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement in a way that bolsters women's participation in trade and economic empowerment.
- In addition, G7 Trade Ministers should commit to joining the SheTrades Outlook digital platform to improve the evidence base on trade and gender equality to inform policy and programme development; and support the establishment of a United Nations binding treaty on business and human rights with a particular focus on the rights of women.



7. Climate change and the green economy

Climate change and biodiversity loss produce dramatically unequal impacts across social groups, with the most marginalised and those with intersecting vulnerabilities - such as ethnicity, age, disability and income - often most severely affected. Women are more likely to die in a climate disaster, be displaced by climate change, or die from pollution.¹⁷ Tackling climate change and biodiversity loss effectively requires taking account of at-risk populations, including girls and women and other marginalised groups and communities.

Successfully transitioning to a Net Zero and nature-positive future will depend on the ability to harness all possible talent globally. Worldwide, women account for 32% of the renewable energy workforce, with 45% working in administrative positions and 28% working in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-related roles. The development and diffusion of green technologies, including through timely implementation of the G7 Industrial Decarbonization Agenda, offer opportunities to both generate jobs and accelerate the transition to Net Zero. But existing barriers to women's economic empowerment are likely to persist unless deliberate action is taken to ensure a just transition to net zero:¹⁸ there must be targeted investment in tailored green skills for women and girls.

We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

- Commit to swiftly implement a gender-responsive approach to climate financing, investment and policies.
- Reaffirm commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Gender Action Plans to better equip and empower women and girls to confront the challenges they are facing, and to adapt, participate and benefit from resetting our relationship with nature and the transition to Net Zero.
- Target investment in girls' education, reskilling of women, and lifelong learning to ensure that they can be a part of the 'green revolution'.
- Work with the private sector to commit to providing equal opportunities for women and girls to take on climate and environmental leadership roles.
- Increase efforts to achieve G7 commitments in the Equality by 30 Campaign, in particular the integration of a gender lens into this work.
- Fund early warning systems and alternative education settings in climate-affected areas to minimise risk and impacts of climate-related school closures.



8. The pipeline into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)

As well as ensuring that girls have access to transformative education, we need to remove barriers to women and girls studying subjects and developing skills that allow them to thrive in academia and in well-paid and growing industries. Women and girls continue to be underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) studies and careers: globally, only 7% of women choose to study engineering, manufacturing, or construction in tertiary education, compared with 22% of men.¹⁹ Beyond the wage gap that comes with women being underrepresented in STEM jobs, the gender gap in STEM is an inefficient allocation of labour and talent, and a missed opportunity for economies around the world.²⁰

In the next decade, between 40 and 160 million women globally will need to transition between occupations, often into roles requiring more complex skills.²¹ If girls and women are not ready to navigate these transitions successfully, they will lose better-paid work opportunities.²² The G7 should build on the 2016 G7 Guiding Principles for Building the Capacity of Women and Girls.

We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

- Acknowledge the damage to global prosperity and women's economic empowerment caused by a gender imbalance in STEM education and careers, and commit to prioritising progress towards gender parity through concrete action.
- Commit to applying a rigorous gender analysis - beyond public sector equality duties - to national industrial, science and research strategies, and implementing strategies such as targets for the participation and leadership of girls and women and other marginalised groups in STEM education and careers, and other sectors of public life.
- Support initiatives which champion best practice in STEM education, such as scholarship schemes and kite-marking systems for those schools and employers which encourage girls to participate in STEM fields.
- Develop targeted communications campaigns that showcase female role models.
- Invest in women's lifelong learning, including female entrepreneurship and reskilling for new economies.
- Set targets for reaching gender parity in STEM secondary and tertiary education within G7 countries by 2030.



9. Digital inclusion

More men than women have access to and use the internet in almost all regions of the world, and the digital gender gap is growing - particularly in developing countries.²³ UNICEF reports that 222 million girls globally were left without access to remote learning during COVID-19.²⁴ In G20 countries, advances in automation and digitisation of industries may disadvantage women, linked to their under-representation in STEM fields and the fact that they may have fewer opportunities to reskill or take advantage of new technologies.²⁵ If the digital gender gap is not addressed, digital technologies will exacerbate existing gender inequalities, meaning women and girls will continue to be more likely to suffer online harms such as bullying, harassment and gender-based online violence.

In parallel, new forms of decision-making have surfaced numerous examples where algorithms have entrenched or amplified historic biases, or even created new forms of bias or unfairness. These often work to the detriment of women and marginalised groups.²⁶ The risk is growing as algorithms, and the datasets that feed them, become increasingly complex. Women must be part of building technology to ensure that algorithms are sensitive to the inherent bias that exists when developed by a homogenised group of people. By bringing diverse voices to the table, the development of these algorithms will be better able to ensure women and minorities are not at a computational disadvantage.

We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

- Address the digital gender divide by supporting initiatives that provide women and girls in all areas with affordable, reliable and safe internet and mobile services; and implementing the recommendations of the Youth 7 to ensure that all young people are equipped with the digital skills and literacy to fully engage and stay safe online.
- Leverage public-private partnerships to target funding towards addressing the digital divide, while learning from private sector best practice and innovative solutions.
- Make better use of technology in education systems to maximise children's skills development for the digital economy and ensure no child is left behind.
- Counteract algorithm bias by encouraging increased use of data in the public and private sectors to identify bias, and incentivising organisations to act to address it.
- Pursue harmonised principles of data collection for use in the private sector.
- Provide clear guidance, working with regulators, on the collection and use of sex- and/or gender-disaggregated data in outcome monitoring and decision-making processes.



10. Representation in the media

Stereotypes and the underrepresentation of women in the media play a significant role in shaping harmful attitudes towards them. Studies suggest that harmful stereotypes can restrict the choices, aspirations and opportunities of children, young people and adults. These stereotypes can be reinforced by some advertising, which plays a part in unequal gender outcomes. Recent analysis of major news outlets in 12 countries – including the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, Japan, South Africa and South Korea – found that only 22% of the top editors across the 240 brands sampled are women, despite the fact that on average, 40% of journalists in the 12 countries are women.²⁷

The creative and cultural industries have the potential to challenge gender stereotypes and promote social inclusion with fair and accurate representation in programming and editorial content, combined with inclusive workplace policies and practices in the cultural and creative industries.

We call on the Leaders of the G7 to:

- Pledge to tackle the stereotyping and unequal treatment of women in the media.
- Endorse the Charter of Commitments for Cultural and Creative Industries, which will be signed on the occasion of the Generation Equality Forum, which takes place in Paris from 30 June to 2 July 2021, and will hold media companies accountable for addressing damaging stereotypes of women internally and in the content they produce; raising awareness on sexual and gender-based violence; and acting as sounding boards on issues concerning women's rights and equality between men and women.
- Encourage all G7 media outlets to challenge gender stereotypes using the UNESCO Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media²⁸ as a framework for action.



11. Ending gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a grave human rights violation, with immediate and long-term physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls that can be devastating. According to latest estimates from the World Health Organization and UN Women, almost one in three women globally had experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.²⁹ According to the Five Foundation, an additional 70 million girls will undergo FGM by 2030 in Africa alone.³⁰

During times of crisis and quarantine, women and girls face increased risks of violence, exploitation, abuse or harassment. Economic insecurity - that is job and income loss as well as food insecurity - has been shown to be a primary risk factor for increased gender-based violence within the context of the pandemic.³¹ COVID-19 not only exposed the lack of preparedness of countries to respond to and deal with VAWG, it also led to a significant rise of this already prevalent human rights violation. Across the world, civil society organisations reported a surge in VAWG, reflected in increased calls for support to helplines, in some cases up by 770%.³² This rise in violence has taken many forms and for certain populations, such as refugees and migrants who are not reached by government schemes, the challenges are even greater. At the same time, services to support survivors are being disrupted or made inaccessible as a result of lockdowns.

VAWG is preventable. It requires political will, alongside resources for prevention and response services, and developing survivor-centred policies and practices. We endorse the Women 7 recommendations on addressing gender-based violence.



We call on the Leaders of the G7 to:

- Drive global action to end VAWG, with increased investment in prevention and responses across all aspects of women's and girls' lives.
- Ratify and implement relevant international and regional conventions, including ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the workplace; the Istanbul Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- Protect and prioritise VAWG initiatives in lower-income partner countries through responsible and sustainable aid budgets.
- Scale up implementation and financing of evidence-driven prevention strategies domestically and globally.
- Scale up implementation and financing of coordinated, comprehensive, and accessible services for survivors of gender-based violence, including in humanitarian settings.
- Enhance support for autonomous girl- and women-led organisations working to end gender-based violence against girls and women in all their diversity.
- Commit to eradicating FGM within a generation, prioritising support for the Africa-led movement to accelerate efforts towards Sustainable Development Goal 5.3.



12. Online harassment and abuse of girls and women

Online harassment and abuse is a growing problem for girls and women. Greater use of online platforms as a result of COVID-19 may have precipitated a further rise in multiple forms of online violence, including stalking, bullying, sexual harassment and sex trolling. Online abuse has a very real impact: women who experience abuse or harassment online often feel that their physical safety is threatened,³³ and reports of physical attacks following online violence are not uncommon.³⁴ This type of abuse does not recognise physical borders and therefore requires strong cooperation at international level.

We welcome the work of G7 Digital and Technology Ministers on joint Internet Safety Principles to guide G7 approaches to improving online safety, and that of Interior Ministers to develop a robust G7 agreement on sharing of information and best practice on tackling existing and emerging online forms of VAWG. A regulatory and policy environment that takes into account this specific form of VAWG is critical to enabling everyone to fully participate in and benefit from digital technologies, and to the online world being a safe and welcoming place.

We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

- Build a commonly agreed definition of VAWG online in order to comprehensively eliminate this form of violence against girls and women.
- Introduce legislation that establishes a duty of care on companies to improve the safety of their users online, addresses the full range of harmful online activity and holds the private sector to account in remedying any adverse impacts in which they are involved.
- Introduce regulation to ensure that companies implement accurate age verification technology; and that websites containing pornography and other harmful content have proper controls in place to track and report illegal activity.



13. Violence in conflict

War and violent conflict impact men and women in different, but devastating ways.³⁵ Women around the world continue to lead action for peace, reconciliation and reconstruction. There is strong evidence suggesting that women's participation in peace processes contributes to longer, more resilient peace after conflict.³⁶ But women remain largely invisible to, and excluded from, peace processes and negotiations. In conflict-affected countries, women's representation in COVID-19 taskforces stands at just 18%.³⁷

Sexual violence used as a weapon of war remains an ongoing scourge and continues to cause immense human suffering, not only affecting victims, their families and communities but also causing harm over generations. In many cases, sexual violence is used as a systematic strategy to inflict mass destruction on populations. Despite its profound devastation, sexual violence in conflict does not evoke the international outcry and action it deserves. While justice and accountability are essential in preventing the recurrence of conflict-related sexual violence, justice and accountability for these most grave crimes remain the exception rather than the rule.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which calls for women and girls to have their voices heard and rights and needs addressed in situations of conflict, should be at the heart of the G7 peace and security agenda.

We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

- Integrate gender equality into their wider peace and security agendas by putting women and girls' human rights at the centre of development and security strategies and policies, with mandatory inclusion of 50% women and girls, including those from diverse communities, at all G7-supported peace talks and security processes, including ceasefire monitoring mechanisms, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.
- Commit to a funded National Action Plan on WPS in line with the recommendations of the Women 7, with a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of violence.
- Condemn the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war as a 'red line', and lead the development of an International Convention to eliminate it, establishing clear consequences for perpetrators and governments who fail to act, to prevent and respond to the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and bring the approach into line with other prohibited weapons of war such as chemical weapons and landmines.



14. Accountability and monitoring progress

Gender equality should be at the heart of the G7. This requires specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound political commitments. It also requires a clear and agreed approach to measuring progress, data collection, reporting and accountability on gender equality outcomes. This should include but not be limited to the work of the GEAC, and should help ensure consistent improvement year on year.

An agreed measurement framework of gender equality indicators - based on existing data sources, including but not limited to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal indicators, UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) country reports, UN Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index and World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Reports - is required to accurately and consistently measure progress. The GEAC proposes to work closely with the UK Presidency and other G7 countries to develop and agree a clear monitoring proposal before the end of 2021.

We call on Leaders of the G7 to:

- Increase their efforts to close the gender data gap, to ensure the data that underpins the design of policies and interventions take gender differences into consideration, and encourage the private sector to do so as well.
- Implement the GEAC's monitoring proposal, which will include but not be limited to reporting on their country's progress towards gender equality on an annual basis at the G7 Leaders' Summit and tracking the implementation of all GEAC recommendations since 2018; and should complement the work of the G7 Accountability Working Group on gender-related development commitments.
- Use evidence and data from these annual reports to inform policy discussions on gender equality, and ensure progress year on year.
- Convene the GEAC as a standing feature of all G7 Presidencies to ensure a consistent and coherent approach and project the G7's global leadership on gender equality.



- ¹ Women 7 (2021), '[Making gender equality a reality - Recommendations to the G7](#)'
- ² Generation Equality Forum, '[What are Action Coalitions?](#)'. Accessed 17 May 2021
- ³ Institute of Employment Rights (29 October 2020), '[BAME women 'at twice the risk' of both Covid-19 and low pay, research shows](#)'
- ⁴ Bourgault, Peterman and O'Donnell (2021), '[Violence against women and children during COVID-19 – one year on and 100 papers in: a fourth research round up](#)', Center for Global Development. Accessed 17 May 2021
- ⁵ Care International et al (2021), '[UK Government decisions to cut UK Aid are disproportionately falling on women and girls](#)'
- ⁶ See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), '[Development Assistance Committee Gender Equality Policy Marker](#) No.1
- ⁷ See United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), '[COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#)
- ⁸ Wodon, Montenegro, Nguyen and Onagoruwa (2018), '[Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls. The Cost of Not Educating Girls](#)', World Bank Group
- ⁹ IBID
- ¹⁰ Up to ten times as much in some countries, according to the OECD Development Centre's '[Social Institutions and Gender Index \(SIGI\)](#)
- ¹¹ See UN Women (2020), '[Whose time to care? Unpaid care and domestic work during COVID-19](#)' and McKinsey & Company (2020), '[COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects](#)'
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- ¹³ See OECD '[Gender Wage Gap Data](#)
- ¹⁴ OECD (2018), 'Employment Outlook 2018', see '[Chapter 6: Starting close, growing apart: Why the gender gap in labour income widens over the working life](#)
- ¹⁵ International Labour Organization (2015), '[World Employment and Social Outlook 2015: The Changing Nature of Jobs](#)'
- ¹⁶ OECD, '[Small and medium-sized enterprises and trade](#)'. Accessed 17 May 2021
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- ¹⁸ As shown in research funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2021), '[Women's Economic Empowerment and Climate Change: A Primer](#)', p.17
- ¹⁹ World Bank (2020), '[The Equality Equation: Advancing the Participation of Women and Girls in STEM](#)'
- ²⁰ IBID
- ²¹ McKinsey Global Institute (2019), '[The future of women at work: Transitions in the age of automation](#)'
- ²² UNICEF (2020), '[Towards an equal future: Reimagining girls' education through STEM](#)', and McKinsey Global Institute (2019)
- ²³ International Telecommunication Union (2020), '[Measuring digital development: Facts and figures](#)'
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³¹ Center for Global Development (2021), '[CGD NOTES: Violence Against Women and Children During COVID-19—One Year On and 100 Papers In: A Fourth Research Round Up](#)'

³² UN Sustainable Development Group (2020), '[United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better](#)'

³³ Amnesty International (2018), '[Toxic Twitter - Women's experiences of violence and threats on Twitter](#)' and UN Women (2020), '[Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19](#)'

³⁴ See for example: statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein on 21 June 2018 '[The impact of online violence on women human rights defenders and women's organisations](#)'

³⁵ See for example: Plumper and Neumayer, '[The Unequal Burden of War: The Effect of Armed Conflict on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy](#)' International Organization 60, Summer 2006, pp. 723-754; Buvinic et al., '[Violent Conflict and Gender Inequality: An Overview](#)' The World Bank Research Observer, November 2012, 28:110–138

³⁶ See for example: O'Reilly et al., '[Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes](#)' New York: International Peace Institute, June 2015

³⁷ United Nations Security Council, '[Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General](#)' 25 September 2020, paragraph 3

