



Social G7 - June 6-7 in Paris Recommendations from the Women 7 (W7)

Promote and invest in women's economic empowerment, financial inclusion and access to decent work for everyone

Preamble

In 2019, women and girls all over the world continue to face significant obstacles which prevent their access to resources, power and opportunities, as well as their economic empowerment and independence. Women, key actors in the formal and informal economy, must have access to and exercise the same rights and opportunities as men in their personal and professional lives.

According to the World Economic Forum, we need to wait at least 108 years to effectively achieve gender equality. In the world of work, in G7 countries and beyond, inequalities faced by women and girls are reflected by multiple factors: discriminatory laws, unsafe conditions of work, a disproportionate distribution of unpaid care work, the lack of access to economic and financial resources, significant gaps in terms of remuneration and opportunities, and harmful gender norms and stereotypes. Moreover, all over the world, women are overrepresented in informal work and in precarious employment. G7 governments have the means and the obligation to act to fight against these inequalities and to foster women's economic empowerment as well as occupational equality.

The fight against inequalities, with a particular focus on gender inequalities, has been chosen by the French Presidency as the core of the 2019 G7 agenda. Within this framework, as members of the Women 7 (W7), bringing together feminist civil society organisations from G7 and Global South countries, we call on the G7 governments to design and implement feminist public policy at domestic and international level to respond to these challenges and inequalities. In this sense, specific measures are needed for those groups that are subject to multiple forms of discrimination. Most marginalised groups include, among others, women of colour, rural women, women with disabilities, LGBTI+ people, migrant and refugee women, and indigenous women.

G7 countries both in their national contexts and in their international actions must respect their commitments in the area of women's and girls' economic empowerment, by integrating a feminist approach to all decision-making processes as well as policy implementation itself. Building on the Charlevoix Commitment on equality and economic growth, on the G7 Taormina Roadmap for a Gender Responsive Economic Environment and the 25X25 commitments and the 2017 UN High-Level Panel conclusions on Women's Economic Empowerment, G7 Governments should adopt an action plan on women's economic empowerment for the coming years in their domestic and international policies. It is fundamental for G7 leaders to engage multiple partners and stakeholders, such as feminist organisations and associations operating in G7 countries and beyond, trade unions and social partners, development agencies, and the private sector.



We call on G7 countries to :

1. **Invest in social infrastructure and universal social protection**
2. **Ensure equal access to decent work and implement specific measures to combat sexual and gender-based violence and harassment**
3. **Guarantee equal access to and control over economic and financial resources and power**
4. **Adopt measures to tackle vertical and horizontal segregation in the world of work**

At home and abroad, G7 governments should prioritise measures to:

1. **Invest in social infrastructure and universal social protection**

- **Invest in appropriate, accessible, high quality social infrastructure and social protection, and in the improvement of conditions of work for care workers, a large majority of which are women.** In this context, as highlighted by the G7 Taormina Roadmap, the formal sector economy often relies upon the unpaid care economy/domestic work, which weighs disproportionately on women and girls, and social infrastructure plays an essential role in easing this burden and in enabling them to be part of the formal labour market.
 - With this in mind, in line with SDG 5.4, G7 countries must:
 - Commit to investing in **high quality social infrastructures** such as child care services. G7 countries should invest 2% of GDP in social infrastructure (including care, education and health services) which will create an increase in employment, in sectors dominated by women.
 - Adopt **gender budgeting** in all their budgets, including for the construction of infrastructures to ensure these will integrate a strong gender perspective.
 - Follow-up on the G7 Taormina Roadmap commitment to ensure that the OECD updates and disseminates its existing national accounts estimates of unpaid care work and domestic work activities in G7 countries.
 - It is fundamental to invest in **universal social protection**, to fight poverty and facilitate inclusive and sustainable development, in line with SDG 1.3.
 - G7 States must implement programmes and initiatives at national level which guarantee **women's access to social protection services** in cases of illness, maternity, divorce, unemployment, disability, old-age. Examples of measures and services include, for example, social pensions, child support, universal daycare, fee exemptions for healthcare and/or education, access to unemployment insurance, access to medical leave, regardless of their contractual status. Particular attention should be paid as well to the situation of widows, to ensure, if need be, a pension and a minimum income for the elderly.
 - **Paid maternity and paternity leave** must be guaranteed in all G7 countries and beyond. To facilitate an equal participation of men and women in care



- work, paternity leave should be extended. Both maternity and paternity leave should be guaranteed for same sex couples.
- While recognising parenthood as an undeniable factor of professional divide between women and men, it is important to encourage enterprises to guarantee that all women maintain their full revenues during maternity leave. This may be done by extending access to a harmonised offer of benefits (mandatory and/or complementary), whatever the contractual status of the employees, and by ensuring the continuity of this right to benefits in case of any contractual or professional status change, in order to avoid limiting employees' mobility and their professional plans.
 - It is as well important to invest in **paid and non transferable parental leave** for both parents, as well as universal child care and human and social services.
 - **Family leave** for sick relatives, elder or disability care should be guaranteed in G7 countries and beyond.
 - To ensure universal access to social protection, it is necessary to facilitate cooperation between different actors, such as international organisations, financial institutions, social partners, development agencies, private sector and civil society organisations.
 - It is necessary to pay particular attention to the needs of the most marginalised groups, which are victims of intersecting types of discrimination, such as women of colour, rural women, women with disabilities, LGBTI+ people, migrant and refugee women, and indigenous women. Specific measures should be taken to support single mothers.
- It is crucial to facilitate an **equal distribution** of responsibilities in care services, and particularly **of unpaid care work**, which weighs disproportionately on women and girls and which impedes their economic independence.
 - In this context, it is essential to promote men's involvement in unpaid care work, so that it can be more equally distributed between women and men, families and public sector.
 - It is important to encourage companies to get involved in favour of women and their professional rights by facilitating a work-life balance for all. This will allow a better distribution of multiple loads that weigh on women, by involving men in this social model change, from which they benefit as well.
 - **Invest in gender-responsive sustainable energy and water and sanitation infrastructure**, at home and abroad, to reduce the unpaid care work burden on women and girls, especially for those living in poverty. Such efforts can be facilitated through an improved integration and increased participation of women into infrastructure planning, management and policy design. It is necessary to take into account the impacts of environmental degradation on the situation of women, and to strengthen the preservation of ecosystems, as well as the fight against climate change and pollution. In this regard, women- and girls-led entrepreneurial



projects meant to tackle climate change at national level as well as in countries of the Global South should be recognised and encouraged, in terms of funding, promotion, as well as fostering relations and knowledge exchange between the different actors involved.

2. Ensure equal access to decent work and implement specific measures to combat sexual harassment and gender-based violence

- **Ratify and implement all international conventions related to women, non-discrimination, labour and decent work for formal and informal workers, as well as human trafficking, forced labour and child labour**, which provide a comprehensive set of measures and principles to achieve gender equality and women's and girls' rights. It is important to ensure that existing mechanisms are known and respected.
- **Adopt measures to give access and maintain decent, safe and well-paying work for women**, including equal pay for work of equal value in all sectors, while supporting women's transition from the informal to the formal sector.
 - In this framework, G7 States must take further rigorous action to close **gender income gaps** in public and private sectors such as the ones in wages and pensions. The Gender Equality Index (*Index de l'égalité femmes-hommes*) in France constitutes an example of an instrument, established at national level, that allows to measure equal pay within enterprises and to identify the necessity of correction mechanisms.
 - We also call on G7 leaders to accelerate the pace of implementation of the G7 commitment to reduce the **gender gap in labour force participation** by 25% by 2025 by developing and funding National Plans for the provision of high quality and decent work, and by reporting progress on an annual basis.
 - It is also crucial to take measures to support **women's transition from the informal sector to the formal sector**, through training, recruitment processes within the informal sector, awareness-raising activities.
- **Promote the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP)**, supported by UN Women and the UN Global Compact, with employers in the private and public sectors. The WEP charter is a roadmap that supports employers in the development of a comprehensive set of measures in favour of women's employment and gender equality, in terms of non-discrimination, health, safety, well-being, education, training, professional development, accountability, etc.
- **Combat sexual and gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work.** G7 States must support the adoption and the early ratification of the ILO Convention to end violence and harassment in the world of work, working with other governments, with representatives from trade unions and enterprises, which have a major role to play through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies and their managerial policies. Women's rights organisations must be closely involved and consulted to ensure that the Convention takes into account the needs of all women. The G7 countries must support a Convention and a



Recommendation, as that is the most ambitious combination of instruments, ensuring the following elements are also taken into account:

- The adoption of a definition of “violence and harassment” (Article 1) that recognises that violence and harassment are part of “a range of behaviours and practices” to demonstrate that a continuum of violence and harassment exists. The diversity and the multiplicity of these violations must be included in the Convention.
- Support of a broad and inclusive definition of “workers” or a broad and inclusive scope of who is covered by the Convention (Article 2), which must include the informal as well as the formal sectors and which protects workers regardless of their contractual status, to ensure that all precarious workers are well protected.
- The defence of a broad definition of the “world of work” (throughout the text of the Convention and specifically in Article 3), which covers public as well as private spaces where they are places of work, in order to include specifically home-based work and domestic workers.

3. Guarantee equal access to and control over economic and financial resources and power

- **Design financial services for the 1 billion estimated unbanked women.** G7 States must closely work with local authorities and feminist civil society organisations in their own national context and beyond, to:
 - Ensure that the specific needs of women who currently do not have access to formal financial services are taken into account, by specifically considering the barriers they face. For example, it is necessary to identify whether they cannot access this services for geographical reasons, social norms, or because of specific discriminatory regulations and policies, or because of a lack of financial literacy or training etc. Specific measures to address and remove these barriers must be implemented. Specific attention should be paid to the most marginalised groups.
 - Ensure that all financial institutions remove their existing discriminatory policies and rules and regulations, for example the ones that impede women from accessing loans and funding because of their marital or family status.
- **Ensure women’s equal rights to economic resources and access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property and natural resources, at national level as well as in countries of the Global South.** By doing so, G7 countries will not only improve women’s financial security, but will also build their resilience to climate shocks. They must address legal, regulatory, and social barriers that prevent women from equally participating in the economy and remove restrictions based on gender and discriminatory laws on inheritance and land ownership.
- **Promote women’s economic empowerment through entrepreneurship** by training on income-generating activity and company creation at home and abroad, by supporting the development of projects through funding and/or by facilitating women’s access to relevant investment funds and by promoting support mechanisms.



- **Analyse the future of work from a gender perspective and design policies to ensure an equitable impact.**
 - Major trends such as the gig economy, automation and machine learning should be addressed within G7 countries and abroad in terms of their gender-specific impact, focusing on the social protection and labour rights of women workers.
 - Studies find that women are and will be the most affected by the effects of artificial intelligence and robotisation on the evolution of professions. This impact must be anticipated to ensure that women are accompanied in the transition, for example through training and support.

4. Adopt measures to tackle vertical and horizontal segregation in the world of work

- **Tackle gender norms and stereotypes**, which have a direct impact on women's participation in the labour market.
 - **Adopt measures against the under-representation of women and men in specific sectors** (horizontal segregation), including women's participation in STEM, in digital computing technologies and in ICT. Moreover, it is necessary to work on education and training to open up the professions that are "female dominated" and the ones that are "male dominated", and to develop non discriminatory practices by fighting against professional and social stereotypes. In this context, it is also important to pay particular attention to gender stereotypes that may be reinforced by algorithms and that may generate bias in the use of artificial intelligence for example in automated recruitment processes, excluding women from certain professions and professional posts.
 - **Take action against the under-representation of women in decision-making positions** (vertical segregation), for example through the introduction of quotas in Management Boards. Beyond equality, these measures allow to reinforce gender-responsive decision-making, regardless of the field, whether public, private, political, economic, financial, diplomatic, etc.

Note

The Women 7 (W7) constituency brings together civil society organisations from the G7 countries and developing countries invested in women's and girls' rights. Its mission is to ensure that concrete commitments in favour of gender equality are taken throughout the whole G7 process.

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