

/ GWL VOICES STATEMENT HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM /

/ 13_JUL_2022 /



The **High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)** is the platform where governments come together to share the progress and challenges in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The central theme for this year's HLPF is "Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". **The Forum will provide special attention to the progress made in SDG 5, which aims at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.**

There is abundant evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls. **According to UN Women, it will now take at least 136 years to achieve gender equality. This delay hinders the achievement of all the SDGs and is worsened by the impact of the invasion of Ukraine on the economy and food and energy prices, especially in developing countries.** Combined, these developments are deepening poverty and extreme poverty throughout the world fueling conflict and boosting migration and refugee streams.

From the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, it has been clear that **the full implementation of SDG5 is essential for the successful implementation of Agenda 2030**, the Paris agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

We, the members of GWL Voices, are firmly convinced that this HLPF is an opportunity to show that women and girls' empowerment accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030 and guarantee a just and sustainable recovery from COVID-19.

This HLPF has a particular significance since it will be **a milestone in the road to the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future in 2023.**

GWL VOICES ACKNOWLEDGES THAT



There has been **some progress in reducing the arithmetic of gender inequality** with more girls going to school; a slight improvement in the political participation of women; more and better norms and regulatory frameworks against all forms of discrimination and violence against women, among others agents for a fair, sustainable, and equitable recovery.



However, **this advancement has not been incremental. In fact, to the contrary, there have been many setbacks due to triggering factors:** war and conflict, the deepening of intersectional inequalities, and the social, economic, and political effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the increase of gender-based violence and underpaid and unpaid work.



The pandemic has hit women in the most brutal ways including in a noticeable **increased gender-based violence**. However, COVID recovery policies pose significant challenges and diminish opportunities to boost gender equality and uphold the human rights of women and girls. Consequently, it is necessary to acknowledge that they are essential agents for a fair, sustainable, and equitable recovery.



The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls globally has been **compounded by the effects of invasion of Ukraine on food and energy security and fueled by increasing extreme weather events caused by climate change.**

DECALOGUE FOR A GENDER EQUAL FUTURE

Against this backdrop, **GWL Voices calls for 10 transformative actions to accelerate gender equality and stop all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls:**

The Decalogue for a gender-equal future

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant higher prevalence of gender - based violence and an increase in the burden of unpaid care work for women.

It also underscored magnified women's overrepresentation as care and health workers and their underrepresentation in decision-making. In addition, 60% of women work in the informal economy, with little or no social protection and a higher risk of falling into poverty or getting further entrenched in it.

We call on world leaders, governments, both national and local, parliaments and multilateral organizations to:

1

Foster COVID-19 transformative, gender-equitable norms and policies at the center of **care economies**. Take action to increase women's equal participation in the **labor force**, including legislation recognizing and providing remedies to the care burden. This requires **professionalizing and defeminizing care work** and seriously addressing **pay gaps**, access to **social protection**, and **fair and safe work conditions**.

2

Use **finance as a tool** for driving gender equality outcomes — use **gender-responsive budgets** and incentivize **gender lens public and private investment**, including through innovative mechanisms like **gender bonds**.

We are witnessing a severe regression in sexual and reproductive health rights worldwide

3

Safeguard that **reproductive rights are enshrined in legal frameworks** as they are foundational for women's health, freedom and rights.

1 in 5 women and girls have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within twelve months.

5

Declare **violence against women a public health emergency** and set specific targets, laws, norms, investments, and infrastructure to eradicate it. Establish the necessary political, institutional, legal, and financial conditions to protect women and girls that are **victims of violent conflict**. Ensure the full **participation of women in conflict prevention**, mediation and peacebuilding so as to fully implement UN Security Council **Resolution 1325** and the Compact on Women, Peace and Security.

4

Enact and implement policies and promote a cultural shift to **ensure women's representation in key decision-making bodies**, including governments, parliaments, cabinets, educational fora[CLCE1] , science and technology committees, and corporate boards. Women political participation should encompass the active involvement of all generations, especially young women.

6

Ensure that **climate negotiations**, as well as climate action on adaptation, mitigation and resilience building, put women and girls at the center, in terms of investment, energy transition plans, and their full and **effective participation in all levels of decision-making**. **Indigenous and rural women** should play a privileged role in these efforts.

The majority of the estimated 2.9 billion people currently having no internet connectivity [CLCE2] are women and girls. The proportion of women using the Internet globally amounts to 57%, compared to 62% of men.

8

7

Invest in **digital infrastructure** to close the gender digital divide and give women and girls the opportunity to learn, work and interact freely online.

Gender biases and stereotypes affect girls' schooling as boys are far more likely to be over represented at the top level of maths. The problem extends to science, with data from middle and high-income countries showing that although girls in secondary school score significantly higher in scientific studies, they are still less likely to opt for careers in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Less than 30% of today's STEM professionals are women. And the outlook for improvement is not promising: currently, approximately half the number of women study STEM subjects in tertiary institutions than men.

Enact and implement policies and promote a cultural shift to ensure **women's representation** in key decision-making bodies, including governments, parliaments, cabinets, educational fora[CLCE1], science and technology committees, and corporate boards. Women political participation should encompass the active involvement of all generations, **especially young women**.

9

Guarantee girl's access to education to fulfill their potential and promote gender equality in learning to eliminate biases and stereotypes that prevent girls from developing **STEM careers**.

10

We call for a strong, efficient and responsive multilateral system as a vital means to achieve gender equality and guarantee the rights of women and girls. We therefore call for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the **Our Common Agenda Report with a gender sensitive lens**.