

## Meeting Summary<sup>1</sup>

### Sustainable Development Goal 5 and interlinkages with other SDGs

*An Expert Group Meeting in preparation for HLPF  
2022: Building back better from the coronavirus  
disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full  
implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable  
Development*

Virtual meeting, 27-28 April 2022

#### 1. Introduction

The theme of the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) is “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The 2022 HLPF will have an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 4 on quality education, 5 on gender equality, 14 on life below water, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The forum will consider the different and particular impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all SDGs and the integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature of the Goals.

In preparation for the review of SDG 5 – and its role in advancing sustainable development across the 2030 Agenda, the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA/DSDG), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) to take stock of where we are in terms of progress towards SDG 5.

The last time SDG 5 – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – was reviewed at the High-level Political Forum in 2017, there was evidence of some progress being made to advance gender equality, including legal reforms, more girls in school, and fewer child marriages. The percentage of women serving in parliament had increased. Nevertheless, discriminatory laws, social norms and gender stereotypes remain pervasive, and women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of decision-making processes and political leadership. Moreover, violence against women and girls remains devastatingly pervasive.

The socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 have added to this disproportionately affecting women and girls and threatening to push back recent progress and further entrench persistent gender inequalities. Lost jobs and livelihoods, derailed education, increased burdens of unpaid care work, and increased rates of gender-based violence are among the struggles women and girls have faced with greater intensity since the onset of the pandemic.<sup>2</sup>

This summary points to key messages emerging from the EGM noting from the start that gender equality is a cross-cutting issue and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its 17 SDGs

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<sup>1</sup> The recommendations expressed in this report are a summary of the contributions made by experts in the meeting and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations

<sup>2</sup><https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-COVID-19-en.pdf>; see also <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/whose-time-care-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-during-covid-19>

cannot be fully achieved unless gender inequality is addressed. Experts at the EGM considered the interlinkages SDG 5 has with other SDGs and focused on opportunities to leverage synergies and minimize trade-offs, sharing knowledge about success stories, good practices and challenges and suggesting ways forward in terms of policies, partnerships and coordinated actions at all levels.

## **2. Stocktaking and challenges**

Monitoring the implementation of SDG 5 is particularly challenging. SDG 5 has one of the largest data deficits with only 48% of the data needed to monitor targets. Based on the information available, the assessment of progress to date shows that the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. Where data are available over time, they reveal limited or no progress across regions and in at least one case are on a deteriorating outlook. The full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet known but is expected to further erode progress. Strong legal and policy action as well as resources for implementation and inclusion of women in recovery efforts are critical to stem the tide and get back on track.

The latest data for each indicator under Goal 5 reveals a long road ahead<sup>3</sup>. Globally, only 1 of the 18 indicators (including sub indicators) is assessed as being “close to target” (the proportion of seats held by women in local government).

Three out of 9 SDG 5 targets (33%) are off track in at least one indicator of progress: Target 5.4 on shared responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work, Target 5.6 on women’s ability to make their own informed decisions regarding their reproductive health and Target 5.c on policies and legislation for gender equality and women’s empowerment. Unfortunately, the world is far or very far from the target in three areas that are critical to women’s empowerment. Women spend 3 times as many hours as men on unpaid care work, and COVID-19 is intensifying women’s workload at home. Just over half of the world’s women make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, and reproductive health care (57%). Only 23% of the countries have systems that track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Three out of 9 SDG 5 targets (33%) are at moderate distance from where they need to be by 2030. This includes Target 5.1 on eliminating discriminatory laws, Target 5.2 on ending violence against women and Target 5.3 on ending all harmful practices.

In 2 out of 9 SDG 5 targets (22%) data gaps hinder the assessment of current levels of progress: Target 5.a on reforms to ensure women’s equal rights to economic resources, and Target 5.b on women’s enhanced use of technology. Among these, blind spots are most pervasive in the area of women’s secure rights over land (Target 5.a).

Target 5.5 on equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making tells a story of mixed progress. Women’s participation in local government is close to the 2030 target, yet women’s participation in parliament and as managers in the workplace are moderately far from the 2030 target. At current trajectories, parity in the latter two areas will not be reached by 2030.

In terms of regional and country level outlook, there is a lot of variability in the current status of progress of SDG 5. In addition, 1 in 15 countries is very far or far from the target in at least a third of the SDG 5 indicators.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/progress-sustainable-development-goals-gender-snapshot-2021>

Gender is cross-cutting, and to evaluate progress towards achieving gender equality we need to look not only at the SDG 5 metrics but also at the progress to date across all other goals from a gender perspective. Extreme poverty (SDG 1) is globally on the rise, and the total number of women and girls living on less than \$1.90 a day is estimated to be 388 million in 2022. If governments implement a strategy to improve access to education and family planning, achieve equal wages and extend social transfers, over 150 million women and girls could emerge from poverty by 2030. Women's food insecurity levels (SDG 2) were 10 per cent higher than men's in 2020 (compared with 6 per cent higher in 2019). On SDG 3, during the first year of the pandemic, an estimated 12 million women in 115 low- and middle-income countries experienced disruptions in family planning services, leading to an estimated 1.4 million additional unintended pregnancies. In addition, in some countries women still do not have the same access to information and COVID-19 vaccines as men. Prioritizing sexual and reproductive health services during normal times and times of crisis is therefore key to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

School closures were associated with decreases in learning opportunities (SDG 4) particularly for poor and marginalized communities (half of all refugee girls enrolled in secondary school before the pandemic will not return to school). School closures also increased the risk of violence, child marriage, child labour, trafficking and early childbirth. Countries should do more to ensure that progress on girls' education does not fall back, especially since only 42% of 131 countries are taking proactive measures to support girls in their return to school.

Regarding SDGs 6 and 7, only 26 per cent of 170 countries were actively working on gender mainstreaming in water management in 2020, and women continue to be underrepresented in the energy sector (globally in 2019, women held 22 per cent of traditional energy jobs and 32 per cent of renewable energy jobs). Women have suffered steeper job losses than men (SDG 8), along with increases in unpaid care burdens at home. In 2020, the number of employed women declined by 54 million, and 45 million women left the labour force. Governments should invest in the care infrastructure to reduce the unpaid care burden disproportionately carried by women and contribute to women's economic empowerment.

In relation to SDG 10, by the end of 2020, 26.4 million people, almost half of whom were women and girls, fled their countries and became refugees - the highest level ever recorded. This trend is also linked to increases in sexual violence. The shadow pandemic of gender-based violence has shown that services for survivors must be regarded as essential both during times of crisis and during normal times. Furthermore, greater and more flexible funding is needed for women's rights organizations, recognizing their roles as first responders. Investment in training of police and justice system actors should also be prioritized.

Of the 45 indicators under SDGs 12, 13, 14 and 15, only one indicator is gender specific. Women activists, scientists, and researchers, who are working hard to solve environmental issues, often do not have the same opportunities and platforms as do men to share their knowledge and skills.

A predominant challenge when monitoring the SDGs is data gaps. This can be due to many factors, such as the enormity of data needed to monitor the SDGs; lack of funding and resources; difficulties in tracking the informal economy; the binary language of the SDGs, resulting in lack of data on LGBTI persons; as well as differences in which data governments choose to collect. To address these data gaps, qualitative data can be used when the quantitative data falls short. Greater focus is also needed on the intersectional nature of data collection, such as data on race and ethnicity. SDG 5 data from national statistical institutions can be combined with macro data and data from grassroots organisations to be more comprehensive and inform governments of the true realities, while

considering data ethics issues when very specific categories of data are used and there are risks of generalizations being made about specific groups of people.

The HLPF provides an opportunity to enhance policy infrastructure for gender equality, strengthen gender-responsive budgeting and ensure that SDG 5 is not viewed as a standalone agenda but rather integrated into core government work. For example, the Canadian Government has implemented a national SDG strategy enabling reporting on 10 out of the 14 indicators for SDG 5. When the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted data tracking, the government implemented new methods to ensure data collection and reporting continued.

Gender inequalities are still deep-rooted in every society. Women still face lack of access to decent work, occupational segregation, and gender wage gaps. In many situations, they are denied access to basic education and health care, including sexual and reproductive health, and are subjected to violence and discrimination. They are underrepresented in political and economic decision-making processes.

There are many structural drivers of gender inequality which must be dismantled. The elimination of discriminatory laws, violence against women and girls, harmful practices and negative social and gender norms and practices in all public and private spheres is crucial to building sustainable and inclusive societies. Social norms, gender norms, and roles and stereotypes uphold gender inequality. Gender inequality at household level determines access to resources and decision-making. Deeply ingrained patriarchal views of women and girls are also reflected in barriers women face in access to resources and land. Engaging men and boys, as well as customary and religious authorities is key to overcoming inequality and discrimination and to creating systemic change. Data will be critical to influencing and shaping policies and laws and supporting political will for implementation. Weak institutional capacity remains a challenge, often in combination with insufficient political will to implement laws and policies that promote gender equality. To overcome this challenge, the international community may foster exchange of information on good practices between governments that share similar characteristics and encourage governments to work more closely with grassroots and women's organizations.

### **3. COVID-19 crisis impacts and recovery**

The socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected women and girls and threaten to push back recent progress and further entrench persistent gender inequalities. Lost jobs and livelihoods, derailed education, increased burdens of unpaid care work, and increased rates of gender-based violence are among the struggles women and girls have faced with greater intensity since the onset of the global pandemic.<sup>4</sup> Women's employment-to-population ratios declined proportionally more than men's for all country income level groups in 2020, and job recoveries are expected to be slower for women, with 13 million fewer women employed in 2021 compared to 2019.<sup>5</sup>

Negative impacts are compounded for women and girls who are marginalized based on multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, age, income, geography, disability, or other characteristics. Women migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, as well as forcibly displaced women living in humanitarian crises, are at heightened risk, particularly in light of travel restrictions

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-COVID-19-en.pdf>; see also <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/whose-time-care-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-during-covid-19>

<sup>5</sup> ILO. 2021. *An uneven and gender-unequal COVID-19 recovery: Update on gender and employment trends 2021*. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_824865.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_824865.pdf)

and rising gender-based violence. These groups frequently face overcrowded conditions, lack of water and sanitation, and limited healthcare facilities.

The pandemic has had both direct and indirect impacts on women's health. Since the pandemic, women and girls with disabilities have reported barriers to accessing health services, including for sexual and reproductive health.<sup>6</sup> Clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccines have not adequately considered sex and gender.<sup>7</sup> Women's health services as well as social services such as shelters and one-stop crisis centres, already poorly funded, faced major disruptions that cut lifelines for survivors of violence and undermined sexual and reproductive health services. When schools and care services closed, women stepped in to provide domestic and other support, including unpaid care, for families and communities, often at the expense of their own mental and physical health, further increasing their time-poverty, often with negative implications for their earning potential outside the home. Even before the pandemic, women spent about 2.5 times as many hours on unpaid domestic work and care work as men.<sup>8</sup>

As countries locked down, reports of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, to helplines and other services spiralled upwards. UN Women collected data that confirms a shadow pandemic.<sup>9</sup> More than half of women surveyed reported that they or a woman they know experienced violence since the onset of COVID-19.<sup>10</sup> UNICEF and UNFPA estimate that with more girls out of school, an additional 10 million child marriages<sup>11</sup> and 2 million female genital mutilation cases<sup>12</sup> may occur within this decade, and yet this is the Decade of Action, within which the world has committed to accelerate efforts to deliver on the SDGs.

Despite women's central roles in responding to COVID-19, including as 70 per cent of health and social care workers, they are underrepresented in leadership positions and decision-making spaces (only 30 percent of leaders in the global health sector are women).<sup>13</sup> Women also make up less than one quarter of all COVID-19 national committees.<sup>14</sup> Large gender gaps remain in the use of ICTs<sup>15</sup> (mobile phone ownership among women is on average 8.5 percentage points lower than for men)<sup>16</sup>, with implications for women's access to information and empowerment. Digitalization has also exposed women to increasing risks of cyber violence and ICT-facilitated violence.<sup>17</sup> During the pandemic reduced access to physical information and services drove increased use of technology

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/featured-publication/impact-covid-19-women-and-girls-disabilities>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-021-24265-8>

<sup>8</sup> UN. 2021. *Secretary-General's SDG Progress Report 2021*.

[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27610SG\\_SDG\\_Progress\\_report\\_2021.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27610SG_SDG_Progress_report_2021.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://data.unwomen.org/features/emerging-data-violence-against-women-confirm-shadow-pandemic>

<sup>10</sup> <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/Measuring-shadow-pandemic.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF. 2021. *COVID-19: A threat to progress against child marriage*.

<https://data.unicef.org/resources/covid-19-a-threat-to-progress-against-child-marriage/>

<sup>12</sup> UNFPA. 2020. *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage*. [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19\\_impact\\_brief\\_for\\_UNFPA\\_24\\_April\\_2020\\_1.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_impact_brief_for_UNFPA_24_April_2020_1.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> WHO. 2019. *Gender equity in the health workforce: Analysis of 104 countries*

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/311314/WHO-HIS-HWF-Gender-WP1-2019.1-eng.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://wrd.unwomen.org/practice/listing-toolbox/covid-19-global-gender-response-tracker>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/FactsFigures2021.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> UN. 2021. *Secretary-General's SDG Progress Report 2021*.

[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27610SG\\_SDG\\_Progress\\_report\\_2021.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27610SG_SDG_Progress_report_2021.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> UNIDO, UNODC, Permanent Missions of Finland, Norway and Sweden in Vienna. 2022. Summary of recommendations – Vienna Discussion Forum, 4 November 2021; UN Women. Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19. 2021.

and online spaces<sup>18</sup> through which violence can be perpetrated including tech platforms and social media.

While the pandemic could serve as a turning point for building back more equitably, government responses to challenges faced by women and girls have so far fallen short. Even before the pandemic, many policies were not addressing the fundamental problems of gender inequality. Shortcomings in gender-responsive policies undermine the resilience of women and girls to shocks, like the pandemic, and exacerbate existing inequalities. Designing and implementing comprehensive, gender-transformative approaches and applying a gender lens to all policies would serve to address the root causes of gender discrimination for long-term change. It would also help governments build resilience against future shocks.

Several lessons learned emerged from the experience of the pandemic. For example, Argentina implemented gender-targeted relief actions including- gender-sensitive budgeting, prioritising low-income women and childcare expenses as part of the Emergency Family Income policy, as well as support to informal workers. Albania put in place measures to advance women in the private sector, including through SMEs. Pandemic recovery measures stimulated gender-sensitive social protection measures, however, there have been gradual reversals to these policies. Advancing gender equality in the post pandemic phase would require retention and expansion of social protection measures. Ensuring that resources actually get into the hands of women, including in the informal sector, while supporting broader socio-economic needs of low-income households, will also be critical.

Along these lines, there is an opportunity to promote mutually reinforcing policies that promote gender equality, as well as other SDGs, through investment in the care economy and green economy, feminist policy frameworks, and low-income countries. Valuing and integrating the care economy and unpaid care work into post-recovery macroeconomic policy frameworks would be a step in the right direction. Furthermore, there is a need for greater data and evaluation to assess the gender-specific impacts of policies and programmes to determine their true benefits to women and girls. The pandemic has underscored the need to systematically integrate a gender lens, and gender transformative outlook prior to emergency situations so that in times of crisis, governments are already prepared to target and address the needs of women and girls and the most vulnerable in societies.

The COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker developed by UN-Women and UNDP shows that stimulus packages and response measures by Governments rarely address the needs of women and girls. Gender-responsive planning and budgeting is key to ensuring that the next crisis does not have as deep an impact on the lives and livelihoods of women and girls.

#### **4. Policies and actions to maximize synergies, mitigate trade-offs and drive transformation; means of implementation**

Concerted efforts are needed to both recover from COVID-19 to advance gender equality and empower all women and girls, while also addressing the persistent root causes of gender inequality. Several working groups during the EGM identified the most promising actions for accelerating progress on SDG 5 while also reversing losses from COVID-19 and leveraging interlinkages with other goals. The experts worked to identify ways that solutions could be adopted and scaled up through collaboration among all stakeholders and sectors – governments, business, individuals, civil society, the science, and technology community.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/publications/technology-facilitated-gender-based-violence-making-all-spaces-safe>

This section details the recommendations collaboratively developed by the experts to address gender equality from various angles and through various means. Recommendations are separated into five key areas of action that reflect the topics of the meeting working groups.

***Investing in the care economy and gender-responsive social protection and health systems, including sexual and reproductive health and rights***

This working group focused on recommendations about how national policies on social protection and social infrastructure can be strengthened to integrate a gender perspective, promote women's labour participation, and reach the poorest and most marginalized women and girls. Experts also looked at how health-care systems and services can be strengthened to promote women's physical and mental health and well-being, as well as their bodily autonomy and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. They additionally considered steps that should be taken by governments to invest in the care economy and reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work. Recommendations were identified as follows:

- Apply a gender-responsive lens to social protection systems and investment; strengthen gender-transformative social protection to shift harmful gender norms, eliminate gender-based discrimination, and protect, promote, and fulfil the human rights of women, girls, men, boys, and those with gender diverse identities.
- Ensure the central role of national gender equality mechanisms in the design, implementation and accountability of national care, health (including sexual and reproductive health), and social protection strategies and policies.
- Strengthen the coordination between national and regional actors responsible for care, health (including sexual and reproductive health), and social protection strategies, including the participation of national gender equality mechanisms, through the establishment of inter-ministerial committees or other bodies that have an explicit mandate to facilitate coherence, make efficient use of resources, and improve coordinated service delivery.
- Ensure the full and meaningful participation of women in the development, implementation, and monitoring of social protection and health system policies and services, including national care programs and sexual and reproductive health services, amongst others. Reflect the specific needs of women experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization, including rural and indigenous women, women with disabilities, migrant women, racial and ethnic minorities, and those with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities/expression.
- Centre care work within macroeconomic, health, and other social sector policies and laws with a view towards recognizing, valuing, measuring, and assigning an economic value to, and redistributing care work to reduce the disproportionate share borne by women.
- Invest in a broad range of publicly funded, universal, high-quality care services and infrastructure, with long-term safeguards in place, for the care of children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other healthcare needs to relieve the burden of unpaid care and support ageing in places with diverse settings and in rural and urban areas.
- Invest in the creation of high-quality formal care jobs as attractive and quality employment, including by addressing pay and conditions of care; include informal workers in social protection, prohibiting discrimination in employment, and/or providing reasonable accommodations.
- Ensure adequately paid leave, including family leave, leave in situations of domestic violence, parental leave with incentives for male uptake, medical leave, and caregiving leave.
- Implement gender-transformative policies and interventions to eliminate harmful gender norms and promote positive masculinity, including through full implementation of inclusive comprehensive sexuality education.

- Provide access to sexual and reproductive health-care services that are available, acceptable, accessible, and affordable, including actions to promote bodily autonomy and agency, access to contraception and safe abortion, making them integral to primary health care at all levels as part of universal health care, including in emergency settings.

### ***Integrating a gender perspective in technology and infrastructure development***

This working group focused on recommendations about how infrastructure systems, including transport, urban design, ICT, and public services can better incorporate the needs and preferences of women. Experts considered best practices in gender-responsive infrastructure and examined the biggest gaps in technology governance that perpetuate gender bias. They focused on how governments and businesses can ensure gender-responsive design and development of technology looking also at what this sector can do to ensure marginalized women participate in and benefit from decision-making processes. Recommendations were identified as follows:

#### *Bridge the gender gap in digital access and competences*

- Conduct gender analysis and prepare, build capacity for, implement, and monitor gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) action plans in technology and infrastructure investments, programmes, and projects; and establish gender mainstreamed digital policies.
- Scale-up existing initiatives at national and sub-national levels to remove cultural, economic, and social barriers that discourage women from acquiring digital and technical science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills such as women's economic empowerment programmes.
- Promote women's and girls' access to STEM education and encourage digital literacy and re-skilling, specifically in 'frontier' tech fields such as programming and development in data science and AI, where many of the higher paid and influential roles in the labour market will be in the future.
- Provide inclusive finance and targeted gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) information to the activities and priorities of women and underrepresented groups and include women's voices and involve women's organizations in decision-making at the community, national and international fora for gender-responsive technology and innovation systems.

#### *Invest in feminist technology and infrastructure*

- Invest in safe, affordable childcare and elderly care facilities and safe, accessible, affordable, and integrated public transportation, connecting to rural and peri-urban communities; plan transportation programmes in consultation with other related agencies, working towards women's safety, social protection, economic participation (e.g., access to and transport of goods to markets), and decent work.
- Integrate "clean cooking" goals and targeted investment into energy planning, linking to forest and natural resources use in the context of the gender-energy-poverty nexus.
- Invest in data infrastructures and frameworks which can help to tackle gender data gaps and increase collection of sex-disaggregated data.
- Build on innovative and accessible mobile and digital mechanisms such as mobile money.

#### *Build inclusive, transformative, and accountable ecosystems for gender equality and women's empowerment*

- Promote hiring, retention, and advancement of women in the STEM workplaces, building on and improving successful models (e.g., Athena Swan initiatives, US National Science Foundation ADVANCE, corporate diversity programs).
- Create an ecosystem to provide support and access to finance to female entrepreneurs through multi-stakeholder engagement.
- Introduce public procurement quotas for women-owned business and institutionalize a preference for women-owned business in case of equal offers.



- Adopt special measures, including affirmative action legislation (e.g., prioritizing women in case of equally qualified candidates for technical and managerial positions, and instituting targets and quotas in company boards and leadership positions), mentoring role models and peer networking platforms to empower women to enter the STEM field and gain access to decision and standard-making roles.

*Prevent and eliminate online and tech-facilitated gender-based violence and discrimination*

- Research the risks of digital technologies, social media and ICT for gender equality and women's empowerment, including gender-based violence and surveillance; strengthen legal frameworks and policies to address these risks; design and implement digital technologies for women, including their role in combating gender-based violence (e.g., HarassMap).

Experts in this working group also reiterated building on recommendations and priorities identified by the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality to ensure women and girls have equal opportunities to safely and meaningfully access, use, lead, and design technology. They also pointed to resources in the UN Resolution on the High-Level Dialogue on Energy Global Energy Road Map and the SDG7 Theme Reports on Energy Access and on Enabling SDGs Through Inclusive, Just Energy Transitions. These recommendations could also serve as inputs to the recommendations to be discussed in 2023 at the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" and for the Global Digital Compact of the Secretary-General's "Our Common Agenda".

***Reprioritizing and reforming domestic and international financing for gender equality and promoting equal access to economic resources and inclusive, equitable trade***

This working group focused on steps governments must take to reform economic and fiscal laws and policies as well as restructure budgets to direct resources towards gender equality objectives. Experts focused on how trade policies, including regional and bilateral trade agreements, can integrate a gender perspective and improve women's access to markets and foreign investments. They also considered promising examples of COVID-19 recovery programmes that support women in the labour force, including in the informal sector and the role of data in informing gender-responsive budgeting and financial policies. Recommendations were identified as follows:

Promote financial inclusion and women's access to finance and assets by implementing flexible measures and assessment of who benefits from subsidies and exemptions.

- Direct finance toward the social solidarity economy to enable greater financial inclusion and security for workers in the informal sector.
- Support cooperatives in contributing to financial inclusion and support proven gender equitable microfinancing models.

Increase the global percentage of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women within development and humanitarian funding budgets.

- Promote a more inclusive multilateral system based on strengthened development cooperation with debt relief, Special Drawing Rights reallocation, and fair global taxation rules that grant developing countries more fiscal and policy space.
- Bring private creditors to the table to renegotiate or forgive debts which are constraining the fiscal space of many countries and undermining vital investments in health and social sectors
- Establish a systematic and comprehensive debt workout mechanism under the UN.
- Incorporate in debt assessments an analysis of revenue needed to fund gender-responsive and human-rights based social policies and programmes.

Ensure adequate multistakeholder investments (public/private investments) in the care economy, including through progressive taxation.

- Measure and assign an economic value to unpaid care work.

- Implement policies to distribute unpaid care work among social actors, namely the government, the private sector, and the household.
- Put in place comprehensive rights-based social protection programmes including universal child benefits and social pensions.

Ensure women's access to equal resources, employment, labour rights and decent work, and market opportunities.

- Address vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the economy by implementing affirmative action policies for women in senior, managerial and technical jobs in the public and private sectors and incentivising firms in male-dominated sectors to hire and train more women.
- Adopt public campaigns to change norms and challenge gender stereotypes about gender-appropriate work.
- Provide incentives for promotion and on-the-job training for women.
- Eliminate gender segregation in STEM fields and in vocational training and ensure equal representation of women among faculty in these fields.
- Ensure that all workers enjoy their rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and decent work through the implementation and monitoring of national labour laws that are in line with ILO labour standards.
- Commit to the implementation of minimum wage laws that are indexed to inflation and subject to regular review.
- Eliminate wage theft and gender pay discrimination through monitoring and public reporting.

Ensure that trade policies benefit women on equal terms with men

- Adopt ex-ante economic and social impact assessments of all free trade agreements that consider intersectional impacts based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, caste, indigenous status, disability, and other status.
- Integrate the results of assessments into the text of trade agreements and establish adequate monitoring mechanisms.
- Increase women's participation and leadership in trade policy bodies and trade policy negotiations.

***Supporting gender-responsive approaches and women's leadership in decision-making in protecting natural resources and biodiversity and promoting climate resilience***

This working group focused on effective gender-responsive approaches and financing in climate change and biodiversity policies and programmes and how these can be scaled up. Experts considered key opportunities to advance the protection, promotion, and respect for the rights of women and girls, including with regards to ownership of and control over land and other resources and participation in natural resource management and environmental decision-making. Recommendations were identified as follows:

- Guarantee the fulfilment of human rights and ensure accountability for states' obligations across all relevant environmental, climate, disaster risk reduction, peace and security and gender policy processes including the full breadth of the 2030 Agenda.
- Require and implement ex-ante and periodic human rights, environmental, and gender impact assessments of all economic policies, private financing, and trade and investment agreements.
- Ensure the full, equal, effective, and meaningful participation, representation and leadership of women, including those in diverse situations and conditions through prioritizing mechanisms for procedural rights for women, enforcing gender-balanced decision-making at all levels of relevant climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction decision-making bodies and processes.
- Co-create risk-informed climate resilience, pandemic recovery and disaster risk reduction policies and programming through explicit intersectional gender analyses and inclusive, multi-stakeholder co-design mechanisms that recognize and honor traditional knowledge.

- Allocate resources for gender-transformative climate, environmental and disaster risk reduction policy interventions, particularly in frontline areas, in compliance with human rights obligations of availability, transparency, accessibility and accountability; and centre policies around the leadership of women's rights and feminist networks, including those groups which are hardest to reach.
- Call on existing climate, biodiversity and disaster risk reduction financing mechanisms, including existing multilateral climate funds (such as the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund) implement new gender-responsive delivery mechanisms to support and enhance direct access to climate finance for grassroots women's organizations, Indigenous peoples and local communities, along with equitable and transparent monitoring of funding streams, to support adaptive capacity and resilience of individuals and communities through the realization of rights
- Reform laws, policies, regulatory frameworks, and justice institutions to make them more responsive to the climate, biodiversity and disaster risk needs of women and girls, in line with international human rights standards and national development plans.
- Strengthen women's rights to land and natural resources, including through better tenure security, elimination of discriminatory laws, and greater gender-responsiveness of customary and informal justice institutions.
- Address constraining patriarchal norms and promote and sustain behaviour change (social, political, economic, legal), by investing in evidence-based gender-transformative strategies within government and community programming and bodies from local to national levels in partnership with civil society organizations and communities.
- Transform global and national economic systems to enable a just and equitable transition to a green new economy; end the sovereign debt crisis and promote debt justice as a fundamental precondition for climate justice.
- Confront exploitative and unsustainable production and consumption patterns, shifting from the privatisation and commodification of nature to a degrowth mindset grounded in sustainable, equitable production and resource use.
- Recognise the unique impact of climate change, biodiversity, life below water and on land and environmental degradation on the health of women and girls and ensure compliance with international human rights law to promote, respect and protect sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Commit to robust and feminist financing at the intersections of climate and sexual and reproductive health and rights including gender-based violence, for climate-resilient health systems and investments that address underlying systemic causes of vulnerabilities to the climate crisis, including for women and girls and Indigenous peoples.
- Develop consultative frameworks to ensure multiple and major contributions of civil society, provide oversight on national action, and integrate the peace-development-humanitarian nexus approach in the implementation of SDGs.
- Significantly improve the quality, availability, and use of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics (including data generated through participatory data-gathering initiatives) on gender inequality. To account for gendered realities and specificities, areas for data collection may include unpaid care work; land tenure; impacts of climate change, natural disasters, environmental degradation and biodiversity on women and girls; impacts on health (including sexual and reproductive health and rights) and gender-based violence.

***Accelerating efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls and harmful practices, including through emergency response plans***

This working group focused on promising approaches to addressing the root causes of discrimination and violence against women and harmful practices such as child marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM), including by promoting equitable social and gender norms. Experts considered steps

that have been taken to repeal discriminatory laws and practices that disproportionately harm women as well as good practices in gender-responsive emergency response planning, and lessons that have been learned from COVID-19. Recommendations were identified as follows:

- Ensure that laws, policies and programmes enable prevention, protection, redress, risk mitigation, care and support in relation to all forms of gender-based violence for all women and people from marginalized groups including adolescent girls; women and girls with disabilities; people with diverse sexual orientation gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC); indigenous, Afro-descendant and rural populations; refugees; migrants; internally displaced people; asylum seekers; stateless persons; and others.
- Review, revise and adopt legislation and national policies to comprehensively address gender-based violence and harmful practices, aligned with international human rights standards and strengthen the implementation of existing laws and policies.
- Ensure that such legislation and policies address multiple forms of violence in the public and private spheres including marital rape, femicide, sexual harassment in public and the workplace, economic violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, pandemic-related violence, violence in the context of climate change, technology facilitated and reproductive violence.
- Review, revise, and adopt laws and policies aimed at preventing child marriage, protecting those at risk and addressing the needs of those affected, taking into account the need to be guided by the best interests of the child, evolving capacities and the right of the child to be heard and recognizing the need to remove legal and social barriers for the progressive realization of sexual and reproductive health rights.
- Investigate and report on female murder (femicide) to better understand murder perpetrated by intimate partners and other perpetrators, with a view to developing and implementing national policies to prevent and respond to femicide, including addressing the specific needs of child survivors.
- Establish observatories at the national level to ensure disaggregated data on gender-based violence, including gender-related killings, is accurately collected, and set up systems for appropriate and respectful investigation of disappeared women.
- Increase funding made available through national budgets and global mechanisms, including Generation Equality, and with a strong accountability mechanism for work to combat gender-based violence and to support women's rights organizations.
- Establish a national multi-sectoral coordinating committee for the prevention of gender-based violence and harmful practices, including but not limited to, child marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Mandate that such a committee develop a funded and costed national strategic plan for ending gender-based violence, guided by the principles of the RESPECT framework and including evidence-based interventions to prevent gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, and child marriage.
- Implement and/or scale-up the availability of accessible, quality and coordinated multisectoral and survivor-centered response services (health, justice, police and social services), with functional referral mechanisms, including for marginalized women and girls in all their diversity. This will include financial, and technical (including capacity-strengthening) support, coordination and convening guidance and support, in partnership with women-led organizations, guided by the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence and the Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-based Violence in Emergencies Programming and associated tools, in line with and building upon national priorities, commitments and systems to end violence against women.

- Support the scaling up and implementation of evidence-based and -informed multisectoral and coordinated prevention strategies that address root causes including unequal gender and social norms that condone violence against women and girls.