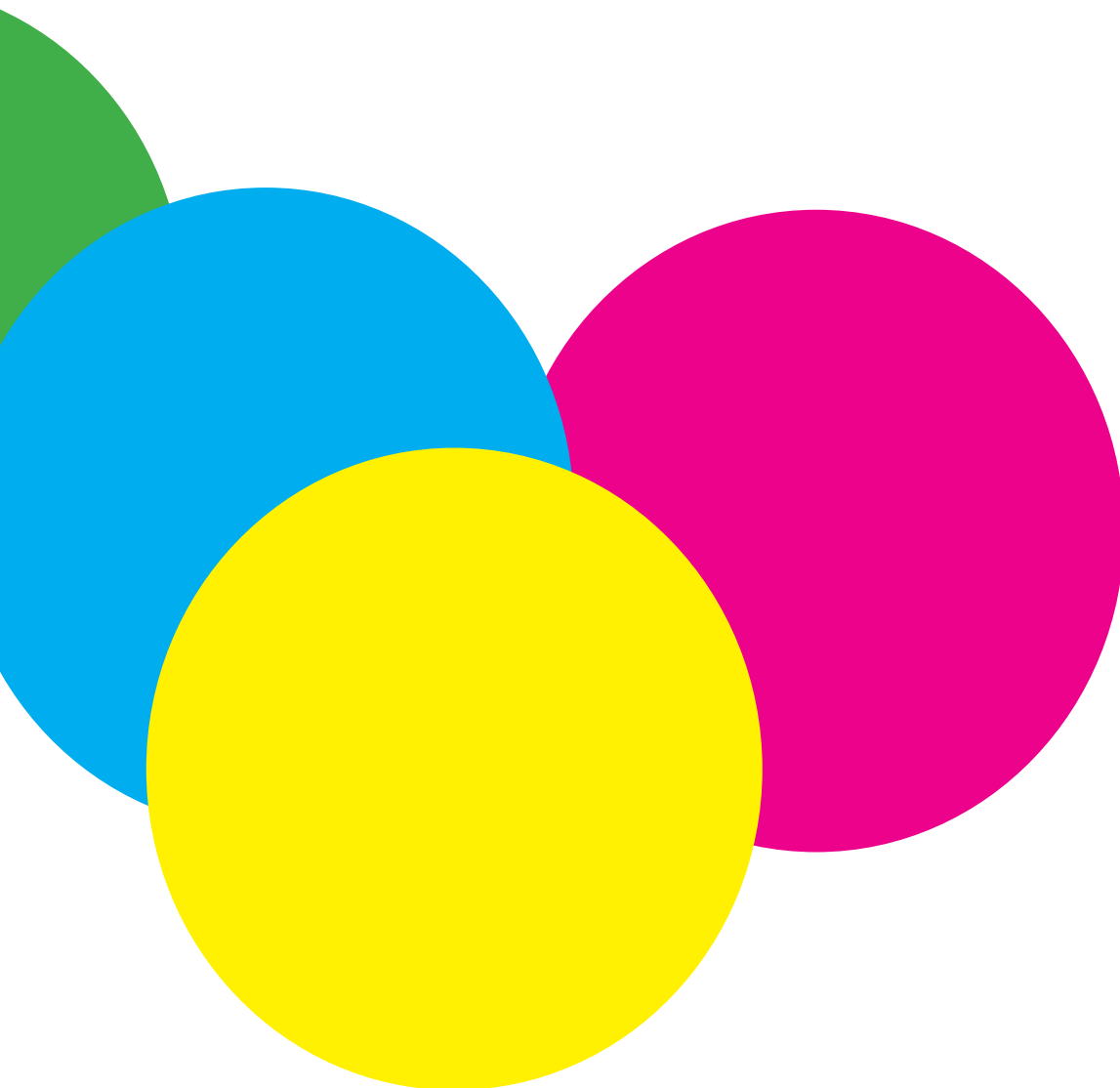


Report: the Italian presidency of the G20 and Gender Equality



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Report: the Italian presidency of the G20 and Gender Equality

Introduction: previous commitments on Gender Equality

The G20, a “strategic multilateral platform connecting the world’s major developed and emerging economies”¹, representing more than 80% of the global GDP and 60% of the world population, is a gathering of the strongest world’s economies aimed at reaching financial stability. Over recent years, the G20 has cautiously but progressively started to pay attention to the issue of gender equality. Since its first Summit, held in 2008, it has put forward a number of commitments on the enhancement of women’s participation to the economy and labour markets. However, these commitments have seldom translated into concrete actions resulting in a substantial advancement of gender equality, nor has the G20 produced high levels of compliance with its own gender equality commitments, as it was stressed in a study conducted by the G20 research group². In fact, while the overall compliance with commitments reaches an average of 71%, compliance on core gender related commitments and related ones only amounted to 60% (2019).

Over the years, the G20 has identified, among others, the following commitments related to gender equality:

“Reduce the gap in labour force participation rates between men and women by 25 per cent by 2025 (Brisbane goal) by boosting female participation, improving the quality of employment and enhancing gender equity.”

Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration, 2014.

¹ <https://g20.org/about-the-g20/>

² *G20 performance on gender equality*. Analysis by Julia Kulik, director of research, G20 Research Group. *G20 Japan: The 2019 Osaka Summit* by GT Media Group, p. 94, <https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=575befaf-ba0f-47c5-b208-95516fa17c0f>.

G20 leaders renewed their commitment to monitoring the Brisbane goal in a transparent and sustained manner:

“We will work towards reducing the disproportionately high number of women in informal employment, involuntary part-time work and low paying jobs, including through providing greater access to training and career pathways and by improving employment prospects for women in all forms of employment. We will also promote policies that help women and men reconcile work and family lives in a more equitable manner.”

Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration, 2017.

“The G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group committed to deepen its understanding of the linkages between gender and corruption and discuss possible actions on how to include a gender dimension in anti-corruption programmes and policies.”

G20 2019-2021 Anti-Corruption Action Plan.

“G20 Ministers responsible for the digital economy presented a comprehensive list of recommended actions to bridge the gender digital divide.”

G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Declaration 2018.

“We will work towards reducing the disproportionately high number of women in informal employment, involuntary part-time work and low paying jobs, including through providing greater access to training and career pathways and by improving employment prospects for women in all forms of employment. We will also promote policies that help women and men reconcile work and family lives in a more equitable manner.”

Labor and Employment Ministerial Declaration, 2017.

“We remain committed to promote decent work and reaffirm our commitment to take actions to eradicate child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery in the world of work, including through fostering sustainable global supply chains.”

G20 Osaka Leaders' Declaration, 2019.

“Recalling relevant UN declarations, processes, and calls to action to empower women and girls, we reaffirm the importance of women's and girls' empowerment as a cross-cutting issue in all aspects of our policies and recognize that women are a key driver of economic growth.”

G20 Riyadh Leaders' Declaration, 2020.

“We reaffirm our commitment to gender equality and emphasize the pivotal role of women’s and girls’ empowerment and leadership at all levels for inclusive and sustainable development. We commit to put women and girls, who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, at the core of our efforts to build forward better.”

G20 Rome Leaders’ Declaration, 2021.

As it was widely demonstrated by the last two years, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated and therefore brought to light the structural and systemic inequalities existing globally. We also know that the crisis is particularly affecting women, girls, LGBTQI+ people and marginalized communities experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports showed that, due to the isolation and distancing measures adopted to prevent COVID transmission, an increase of all types of gender-based violence (GBV), and in particular domestic violence, has been registered and is now commonly referred to as the “shadow pandemic”. While this phenomenon has always been structural, the current crisis exacerbates it and at the same time curtails the resources and infrastructure to cope with it. The largest study conducted on the prevalence of violence against women³ showed that, in pre-pandemic times, 1 in 3 women and girls globally, around 736 million, experience violence perpetrated by a partner or non-partner (2018). Women’s mental health has been particularly impacted due to increased household responsibilities and unpaid care work, feeble or non-existent social protection, and higher rates of unemployment and poverty. A disproportionate impact on LGBTQI+ people has been registered as well, due to the current crisis exacerbating patterns of social exclusions and multiple forms of violence⁴.

The pandemic also worsened gender and economic gaps, putting a strain on people and communities that were already affected by structural inequalities. Globally, women lost more jobs and sources of income than men, therefore facing more financial precarity and falling into extreme poverty, even in High Income Countries (HICs). According to an analysis carried out by UNDP and UN Women in 2020 on the impact of the pandemic on women and girls, “by 2021 around 435 million women and girls will be living on less than \$1.90 a day — including 47 million pushed into poverty as a result of COVID-19”⁵.

3 WHO, *Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018*. Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256>.

4 Report to the UN General Assembly: *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the human rights of LGBT persons*, 2020. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/SexualOrientation/ImpactCOVID19LGBTpersons.pdf>.

5 UN Women, *From insights to action: Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19*, 2022. Retrieved at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-COVID-19-en.pdf>

These worrying trends and scenarios, as well as events like the return to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan in August 2021, make the issue of gender equality and women's rights an unavoidable issue in international forums. On the occasion of the first conference in G20 history on women's empowerment, held in Santa Margherita Ligure on August 26th 2021, the Italian President of the Council of Ministers Mario Draghi declared that "the G20 can play an essential role in supporting women worldwide. Under Italy's presidency, we have taken concrete steps to improve women's position in the workforce, empower female leaders and remove obstacles that hold women back in their careers."⁶

This report aims at assessing how gender was taken into account during the 2021 G20, reflect on the Conference on Women's Empowerment and its outcomes, and provide an overview of the recommendations and efforts carried out by the Civil20 Gender Working Group. In conclusion, it also presents future challenges that civil society organizations might face in ensuring a gendered approach to the economic recovery is applied during the next G20 and a roadmap for future Civil20 Gender Working Groups.

G20 groups/initiatives on Gender Equality

In the framework of the G20, the following groups/initiatives focus on gender equality:

Women20 (W20): The W20 is one of the G20 official engagement groups, launched in October 2015, when its first working meeting took place in Istanbul under the Turkish G20 presidency. Demands and measures were formulated to promote the economic participation of women in the G20 Member States and strengthen their economic power. Since then, the Women20 established itself as a regular engagement group.

G20 EMPOWER: The Alliance for the Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation is an alliance of G20 business leaders and governments that aims to accelerate women's leadership and empowerment in the private sector.

We-Fi: The Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) is a partnership that aims to unlock financing for women-led/owned businesses (WSMEs) in developing countries. We-Fi's partners include 14 donor governments, six multilateral development banks as implementing partners, and numerous other stakeholders in the public and private sector around the world. It was launched at the 2017 G20 Leaders' Summit in Hamburg, Germany.

Civil20 Gender Working Group: The Civil20 (C20) is one of the official G20 engagement groups, providing a platform for international civil society organizations to engage in the political dialogue with the G20 through thematic working groups. In 2021,

⁶ <https://www.governo.it/it/node/17750>

it gathered around 600 organizations from all over the world. The C20 has paid increasing attention to gender issues, starting its first specific Gender Working Group (GWG) in 2018, under the Argentinian presidency, after an internal survey showed that most participants deemed it necessary.

Civil20 and Gender Equality

In 2021, with Italy being the host country for the G20, the Italian civil society was tasked the organization of the C20. It decided to maintain the GWG and ensure gender mainstreaming across the entire work of the engagement group. The GWG was coordinated by Maria Grazia Panunzi, president of AIDOS – Italian Association for Women in Development, and Mabel Bianco, president of FEIM – Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer. The group consisted of 185 registered members and met six times over the course of roughly seven months (March – October 2021), participated in the release of five statements, produced two communiqués, participated to the delivery of the Policy Pack with a section on gender and organized five events. The GWG adopted a twin track approach, having gender equality as a specific objective but also doing gender mainstreaming in the other working groups. In order to achieve this, members of the GWG were invited to follow the activities of other working groups and contribute by bringing forth a gendered perspective, if necessary. Additionally, the GWG coordinators, thanks to their participation in the Steering Committee and International Advisory Committee, regularly liaised with other working groups to establish a relation of mutual contribution to the advocacy activities carried out throughout the year by the C20, e.g. official dialogues, the release of statements and so on.

Unlike the other G20 working groups, the GWG does not have a corresponding G20 working group: this implied that by having no pre-established interlocutor, all the GWG activities relied heavily on gender mainstreaming and liaising with the Italian Department of Equal Opportunities, as well as the G20 Italian presidency itself and other relevant actors.

Nevertheless, the GWG was able to be one of the most active working groups, participating in the release of the following statements:

- C20 – L20 Joint Statement on TRIPS Waiver (<https://civil-20.org/c20-l20-joint-statement-on-trips-waivers/>).
- C20 – L20 – Y20 Joint Statement. Preventing and combating violence against women and girls and domestic violence, Istanbul Convention (<https://civil-20.org/c20-l20-y20-statement-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-girls-and-domestic-violence-as-a-violation-of-human-rights/>).

- C20 – L20 – W20 Joint Statement on TRIPS waiver. Opening now access to vaccines and treatments is crucial (<https://civil-20.org/2021/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/C20-L20-W20-2nd-TRIPS-statement-June-4th-2021.pdf>).
- C20 Statement on Afghan women's and girls' rights (https://civil-20.org/2021/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/C20-Statement-Afghan-womens-and-girls-rights_21.08.21.pdf).
- B20 – C20 – L20 – W20 Joint Statement. Call on the institutionalization of a G20 Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting and Working Group (https://civil-20.org/2021/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/B20-C20-L20-W20-Joint-Statement_call-on-the-institutionalization-of-a-G20-Equality-Gender-Ministerial-Meeting-and-Working-Group.docx.pdf).

It produced the following communiqués:

- C20 Gender Working Group Communiqué on the Global Health Summit of May 21st 2021 (<https://civil-20.org/c20-gender-working-group-communication-on-the-global-health-summit-of-may-21st-2021/>).
- C20 Gender Working Group Communiqué on Digitalization (<https://civil-20.org/2021/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/C20-Gender-Working-Group-Communique-on-Digitalization.pdf>).

And organized the following events:

- Global Health beyond the emergency (9 June).
- G20 High Level Parliamentary Consultation on Placing Gender back at the Centre of Global Health and Development Policies (22 and 25 June)⁷.
- One Health in future policies: Cooperation, gender, and health financing (9 September).
- G20 and Women in rural areas: challenges and opportunities for Gender Equality (6 October).
- Amidst COVID 19: putting the last mile first (7 October).

The 2021 Italian presidency of the G20 and Gender Equality

The Conference on Women's Empowerment

The G20 started gathering in 1999, when Finance ministers from high and middle income countries and Central Banks governors held meetings to discuss international financial stability and common responses to financial crises and economic shocks. In 2008, the first G20 Summit was held.

⁷ This activity was organized by AIDOS but was carried out in the framework of the G20/C20 process.

Under the Italian presidency, the G20 articulated its priorities into three interconnected pillars – People, Planet, Prosperity – under the motto of “building back better” while leaving no one behind. Women’s empowerment and a focus on reducing inequalities were explicitly mentioned among the priorities, as well as the arrangement of smarter and more flexible working models, “which may contribute to better redistribute unpaid care work between genders and promote a better work-life balance for both men and women”⁸.

As mentioned earlier, in 2021 the G20 held its first Conference on Women’s Empowerment in Santa Margherita Ligure. The Conference saw the participation of Gender equality/Equal opportunity ministers, representatives of the private sector and international organizations, as well as representatives of relevant G20 engagements groups and civil society actors. The goal of the conference was to collect inputs on women’s empowerment by different stakeholders in a systemic and cross-cutting way, and present them to G20 leaders in order to influence the final Summit Declaration.

The event included a special meeting on the situation of Afghan women that was followed by a call on G20 countries and the international community to support their human rights. This call to action however was not met with concrete steps in the following months. With little to no ability to offer support in the country after the withdrawal of US troops, and after the flustered international evacuations carried out in the month of August, Afghan nationals trying to reach safety elsewhere were met with enormous obstacles, with the exception of a few humanitarian corridors. In the wake of the return to power of the Taliban, only in the European Union six Member States⁹ expressed the willingness to continue and step up the repatriations of Afghan nationals, in opposition to the European Commission’s wish to stop carrying out forced returns and UNHCR’s issue of a non-return advisory¹⁰. Just a few weeks after that, media outlets revealed the dire crisis at the Belarus-Poland border, where many Afghan asylum seekers - among other nationalities - gathered to try to enter the European Union, exposing acts of police brutality, threats, extortion, violations of international law, limited access to basic necessities and shelter, all under freezing temperatures.

Additionally, the Conference focused on two macro areas: STEM, digital and financial skills, environment and sustainability; economic empowerment and work-life balance. The GWG participated, in the person of AIDOS’s president Maria Grazia Panunzi, in the panel on digital and financial skills, bringing forth the recommendations expressed in the GWG communiqué on digitalization. These two areas were also the two main themes in the final Chair’s statement, that was presented to the G20 leaders to call for women to be at the center of the agenda. While the statement introduces important themes, that have been addressed also in previous G20s, such as the importance

8 G20 website <https://g20.org>, retrieved on March 2nd 2021.

9 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-004046_EN.html.

10 <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/611a4c5c4.pdf>.

of bridging the gender digital divide, fostering the participation of women and girls in STEM, enhancing women's financial literacy and increasing women's participation in the labor force, it also presents vague and scarcely action-oriented declarations. In fact, the statement remains on the surface of identifying various criticalities, without explicitly calling out the root causes of such disparities and without proposing structural changes that would lead to a more systemic redistribution of power, income and opportunities. More specifically, the G20 as a whole relies heavily on the private sector and is oriented towards a relentless pursuit of economic growth, in accordance with a neoliberal capitalist model. This approach has been and continues to be strongly criticized by feminist organizations, and more specifically by those located in the Global South, that see this paradigm as a “tool that only benefits the rich and continues to exploit and extract labour and natural resources from the South”¹¹.

Labour and economic empowerment

The theme of women's economic empowerment and work-life balance was addressed in another important G20 document, the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration on Fostering an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient recovery of labour markets and societies. The declaration included the G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target: more, better and equally paid jobs for women. This roadmap was aimed at improving the quantity and quality of women's employment, promoting equal opportunities through educational and vocational pathways, the enhancement of digital and financial skills, the bridging of the gender pay gap and the promotion of a more even distribution of paid and unpaid work between genders. Moreover, it included a call on ILO and OECD to continue their reporting on the progress made by G20 countries towards the Brisbane Target¹² through a set of indicators.

While the initiative of a roadmap to go beyond Brisbane was welcomed by civil society, many criticalities remain in addressing the inequalities between genders in the labour market and employment. Firstly, the reduction of the gap in labour force participation rates between men and women must be achieved through the specific growth of women's employment rates, and not through, for instance, the decrease in men's employment, as reminded by Women20's Chair Linda Laura Sabbadini¹³. Moreover, women's employment must improve from the quantitative and qualitative point of view. However, a single-issue approach – such as the goal of reducing the employment gap – does not take into account the deeper structural causes of global inequalities and the crisis of care, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Firstly, without massive investments in public infrastructure, not much will change for those who need it the most, especially women at the intersection of various forms

11 Darooka, P. and Basnyat, K. *Women and G20: inclusion or exclusion. South Feminist Analysis*. 2022, retrieved at <https://pwescr.org/Women-and-G20-final-paper.pdf>.

12 The Brisbane Target (2014) refers to the goal of reducing the gap in labour force participation rates between men and women by 25% by 2025, with the aim of bringing 100 million women into the labour market.

13 <https://w20italia.it/2021/04/10/the-five-strategical-points-women20-would-like-to-underline-as-civil-society/>.

of systemic oppression. Care should be valued and recognized as a central component of human reproduction and wellbeing, and should be supported by governments through social infrastructure and the provision of public goods and services. Without proper access to publicly subsidized care services and by placing the onus of care work on individuals, unpaid care work will always be unevenly distributed among demographics with different levels of privilege, penalizing women and girls in all their diversity. Moreover, feminists from the Global South point out that issues like unpaid non-care work, such as subsistence forms of livelihood that provide food security to communities in the South¹⁴, are not taken into account in settings like the G20, that despite including so called emerging economies, still represent the point of view of wealthy Global North countries.

In fact, many feminist economists and analysts believe that macroeconomics factors should be primarily taken into account to concretely change things and benefit, among others, women in all their diversity: the introduction of minimum wage and universal basic income, progressive taxation, debt cancellation, investments in social infrastructure and so on. Merely focusing on single issue elements, such as the rate of women's labor participation, is not enough to truly reach equality. Feminist thinkers, practitioners, and activists around the world have shown that the ultimate goal is not to be integrated into the preexisting system, that is inherently unequal and built to benefit only certain categories, but rather creating a new system, based on different foundations.

Sustainable development and climate justice

The focus on women's empowerment was purportedly stated as a priority also in the area of development. The document issued as a result of the ministerial meeting among Development and Foreign Affairs ministers, the Matera Declaration, is a call to "strengthen international efforts to contain the effects of the pandemic on lives and livelihoods" with regards to food security, nutrition and food systems, with a specific focus on the empowerment of women and youth. Nevertheless, the attention to marginalized groups does not translate into concrete action points geared towards tackling the structural causes of poverty and hunger. Again, the solutions proposed by the G20 rely heavily on the private sector, without strong and action-oriented commitments on public policy, and on international trade, that plays an important role in benefitting the Global North through unfair trade agreements and an under-regulated global financial market. Moreover, the lack of strong statements to tackle climate change and its effects – e.g. only mentioning adaptation strategies to it – will result in "dumping on the poorest and most vulnerable the responsibility of surviving in a world whose climate is modified by someone else"¹⁵. Overall, the G20 declaration of intent to mitigate climate change reveals a timid approach to the current environmental

¹⁴ Darooka, P. and Basnyat, K. *Women and G20: inclusion or exclusion. South Feminist Analysis*. 2022, retrieved at <https://pwescr.org/Women-and-G20-final-paper.pdf>.

¹⁵ C20 Development WG Communiqué on the G20 Matera Declaration Building back better? Or business as usual?. Retrieved at <https://civil-20.org/2021/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/C20-Development-WG-Communiqué>

crisis, exposing the lack of concrete steps for decarbonization and the elimination of subsidies to fossil fuels, and no clear commitment on how to achieve the goals included in international frameworks on climate change.

Similarly, the commitments taken on health show a lack of long-term vision and boldness. While the pandemic has shown the centrality of quality public health systems in our collective wellbeing and the impact that decades of underfunding had on public and accessible health systems worldwide, the trends to privatization of health care services are still ongoing. The lack of support to the TRIPS waiver and the decision to opt for voluntary transfers of technology and pledges to donate vaccines is a clear sign that the interests of the private sector are still considered a priority. The crisis has quickly propagated to other health related domains, setting back the efforts made in the past decades and particularly affecting women, girls, LGBTIQ+ people and marginalized communities experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination. Although there is an explicit mention of the willingness to ensure the continuity of health services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, beyond COVID-19 in the final Rome Leaders' Declaration, there is a lack of a clear roadmap that would translate these commitments into action. This is particularly worrying given the fact that, for instance, some developed countries have announced cutbacks in development aid targeting family planning by 85%, and funding for HIV/AIDS by 80%¹⁶.

While the Indonesian presidency of the G20 for 2022 decided to hold a second Conference on Women's Empowerment, is it still unsure whether this event will become customary, as it will depend upon future presidencies' willingness to carry on this legacy. Despite the many criticalities highlighted thus far, we sincerely hope that this Conference will become an integral part of the G20 process to catalyze the attention on the issue of gender equality. These spaces are critical for civil society to make its voice heard and try to negotiate, open discussions and present bold propositions that, in time, can permeate these forums and tip the balance towards more progressive and inclusive societies.

Recommendations and challenges of the 2021 C20 Gender Working Group

In this context, the GWG condensed its recommendations in the Gender statement included in the 2021 Policy Pack. The statement addressed the major macro areas related to gender equality and partially overlapped with the G20 and C20 working groups. It included both a description of the current global challenges and the following recommendations:

nique-on-the-G20-Matera-Declaration.pdf

16 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1090892>

Health

- Scale up efforts to ensure **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and **Universal Health Access (UHA)**, in order to realize the right to health for everyone and *leave no one behind*, especially women and girls in all their diversity, notably through the development of universal social protection floors as defined by ILO 202 and include access to essential health care services
- Guarantee access to **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**, including menstrual health, contraceptives, antenatal care, FP, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH), safe abortions service for women and girls in all their diversity, LGBTQI+ people, vulnerable groups and key populations, indigenous people, refugees, migrants. Recognize SRHR as well as safe abortions as “essential services”, as stated in the WHO resolution of May 2020¹⁷, in any health policies and everywhere and include it in all humanitarian, conflict and environmental crisis/context.
- Enhance and promote a **gender inclusive One Health** approach and **Gender Medicine**, both in terms of research and innovation, as well as in training and communication. Finance with additional funds system for the global commons for pandemic prevention, surveillance, preparedness and response without undermining existing health programs, such as SRHR, safe abortion services, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, programmes for vaccination including HPV and nutrition and other chronic diseases.
- Ensure the availability of **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** for all people, including all healthcare facilities, as a fundamental prerequisite for quality health care, especially for women and girls, and a basic human right.
- Guarantee the participation of **women and girls as agents of change** in the elaboration of preventive and curative health policies by including them in all decision-making processes.
- Acknowledge, appreciate, and support the work of health workers worldwide of which over 70 % are women working in lower status, low paid roles, formal and informal sector, and insecure conditions. Make sure health workers of all sex, gender, and race, have **decent work** and are equipped with **safe and appropriately sized protective gears**.

¹⁷ WHO, A73/CONF.1 Rev.1, May 2020, https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_CONF1Rev1-en.pdf.

- Implement the World Health Organization's Vaccine Equity Declaration which encourages countries to accelerate the equitable rollout of vaccines in every country, starting with health workers and those at highest risk for COVID-19. Countries with privilege of wealth and access to the vaccine must resist and fight against vaccine nationalism, including by supporting the proposed temporary TRIPS waiver for COVID-19 health products and C-TAP.

Economic empowerment

- Recognize and take into account the **social and economic value of care work**.
- Support the development of **transformative universal social protection**, in order to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, in particular the impact of childcare on women's livelihoods and employment, a first step being the effective implementation of ILO 202 recommendation on social protection floors.
- Include the G20 *Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target: more, better and equally paid jobs for women*, encompassed in the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration of June 23, 2021 Catania (Italy) *Fostering an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient recovery of labour markets and societies*, in the final G20 Declaration, specifying that the Brisbane goal needs to be met by **increasing women's employment**.
- Enhance **legislative frameworks and social protections** for women's economic security in the informal and domestic sectors.
- Empower women to be **self-employed through entrepreneurship**, specifically by addressing how the entrepreneurship and innovation sectors define success according to forms of impact typically led by men (the franchise model), whereas women entrepreneurs lead impact at the level of mindsets and policy changes. Support women in the access to capital and credit that makes the path to female self-entrepreneurship difficult, aggravated by less experience of women in negotiating financial matters, promoting training and effective follow-up.

Finance

- Implement more redistributive macro-economic policies promoting social justice notably through **sovereign debt suspensions and restructuration, progressive taxation** and **fight against illicit financial flows**.
- Facilitate increased **access to capital** for women-led organizations.

- **Redefine success in entrepreneurship** to include the unique forms of impact led by women entrepreneurs.

Digitalization

- Scale up efforts to ensure that women and girls in all their diversity possess digital skills and have access to internet and technological devices, therefore **bridging the gender digital divide**.
- Place **digital security and the prevention of online violence** firmly at the center of the engagement within the process of digitalization: curtail the spread of abuse on digital platforms and networks through regulatory bodies and task forces.
- Ensure the **participation of women and girls**, as well as other **marginalized communities**, in the ICT sector to work towards the elimination of the gender and racial bias found in AI, such as in algorithms.
- Promote multistakeholder partnerships, **global partnerships** of “like-minded” public, private and third sector actors to manage digitalization processes.

Mainstream gender-transformative analysis into the G20 COVID-19 Action Plan + G20 agenda

- Implement a **gender mainstreaming strategy** in the whole G20 agenda, commit to gather gender disaggregated data for accountability and establish a **Ministerial Working Group on Gender**.
- Develop **gender and intersectional impact assessments** in the design phase of any legislative, political, programmatic and strategic initiative.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- Address GBV as a **structural phenomenon** leaving behind emergency-based responses, address GBV in all contexts and in all its manifestations. The experience of fighting the pandemic has shown that concrete resources and partnerships can be put in place if a serious and widespread phenomenon is to be tackled.
- Increase sustainable financing for programmes aimed at ending GBV and its many manifestations, e.g. **harmful practices** that appear to be on the rise due to pandemic-related disruptions

- Involve **women's, feminist and LGBTQI+ associations** in the implementation of national plans duly funded and support their activities and programmes

Education

- Close the **gender gap in education** in all fields, promoting human rights and gender equality education.
- Promote comprehensive **sexuality education**, including the dissemination of IEC materials, WASH and information related to menstruation and safe menstrual practices including the distribution of menstrual hygiene products in schools (Menstrual Hygiene Management - MHM).
- Tackle **gender stereotypes and unconscious biases** in school at every level, including trainings for teachers and in school material.
- Increase enrollment of women and girls in all their diversity in **STEM programmes**.
- Scale up efforts to protect girls and young women from **domestic violence** and **sexual exploitation**, end **school-related gender-based violence** (SRGBV).

Development and Agenda 2030, Women, Peace and Security

- Scale up efforts to achieve **SDG 5** (Gender Equality), especially in light of the major setbacks occurred during the pandemic and implement **gender mainstreaming** across all SDGs.
- Support the proposal to create a **Global Fund for Social Protection** put forward by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, a way of addressing the urgent funding gap in low and middle income countries, providing grant based matching funds that would offer a financial incentive for countries to invest more in gender transformative social protection—ensuring that domestic resource mobilization gradually expands so that, in time, international support becomes unnecessary
- Recommit to **0.7% of States' GNI to ODA**, allocating 85% of the ODA to gender equality and foresee the elaboration of a bi-annual accountability report on international cooperation for gender equality.

- Implement a **Feminist Foreign Policy**, therefore centering the security of the most marginalized and rethinking global power relations and hierarchies, to address, among other challenges, the exceptional struggles migrant, asylum seeking and refugee women and girls must face.
- Strengthen the presence of women and girls in all their diversity in **peace-building processes**

Climate, Biodiversity and Ecological Transition

- Enforce a **Gender-inclusive green economy and transition**, putting women and girls in all their diversity at the center of all policy and decision-making processes.
- Promote a **gender inclusive One Health approach**, also by assessing and taking into consideration the impact of climate change on women in all their diversity, indigenous people and the Global South.
- Fully implement **international frameworks** on Climate Change through a gender lens.

Democratic societies, participation in leadership and decision-making

- Implement **public gender procurement** measures.
- Address the shrinking of the democratic space by ensuring the **full participation of Civil Society** to multilateral forums and its related international processes, especially Women's rights, feminist, LGBTQI+ people, indigenous, migrant/refugee-led associations.
- Scale up efforts to put women and girls in all their diversity and LGBTQI+ people at the **center of the decision-making processes** across all areas and therefore ensure equal opportunities for **leadership** by removing structural legal, institutional, social and cultural barriers that prevent their full participation to society, also through quotas.

The work carried out throughout the year presented many great opportunities to provide civil society's feedback and inputs, more specifically from the point of view of feminist and women's rights associations, on the current most pressing issues. At the same time, we encountered some challenges in carrying out our work of coordination of the GWG. Firstly, given the cross-cutting nature of gender issues, a wider participation of members with varied backgrounds, different types of expertise and positionalities would have made the entire process more inclusive and representative of different points of view. More specifically, a wider participation of (feminist) organiza-

tions from the Global South in the C20 and GWG would have been appreciated. We are aware that working on gender equality implies adopting an intersectional approach and therefore always consider the interlinkages of different systems of oppression: only taking gender into account will provide a partial and incomplete analysis. For this reason, listening to as many voices as possible is of paramount importance to report the complexity of gender issues at the global scale.

Another challenge was the lack of a specific interlocutor in the G20: as mentioned earlier, this meant that our work had to rely strongly on gender-mainstreaming and liaising with the Italian Department of Equal Opportunities, the G20 Italian presidency itself and other relevant actors, but without following a fixed path (e.g. ministerial meetings).

Carrying out gender-mainstreaming was not easy, both within the G20 and the C20. Within the G20, the issue of gender equality is compartmentalized as a specific issue on its own. If it is mentioned in other workstreams, it is addressed quickly and superficially, as if mentioning the word “gender” or “women” automatically ticks the box of gender equality, when in fact the G20 policy frameworks and declarations lack strong gender assessments. Within the C20, a better coordination among all group coordinators and a better understanding of the cross-cutting nature of gender issues would have made gender-mainstreaming easier.

Future challenges in ensuring a gendered approach in the economic recovery plans made by the G20

Economic and financial policies have historically been considered gender neutral, while in fact they have a different impact on women in all their diversity. They have direct repercussions on women’s employment, on resources for social infrastructure and public policies aimed at realizing women’s rights, and on the burden of different types of unpaid work performed by women. Considering the inherent gender bias of economic and financial policies is fundamental to finally start integrating gender assessments in every decision, and not merely compartmentalize women’s economic empowerment as a special issue that may or may not receive adequate support from governments. Moreover, in order to ensure a gendered approach in future economic recovery plans made by the G20, women’s leadership and participation in decision-making must be enhanced: women are underrepresented both as heads of state and official government representatives in the G20 context.¹⁸ In official engagement groups, and more specifically in those that represent the views of civil society, such as the C20 and W20, the problem of representation must also be analyzed in terms of background. We cannot afford to give a platform to only one kind of woman, which is often identified as the businesswoman/entrepreneur. For this reason, initiatives such as G20 Empower, that aims to accelerate women’s leadership and empowerment in

¹⁸ Heintz, J., *Missing Women: The G20, Gender Equality and Global Economic Governance*. 2013, Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

the private sector by fostering an alliance among business leaders and governments across the G20 countries, do not represent the vast majority of women globally and are therefore frowned upon by feminist organizations, especially those from the Global South. Not only is the “businesswoman archetype” not representative of the diversity of women globally, but it also reinforces the current economic model based on infinite growth and a relentless pursuit of profits, a model that we know perpetuates gender and environmental injustice.

Future economic recovery plans must recognize and take into account the social and economic value of care work, as well as any other type of unpaid work performed by women and marginalized communities, that is not captured into classic economic indicators such as the GDP. Women’s employment rate should be increased and go hand in hand with the green transition, creating quality jobs that do not further exacerbate the unsustainable environmental impact of the current economic model. For this reason, women and girls in all their diversity should be put at the center of all policy and decision-making processes, ensuring a gender-transformative green transition. Legislative frameworks and social protections for women’s economic security in the informal and domestic sectors should be enhanced, so that no woman is left behind. G20 countries must commit to remove all the legislative, social and cultural barriers preventing women from accessing capital, as well as other resources (e.g. access to land rights or control over natural resources), and their participation in leadership and decision-making processes must be guaranteed, also through the use of quotas. Sexual and reproductive health and rights must be safeguarded, as being able to make informed choices, free from coercion and stigma, about one’s body and reproductive system is a prerequisite to the full enjoyment of human rights and autonomy.

At the international level, debt cancellation and restructuring should also be prioritized, as sovereign debt hampers the realization of women’s rights by restricting the fiscal space of so-called developing countries and therefore forces governments to cut public financing for public services. These cuts have wider repercussions on women and marginalized communities, amplifying the burden of unpaid labour and narrowing down essential public services that these communities rely on. These debts are often colonial legacies and/or the result of unjust trade and investment terms that have historically disadvantaged communities in the Global South.¹⁹ G20 countries ought to recommit to 0.7% of States’ GNI to ODA, allocate 85% of the ODA to gender equality and foresee the elaboration of a bi-annual accountability report on international cooperation for gender equality.

19 Feminist Economic Justice for People & Planet Action Nexus (2021): *A Feminist Agenda for People and Planet: Principles and Recommendations for a Global Feminist Economic Justice Agenda*. Feminist Blueprint for Action, by Diyana Yahaya. Available at https://wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Blueprint_A-Feminist-Agenda-for-People-and-Planet.pdf.

Roadmap for future Civil20 Gender Working Groups

With these challenges in mind, we hope future C20s will maintain a Gender Working Group, as Indonesia has done for 2022. Given that other engagement groups are often appointed by governments, such as the Women20, C20 is the only engagement group that is completely independent and therefore has the potential to bring forth an unfiltered, human rights based critique of the G20 process from the standpoint of civil society.

Despite the challenges in the participation of civil society to a forum such as the G20, and the stance taken by some organizations that are skeptical about the whole process and decide to not take part in it, we also believe that the absence of women's rights and feminist associations would imply the lack of progress, albeit limited, and "infiltration" of certain themes in the public and institutional sphere. The decisions and policies agreed upon in these international forums have concrete repercussions on the lives of everyday people, therefore being present and act both as watchdogs and bearers of bolder, more radical and transformative proposals is crucial for civil society's advocacy efforts.

To carry on this legacy, we suggest some practical recommendations for future GWGs, both in terms of methods and contents.

In terms of methods, we suggest monitoring pre-ministerial meetings to be prepared for the priorities set for the given year and therefore have better chances to influence the process. Once the presidency has started, we suggest having regular bilateral meetings with other C20 working group coordinators and the sherpa. Moreover, sherpas should ensure the participation of a gender representative in all official meetings, so that a more efficient gender-mainstreaming can be guaranteed.

In terms of contents, we suggest concentrating on the following macro-themes, that we deem are crucial for gender equality:

- Focus on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, bodily autonomy and Gender Medicine; the right to health for all and vaccine justice
- Advocate for policies and commitments to tackle and eradicate Gender Based Violence
- Strive for climate justice and highlight its connection with gender equality
- Maintain high in the G20 agenda women and girls' empowerment, leadership and contributions as the heart of resilience and recovery policies and decision-making at every level
- Organize a G20 Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting - resulting from the creation of a G20 Gender Working Group - and of official mechanisms to ensure gender mainstreaming in each G20 Working Group
- Promote social justice notably through sovereign debt suspensions and re-structuration, progressive taxation and the fight against illicit financial flows

Despite the importance of participating in a forum like the G20 one, we call on its leaders to strengthen the UN multilateral framework: the G20 is a plurilateral process and

informal meeting that should support and not replace multilateralism. In this regard, we hope that true multilateralism, involving all stakeholders and rightsholders, will be preserved and that the space afforded to civil society will be enhanced, inverting the trend of a widening massive participation of the private sector in a context of rising inequalities, systemic crises and growing demands for social equity. In this scenario, feminist and women's rights organizations from around the globe have led the way to show that another world, based on sustainability, equality, care and justice, is possible: for this reason, the voices who have been marginalized so far must be put at center of the recovery not to build back better, but to build a new system based on different foundations.



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