



W7 Starting from Girls Final Declaration

Rome (Italy), April 7-8, 2017

The 2017 Women 7 network (W7)-was held in Rome, Italy , on April 7 and 8, 2017 and gathered representatives from international organizations, NGOs, business, academia and politics, to provide the Italian G7 Presidency with some specific policy recommendations on how to best address gender equality as a means of reducing inequalities and promoting sustainable and inclusive growth and productivity.

In pursuit of this objective, we, the representatives of the 2017 W7 network, thoroughly discussed current challenges undermining women's and girls' empowerment and their role as actors for change.

Taking into account the set of recommendations and principles outlined in previous G7 Declarations and in relevant international frameworks, we, the W7, acknowledge that:

- gender equality is a global issue that concerns both women and men, as well as society as a whole;
- the drive to build gender equality is a shared responsibility, needing action at all levels and by everyone: women and men and private and public sectors cannot work in isolation but must act collectively within their respective areas of responsibility and spheres of influence.

We, the W7, agreed that:

- "*starting from girls*" is a must if we want to promote a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to deliver on all the Sustainable Development Goals;
- a *holistic approach* is needed, focusing on interdependent and mutually reinforcing areas of action, such as investing in girls' and women's education and in their economic empowerment; eliminating social inequalities and all forms of violence against women and girls; guaranteeing access to health; and protecting women and girls on the move.

For each priority area listed below, we, the W7, have reached a consensus on two transformative and action-oriented policy recommendations. We assume our responsibilities regarding their effective implementation, bearing in mind that any action must be complemented by the creation of an enabling environment by our Governments.

Girls' empowerment: closing the gender gap to foster growth

Recommendation 1: Strengthen collaboration between universities, research institutes and the private sector to encourage girls to focus on STEM curricula, and to foster gender-related research and innovation content on gender issues. Start from primary school: include digital and financial literacy in school curricula, invest in proper equipment and ensure adequate teachers' training and qualification. Provide positive female role models in all spheres, including STEM and innovation related fields, eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls, including both conscious and unconscious bias and stereotypes that hinder women's and girls' access to and growth in STEM-related fields.

Recommendation 2: Overcome the gender pay gap in one generation: the business sector should take up the commitment to further promote female leadership and be transparent on remuneration of employees at comparable levels. These efforts need to be combined with proper legislative measures by Governments addressed to the creation and implementation of comprehensive equal pay policies and measures including the need for certification on gender balance and equality (including equal pay for equal work).

Social inequalities and the future of democracy

Recommendation 1: To better balance work and life the G7 countries should: a) Encourage work arrangements that respond to the mutually-recognized needs and requirements that arise throughout the life cycle of both workers and firms, that are fair and equitable and that provide for continuous skill-upgrading opportunities and productivity growth; b) Introduce temporary fiscal incentives facilitating women's participation in the labor market; c) Promote investment in social infrastructure such as facilities and services for caring for children, the elderly and the disabled, and explore the use of new technologies to create new skills and professional roles within the care services and reduce the "drudgery" in care work; d) Promote new and review current family-friendly policies such as maternal, paternal and parental leave as well as flexible work hours, so as to reduce the scope for decisions that may put women at a disadvantage in the workplace.

Recommendation 2: Measure and assess the contribution of unpaid care work to GDP and agree on a shared methodology and common definitions. Consider reshaping the current retirement system so as to provide social protection and alternatively systems could be put in place that actually allow women to gain pension points while being unpaid care workers and therefore could not contribute to social security.

Women, health and science

Recommendation 1: In recognizing that health is critical to social, political and economic progress, universal health-care should be seen as a significant element of providing social protection. Governments' financing and accountability for women's health and particularly for adolescents' programs should be strengthened and specific attention should be paid to areas that are at risk of

regression, such as vaccination, and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. More effective public private partnerships (PPPs), and innovative tools such as gender budgeting and cash transfers, are needed to guarantee access to health care services and greater efficiencies.

Recommendation 2: Specific interventions should be developed to promote and facilitate women's and girls' participation in science and research, starting from school age. Participation of women and girls in science and research should be monitored and measured. Financial and other incentives should be granted in academic settings and work environments.

Women and girls on the move: refugees, migration and integration

Recommendation 1: Launch a major research initiative on the gender dimensions of global mobility and refugee situations, deliberately connect the G7's work on migration with the Women Peace and Security Agenda, and provide funding to women's organizations who provide crucial support to women and girls on the move and in fragile and humanitarian settings.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that integration and job creation schemes for migrants and refugees are better tailored to women, that their contributions to the care economy are better recognized and valued, that their mental health and maternal, sexual and reproductive rights are upheld and that all risks of gender based violence among mobile and displaced populations are eliminated. Moreover, policies should prioritize family reunification, especially for women, as an important way to guarantee protection for them and to find security as quickly as possible.

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To reach these results and more, we, the W7, believe that a "New Deal" between public and private sectors, between women and men alike, is needed. All the different actors in our societies must take up the challenge. With this meeting, we, the W7, have assumed our share of responsibility. We trust the G7 Governments will do the same, by approving an ambitious Communiqué and by undersigning a Roadmap, with measurable targets and timelines, in addition to measuring and reporting on progress of previous commitments, such as commitment to reduce the gender gap in workforce participation with 25 percent by 2025. This will convert principles into actions.

To achieve all this, we, the W7, ask the Italian G7 Presidency to propose the creation of an international task force, whose technical secretariat will be composed of the representatives from the international organization partners of the W7. This group will be tasked to produce a global report on the key areas mentioned above. We also call on G7 members to include Government representatives responsible for gender equality and women's empowerment in G7 processes.

All these efforts will lead to the development of a global strategy aimed at sharing best practices, monitoring concrete progress and informing policy reforms for the concrete achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Together, we can make a difference.