G7 Leaders Summit 2020:
Background Paper on Themes of G7 Leaders Summits
(2012-2019)
**G7 Commitments at a Glance**

Gender equality and women’s empowerment are at the heart of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically in relation to women’s economic empowerment (WEE). This WEE agenda has evolved through further engagement with governments and other key stakeholders, such as during the 2017 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, the Group of 20 (G20) and the Group of 7 (G7).

The G7 has articulated its WEE position in the G7 Common Principles on Women’s Entrepreneurship (2015 Elmau); G7 Guiding Principles for Building the Capacity of Women and Girls (Ise-Shima 2016); the G7 Roadmap for a Gender-Responsive Economic Environment (Taormina 2017); the Charlevoix G7 Summit Communique (Charlevoix 2018) and Paris Declaration on Gender Equality (Biarritz 2019).

The G7 recognizes that women are key drivers of innovation, growth and jobs, and that the private sector plays a vital role in creating an environment in which women can more meaningfully participate in the economy. The group has set concrete targets, such as reducing the gender gap in labour force participation rates by 25% by 2025, and to increase spending on Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET) by a third by 2030.

In the last four years, the G7 countries have committed to: invest in women’s skills development and TVET; facilitate women’s labour force participation, career advancement, and work life balance; stimulate women’s entrepreneurship and the growth and sustainability of women-owned businesses; and accelerate the adoption and implementation of the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

An enabling environment for women’s economic empowerment in the world of work requires multi-stakeholder interventions that address constraints on women’s economic empowerment on both the labour supply side and demand side. G7 Leaders have the avenues to influence policies and the implementation of reforms and inviting global community to join their lead.
Summary of Attention to Women’s Economic Empowerment in G7 Summits (2012–2019)

G7 LEADERS SUMMIT FRANCE (2019)

The 45th G7 summit was held on 24–26 August 2019, in Biarritz, France. The Summit focused on fighting inequality through five key objectives: (1) fighting inequality of opportunity, promoting in particular gender equality, access to education and high quality health services; (2) reducing environmental inequality by protecting our planet through climate finance and a fair ecological transition, preserving biodiversity and the oceans; (3) strengthening the social dimension of globalization through more fair and equitable trade, tax and development policies; (4) taking action for peace against security threats and terrorism which weaken the foundations of our societies; and (5) tapping into the opportunities created by digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI).

The French Presidency brought to the table all relevant stakeholders by convening young people (Youth 7), women (Women 7), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (C7), unions (Labor 7), employers (Business 7), research centers (Think Tanks 7) and academies of science (Science 7).

The French President Emmanuel Macron renewed The Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) created by Prime Minister Trudeau for Canada’s G7 Presidency in 2018. The G7 GEAC releases its Recommendations for Advancing Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls and Women and Call to Action.

The Advisory Council identified 79 good practices in gender equality laws in four areas (violence, economic empowerment, education and health, discrimination) and in all regions of the world. It called on the leaders of the G7 and other countries to commit themselves, through the “Biarritz Partnership”, to adopt and implement progressive legislative frameworks for gender equality, drawing on its recommendations. In particular, it called on the leaders to: (1) end gender-based violence; (2) ensure equitable and quality education and health; (3) promote economic empowerment; (4) ensure full equality between women and men in public policies.

The GEAC expressed great concern about the persistent, and even growing, threats and backlash against girls’ and women’s rights in many countries and condemns the serious responsibility of some political leaders in this step backwards. The Call to Action called on States to ensure the necessary funding for the implementation of laws and to monitor them on a regular basis, as well as to abolish any discriminatory measures against women that may persist. Also, the French G7 Presidency also supported civil society initiatives such as the Business for Inclusive Growth (B4IG) initiative, which brought together 34 companies that want to effectively combat equality.

The G7 Leaders adopted the Paris Declaration on Gender Equality, underscoring that women’s economic empowerment is central to realizing women’s rights and equality with men. Increasing women and girls’ access to quality education, learning and vocational training contributes to women’s economic empowerment and to economic growth.
Women face multiple inequalities in achieving economic empowerment. Globally and in all G7 countries, women are frequently still paid less than men for the same work and for work of equal value, have less access to financial resources needed for developing entrepreneurship, and tend to spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care than men do. G7 Leaders committed to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence. This includes intimate partner abuse, sexual violence, sexual violence in conflict, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilations as well as online violence, abuse and harassment.\(^6\)

G7 Leaders agreed on the creation of the Biarritz Partnership on Gender Equality and welcomed the organization of the Generation Equality Forum celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, and Platform for Action in Mexico and in Paris in 2020,\(^7\) hoping that this will serve as an important milestone for advancing gender equality across the world.\(^8\) In the same context, the G7 Leaders agreed to support survivors of conflict-related sexual violence – creation of a voluntary International Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence; and girls’ and women’s Education and Training - to address the barriers girls face and to achieve gender equality and, in particular, the Gender at the Centre Initiative.\(^9\) The European Union contributed an initial €1 million to the International Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, which Nadia Murad and Doctor Denis Mukwege, winners of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize, presented to G7 leaders during the summit in Biarritz.\(^10\)

Other documents presented during or in preparation for the 45th G7 summit:

- G7 France Social Communiqué, Biarritz 2019
- Declaration on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
- Biarritz Youth Partnership Declaration
G7 LEADERS SUMMIT CANADA (2018)

The 44th G7 summit was held on 8–9 June 2018, in Charlevoix, Canada. At the G7, Canada has advanced its key domestic and international priorities, including on gender equality, peace and security, climate change and building a sustainable global economy. Transparent and inclusive engagement with Canadian and international stakeholders has helped Canada to deliver on priorities that are important to Canadians at the G7. Key topics on the agenda for the G7 Leaders Summit: (1) investing in growth that works for everyone; (2) preparing for jobs of the future; (3) advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment; (4) working together on climate change, oceans and clean energy; and (5) building a more peaceful and secure world.11

The G7 Leaders endorsed the Charlevoix Commitment on Equality and Economic Growth, which reinforced the G7 commitment to eradicate poverty, advance gender equality, foster income equality, ensure better access to financial resources and create decent work and quality of life for all. The Leaders recognized the “value in development and humanitarian assistance that promotes greater equality of opportunity, and gender equality, and prioritizes the most vulnerable, and will continue to work to develop innovative financing models to ensure that no one is left behind.”12

The Leaders reinforced their commitment “to work to remove barriers to women’s participation and decision-making in social, economic and political spheres as well as increase the opportunities for all to participate equally in all aspects of the labour market.”13 The G7 Leaders committed to promote women’s full economic participation through working to reduce the gender wage gap, supporting women business leaders and entrepreneurs and recognizing the value of unpaid care work. “Advancing gender equality and ending violence against girls and women benefits all and is a shared responsibility in which everyone, including men and boys, has a critical role to play. The G7 Leaders endorsed the Charlevoix Commitment to end sexual and gender-based violence, abuse and harassment in digital contexts.”14

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau established and convened the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) as an independent body, advising the Canadian Presidency.

In their report presented to the G7 Leaders, GEAC highlighted that the G7 Leaders were in a unique position to take concrete steps to advance gender equality at home and abroad. Doing so is central to solving the many economic, development, and security challenges facing the G7, its partners and the world. GEAC asked for creation of enabling environment for (1) safe, healthy, educated, heard and empowered girls and women, supported with the resources and opportunities they need to be agents of change in their own lives and for a better world; (2) societies in which girls and women are equally represented in decision-making bodies, and are free from harassment and violence; and (3) economies that are prosperous, innovative, inclusive, and more equitable.15

In Charlevoix, G7 Leaders committed to “encourage private, state-owned companies and public employers to take measures to facilitate the reconciliation of work and care responsibilities for both women and men, and to increase efforts to reduce the gender pay gap” and “support gender
equality in labour market opportunities and in the distribution of unpaid care work, with measures such as paid maternity leave and parental leave, as well as initiatives to ensure women’s equal access to decent employment opportunities, leadership opportunities, resources and finance”, thus address inequalities in society, bolster public confidence and economic integration, and better prepare for technological change.16

Inclusive growth was also the leaders’ agenda. They agreed to work together to ensure that economic growth benefits everyone and in particular those most at risk of being left behind.

Other documents presented during or in preparation for the 44th G7 summit:

- Charlevoix Commitment on Innovative Financing for Development
- Charlevoix Common Vision for the Future of Artificial Intelligence
- Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries
- Charlevoix Commitment to End Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Abuse and Harassment in Digital Contexts
- Achieving growth that works for everyone
G7 LEADERS SUMMIT ITALY (2017)

The 43rd G7 summit was held on 26–27 May 2017 in Taormina, Italy. The mission of the G7 Summit was "Building the Foundations of Renewed Trust". The agenda was based on three fundamental pillars: 1) citizen safety; 2) economic, environmental and social sustainability and the reduction of inequalities; 3) innovation, skills and labor in the age of the Next Production Revolution.

Gender equality was front and center in the G7 Taormina Leaders’ Communiqué which recognized that "gender equality is fundamental for the fulfillment of human rights and a top priority, as women and girls are powerful agents for change. Promoting women’s empowerment and closing the gender gap is not only right, but also smart for economies, and a crucial contribution to progress towards sustainable development." The G7 committed to mainstreaming gender equality into all our policies and foster the economic empowerment of women and girls.

The G7 Leaders recognized that "although girls and women today are better educated than ever before, they are still more likely to be employed in low-skilled and low-paying jobs, carry most of the burden of unpaid care and domestic work, and their participation and leadership in private and public life as well as their access to economic opportunities remains uneven."

In Taormina, the G7 Leaders adopted the first G7 Roadmap for a Gender-Responsive Economic Environment and committed to deliver gender equality through enabling women’s labor force participation, entrepreneurship, economic empowerment and thus their full and equal participation in society.

Another important discussion was centered around The Next Production Revolution which offers an extraordinary opportunity to increase competitiveness and to boost an innovation-driven growth. G7 Leaders committed to help people across all sectors and regions to benefit from innovation and digitalization and enhance women’s opportunities to pursue STEM careers - “address new forms of work and improve working conditions by implementing sound labor market policies and by making adjustments to our welfare systems, when necessary, in a multi-stakeholder approach, so as to provide stability for our labor force”.

The G7 People-Centered Action Plan on Innovation, Skills and Labor identified three main Policy Pillars: (1) inclusiveness; (2) openness; and (3) security along with a set of Key Policy Priorities: (1) human capital formation; (2) science, technology and innovation (STI) financing policies and mechanisms; and (3) global research infrastructures; to promote people-driven innovation that boosts both the quantity and quality of jobs; and design sound policies related to the future of work for inclusive and sustainable innovation-driven growth.
G7 LEADERS SUMMIT JAPAN (2016)

The 42nd G7 summit was held on 26–27 May 2016 in Ise-Shima, Japan. The G7 leaders discussed policy responses in order to swiftly achieve a strong, sustainable and balanced growth pattern in light of global economic conditions with growing uncertainty. Amongst the priority issues discussed: quality infrastructure investment; women’s empowerment; cybersecurity and anti-corruption measures.

In Ise-Shima, the G7 leaders endorsed the G7 Guiding Principles for Building the Capacity of Women and Girls and the Women’s Initiative in Developing STEM Career (WINDS) based on an understanding of the importance of capacity building for women and promoting engagement of women in STEM fields as the basis for the empowerment of women.22

The G7 leaders agreed to take decisive actions against cyber attacks and confirmed the importance of promoting the “rule of law” in cyberspace and encouraging the digital economy. They endorsed the G7 Principles and Actions on Cyber, established a new G7 working group, and agreed to strengthen G7 cooperation on cyber security.23

G7 Leaders committed to “advancing labour market participation by women, the youth and the elderly, and improving job opportunity and quality. We commit to promote active labour market policies in order to ensure flexibility, inclusiveness and provide opportunities for the unemployed.”24

The actions for skills development and training for women and girls were highlighted in the G7 Guiding Principles for Capacity Building of Women and Girls. G7 Leaders committed to building the capacity of women and girls towards sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth by (1) eliminate gender disparities and stereotypes in education and careers; (2) Enrich job-related education and vocational training for women’s labor force participation, entrepreneurship and leadership; (3) Improve school environments and address barriers to quality education for girls.25
**G7 LEADERS SUMMIT GERMANY (2015) MAIN THEMES**

The 41st G7 summit was held in Schloss Elmau, Krün, Germany on 7–8 June 2015. Key priorities for the German G7 Presidency included the global economy, foreign, security and development policy, as well as empowering self-employed women and women in vocational training, energy security, and the upcoming UN conferences on international climate protection and the post-2015 agenda.²⁶

The Schloss Elmau G7 Summit Declaration highlighted women’s entrepreneurship being a key driver of innovation, growth and jobs. The Leaders recognized that “across G7 countries and around the world far fewer women than men run their own businesses often due to additional barriers that women face in starting and growing businesses.”²⁷ G7 Leaders agreed to boost women’s entrepreneurship and invite other interested countries to join them in this effort. In particular, the commitment was made to address the specific needs of women entrepreneurs, e.g. by promoting their access to finance, markets, skills, leadership opportunities and networks. The Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to continue the work to promote gender equality as well as full participation and empowerment for all women and girls.

Moreover, the Schloss Elmau G7 Summit Declaration featured the importance of women’s economic empowerment which leads to poverty reduction and inequality, promotes growth and benefits all. G7 Leaders committed “to support the partners in developing countries to overcome discrimination, sexual harassment, violence against women and girls and other cultural, social, economic and legal barriers to women’s economic participation.”²⁸

Leaders recognized the importance of skills development for decent work, especially through technical and vocational education and training (TVET) via formal and non-formal learning, is key to the economic empowerment of women and girls, including those who face multiple sources of discrimination (e.g. women and girls with disabilities), and to improving their employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. G7 Leaders “committed to increasing the number of women and girls technically and vocationally educated and trained in developing countries through G7 measures by one third by 2030.”²⁹

G7 Leaders committed to increase career training and education for women and girls within G7 countries, foster access to quality jobs for women and to reduce the gender gap in workforce participation within our own countries by 25% by 2025, taking into account national circumstances including by improving the framework conditions to enable women and men to balance family life and employment, including access to parental leave and childcare. G7 members highlighted the private sector importance in creating an environment in which women can more meaningfully participate in the economy.

The Leaders expressed their support for the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles and called on companies worldwide to integrate them into their activities. We will coordinate our efforts through a new G7 working group on women.³⁰
Other documents presented during or in preparation for the 41st G7 summit:

- OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
- UN Women’s Empowerment Principles
In 2014, the Leaders of the 40th G7 met in Brussels on 4-5 June after the previously scheduled G8 Summit in Sochi, Russia, was cancelled. G7 leaders discussed the situation in Ukraine and stand united in support of the efforts of the people of Ukraine to build a deeper and stronger democracy that accommodates the rights and aspirations of all people in all regions of Ukraine. Other topics discussed were Energy Security and Climate, and Development (including food security and nutrition, and post-2015 Development Agenda).
G8 LEADERS SUMMIT UNITED KINGDOM (2013)

The 39th G8 summit was organized on 17-18 June 2013 in Lough Erne, the United Kingdom. Key priorities for the UK G7 Presidency included: advancing trade; ensuring tax compliance; and promoting greater transparency.33

In 2013, the G8 Leaders’ Communique emphasized the commitment to “open economies, open societies and open governments as the basis of lasting growth and stability”.34 G8 members reaffirmed their commitment to respond with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable global food and nutrition security.

A reference to women’s empowerment was made in the context of Food Security and Nutrition priority theme, “We recognize the critical role played by smallholder farmers, especially women” and Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition, “We pledge our continued support for the political and economic reforms in the region and encourage Leaders of Arab Countries in Transition to continue to make progress through the difficult transition toward democracy, prosperity, open economies and more inclusive societies, including respect for the rights of women and girls and the right to practice religious faith in safety and security.”35

2013 G8 Lough Erne Declaration highlighted the importance of governments responsibility in promotion of the good governance and establishment of proper rules for fair taxes, increased transparency and open trade.36
G8 LEADERS SUMMIT USA (2012)

The 38th G8 summit was held on 18-19 May 2012 in Camp David, Maryland, United States. The leaders addressed major global economic, political, and security challenges, including energy and climate change, food security and nutrition, Afghanistan’s economic transition and transitions taking place across the Middle East and North Africa.

G8 leaders announced a new alliance on food security with African leaders and the private sector as part of an effort to lift 50 million people out of poverty over the next decade.37

The G8 Declaration highlighted the Leaders imperative is to promote growth and jobs, reinvigorate the economies and combat financial stresses.38 The G-8 Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people, and recognized the vital role of official development assistance in poverty alleviation and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Leaders recognized that “according women full and equal rights and opportunities is crucial for all countries’ political stability, democratic governance, and economic growth”. They reaffirmed the “commitment to advance human rights of and opportunities for women, leading to more development, poverty reduction, conflict prevention and resolution, and improved maternal health and reduced child mortality”.

G8 Leaders called upon all states to protect human rights of women and to promote women’s roles in economic development and in strengthening international peace and security.
Endnotes

1 The 2019 Council was composed of 35 members, including three Nobel Peace Prize laureates, representatives of international and French NGOs, international organizations and private companies, government representatives*, journalists and artists: More info: https://youtu.be/KFmffchbXuQ


6 Ibid


9 Ibid


13 Ibid

14 Ibid


18 Ibid

19 Ibid, page 4

20 Ibid, page 9


23 Ibid, page 3

24 Ibid, page 5


26 Official website of the German Presidency G7 summit on 7 and 8 June 2015, available at: https://www.g7-germany.de/Content/EN/StatistischeSeiten/G7_elaum_texte_en/2014-10-08-ankuendigung-pipfel-elaum_en.html


28 Ibid, page 20

29 Ibid, page 20

30 Ibid, page 22


32 Ibid


36 Ibid

37 Fact Sheet: The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, available at: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2012/05/18/president-obama-announces-new-partnership-fight-global-hunger

38 Camp David Declaration (18–19 May 2012), available at: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/05/19/camp-david-declaration