



**TOCHIGI-NIKKO**   
Ministerial Meeting on Gender Equality  
and Women's Empowerment 6.24-25

JOINT STATEMENT OF  
THE G7 GENDER EQUALITY MINISTERS

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NIKKO STATEMENT

# **Joint Statement of the G7 Gender Equality Ministers On Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls**



**June 25 2023, Nikko**

We, the G7 Gender Equality Ministers, gathered in Nikko City, Tochigi Prefecture, in Japan, to reaffirm and reinforce our commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Gender equality is fundamental to human rights and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Achieving the safety and the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity in all spheres of society and their full and equal enjoyment of all human rights contributes to the vitality, cohesion, and democratic stability of society.

The G7 has strived to realize gender equality and to ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity as well as LGBTQIA+ persons in all spheres of society. The G7 has also sought to achieve a society where diversity, human rights, and dignity are respected, promoted, and protected, and all people can enjoy vibrant lives free from all forms of violence and discrimination independent of their intersecting characteristics, such as gender, sex, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

However, as of 2023, no country has achieved full gender equality. Moreover, the challenges in realizing a gender-equal society have become even more difficult because of the recent compounding crises, including war and conflict, climate change and biodiversity loss, a weakening of democratic institutions, increasing global inequality, and the long-term health, economic, and social impacts of COVID-19.

The rights and lives of women and girls are under threat across the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic and other crises have had a disproportionately negative impact on women and girls in all their diversity. In Ukraine, Russia's ongoing and illegal war of aggression led to a surge in conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Human rights violations and abuses against women and girls are on the rise in Iran. In Afghanistan, the Taliban are excluding women and girls from public life. The destruction of medical facilities and reported increase in conflict-related sexual violence in Sudan will have lasting impacts on women and girls. The rights and the safety of LGBTQIA+ persons are under threat in many countries. In addition, technology-facilitated gender-based violence continues to threaten the safety and well-being of many women and girls, and LGBTQIA+ persons. There is a rising tide of backlash against gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls worldwide.

Under these circumstances, the Japanese Presidency has placed gender equality high on its 2023 G7 agenda. Discussions held at the Summit and ministerial meetings have incorporated an intersectional gender perspective to accelerate progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity.

The G7 Ministerial Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment has been positioned as the core of our gender mainstreaming efforts. At the meeting, we, the G7 Gender Equality



Ministers, together with the representatives of the W7 and the GEAC, discussed gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in a cross-sectoral manner. We reaffirmed our commitment to accelerating our efforts toward full gender equality and further empowering all women and girls.

### Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on all spheres of society, and its impact was not gender neutral. It has disproportionately and negatively affected women and girls, and LGBTQIA+ persons, in many areas, and has exacerbated existing gender inequalities. In particular, individuals who have been marginalized because of their intersecting characteristics, such as gender, sex, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression have been seriously affected. As over three years have passed since its onset, it is time to reflect on the pandemic's effects and review the responses and outcomes. To further advance gender equality and empower all women and girls, we must learn from our experiences.

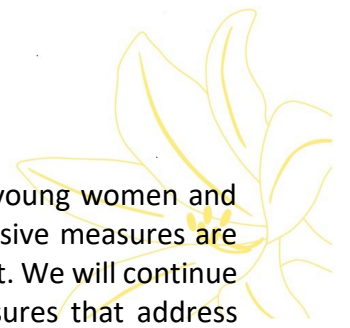
The pandemic significantly impacted women's employment and work. Women in sectors, such as the service sector, and the care and health sectors, were severely affected. Disrupted operation of schools and childcare facilities as well as long term care services resulted in many women, who usually fulfill the primary responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work, exiting the labor market or reducing their working hours to take care of their children or other family members. The pandemic has highlighted the essential role of care work – both paid and unpaid – for the functioning of our societies and economies, but also as a key cause of gender inequalities due to its unequal distribution.

During the pandemic, various types and forms of gender-based violence became increasingly severe. Barriers, including the heightened threat to women's economic security and independence, and restrictions on going out made it more difficult for survivors and victims to report episodes of violence. Moreover, online gender-based violence, as well as hate speech against women and girls in all their diversity, and LGBTQIA+ persons, have exacerbated worldwide. It is important to note this is increasingly intensifying through the proliferation and misuse of new technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Additionally, the pandemic further limited access to quality, safe, and inclusive education and health services, including access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, products, and information, which enables all women and girls to fully, equally, and meaningfully participate in all spheres of life and exercise their rights.

However, the pandemic has also led to development and progress in several fields. For instance, teleworking has become more common. Although efforts should be made to hold back its possible downsides, teleworking has the potential to provide opportunities to save commuting time and expand men's participation in unpaid care and domestic work, and thus realize a work-life balance irrespective of gender. In addition, telehealth, the provision of healthcare service remotely by means of telecommunications technology, has become more common and it has the potential to expand access to healthcare for those with limited access.

Our experiences during the pandemic have made it clear that organizations with diverse workforces, including gender-balance in executive and managerial positions, are more resilient to crises, and that it is an important factor for company's growth. Similarly, we acknowledge the importance of



incorporating the perspectives of people from diverse backgrounds, including young women and women with disabilities, into the policy-making process and public life. Responsive measures are most effective when we adopt an intersectional approach for those affected most. We will continue to strengthen gender-disaggregated data collection to develop targeted measures that address diverse needs of women and girls in all their diversity.

Our society has suffered severely under the pandemic, and our efforts toward a gender-equal society have suffered a serious setback. We have all made enormous sacrifices during the pandemic. Therefore, we should embrace the lessons we have learned and utilize them to fuel greater progress.

## Advancing Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls

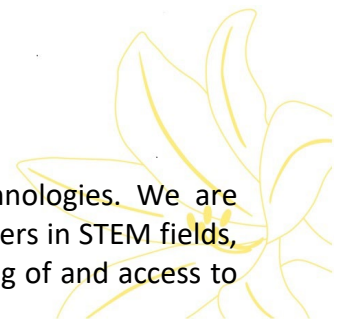
### **Promoting Economic Empowerment**

During the pandemic, difficulties in ensuring women's economic independence as well as the linkage between women's economic security and gender-based violence became acutely evident. Economic security of all women and girls is a prerequisite for the full enjoyment of their rights. In addition, empowering all women economically and closing gender gaps in the world of work are key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Achieving the full, equal, and meaningful participation of all women in the labor market and in the economy is an urgent task everywhere. Inter alia, in countries battling with declining birthrates and a shrinking working age population, the full, equal, and meaningful participation of all women has an especially significant role in sustaining the vitality of society.

However, we must emphasize that there remain many structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, and the factors which keep women's income low are manifold and interwoven. Underrepresentation of women in executive and managerial positions, sectoral or occupational segregation, unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work, and personnel and wage systems that disadvantage women in all their diversity are among them. The long-standing gender pay gap is a composite product of these structural factors and we need a comprehensive approach to close the pay gap.

Women's representation in executive and managerial positions should be expanded and supported. Women's leadership pipelines should be established and improved, and measures to encourage companies to increase women's participation and leadership should be taken. Facilitating flexible working models and the option of part-time work in executive and managerial positions could contribute to increase women's share in these positions. Pay equity and transparency policies can be effective solutions to support equal pay for equal work or work of equal value.

In terms of sectoral and occupational segregation, in addition to giving due recognition and fair treatment to professions in which women are predominant and undervalued, facilitating labor mobility of women to growing sectors and sectors with traditionally higher remuneration is important. To facilitate labor mobility of women, their access to education and opportunities for skilling, including upskilling and reskilling, should be improved. Because of the rapid socioeconomic changes, women need more opportunities to develop or upgrade their skills and abilities, so that they can advance their careers in certain industries or enter growing sectors, such as the digital and climate fields. We should note that, in order for everyone, regardless of their gender, to benefit equally from digital developments, efforts to close the digital gender divide should be made. We should take a gender perspective on digital policies and processes to design, develop, and deploy new technologies, and we should strive to ensure that women are full, equal, and meaningful



participants in governance and decision-making in all aspects of digital technologies. We are committed to encouraging women and girls in all their diversity to consider careers in STEM fields, by removing gender stereotypes and biases and promoting better understanding of and access to STEM careers.

A growing number of women are engaged in entrepreneurship and self-employment. These ways of working can offer a more flexible working environment than more traditional workplaces. The advancement of women's entrepreneurship contributes to innovative solutions to urgent challenges of our times. We reaffirm the G7 Principles on Women's Entrepreneurship to empower all women and girls to take on and succeed at entrepreneurial leadership. To support women in all their diversity to start and grow their own business, their access to knowledge, education, training, networks, and capital should be improved significantly.

Safety and security in work and employment for women in all their diversity are indispensable to ensure an equal access to opportunities. We are committed to promoting measures that prevent and respond to gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace and addressing patriarchal structures which perpetuate discrimination in the workplace.

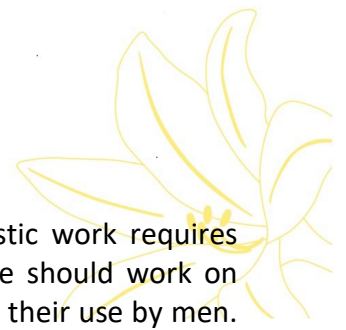
### **Recognizing, Reducing, and Redistributing Unpaid Care and Domestic Work, and Supporting Care Workers**

Unpaid care and domestic work, which are disproportionately performed by women, are major obstacles to the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all their diversity in all spheres of society and negatively impact women's economic empowerment by impairing their ability to work full-time or in leadership positions. Supporting a more gender-equal sharing of work and family or parental responsibilities can contribute to realizing more flexible working hours and closing gender gaps in incomes. Recognition, reduction, and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work are crucial for the economic empowerment of women in all their diversity, and increasing their participation in decision-making processes and, thus, strengthening their economic security and autonomy.

We must acknowledge that recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work, including, but not limited to, childcare and care for older persons or persons with disabilities, is an issue that society as a whole needs to address. We must therefore reinforce public support for families and parenthood by ensuring access to quality and affordable care services, and encourage companies to adopt and improve a working system that ensures employees' work-life balance irrespective of their gender.

It is also necessary to reward care workers fairly, noting that care work is characterized by low pay and difficult working conditions, and the overrepresentation of women. Care workers must also be represented in social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Technology and innovation, particularly those in the digital field, play an important role. The use of technologies may increase labor productivity and reduce workload. Teleworking is an example of such technology. However, we should note that technologies may be used to cause harm and perpetuate gender inequality. We should strive to ensure that rising technologies are beneficial to everyone and do not erode our efforts toward gender equality by paying due attention to their proper use and development, as well as minimizing the risk of gender-based violence facilitated by them.



Additionally, recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work requires commitment from everyone, including men and boys in all their diversity. We should work on improving flexible working time and leave systems, and enabling and promoting their use by men. Besides that, to ensure that men and boys in all their diversity participate more in unpaid care and domestic work, measures to break down gender roles, stereotypes, and biases are needed.

### **Addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence threatens the safety and security of individuals, undermines their dignity, and deprives them of their freedom and right to self-determination. In order to fully and equally enjoy their rights, and pursue their full potential and opportunities, all individuals should be free from fear of violence and be able to live safely and securely. We must not tolerate any form of sexual and gender-based violence.

To eliminate all forms of gender-based violence, we must establish seamless multi-sectoral systems with focus on preventing violence, supporting and protecting survivors and victims, and ensuring access to justice and accountability of perpetrators. Effective cooperation among relevant agencies and entities, based on a trauma-sensitive and survivor/victim-centered approach, is essential. Systems to support survivors and victims on a one-stop basis, including physical and mental healthcare, access to justice systems, and housing support, according to mid- to long-term plans, are urgently required. We also need to develop and enhance the capacities of relevant actors and professionals, including local and community-based organizations, the justice system, and law enforcement agencies, from a gender-responsive and survivor/victim-centered perspective.

Online violence, harassment, disinformation, and misogynist hate speech have intensified over the past few years. Retaliation and repeated victimization of survivors, victims, and actors that support them have been particularly significant and severe. Women and girls in all their diversity in public life, such as journalists, human rights defenders, politicians, and advocates face a heightened risk of experiencing technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), which is gender-based violence facilitated by the use of information and communication technology (ICT) or other digital tools, such as artificial intelligence. Adolescents and young people also face a higher risk of experiencing technology-facilitated gender-based violence, due to their higher usage of these technologies. To address online gender-based violence, measures such as establishing an effective process of reporting and removing contents violating the law, and holding perpetrators, including platform companies when appropriate, accountable must be considered. We also need to pay attention to and take measures to address loneliness and social isolation of women and girls in all their diversity.

We reiterate our concerns about coordinated backlash against gender equality and roll back of the rights of women and girls in all their diversity as well as LGBTQIA+ persons and express our commitment to fighting them by addressing and eliminating stereotypes and biases and positively changing attitudes and behaviors of society that sustain gender-based violence.

### **Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**

We recognize the essential and transformative role of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and bodily autonomy, and in supporting diversity, including of sexual orientation and gender identity. We reaffirm our full commitment to achieving comprehensive SRHR for all, including by addressing access to safe and legal abortion and post abortion care. We stress our commitment to reducing



maternal and child deaths, and eliminating harmful practices.

### **Increasing Women's Representation in Decision-Making**

Women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in decision-making at all levels is a matter of human rights and it also benefits everyone by contributing to better economic, social, and political outcomes. To build a fairer, more inclusive and resilient society, the participation and leadership of all women in all spheres of society should be increased.

Safety is a prerequisite for women's full, equal, and meaningful participation. Growing attacks on women and LGBTQIA+ activists, politicians, and human rights defenders, feminist and women's rights actors and organizations negatively affect democratic processes and undermine the legitimacy of institutions.

We reiterate our shared and steadfast commitment to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and its contributions to achieving peace, security, and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). We recognize that when women are safe and able to fully, equally, and meaningfully participate in all spheres of life, we are all safer and more secure, and enjoy a better life. Despite contributions of women and women's organizations to preventing and resolving security challenges, countering violent extremism and terrorism, and building resilient communities, they are consistently underrepresented in decision-making institutions and processes aimed at preventing conflict and building peace and security. Women are agents of change. Increasing women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in decision-making roles at all levels can increase the legitimacy of a government and its ability to effectively manage conflict and natural disasters, and result in resilient democracies. We will continue to promote the full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership of women in all their diversity in crisis management, conflict prevention and resolution, and peacebuilding.

### **Changing Society's Mindset**

Gender stereotypes and biases, and discriminatory and harmful social systems and customs mutually reinforce and reproduce each other. We must work to change societal norms and to eliminate discriminatory social practices to facilitate the safety and the full, equal, and meaningful participation of all women and girls. Challenging harmful stereotypes and biases that perpetuate gender inequalities demands that everyone irrespective of their gender be involved in advancing gender equality, and addressing and preventing gender-based violence. We will strive toward engaging all men and boys as allies, agents of change, and co-beneficiaries. These efforts include promoting healthy attitudes and behaviors, and encouraging all men and boys to free themselves from harmful gender stereotypes and biases, such as toxic masculinity, to challenge and change norms, attitudes, and behaviors that perpetuate gender inequality, and to understand and take action against gender-based violence.

### **Promoting the G7's Commitment to Gender Equality**

Gender equality cannot be achieved through government initiatives alone. To advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, our strong political commitment should be coupled with a solid and constructive cooperation with all stakeholders, such as civil society, academia, the private and public sectors, and effective implementation mechanisms. The G7 has made significant progress in this regard.

Meetings of G7 gender ministers have been held since 2017, providing a forum for discussing gender



equality in a cross-sectoral manner. The G7 gender ministers' meetings offer a platform to reaffirm the G7's commitment to and understanding of gender equality, and provide precious opportunities to form mutual understanding for its implementation.

The Women7 (W7), which held its first Summit in 2018, has brought the voices of women and girls in all their diversity from around the world to the G7. We welcome this year's W7's recommendations toward an equal, just, and peaceful future. Additionally, the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC), which was established in 2018, has significantly contributed by supporting leaders and ministers in ensuring that gender equality and gender-based analysis are integrated into all deliverables of the G7 process utilizing its members' outstanding expertise. We also welcome the GEAC's insightful work toward an inclusive, peaceful, and just society this year.

Furthermore, a framework for accounting for the progress of the G7's commitment is being developed. The G7 Dashboard on Gender Gaps was first released in 2022 and updated in 2023 in cooperation with the OECD. The Dashboard contributes to understanding the current status and progress of the G7's commitment to achieving gender equality, and is also a medium for mutual co-learning. We will redouble our efforts to publish the first Implementation Report this year, which aims to describe the progress of past G7 commitments, and anticipate it will provide another robust monitoring and accountability tool.

We will continue to improve and utilize these mechanisms through enhancing data collection disaggregated by gender and other intersecting characteristics, which is necessary to develop targeted measures and tailor support diverse needs of women and girls in all their diversity, and we will further develop our cooperation with relevant stakeholders and our civil society partners to advance our efforts.

### Way forward

We, the G7 Gender Equality Ministers, express our strong concern about the roll back of rights of women and girls in time of crisis and we strongly condemn all violations and abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms for women and girls around the world. We denounce the use of sexual violence in conflict situations and underscore that such acts may constitute crimes against humanity or war crime. We condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest terms and urge Russia to immediately withdraw from the territory of Ukraine. We stand with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, in particular, women and girls in all their diversity. We call for a gender-responsive recovery planning in Ukraine in close cooperation with Ukrainian authorities.

We commit to strive to achieve full gender equality, and further empower women and girls in all their diversity, taking into account their intersecting characteristics, such as gender, sex, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. We continue our efforts toward realizing a society where the human rights and dignity of all women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ persons, are fully respected, promoted, and protected. We are committed to fighting the backlash against gender equality.