

WHAT WE WANT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN 2019

01 THE PROMISE

In 2015, world leaders agreed to the Sustainable Development Goals, with a deadline to achieve them by 2030. Regional agendas, such as the African Union's Agenda 2063, support and contextualize these goals. Through SDG 5, world leaders pledged to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." SDG 5 calls on countries to address a broad range of obstacles facing women and girls, including gender-based violence, unpaid care and domestic work, the gender digital divide, and barriers to participation in politics and the economy. Given the cross-cutting nature of gender equality, the vast majority of other SDGs are also closely linked to the health, education, economic empowerment, and overall well-being of women and girls. Four years into the sustainable development agenda, it's time to account for progress made on the SDGs, with a specific emphasis on ensuring no woman or girl is left behind.

02 THE PROBLEM

"Leave no one behind" is the ethical imperative of the global development agenda. Common sense – backed up by a growing, rigorous evidence base – dictates that global economic growth, peace, stability and security are impossible if we leave half the world's population behind. We won't be able to achieve gender equality if we proceed with business as usual. By and large, the systems and structures that surround us – from health systems to school curricula to workplaces and laws of all kinds -- have not been designed in a way that considers women and girls' specific needs and constraints. That means they are often not set up to address – and may in fact exacerbate – the gender-specific barriers facing women and girls. As a result, increased barriers face girls who seek to complete secondary education and enter the workforce. Additional barriers face women when they make efforts to advance within the workforce, access capital to start or grow a business, or seek a position of political leadership.

According to the World Economic Forum, at the current rate of change, it's going to take over a century (108 years) to achieve gender equality, and even longer in the world's poorest countries (135 years in sub-Saharan Africa).¹ Improvements have been made with regard to women's health, but in Africa, young women are twice as likely as young men to be living with HIV, and 776 young women ages 15-24 are infected with HIV each day. More girls worldwide are now in school, especially at the primary level, but there is still significant work to be done to narrow gender gaps at the secondary level and to ensure that all children are learning while in school.

Improvements in women's labor force participation and leadership have been slower. Over the last two decades, the gap between male and female employment rates has closed by only 0.6 percent,² and there is a persistent 9 percentage point gender gap in access to financial services.³ Very few countries have achieved gender parity in parliamentary representation; women's share of parliamentary seats rose to 23 percent in 2018, representing an increase of 4 percentage points since 2010.⁴ Globally, 2.7 billion women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men.⁵

A lack of progress on gender equality will threaten progress on the whole SDG agenda. Women and girls are at the heart of all the global goals, including the goals on poverty, hunger, health, education and inclusive growth.

03 THE PATH FORWARD

To ensure **NO women and girls are left behind, in 2019**, ONE calls on the G7 and other countries participating in the Biarritz summit to **agree to a gender equality financial commitments package**, which will help fill the financial gap needed to reach specific 2025 interim SDG targets for the world's most marginalised women and girls, with a specific focus on those living in Africa. The package should focus on basic social services such as health and education as well access to financial services and economic prospects to tackle the root causes of extreme poverty and to increase opportunity.

The package should comprise increases in donor countries' official development assistance (ODA) and developing countries' domestic resource mobilisation and could be implemented through different channels, such as intensified bilateral or multilateral commitments targeted to the poorest countries and people, for instance through the Global Partnership for Education, the successful replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in October 2019, the successful replenishment of the International Development Association and African Development Fund and increased domestic resources targeted at gender equality from African countries.

But increased financing on its own won't be sufficient. ONE therefore calls on governments, as well as the private sector, to **implement a set of evidence-based laws and best practices that will improve the lives of girls and women**. These laws and policies should be informed by the work that the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council will carry out this year.

To ensure that commitments by countries and the private sector are implemented and impactful, they need to be **monitored through an independent and institutionalised accountability mechanism** gathering different stakeholders. The mechanism would follow up on progress and results over time and ensure that the Biarritz summit leads to lasting change. It would bring together a wide range of actors (state and non-state, including private sector actors and CSOs) to foster the implementation of the most impactful gender equality-related laws and private sector practices.

This proposed mechanism could be modelled on the innovative example of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and would oversee commitment making and reporting and provide technical assistance in drafting quality national action plans by each country and private sector actor, in cooperation with civil society.⁶ Its creation is crucial for the fight against gender inequalities, as there is no comparable mechanism actively encouraging (and monitoring) time-bound and concrete commitments on gender equality policy and standards changes today.

Donor and developing countries alike will be critical partners in delivering necessary financial resources and policy change. Donor countries will be encouraged to allocate at least 85% of aid to gender equality, of which

20% should promote gender equality as its primary purpose.⁷ Similarly, developing country governments should adopt gender-responsive budgeting practices, ensuring that domestic resources are spent to equally benefit women and girls and narrow gender gaps.⁸ (This could include, for example, the implementation of the Agenda 2063 commitment to allocate at least 30% of agricultural financing to women). Improvements in the quality of financing should be coupled with additional policy change.

04 SUMMARY

In sum, in 2019, we call on world leaders to:

- Agree to a gender equality financial commitments package, ensuring the world is on track to meet critical SDG targets focused on women and girls' health, education, economic empowerment, and well-being;
- Create a global, independent accountability mechanism, modeled on the [Open Government Partnership](#), which tracks legislative and policy change commitments by both governments and private sector actors to promote gender equality;
- Ensure that every participating country in the G7 summit in Biarritz commits to implement at least 2 progressive laws or policies on gender equality by 2022, informed by the recommendations of the Gender Advisory Council, and develops action plans for implementation under the new OGP-style partnership.
- Allocate at least 85% of overseas development assistance to gender equality, of which 20% should promote gender equality as its primary purpose. Concurrently, developing country governments should adopt gender-responsive budgeting practices.

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1. World Economic Forum (2018). "Global Gender Gap Report." <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018>.
 2. International Labour Organisation. 2016. "Large gender gaps remain across broad spectrum of global labour market." Available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_457267/lang--en/index.htm.
 3. Global Findex (2017). <https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/>.
 4. "Progress of Goal 5," Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>.
 5. Women, Business and the Law (2018). "Key Findings." <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/999211524236982958/WBL-Key-Findings-Web-FI-NAL-2.pdf>.
 6. Other accountability mechanisms, including the African Peer Review Mechanism, should be examined to inform the proposed gender equality partnership.
 7. The OECD DAC tracks the amount of ODA donors allocate to gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender marker 1 indicates the amount of aid allocated to projects and programs that 'significantly' promote gender equality, and gender marker 2 indicates those that 'principally' do so. Donors should ensure that their totals under gender markers 1 and 2 add up to at least 85% of their ODA, and gender marker 2 alone should total at least 20%.
 8. Two African countries that have gender budgeting efforts underway are Rwanda and Uganda. Their approach [has been reviewed by the IMF](#) and can be drawn upon by other countries seeking to ensure that their expenditures better narrow gender gaps and benefit women and girls. In Rwanda, for example, government agencies are required to submit 'Gender Budget Statements' to the Ministry of Finance and Parliament.