

May 21, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of the 38 organizations committed to advancing gender equality at home and abroad, we applaud your administration's decision to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement and to have Vice President Kamala Harris deliver the U.S.'s remarks at the 65th Commission on the Status of Women. Additionally, we welcome your Executive Order formally establishing the White House Gender Policy Council and its mandate to develop the Government-Wide Strategy to Advance Gender Equity and Equality. Coupled with the Presidential Memorandum on Protecting Women's Health at Home and Abroad and the Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Persons Around the World, these actions begin to restore the U.S. as an authoritative voice on human rights and gender equality.

In light of your administration's stated commitment to U.S. leadership and partnership on gender equality and human rights on the global stage, we are writing to urge *you* to personally attend and participate in the Generation Equality Forum taking place in Paris between June 30 - July 2.

The Generation Equality Forum, a partnership between UN Women, the governments of Mexico and France, feminist and youth movements and advocates from every sector of society, are intended to take place outside of the formal intergovernmental process in order to allow bold thinking and ambition - they are a space only for champions of gender equality. As such, they provide an opportunity for the United States to demonstrate its renewed commitment to human rights and make commitments towards the goals of the six Generation Equality Action Coalitions: gender-based violence, economic justice and rights, bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights, feminist action for climate justice, technology and innovation for gender equality, and feminist movements and leadership.

We urge the United States to make strong, cross-cutting, and specific commitments in both domestic and foreign policy, to catalyze progress on all 6 of the Action Coalition themes.

Bold commitments that build upon the U.S.'s legacy of leadership in human rights and health and contribute to the Generation Equality Forum's commitment to propel global gender equality include:

- **As a cross-cutting commitment, commit to elevate and integrate gender equality into all levels of U.S. policy--already begun through your Executive Order to adopt a National**

**Gender Strategy--and announce the world's next feminist foreign policy**, following in the footsteps of Generation Equality Forum hosts, France and Mexico, and a growing number of countries.

- As part of this, and in line with the recommendation for climate financing below, **commit 20% of all foreign policy funding to advancing gender equality as a principal goal and 100% to be subject to gender analysis**, in line with Executive Order 14020. Ensure the policies, programs and funding authorized in this order advance gender, racial and environmental justice at home and abroad, in line with the principles of an intersectional, feminist foreign policy.<sup>1</sup>
- **Increase by 50% the amount of funding going directly to feminist, women's and LGBTQI organizations and movements** domestically and globally.
- On the diplomatic front, **join the Group of Friends for Gender Equality** to champion these issues with like-minded governments at the United Nations, and take leadership in promoting and exemplifying accountability to commitments.
- **Commit to climate- and gender-just action and leadership**, building on the January 27th Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad:
  - **Catalyze and scale the collection and use of comprehensive and intersectional gender and sex-disaggregated data and analysis through support to a newly established Gender Environment Data Alliance**. This can, for example, build on work led in partnership by USAID and IUCN under the Advancing Gender in the Environment (AGENT) programme, filling critical gaps in data and information at the gender and environment nexus. It can also tailor information and tools for cross-sector cooperation, for example building knowledge and capacities on gender-based violence and climate change linkages.
  - **Commit to 100% gender-responsive climate finance**. Ensure 100% of climate financing, both ODA and domestic, is gender-responsive, with at least 20% of funding having gender equality as its principle objective, including direct access to funding for feminist, grassroots and indigenous women's groups in the United States and in climate vulnerable countries. This includes scaling up the existing funds.
  - **Commit to a gender-just transition**, supporting leadership and capacity-building of women, girls, trans, intersex, and gender non-conforming people to lead in a sustainable and green economic system, reframing care work as essential infrastructure to a climate compatible economy and ensuring equitable access to opportunities in the clean energy sector.
- **Make concrete commitments to all other action coalitions, for example, by committing to:**
  - **On bodily autonomy and SRHR**: End restrictions on funding for abortion internationally and domestically, specifically by permanently ending the Global Gag Rule and repealing the Helms and Hyde Amendments, and increasing funding for global family planning and reproductive health programs to \$1.74 Billion and \$116 million for UNFPA, and increase support for comprehensive sexuality education at home and abroad.
  - **On Gender-based violence**: Create and mainstream a Gender-based Violence national working plan, with an intersectional approach, addressing data collection, research and

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FFP-USA\\_v11-spreads.pdf](https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FFP-USA_v11-spreads.pdf) for details.

budgetary allocations for combating gender-based violence and for organizations working to combat gender-based violence through an increased and clear budget from the 2009-2017 GBV Action Plan.

- **On technology and innovation:** By 2026, increase investments to autonomous feminist and Global South-led technology and innovation by 50% to support the leadership of women, girls', trans, intersex and gender non-conforming people and better respond to the needs of those most marginalized; demonstrate transparency and accountability of the private sector, governments, and multilaterals that use technology under the guise of health and safety to surveil, curtail, criminalize and fragment civil society and gender justice movements by implementing policies and solutions that protect and uphold democratic and pluralistic processes; reduce by half the gender digital divide across generations by accelerating meaningful access to digital technologies and universal digital literacy; and double the proportion of feminist women, girls', trans, intersex and gender non-conforming people working in technology and innovation by setting up new networks and benchmarks to transform innovation ecosystems and guard against online and tech-facilitated GBV and discrimination.
- **On economic justice and rights:** Increase investments in the care economy; Ensure intersectional gender analysis in all COVID-19 response and recovery plans; and ensure women's job security and enact protections to prevent exploitation.

We hope our organizations may serve as civil society partners to you, the White House Gender Policy Council, the U.S. Mission to the UN, and respective U.S. agencies. We look forward to seeing you at the Generation Equality Forum next month and partnering with you to advance global gender equality. Thank you for your service in this vital role.

Sincerely,

Global Fund for Women  
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)  
International Women's Health Coalition  
OutRight Action International  
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)  
Advocates for Youth  
American Jewish World Service  
Baobab Consulting  
Catholics for Choice  
CHANGE (Center for Health and Gender Equity)  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues  
Council for Global Equality  
Friends of UNFPA  
Fundators Concerned about AIDS  
Global Justice Center  
International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights (Race and Equality)

International Planned Parenthood Federation Western Hemisphere Region

International Women's Anthropology Conference (IWAC)

Ipas

Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network - LACWHN

Minnesota NOW

Montana Chapter of the National Organization for Women

MPact: Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights

MSI United States

National Birth Equity Collaborative

PAI

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Population Institute

Promundo-US

The Global Justice Institute

UN Program, Occidental College

Unchained At Last

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights

Women Deliver

Women Enabled International

Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) International

Women's Refugee Commission

Woodhull Freedom Foundation

CC:

Kamala Harris, Vice President of the United States

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. Ambassador the United Nations

Jennifer Klein, Co-Chair, White House Gender Policy Council

Julissa Reynoso Pantaleón, Co-Chair, White House Gender Policy Council

Samantha Power, Administrator of USAID, US Agency for International Development

Erica Barks-Ruggles, Senior Bureau Official, Bureau of International Organizations, Department of State

Katrina Fotovat, Senior Official for Global Women's Issues, Department of State

Scott Busby, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Department of State