WORLD NEEDS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND EXPERIENCE

2024 GEAC RECOMMENDATIONS

- JUNE 2024 -

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We currently live in a world shaped by uncertainty and threats disproportionately affecting women and girls. This unprecedented polycrisis needs the contribution of women. Promoting equal opportunities between women and men is a cross-cutting and multidimensional effort. In 2024, the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) will continue to advocate for the promotion of gender mainstreaming across all policy areas, and in particular gender-responsive budgeting into all domains of government spending in order to create a more inclusive society, address women's needs, and recognize their skills, value, and talents. Specifically, G7 GEAC 2024 will build on the work of previous GEAC while emphasizing new elements, focusing on four specific issues: Conflict, Care, Generation Z, and Education.

The current economic, social and political situation has been impacting Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) drastically, and increasing the pre-existing gender inequalities in various areas.
The number of women and girls living in conflict-affected countries reached 614 million in 2022, 50% higher than the number in 2017[1]. Women are among the most vulnerable population in armed conflicts, facing increasing violence, including sexual assault and rape used as war weapons. Yet, they also have the potential to drive significant change. It is a fact that war is a male-dominated territory; women's voices are disproportionately under-represented at negotiating tables, in decision-making processes, and during the peace settlement and reconstruction phases.

Care, on the other hand, remains a predominantly female responsibility: women take on a disproportionate amount of unpaid care and domestic work. Indeed, globally women spend 2.8 more hours than men on unpaid care and domestic work. On the current trajectory, the gap between the time spent by women and men on unpaid care will narrow slightly, but by 2050, women globally will still be spending 9.5% more time or 2.3 more hours per day on unpaid care work than men[2]. In a rapidly evolving society, with an aging population and a growing need for assistance, the burden of care is increasing, and care is a more and more necessary and valuable asset. Recognizing and valuing care work means investing in a more just and supportive society, where every individual can receive the attention and support they need. The unequal distribution of responsibilities limits women's opportunities to access and advance in the labor market. It often leads them to make difficult choices between careers and personal life, including motherhood choices.

Digital technologies have advanced more rapidly than any innovation in our history. Within this framework, social media often exerts significant pressure on young generations, affecting their mental wellbeing. Young women and girls are increasingly subject to premature sexualization online and frequently compare themselves to

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[1] Women, peace and security – 2023 Report by the UN Secretary General, https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2023/10/women-are-increasingly-at-risk-in-conflict-underrepresented-in-peace-processes-according-to-un-secretary-general-report#:~:text=More%20than%20600%20million%20women,USD%202.2%20trillion%20in%202022

[2] "Forecasting time spent in unpaid care and domestic work", UNWomen 2023, https://data.unwomen.org/publications/forecasting-time-spent-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work#:~:text=Globally%20women%20spend%202.8%20more,unpaid%20care%20work%20than%20men

unrealistic and unattainable physical models perpetuating and reinforcing gender stereotypes. According to UNESCO Global education monitoring report 2024, 32% of teenage girls already feeling bad about their bodies, feel worse after visualizing contents on social media. In addition, the social media's algorithms can target teenagers with body image and mental health content every few seconds. Greater interaction on social media at the age of 10 is associated with worsening socioemotional difficulties with growing age among girls, while no cross- associations were found among boys[3].

Education, especially in STEM, remains the most influential tool for empowering women and girls. Gender equality in and through education can decrease the likelihood of conflicts, boost economic prosperity, and improve resilience to climate disasters. However, in many parts of the world, girls still have insufficient access to education due to poverty, cultural norms, stereotypes, lack of infrastructure, and ongoing violence and conflicts. The situation is particularly acute in Afghanistan and across Africa, and girls are still the furthest behind when considering the correlation between equal opportunities and poverty. Africa is also facing a serious deficit in qualified teachers. The continent will need 17 million additional teachers in order to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030[4].

More than ever before, the world needs women's voice at the table. In line with its mandate and with a view to supporting the G7 Leaders and Ministers responsible for gender equality, the G7 GEAC 2024 intends to propose the following list of recommendations on the above priority areas and will continue to work throughout the year to elaborate a comprehensive report to the Presidency based on these recommendations.

The G7 GEAC 2024 also recalls that equality between women and men will not be achieved without the eradication of all forms of violence against women and girls. Addressing and eradicating violence against women and girls in all its forms is indeed a fundamental prerequisite for their empowerment. Therefore, besides the proposed priority areas, the G7 GEAC 2024 calls upon the G7 Governments to implement solid comprehensive and multifaceted strategies involving legal, social, educational, and economic measures to eradicate gender- based violence.

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[3] "Global education monitoring report 2024, gender report: technology on her terms" – UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389406

[4] "Transforming education in Africa - evidence-based overview and recommendations for long-term improvements", A Report by UNICEF and the African Union Commission. https://www.unicef.org/media/106691/file

RECOMMENDATIONS

The G7 GEAC 2024 calls upon the G7 Leaders, Ministers responsible for gender equality and all other relevant Ministers to:

Conflicts

- Identify and eliminate all obstacles to the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda at the national level, by adopting concrete positive actions and setting measurable targets to increase women's participation and decision-making in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding processes, and in the rebuilding of post-conflict societies, thus ensuring that women's voices are central and influence key decisions.

- Recognize, support and integrate the contributions of women-led community organizations into broader peacebuilding frameworks, as they continue to be excluded from the official peace processes. Further strengthen engagement and dialogue with relevant grassroots women's organizations and networks of women's mediators and peacebuilders, especially in conflict prevention and resolution efforts.

- Support the strengthening of feminist diplomacy as an innovative strategy in international relations, which promotes equality between women and men as a key guiding principle, in particular in all financial decisions (gender budgeting and equal conditionality) and ensures sustainable participation of women in decision-making in diplomacy, while advocating for a broader integration of a feminist and gender-balanced perspective into the foreign and development cooperation policy of the G7 countries.

- Ensure better protection of victims of conflicts and strengthen legal frameworks to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions, including gender apartheid, while taking into account that women bear the most severe consequences of conflicts such as famine, poor health conditions and forced migration.

- Take strong commitments to adequately prosecute perpetrators of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict situations since women and girls are the most exposed to sexual violence and rapes used as war weapon and protect those who are fleeing conflict zones to prevent human traffickers from exploiting already vulnerable women and children.

- Invest in strategies to increase women's participation in the cybersecurity sector, intelligence and secret services with the aim of reinforcing national security and defense also through women's talents.

- Recognize that climate change can exacerbate resource scarcity and displacement, which may lead to conflicts, and develop comprehensive strategies that address these root causes by promoting sustainable resource management, peacebuilding efforts, and conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on empowering women as agents of peace.

Care

• Recognize care as one of the greatest challenges of our time, as we face an ageing population with 2.3 billion people globally needing care as of 2030[5].

• Assess and include the economic value of women's unpaid care work in national macroeconomic calculations, given that if women's unpaid work were assigned a monetary value, it would exceed up to 40 per cent of GDP in some countries[6], while recognizing that care work is essential for the wellbeing of individuals and the functioning of the society and economy and should therefore be appropriately valued.

• Promote employment in the care sector as a positive career option for both women and men, in a sector that could create almost 300 million jobs by 2035[7].

• Scale up actions to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's disproportionate share of care work by facilitating the equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men and implementing effective work-life balance measures thereby increasingly opening opportunities for women to enter the workforce, while strengthening public care infrastructure and services to ensure accessible, affordable, and quality care for children, older people, persons with disabilities and other dependents, also with a view to concretely supporting parenthood.

• Develop policies to encourage and value the inclusion of unpaid care work in professional curricula while acknowledging that care work requires soft skills such as emotional intelligence, interpersonal qualities, teamwork, creativity, stress tolerance, flexibility, and fast problem-solving capability. In this regard, recognize the skills of carers through a certification process and reflect periods spent on care responsibilities in pension schemes.

• Establish and finance national and international observatories to monitor and regularly update data and projections on the need for care work.

• Explore new and innovative care models starting from women's experience of care, which makes them leaders in this innovation process.

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[5] "Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work" – ILO, https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/care-work-and-care-jobs-future-decent-work

[6] "Measuring unpaid domestic and care work" – ILOSTAT, https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/unpaid-work/measuring-unpaid-domestic-and-care-work/

[7] "Care at work Investing in care leave and services for a more gender equal world of work" – ILO, https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/care-work-investing-care-leave-and-services-more-gender-equal-world-work

GEN Z

• Establish and finance observatories on young people's mental health, and strengthen local services for younger generations.

• Ensure the effective implementation of international and national legislation regulating children's access to social media, and strengthen age verification methods.

• While recognizing the benefits of the Internet and the digital technologies for young people's information, education, and leisure, increase investments in the identification, mitigation and eradication of potential threats for them, including sexist and stereotyped content and all forms of online violence, and establish or improve measures to eliminate children's access to online pornography from an early age, access that harms relations between future women and men.

• Invest in affective and sexual education programs for younger generations dedicated to fight against sexism, with a specific focus on mutual respect between women and men and sexual and reproductive rights.

• Promote policies for younger generations in Africa, especially for young women and girls, bearing in mind that 60 percent of today's African population is made up of young people under the age of 25[8] and that by 2050, one-third of all young people in the world between the ages of 15 and 24 will be African[9].

Education

• Ensure access to quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all women and girls and, while respecting their ambitions and vocations, support girls in diversifying their educational choices including in emerging fields and growing economic sectors, such as STEM and jobs of the future, and promote digital literacy already in primary education with the ultimate goal to close the gender gap in the tech sector.

• Acknowledge the urgency of conceiving and developing an inclusive AI founded on gender-balanced AI teams and data.

• Integrate humanistic studies into the AI development and control. Indeed, the humanities, encompassing fields such as ethics, philosophy, history, and cultural studies, provide essential insights that can stimulate a critical approach by eliminating gender biases and guide the responsible and equitable advancement of AI technologies.

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[8] "How Africa's youth will drive global growth" – WEF, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/08/africa-youth-global-growth-digital-economy/

[9] "World Population Prospects 2019" – UN DESA, https://population.un.org/wpp2019/Publications/Files/WPP2019_Highlights.pdf

• Adopt concrete policies to address the multiple barriers young women and girls face in accessing and completing education, especially in vulnerable situations and in conflict areas.

• Prioritize education as a key strategy to break the cycle of physical and sexual violence, which can foster a culture of respect, equality, non-sexist and non-violence, effectively addressing the root causes and preventing the occurrence of such violence.

• Ensure that, in the political agenda, education is always considered as an investment and not just as an expense. Recognizing that education is vital to foster long-term economic growth, social stability, innovation, productivity, and enhanced global competitiveness, increase financing for education, including specific international cooperation programs targeting women's and girls' educational needs in line with current and future needs of the global economy.

• Fulfill the G7 agreed pledge to a fully funded Education for all and implement accountability mechanisms.