



# Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

## G7 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PAPER

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Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a top priority for the G7 during Canada's Presidency. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are critical to building peace, reducing poverty, growing our economies, and achieving sustainability.

As a global community, we have made significant progress in many areas. Girls' access to education has improved, more women are participating in the workforce, and respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights is expanding. However, we can and must do more. The realization of true gender equality and women's empowerment remains a critical challenge for countries worldwide.

The power dynamics of gender are still present in the home, in the workplace, in politics, in government, in commerce, and in our everyday relationships. The statistics speak for themselves. As of 2016, women around the world made an average of 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. Women occupied just 4% of CEO and board chair positions. Less than a quarter of all national parliamentarians are women. One in three women worldwide are estimated to have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes – often at the hands of intimate partners or family members.

Empowering women and advancing gender equality, through the removal of systemic barriers and increasing access to capital, can have very positive impacts. Women already generate nearly 40% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), and the potential for further growth led by women is left untapped. Achieving gender equality around the world could increase global GDP by \$12 trillion in a single decade. The socioeconomic benefits of gender equality cannot be ignored.

Eliminating inequality requires the transformation of social norms and power relations. Not only that, but we must re-examine and challenge our existing social, political, legal, and economic structures. In order to do this, we must change attitudes and behaviors, recognizing that the gender stereotypes and subtle sexism we encounter every day are part of the problem. These stereotypes, norms, and practices too often determine what opportunities and resources women, men, and gender-diverse people have access to, limiting their participation in communal decision-making.

Gender ideologies, social norms, and stereotypes also impact the lives of men and boys in profound ways, often limiting them in their societal and familial roles. Men and boys have an important role to play in challenging

the institutions, traditions, and customs that support and maintain gender inequalities. It is important for men and boys be engaged in the fight for greater gender equality -- they must be given opportunities to advocate in solidarity with women and girls, while being encouraged to model healthy forms of masculinity themselves.

We all have a role to play in challenging the sexism and discrimination that allows gender inequality to exist. All people, regardless of their identity or status should feel safe, secure, and empowered. When making decisions that significantly affect peoples' lives, governments must understand the extent to which their policy choices will produce different outcomes for different groups of people. Incorporating gender-based analysis when creating and implementing public policy is a fundamental step in the right direction. This analysis should include a recognition of the intersecting identity factors (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, age, income, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, culture, religion, geography, income, education etc.), which together produce unique and further oppressive forms of inequality. Gender-based analysis allows for a meaningful and transparent discussion on gender equality, while helping Governments make informed decisions on behalf of all their citizens.

## Advancing gender equality through the G7

By adopting the G7 Roadmap for a Gender-Responsive Economic Environment in 2017, G7 Leaders committed to advancing gender equality under three main pillars: 1) Increasing women's participation and leadership at all levels of decision-making; 2) Increasing women's access to good quality jobs; and 3) Eliminating violence against women and girls. In addition, Leaders reinforced the importance of declared outcomes from previous G7 Presidencies -- in particular the Elmau and Ise-Shima Leaders' Declarations. Leaders also noted relevant international frameworks, including: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the outcome documents of its review conferences; the global call to action of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment; and finally, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

