

GENDER EQUALITY: tackling inequality and promoting women's rights, with a focus on participation and employment, including in SMEs, and women's financial inclusion.

Introduction:

Working constructively with the G20 to promote gender equality, with a particular focus on women's labour force participation and access to social protection was identified as a key civil society goal for 2015, following an online consultation run by the C20 in early 2015. As a result, the C20 Gender Equality Working Group was formed, making 2015 the first year in which gender equality will be addressed as a standalone issue by the C20.

This working group will now undertake a policy consultation process involving national and international civil society organisations in order to develop policy recommendations to the G20 on women's economic participation and social protection. The working group will take the G20's existing commitments on gender equality as a framework, and will seek to propose concrete policy suggestions for the achievement of gender equality, as well as indicators to be used for monitoring the G20's commitments in this area.

This background paper is designed to be a starting point for the C20 Gender Equality Working Group's discussions. It includes an overview of the G20's commitments on gender equality as well as background information on civil society's prior work on this theme.

Background:

Globally, gender inequality continues to be one of the most persistent and pervasive forms of inequality, with an at times stark divide between women and men when it comes to access to basic social services, economic opportunities and political participation, and the enjoyment of social and cultural space.

According to a recent report by the World Bank, globally women's unemployment rate remains higher than men's, with women's labour force participation at around 57% worldwide. Men are twice as likely to earn a full time wage, and women, when they are employed, earn 10-30% less than men.¹ Women work more often in less productive and profitable jobs, often work in worse conditions and are more likely to do informal work. Across sectors, women suffer from unequal access to resources, are less likely to have employees and hold roles at management levels.² The gender gap for economic participation and opportunity in general stands at 60% worldwide.³

The G20 and Gender Equality

Although the G20 countries collectively constitute 85% of global gross domestic product and 75% of global trade, across **G20 countries and beyond, women are paid less than men, do most of the unpaid labour, are over-represented in part-time work, and are discriminated against in the household, in markets and in institutions**⁴. Over the last few years, the G20 has become the premier platform for global economic and financial issues, which makes it the inevitable platform where making economies work equally for men and women should be discussed.

While the G20 recognises that improving gender equality helps to reduce poverty and stimulates growth, since the G20 Leaders Summit initiation in November 2008 in Washington DC, the attention paid to this issue has been inconsistent and sporadic. **The Los Cabos Leaders' Declaration in 2012**

¹ International Labour Organisation, Global Wage Report 2008–09: Minimum Wages and Collective Bargaining, Towards Policy Coherence. Geneva, 2008

² World Bank, *Gender at Work, 2014*

³ World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report, 2014*

⁴ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/g20-and-gender-equality>

saw just two commitments on issues relating to gender equality, out of a total of 180. The first was to remove barriers preventing women from full economic and social participation, and recognized the need for the full financial inclusion of women in order to advance gender equality. In the **Development Working Group's progress report of the same year**, issues relating to gender equality appeared three times, twice in relation to food security and once related to financial inclusion. Finally, in the **G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Conclusions** women were mentioned in reference to youth unemployment.⁵

The Leaders' Declaration at **St. Petersburg in 2013** included a commitment to tackling the barriers to women's entry to the labour force and job retention. The same declaration endorsed the OECD and International Network for Financial Education's (INFE) policy guidance on addressing women and girls' needs for financial education. One of the most important commitments made in 2013 was to launch a Women's Finance Hub together with the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Finally, in the **Brisbane Leaders' Declaration in 2014**, G20 leaders agreed to the goal of reducing the gap in labour force participation rates between women and men by 25% by 2025 in all G20 countries, which, it is estimated, would **bring a total of 126 million women into labour force**. Turkey has pledged to continue to develop and monitor the implementation of this commitment during its presidency of the G20 in 2015.

"We agree to the goal of reducing the gap in participation rates between men and women in our countries by 25 per cent by 2025, taking into account national circumstances, to bring more than 100 million women into the labour force, significantly increase global growth and reduce poverty and inequality."

- G20 Leaders' Communique, Brisbane 15-16 November 2014

G20 Engagement Groups and Gender Equality

The officially recognised G20 engagement groups – The C20, B20, T20 and L20 – have addressed gender equality issues in their own work to varying degrees over the last few years. They have collaborated on this issue intermittently, and there is a stated intention to increase this collaboration amongst some of these groups.

Since its recognition as an official G20 engagement group in 2013, the **C20 (Civil 20)** has included gender equality concerns in all of its communiqués. In 2013, the C20 called for the financial inclusion of women, and as well as an increase in women's employment. In 2014 it called for the inclusion of gender equality rights in all G20 documents, commitments and

Further resources for the C20 Gender Equality Working Group

Leaders' Communiqués

The leaders' communiqués can be accessed from the G20 website and a host of other sites. You can also access them all from the [Resources section of the C20's website](#).

Inclusive Growth and Development

At the 2014 Brisbane Summit, G20 Leaders agreed to boost economic growth globally by an extra 2% by 2018. This goal is to be incorporated into national growth strategies through means appropriate to national circumstances. The [G20 Members' Comprehensive Growth Strategies from November 2014](#) are available here. [A paper prepared by the OECD, World Bank Group, ILO](#)

⁵ <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/analysis/121129-kulik-women.html>

conclusions. The C20 also called for G20 country action plans to include a specific focus on, and targeted actions to address, gender equality.

There are two important reports by civil society organisations on the G20 and Gender, a recent research paper from Heinrich Böell and PERI on the [G20, gender equality and global economic governance](#), and another paper by Oxfam and Heinrich Böell on the [G20 and gender equality](#).

The **B20 (Business 20)** did not include any specific mention of gender equality in its 2014 Brisbane communiqué, but it did call for women's financial inclusion in 2013, and for expanded market access for women smallholder farmers in the 2012 Los Cabos communiqué.

In 2012, the **L20 (Labour 20)** declaration mentioned gender equality within the framework of a gender sensitive green economy, as well as cautioning leaders on the rise of unemployment amongst young women. While the L20 did not include any provision on gender equality in 2013, the Brisbane Declaration laid out a comprehensive list of policy options and recommendation to G20 leaders. These recommendations ranged from increasing women's employment to closing the gender pay gap; and from addressing the unpaid care economy to reducing informality. It also included a specific recommendation for the establishment of **new mechanisms to assess the gender impact of the G20 policies**.

Finally, while the **T20 (Think 20)** has not traditionally published a list of policy recommendations to the G20 in the same way as other engagement groups, in 2014 its policy papers recommended that G20 leaders consult with women's rights groups when formulating the Mutual Assessment Process (MAP), as well as inviting the G20 to pay special attention to women's smallholder farmers.

[and IMF](#), provides a snapshot of national circumstances and recommendations to achieve this goal.

Employment

Employment Ministers meet regularly to develop, and monitor the implementation of employment strategies in areas including workforce participation, wages and sectoral issues. The [G20 Members' Country Employment Plans, November 2014](#) can be accessed here. The [G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration, Melbourne, 10-11 September 2014, including G20 Statement on Safer and Healthier Workplaces](#) can be accessed here.

Development

The G20 Development Working Group (DWG) manages the development-focussed policy work, including work on food security, infrastructure, domestic resource mobilisation, support for the UN SDG process and financial inclusion and remittances. Measures towards achieving equality for women are therefore also addressed by the DWG.

For further background, refer to the [St Petersburg Accountability Report on G20 Development Commitments, 2013](#) This report documents development commitments and progress towards achieving them prior to 2014. The 2014 progress is in the [Annual G20 Development Working Group Progress Report](#).

G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI) www.gpfi.org

This group is responsible for progressing the implementation of G20 commitments on financial inclusion, including those on women's financial inclusion.

Plans in this area are outlined in the G20's agreed [Financial Inclusion Action Plan](#) that includes women's economic empowerment as a priority cross-cutting theme. [A paper by the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion \(GPFI\), the body responsible for implementing this work](#), focuses on implementing the agreed plan with a commitment to women's economic empowerment. It lists SMEs and LIDCs as other priorities for work on financial inclusion this

| | |
|---|-------|
| | year. |
| <p><u>The C20 Gender Equality Working Group Work in 2015:</u></p> | |
| <p>The C20's aim is to contribute constructively to the G20's policy making processes by providing specific, concrete and evidence-based policy recommendations for the promotion of inclusive and sustainable growth, which reduce gender inequality as well as social, economic and political inequalities.</p> | |
| <p>As detailed above, concerns around gender equality have appeared on the G20 agenda and have been addressed, albeit erratically, by the officially recognised engagement groups since 2012. Even though its treatment of gender equality has been sporadic to date, the G20 has nevertheless made some important commitments to address the challenge of gender inequality, as outlined above. Similarly, the G20 engagement groups have also made a number of sound recommendations for achieving gender equality.</p> | |
| <p>In 2015, the C20 Gender Equality Working Group could play an important role in proposing a comprehensive way forward for the implementation of the G20's commitments, building on the recommendations of the official engagement groups to date. To this end, it is recommended that the C20 Gender Equality working group considers the following proposed next steps:</p> | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyse the progress made by the G20 on its gender equality commitments since 2012; 2. Compare this progress with the gender equality recommendations made by C20, L20, T20 and B20 since 2012; 3. Build policy options and recommendations based on the findings of this comparison. | |
| <p>In addition, and if funding and time allow, the C20 Gender Equality Working Group might also consider producing an analysis of the gender impact of some major G20 policies, including the impact that these policies might have on the gender equality goals set by the G20 itself. Policy recommendations could then be based on this analysis.</p> | |
| <p><u>Other Policy Platforms for Consideration:</u></p> | |
| <p>The 2015 G20 Leaders' Summit comes only 6 weeks after world leaders are expected to adopt a new development framework built upon Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This framework is set to provide a broader set of goals to guide global efforts for sustainable development after the Millennium Development Goals come to an end in 2015. It is widely expected that the SDGs will include a standalone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the landmark agreement on gender equality and women's rights - the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The anniversary has provided a good opportunity to assess global progress in gender equality and to identify remaining challenges.</p> | |
| <p>Thus, it is recommended that the C20 Gender Equality Working Group takes into consideration the gender equality concerns that are proposed within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goal Framework, identifies any overlaps between G20 commitments and the propositions made for the SDGs, and ensures consistency between civil society recommendations made to both platforms.</p> | |
| <p>Get involved.</p> | |
| <p>To find out more about the C20 Gender Equality Working Group, please see the Gender Equality page on the C20's website: http://bit.ly/1IQE8Pz</p> | |