

25 Years of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995-2020): Commemorating 2020 as the Year of Women

As it enters its 5th anniversary during the Saudi Arabian presidency of the G20, [Women 20](#) (W20), an official G20 engagement group, sits on a robust foundation. This year is momentous for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, marking the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the most progressive blueprint for advancing women's and girls' rights globally. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has put the world at a crossroad in achieving the goals and targets set in this policy framework, as well as in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The gains made in the past decades are at risk of being rolled back, as pandemics exacerbate pre-existing gender inequalities for women and girls and expose vulnerabilities in the social, political and economic systems.

Unless urgent action is taken, women stand to bear the brunt and be disproportionately negatively impacted.

At a time of growing economic inequality and political instability, our ambition is that no woman is left behind. We, the W20 2020, call on G20 leaders to commemorate 2020 as the Year of Women in recognition of their role in battling the COVID-19 pandemic, as "agents of peace and in the prevention and resolution of conflict"¹, as well as their broader role as agents of economic recovery.

The W20 calls on G20 Leaders to recognize, affirm and realize women's human rights by acting on the following:

- Adopt universally accepted women's rights standards as outlined in the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- Repeal discriminatory laws and ensure that all women are able to realize their human rights and exercise all aspects of social, economic and political participation and empowerment;
- Protect civic space for women's leadership, organizing and defense of their human rights in line with international law and human rights standards.

Although gender inequalities have always been pervasive, the Covid-19 pandemic has intensified the effects in numerous dimensions by aggregating and exaggerating social and economic injustices, and we risk reversing any progress made. Viruses do not discriminate, but systems and societies do. Our fight against coronavirus must be systematic on all fronts and not limited to rebooting healthcare systems only. This year, we reflect on the Beijing Platform of Action with its global commitments towards comprehensive gender equality and women's rights. Sustaining the achievements over the past 25 years and accelerating further progress is more important than ever to rebuild our systems in the long-term, for a more gender-equitable future.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 laid out a visionary blueprint for action to realize gender equality and the human rights of women and girls, everywhere. Yet 25 years later gender equality is not yet a reality. Committing to delivering on the promise of women's equality cannot wait – if not now, when?

¹ <https://g20.org/en/g20/Documents/2019-Japan-G20%20Osaka%20Leaders%20Declaration.pdf>

