

Open Letter from the Civil Society Advisory Group

To:

Governments of Mexico and France

UN Women

Action Coalition Leaders, Board and Catalytic Members of WPS-Humanitarian Action Compact and Commitment-Makers

The Generation Equality Forum in Paris is almost upon us.

This is a moment with extraordinary potential.

Potential to raise the bar and to accelerate progress toward the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Potential to strengthen feminist movements.

Potential to forge new, strategic alliances between civil society and grassroots organizations, governments, the private sector, international organizations, and other actors committed to gender equality and women's rights.

Potential to address and dismantle power imbalances, to amplify the voices of those most impacted by global inequalities and least heard in international spaces and to ensure that these voices play a meaningful and central role in decision-making and agenda-setting processes.

This is a moment for celebration. But it is also a moment to challenge, to question, to advance new ideas and approaches.

This is a moment to dream big. But not just to dream. This is a moment to put in place the means and the mechanisms to see these dreams become reality.

We want to make it clear: women's rights and feminist movements are coming to Paris with big expectations.

We expect everyone involved in the GEF process to make intersectionality a core principle of our collective work. The processes, actions and outcomes for the Action Coalitions and Compact must be grounded in the understanding that different forms and systems of inequalities are experienced in different ways by different women, girls and gender-diverse people and that these experiences are rooted in systems and structures of power. To be transformative we must go beyond just diversifying and apply a feminist intersectional lens to every aspect of our work, organizational and institutional structures, and the process ahead of us: from the determination, analysis, data, design and execution of our actions and commitments to the accountability processes that will underpin our success. We

expect to centre the women, girls and gender-diverse people who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and ensure that their voices are not just heard, but acted upon.

From the host governments of Mexico and France, we expect:

Leadership by example. The host governments need to set the tone and set the bar for government commitment to the GEF process and actions. This means coming to the table with substantial and bold commitments for national and international policies, practices and funding. This includes benchmarks and clear actions plans for meeting existing obligations, as well as new and substantial investments in gender equality.

Domestic and global action. The GEF is grounded in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), and governments - especially host governments - must be committed to doing their part to accelerate the realization of the BPfA in their own countries and be champions of transformative action on women's rights and gender equality everywhere. We also expect to see commitments to implement new international agreements building on the BPfA such as the ILO Conventions on domestic work and ending violence and harassment (C189 and C190), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG5), and the Women Peace and Security Agenda (UNSCR1325), as well as the CEDAW Convention, and to see them commit to forge new ground to advance gender equality in other multilateral spaces.

Momentum-building efforts. Host governments must engage world leaders and press their peers to up the ante with new, bold and transformative commitments, both in the leadup to the Paris Forum and in any reports to the General Assembly.

From UN Women, we expect:

Bold leadership and sustained partnership with the women's rights, feminist and youth-led movements, through the five year mandate of the GEF and beyond.

Advocacy for strong, robust and well-resourced gender equality architecture within the UN system to ensure sustained efforts to implement the GEF commitments.

Visionary leadership. The next Executive Director of UN Women must go to someone who has a proven track record as a feminist, leader and advocate for gender equality and the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity. With strong, visionary leadership and policy experience, she must also bring demonstrated experience working with diverse grass-roots women and youth, and a passion to bring the organization and its constituents to the promise of its mandate.

From the leaders of Action Coalitions & WPS-Humanitarian Action Compact, especially governments who put their names forward as champions, we expect:

Bold and transformative commitments. Governments, private sector and international organizations and funders must **step up** their fiscal, program and policy commitments by introducing substantial new funding to women’s rights organizations and feminist movements, ensuring policy coherence and accountability frameworks, and they must **ramp up** the scale and the pace of any initiatives already underway.

Meaningful partnerships. Address and level power imbalances between different stakeholders in the Action Coalitions and Compact. Commit to open and transparent decision-making and agenda-setting, ensuring the voices and leadership of civil society, youth and grassroots feminist movements and women and girls in all their diversity are at the core of the Action Coalitions. Resource and sustain multistakeholder processes at national and regional levels and meaningfully engage civil society, youth and grassroots feminist movements to support cooperation and partnerships from the local, national, regional, inter-regional to the international levels.

Leadership by example. The GEF process is not simply about enabling others to take action, it’s about advancing progress on women’s rights, gender equality, and intersectional justice everywhere. Donor governments must make commitments for transformative change domestically while also ramping up their efforts globally. Private sector companies should demonstrate commitments to gender-equal workforces and gender-transformative workplace policies, including throughout supply chains. Private philanthropies should commit to improve the quality of its funding to women’s rights, feminist and youth-led organizations and movements. Leading by example also includes an active and substantial participation in the transformation journey and process beginning after the Paris Forum. This will help **build momentum** by setting a high bar for other commitment-makers and bring new governments, civil society organizations and other partners into the movement.

From ourselves and our colleagues in civil society and feminist movements everywhere, we expect:

A substantial and sustained commitment to continue to drive the GEF process, the commitments and the actions forward, and doing whatever we can to make this a success. This includes reaching out, sharing information, ideas and positive practice, and holding ourselves, our partners and decision-makers accountable for the commitments they have made.

A recognition of our own accountability and responsibility to examine our organizations and ways of working, to dismantle power imbalances among and between our movements, to decolonize and work to ensure racial justice and intersectional and intergenerational practice, and to make our movements accessible to those left behind, making space for new leaders, new voices and a renewed spirit of collaboration and solidarity.

The Generation Equality Forum was conceived as a game-changer for gender equality and a race to the top. Game-changing results require game-changing commitments from every stakeholder involved, as well as clear and transparent mechanisms for

accountability and monitoring throughout the five year mandate of the Action Coalitions, taking into account the differentiated responsibilities among the different stakeholders.

Yes, our expectations are high. Women, girls and gender-diverse people around the world, now and the generations to come, deserve no less.

In Solidarity,
Generation Equality Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG)

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