



RELEASE OF THE 2012 COMMUNIQUE OF THE G(IRLS)20 SUMMIT

We, the delegates of the 2012 G(irls)20 Summit, come together in Mexico in the weeks ahead of the G20 meeting to discuss and debate topics of global economic importance – agriculture/food security and violence against women – and to make recommendations to the G20 leaders on the issues that impair a woman’s ability to be economically productive.

We know that educational opportunity is inextricably linked to economic potential; delegates of previous G(irls)20 Summits have made important recommendations in this regard. Still, there are numerous other factors at play. Equal access to productive resources, land and credit are all key factors in turning opportunity lost into opportunity gained as it relates to a woman’s ability to be economically productive. In addition, as women represent a majority of purchasing power, it is necessary to global growth that women play a key role in decision making at every level.

As identified in the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report 2011, “Countries and companies will thrive if women are educated and engaged as fundamental pillars of the economy.” Further, research shows an unmistakable correlation between gender equality and a country’s GDP and level of competitiveness.

The evidence is clear: empowering women and reducing gender disparities enhances a nation’s productivity and economic growth. While many countries are making progress, no country in the world is fully utilizing the innovation that is brought forward by women. In fact, in some nations, the gap is widening.

Recognizing the important role that governments play in shaping the right policy framework for improving women’s economic participation, G20 leaders would be limiting the potential for economic growth and development by not considering the following recommendations:

On the subject of agriculture/food security

We assert that strategically engaging women in agriculture is an economic imperative. Food security is a high-stakes issue globally. While women comprise nearly half of the agricultural

labour force, their potential remains unleveraged. It has been shown that secure land rights can increase agricultural production by 60 per cent and income by 150 per cent. The World Bank has stated that “the income and resources that women control wield disproportionately strong effects on health and nutrition outcomes.” Countries where women lack land ownership have, on average, sixty per cent more malnourished children.

We call upon G20 leaders to undertake the following agricultural interventions:

1. Support programs that increase the self-sufficiency and productivity of women smallholder farmers through training on sustainable techniques and access to productive tools.
2. Pass a binding international treaty to increase independent land ownership by women by making it possible for a woman to hold title to land as well as making a wife the first successor in the inheritance of land assets, and that this treaty support community-level dialogue on its economic benefits.
3. Introduce water sources in strategic locations to reduce the burden on girls and women so that they can access education and opportunities.
4. Introduce agriculture and nutrition-focused education curriculum in early school years, scholarships, and other mechanisms to encourage agriculture as a potential career path for youth.
5. Provide women and girls engaged in smallholder farming with locally-relevant practical training opportunities to maximize their yield in order to realize their earning potential.
6. Using a Public-Private-Community Partnership (PPCP) model, create an international committee on Women in Agriculture, with ties to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Membership should reflect national, state and local economic development needs and include a wide variety of skill sets including, scientific, educational, developmental, private sector and others.
7. Reorient subsidy programs to reduce reliance on subsidies moving away from income reliance toward direct developmental funds that increase access to credit, property insurance and other programs such as cooperatives and loan guarantees to support sustainable agriculture production by women.
8. Employ a gender-sensitive lens in the planning of policies, regulations and support of technology related to food security measures.

On the subject of violence against women

The economic opportunity lost as a result of gender based violence cannot be ignored. Worldwide, an estimated one in three women will be physically or sexually abused in her lifetime. The issue is pervasive, and the impacts of abuse on a woman’s employment status, productivity and income are staggering. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that domestic violence costs \$4.1 billion annually in direct medical services alone. Globally, lost earnings due to violence against women cost the equivalent of 2.43 per cent of GDP annually.

The high tendency of gender-based violence to go unreported means these figures only scratch the surface of its true economic impact.

We know that gender-based violence affects men, women, communities and countries and significantly impedes productivity, which is directly linked to economic and development growth. Evidence has also shown that education-based interventions around gender-based violence empower girls, boys, women and men to think, act and respond in productive and positive ways.

We call upon G20 leaders to:

1. Encourage women to take jobs in largely male-dominated sectors or industries, thereby boosting economic productivity, by legislating employment practices, policies and systems whereby women are protected against workplace violence or harassment.
2. Incentivize employers to take steps to address the need for gender-specific infrastructure, such as separate sanitary facilities, that meets the needs of women in the workforce, and their role in the safeguarding of women.
3. Ensure that mechanisms are in place to keep both women and men safe, including confidential reporting systems and serious consequences for offenders.
4. Adapt and promote a character-based education on the issues of gender equality, violence prevention, violence mitigation and its consequences in national curricula for young boys and girls to help overcome stereotypes embedded in traditions and cultures that may influence gender-based violence.
5. Improve access to safe spaces and resources for adolescent girls to share their experiences with gender-based violence in order to empower them and others to maximize their productive potential.
6. Implement policy reforms that create, and encourage public broadcasters to deliver, national media campaigns and messages that advocate for an end to violence against women and that create awareness of its devastating social and economic consequences.
7. Set standards to hold media accountable for the negative, hyper-sexualized, violent images of women that contribute to the promotion of violence against women.

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