

BRIEFING ROOM

Fact Sheet: United States to Announce Commitments to the Generation Equality Forum

JUNE 30, 2021 • STATEMENTS AND RELEASES

Today, the United States joined global partners – including governments, civil society, and the private sector – in making commitments to the Generation Equality Forum, reasserting U.S. leadership on gender equity and equality on the world stage.

The Generation Equality Forum (GEF), convened by UN Women and co-hosted by the governments of France and Mexico, marks the anniversary of the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing over 25 years ago, where the world recognized that "women's rights are human rights" and adopted an ambitious Platform for Action to achieve equality and opportunity for women around the world. While tremendous progress has been made since the Beijing Conference, serious gaps remain, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Generation Equality Forum offers an opportunity to make bold, measurable commitments to build back better and accelerate progress towards the Beijing Platform and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The U.S. commitments reflect the Biden-Harris Administration's domestic and global priorities, including policy and resource commitments to:

- Prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based violence;
- Strengthen women's economic security; and
- Protect and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Our participation in the Generation Equality Forum is an important part of broader U.S. efforts to advance gender equity and equality, including in areas beyond the scope of commitments announced today, such as climate, science and technology, leadership and democracy, and education. This includes efforts underway to support the [Build Back Better World Partnership](#) to meet the tremendous infrastructure needs of low- and middle-income countries, particularly across the areas of gender equity and equality, climate, health and health security, and information and communications technology. Finally, as part of Generation Equality, we

have also signed on to the Compact on Women, Peace, and Security and Humanitarian Action and will continue our robust implementation of the U.S. Women, Peace, and Security Act, which strengthens our efforts to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflict by improving the participation of women in peace and security processes.

Our Generation Equality Forum commitments include:

Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence is a significant pillar of the Biden-Harris Administration's work on gender equity and equality. The "shadow pandemic" of alarming increases in rates of gender-based violence in the U.S. and globally underscore the urgency of our collective efforts.

Domestic efforts to combat gender-based violence

- Create the first U.S. National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence, led by the White House Gender Policy Council, to be launched in 2022. This plan will establish a whole-of-government approach to preventing and addressing gender-based violence (GBV) domestically and globally, with significant input from civil society.
- Provide \$450 million in supplementary funding through the President's American Rescue Plan to prevent and respond to domestic violence and sexual assault. This includes \$200 million for domestic violence services and support; \$198 million for sexual assault services programs; and \$49.5 million for a new program to fund culturally specific community-based organizations to improve access to services and safety for survivors in historically marginalized communities, with a primary focus on racial and ethnic minority communities.
- Reauthorize and strengthen the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which passed the U.S. House of Representatives this spring with bipartisan support and is pending in the U.S. Senate. First passed in 1994 with then-Senator Biden as its champion, the VAWA is a landmark piece of bipartisan legislation that has transformed the nation's response to gender-based violence, bringing critically needed resources to States, Territories, Tribes, and local communities to help prevent and improve the response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

- Request, as part of the FY 2022 President’s Budget, an historic investment of \$1 billion to support VAWA programs coordinated through the U.S. Department of Justice—a 95% increase over FY 2021 enacted levels. Also request \$463.5 million to be administered through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including \$250 million to provide cash assistance to survivors of domestic violence to support their short and long-term transition to safety and stability.
- Improve prevention and response to sexual assault and harassment in the U.S. military, including by establishing an Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Military Sexual Assault, which conducted a thorough review and recently made significant recommendations on accountability, prevention, climate and culture, and victim support to the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the President.
- Strengthen the U.S. National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons to integrate the administration’s commitments to gender and racial equity.
- Propose “safe leave” as part of the [American Families Plan](#), a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program that would permit workers eligible to receive paid leave for reasons pertaining to sexual assault, stalking, dating or domestic violence.

International efforts to combat gender-based violence

- Update and strengthen the 2016 U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, in coordination with the development of the first-ever U.S. National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.
- Request, as part of the FY 2022 President’s Budget, \$175 million to prevent and respond to gender-based violence globally, as part of a \$1.2 billion request for gender programming abroad.
- Host the Fourth Trilateral Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls with the Governments of Mexico and Canada. The Biden-Harris Administration will relaunch this regional collaboration, which presents an opportunity to continue to improve and reaffirm our respective national and regional commitments to exchanging information about policies, programs and promising practices to prevent and respond to

violence against Indigenous women and girls through increased access to justice and services, with a human rights and culturally-responsive approach.

- Double the annual investment by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief in DREAMS—Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored, Safe Partnership—which supports programs focused on economic strengthening, gender-based violence prevention, post-GBV care, and sexual and reproductive health services in Haiti and 14 African countries. The U.S. government will seek to continue this increased level of support during FY2022, pending Congressional notification and approval.
- Announce U.S. commitments to the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies 2021-2025 Road Map. The U.S. will strengthen its leadership role in addressing GBV within the humanitarian system to ensure this issue is prioritized and resourced from the outset of emergencies. Through the joint State/USAID Safe from the Start initiative, the U.S. will implement Call to Action commitments that seek to strengthen the quality of GBV programming, support improved GBV risk mitigation efforts, and improve resource tracking and accountability for GBV programming as part of humanitarian assistance.
- Co-sponsor a resolution on “Ending violence against children through health systems strengthening and multisectoral approaches” during the 2021 World Health Assembly, which was passed by consensus. This resolution prioritizes WHO Member State actions on child protection, to prevent and address early, child, and forced marriage, child trafficking, exploitation and abuse of children and other actions that threaten the emotional, mental, and physical health of children.

Advance Women’s Economic Security and Promote Economic Justice

The Biden Administration has taken critical steps to strengthen women’s economic security through the [American Rescue Plan](#) and has proposed once-in-a-generation investments as part of the American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan. The Administration is also committed to advancing women’s economic opportunity and security around the world.

Domestic efforts to strengthen women’s economic security

- Provide immediate relief for women and families through the American Rescue Plan (ARP), helping hard-hit households recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19

pandemic. The ARP expands the Child Tax Credit, allowing more families to benefit, increasing the size of the benefit, and distributing benefits monthly. And it includes a historic investment of more than \$40 billion in child care and early learning. States, tribes, and territories can use these investments to help child care providers—who are disproportionately women of color—avoid potential closure and ensure that they can operate safely and increase pay and benefits for care workers, who are also disproportionately women of color. These funds can also be used to help parents better afford high-quality child care.

- Propose, as part of the American Jobs Plan, a major investment in care infrastructure, including a \$400 billion investment in expanding access to home- or community-based care, expanding access to long-term care services under Medicaid, and additional investments to modernize schools and child care facilities.
- Strengthen the workforce pipeline for all, including more women and communities of color, to access in-demand jobs through the [American Jobs Plan](#), including by investing in apprenticeships and other workforce development programs like Women in Apprenticeship in Non-Traditional Occupations. This commitment includes ensuring jobs with fair and equal pay, safe and healthy workplaces, and workplaces free from racial, gender, and other forms of discrimination and harassment.
- Propose, through the American Families Plan (AFP), a \$1 trillion commitment to working families, helping cover basic expenses that families need and care most about: making child care and higher education more affordable, lowering the cost of health care over the long term, and continuing to reduce child poverty and put money in parents' pockets by extending the historic expansion of the Child Tax Credit in the American Rescue Plan. This investment in working families also includes establishing a comprehensive national paid family and medical leave program.
- Work with Congress to pass key legislation for women's employment in addition to the American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan, including the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives this spring with bipartisan support.

International efforts to strengthen women's economic security

- Mobilize at least \$12 billion—an average \$2.4 billion per year, from January 2021 through December 2025—as part of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation's new

2X commitment to invest in businesses that advance gender equity in emerging markets. These funds will support 15 million women and girls, including from marginalized communities and fragile and post-conflict settings.

- Announce that the Development Finance Corporation will establish 2X Technical Assistance Pilot Program to help private sector clients advance gender equity in their businesses, such as by increasing the number of women in leadership or developing products or services designed specifically to meet the differentiated needs of their women clients.
- Establish the Gender Equity and Equality Action (GEEA) Fund—with \$100 million in FY 2021 and a request of \$200 million in the FY 2022 President’s Budget—to advance economic security for women and girls globally, prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and support underserved and marginalized populations. In addition, the GEEA Fund will help address the disproportionate impact that COVID-19, climate change, and conflict and crisis have on women and girls.
- Promote women’s entrepreneurship around the world, including through grants to grassroots and community-led organizations through the Inter-American Foundation and grants to gender-inclusive digital services for women-owned businesses through the U.S.-African Development Foundation.
- Commit \$33 million in FY 2020 funds to advance gender equity and equality in the Northern Triangle by increasing women’s economic access, agency, and power while reducing gender-based violence in the community, workplace, and household. In addition, commit \$2.2 million in FY 2020 funding to small grants for 15 local organizations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that advance women’s economic participation through the Inter-American Foundation.

Protect and Expand Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

The Biden Administration is committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the U.S. and around the world. Everyone should have access to quality, affordable health care regardless of their income or where they live.

Domestic efforts to protect and expand sexual and reproductive health and rights

- Remove, as part of the President's first budget, the Hyde Amendment restriction from government spending bills, reflecting the President's support for expanding access to health care, including reproductive health care, through Medicaid and other federally-funded programs.
- Review rules for Title X of the Public Health Services Act, which provides Federal funding for family planning services that primarily benefit low-income patients, to ensure access to family planning and other preventive health care. The Department of Health and Human Services published a notice of proposed rulemaking related to the Title X program entitled "Ensuring access to equitable, affordable, client-centered, quality family planning services." This proposed rule revises the 2019 rules by readopting the 2000 regulations, with several modifications needed to strengthen the program and ensure access to equitable, affordable, client-centered, quality family planning services for all clients, especially for low-income clients.
- Direct \$50 million in supplemental funding to the Title X Family Planning Program through the American Rescue Plan, in addition to a proposed \$340 million to the Title X Program in the President's discretionary budget request.
- Expand Medicaid postpartum coverage from 60 days to 12 months, ensuring that more new mothers can retain health coverage and stay healthy.
- Propose, as part of the President's FY 2022 discretionary budget request, \$200 million to reduce maternal mortality rates and end race-based disparities, and as part of the American Families Plan, a \$3 billion investment to further address the maternal health crisis in the United States, which has a particularly significant impact on Black and Indigenous women, by growing and diversifying the perinatal workforce, improving data collection to better understand the causes of maternal death and complications from birth, and investing in community-based organizations.

International efforts to protect and expand sexual and reproductive health and rights

- Issued a Presidential Memorandum on January 28, 2021 to protect and expand access to comprehensive reproductive health services and care, which rescinded the harmful Mexico City Policy, among other actions.

- Propose, as part of the President's FY 2022 budget request, resuming funding for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), including \$56 million in the FY 2022 President's Budget, a 72% increase over the FY 2021 enacted level. Funding for UNFPA would directly support the provision of sexual and reproductive health services in fragile contexts, where access to such services is limited.
- Support the World Health Organization's (WHO) strengthening of internal operations, including efforts to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse within their workforce and the broader health sector, and to bolster WHO's capacity to deliver critical services and technical guidance, including in emergency contexts.
- Assess the current status of HRP (the UN Development Programme/UN Population Fund/UN Children's Fund/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction) and how U.S. expertise can align to support its work. The HRP is the primary instrument within the United Nations system for research in human reproduction, and U.S. engagement will help advance critical research, including building research capacity of lower income countries.
- Commit publicly with like-minded countries to a series of progressive meetings on continuing and expanding essential sexual and reproductive health service delivery on the margins of WHA and WHO regional committees, the UN General Assembly, World Economic Forum, and World Bank fall meetings, among others.
- Commit to supporting women in the global health workforce and affirm U.S. support of the Gender Equal Healthcare Workforce Initiative and its pillars, which aims to minimize and address inequities and inequalities female health workers face globally. This includes harassment and violence, pay inequities, and lack of opportunities for professional training and advancement.

###