

The UK set to lose its global leadership status on gender equality at this weeks' G7 Summit

Friday, 11 June 2021 – Charities warn that the UK is set to lose its long standing global leadership role on gender equality if it fails to include the recommendations put forward today by its own Gender Equality Advisory Council.

Jessica Woodroffe, Director of the Gender and Development Network says *“there is a very real danger that Sunday 13th June, the conclusion of the G7 Summit, will mark the day that the UK relinquished its long-held reputation as a leader on gender equality on the international stage.*

Hannah Bond, Director of Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) added, *“that women and girls around the world face disadvantage and discrimination as a result of their gender has been recognised at G7 Summits for years over many years. As the world continues to combat the Covid-19 pandemic and its ongoing disastrous impacts on women and girls, there is an urgent need for the UK to demonstrate global leadership in this area by putting tangible and resourced commitments on the table.*

The Gender Equality Advisory Council – the Prime Ministers' own advisory group – today released a list of 14 recommendations on ways the G7 leaders should promote gender equality. To demonstrate genuine commitment to women and girls, charities want to see the Leaders' Communique include calls to:

- Acknowledge the double blow to women and girls of cuts in government budgets and aid flows during the pandemic, and confirm commitment 0.7%.
- Increase public investment in care services, recognising that Covid-19 has further increased the paid and unpaid care work done mostly by women around the world.
- Invest in programmes to prevent and respond to the violence against women and girls which has so dramatically increased during the pandemic, and ratify the Istanbul Convention (which the UK has yet to do).

Critically, the charities are also accusing the Prime Minister of double standards in cutting the UK aid budget while hosting the G7.

Daphne Jayasinghe, Chief Policy Advisor at International Rescue Committee - Europe says, *“Slashing proven aid programmes supporting women and girls, then highlighting the importance of girls' education while in the international spotlight, is nothing more than double standards.*

Seismic cuts are being made to lifesaving services that the women and girls fleeing conflict or displaced by climate change overwhelmingly rely on to survive and recover from crises. We have already seen the devastating impact of the cuts to programmes in Syria, Sierra Leone and

Lebanon, as hundreds of thousands of women and girls are left without access to health care, legal protection and economic support.

This is happening at a crucial time, as Covid-19 threatens to roll back much of the progress made on gender equality around the world”.

Notes

1. Gender equality has already been on the G7 agenda for the last seven years. Agreement on [‘the need to show unprecedented resolve to promote gender equality’](#) was included in 2014. It was then addressed in Angela Merkel’s [2015 Communiqué](#) and in the [2016 Declaration](#) in Japan. Specific declarations were made at the [2017 Summit](#) in Italy and the [2019 Summit](#) in France while the Canadian [2018 Leaders’ declaration](#) made gender equality one of its five priorities.
2. The charities are all part of the [W7](#), the formal engagement group of the G7 representing gender equality, which is chaired by [GADN](#) and [GAPS](#) and has released a [communiqué](#) reinforcing many of the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) recommendations which can be accessed [here](#). Jessica Woodroffe, Co-Chair of the W7, is also a member of GEAC.
3. A briefing produced by the charities analyses the impact of the government’s recent cuts in aid on women and girls and programmes to promote gender equality.