

OECD Forum on Gender Equality

Navigating global transitions

Paris, 10-11 June 2024



Co-Chairs' Summary

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The Co-Chairs of the Forum are from France, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States

We, the Co-Chairs of the **inaugural OECD Forum on Gender Equality** (Forum) led the meeting held in Paris on 10-11 June 2024 under the theme “Navigating Global Transitions”.

The Forum was convened by the OECD Working Party on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (GMG), in consultation with a wide range of OECD bodies¹. The Forum brought together a diverse group of stakeholders including Ministers, high-level representatives from the public and private sectors, civil society, and academia from across all OECD Member countries and beyond. Participants spanned a broad array of fields, including environment, energy, digital, statistical and social policies, development cooperation, finance, transport, infrastructure, and numerous others. The engagement of civil society at the Forum highlighted the necessity of inclusive governance models that integrate the insights and expertise of diverse stakeholders. By fostering dialogue and cooperation among public, private, and civil society sectors, the Forum demonstrated how collective efforts can drive substantial and sustainable progress towards gender equality, highlighting the importance of multilateral frameworks in which international action on gender equality is pursued. This multi-stakeholder approach is also crucial for achieving the objectives outlined in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The exchange was enriched by the OECD's large body of empirical evidence and comparative data.

We, the Co-Chairs, welcomed the discussions and the urgent calls for action to adopt inclusive and transformative policies to promote just, equitable and inclusive global transitions in sectors such as digital, energy, and environmental sustainability. This includes applying effective gender mainstreaming strategies across policies through an intersectional approach. It also includes promoting gender equality in leadership positions and strengthening global, multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration. These efforts aim to unite diverse forces and foster innovative solutions to dismantle entrenched gender-related barriers and harmful social norms and to leverage the opportunities to advance gender equality presented by the green, energy and digital transitions.²

¹ Including, for example, Digital Policy Committee (DPC); Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy (CSTP); Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and its DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET); Development Centre Governing Board (DEV); Economic and Development Review Committee (EDRC); Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC); Environment Policy Committee (EPOC); Public Governance Committee (PGC); Committee of Senior Budget Officials (SBO), etc.

² Also welcoming the progress made in furthering the actions set out in the “**OECD's contribution to Gender Equality**” approved by the OECD Council and welcomed by Ministers at the 2023 Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial level (MCM) including to support the implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations.

Recognising the concerning trends documented in recent OECD reports³, the participants underlined the timeliness of the Forum, particularly in light of harmful reversals to gender equality and the increasing polarisation of views among young people in several countries. In this context, the Forum aims to serve as a platform to reaffirm the participants' collective commitment to achieving full gender equality, including through intersectional approaches and the inclusion of LGBTQI+ communities. The discussions focused on addressing the significant risk of deepening inequalities and intensifying harmful gender norms amidst global shifts in the energy, green, and digital domains. At the same time, they stressed the importance of seizing the opportunities to advance gender equality and bolster societal resilience presented by these major global transitions.

In particular, the participants stressed that:

- **Climate change and environmental factors do not affect everyone equally.** Climate change and environmental factors have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, especially in developing countries, due to structural inequalities in access to and control over land and natural resources. Despite accounting for 43% of the world's agricultural labour force, less than 15% of landowners are women. In fact, women farmers have fewer rights to inherit, access, and use land and other productive resources and these inequalities exacerbate the challenges of securing necessities such as food, water, and fuel. Women make up 80% of the population displaced by climate change and extreme weather events, increasing the risk of being victims of gender-based violence (GBV).
- Moreover, climate change and other environmental crises can negatively impact income and livelihoods, contributing to higher school drop-out rates for girls, an increase in child, early and forced marriage and to the exacerbation of women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work. Despite these differentiated impacts, gender considerations remain largely overlooked in climate, environment, and disaster risk reduction and management strategies, with limited representation of women in formal decision-making in agriculture, energy, and transport, which are key areas that impact climate change. The green and energy transitions offer opportunities to accelerate gender equality, while ensuring that their impacts do not exacerbate existing inequities. Indeed, the green transition is rapidly expanding the job market with the creation of over 40 million green jobs expected by 2030. While these jobs offer higher wages, women are underrepresented in the green sector, holding just 28% of these jobs in OECD countries.
- **Similarly, the energy transition is not immune to gender imbalances.** Women continue to be underrepresented in the energy sector and earn almost 20% less than their male counterparts. Less than one in five senior positions are held by women, and only 11% of energy start-ups are founded by women, compared to nearly 20% in other industries. However, there is a silver lining – the expected emergence of 139 million jobs in the energy sector worldwide can pave the way for greater gender equality in this field. Capitalising on the potential of gender equality in sectors such as innovation and renewable energy and in other green jobs can foster inclusive and resilient economies and help to accelerate the net-zero transition.
- Moreover, many organisations with women leaders across the public and private sectors and civil society demonstrate enhanced environmental performance, underlining the importance of women in accelerating climate action. For example, when it comes to business impacts, women entrepreneurs were almost 7% more likely than men to prioritise sustainability over economic goals

³ For example, OECD (2023), SIGI 2023 Global Report: Gender Equality in Times of Crisis, Social Institutions and Gender Index, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/4607b7c7-en>

in their business and women directors tend to focus more on environmental, social, and governance issues, prioritising responsible corporate practices.

- Despite considerable advancements in recent years, **the digital transformation reveals a dual narrative of potential and peril**, particularly for younger cohorts. While it unlocks significant opportunities such as for access to education, democratic participation, and economic growth, it also perpetuates existing inequalities and introduces new risks. Women and girls continue to face numerous barriers, including those related to gender stereotypes and social norms, that prevent their full and equal participation in digital transformation. This is evident in the significant gender gaps in fields such as Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) with girls often disengaging from STEM subjects at an early age in their academic journey. For example, across OECD countries, the percentage of men working as ICT specialists is three to seven times higher than the percentage of women working in these positions. Furthermore, women are notably underrepresented in Research and Development (R&D), including Artificial Intelligence (AI), which risks perpetuating harmful biases.
- The challenges most often faced by women and girls in the digital realm are further exacerbated by the threats of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF-GBV) and negative behaviours online, such as cyberbullying and the spread of stereotypes and content promoting restrictive masculinities on social media. Men and boys are not immune to risks related to the digital transition, such as cyberbullying, negative impacts on their mental health, and the potential exacerbation of harmful social norms. Yet, gender equality and the digital transition can be mutually reinforcing. Promoting gender equality helps expand the talent pool, bringing in fresh perspectives and innovative problem-solving approaches that are vital for driving technological advancements and maintaining competitiveness. Moreover, research indicates that diverse teams outperform homogeneous ones, leading to enhanced creativity, productivity, and profitability in STEM industries. Additionally, the digital transition can offer everyone, including women and girls, opportunities to augment their income, enhance their employment prospects, participate in political and public life, and access education.
- **Many of the gender imbalances in the context of global transitions are fuelled by structural inequalities and discriminatory social norms that persist across political, social, and economic spheres.** Disproportionate time spent on unpaid care and domestic work, lower employment rates, fewer paid working hours per week, significant labour market segregation, and persistent glass ceilings hinder women's economic opportunities and perpetuate gender gaps in wages, lifetime earnings and pension income, which is particularly acute in the sectors leading ongoing global transformations. The impact of these gender inequalities is not only limited to women and girls – they also affect men and boys. Higher rates of school leaving among young men - 16% on average in OECD countries compared to 12% for young women – mean that they are increasingly less educated than young women in many OECD countries.
- There are also still significant gender gaps in entrepreneurship, including the number of start-ups, their economic impact, and the ability of women entrepreneurs to access resources. While some progress has been made, these gaps are costing economies innovation opportunities and jobs. The underrepresentation of women in politics and leadership positions, compounded by gender-based violence across sectors, including in the form of online violence and harassment, poses a risk to gender-sensitive decision-making in these and related sectors. Transformative approaches are needed to address the root causes of multiple and intersecting forms of gender inequality and discrimination and to promote strong, green, inclusive, and sustainable economic development and resilient societies.
- **Governments have both the responsibility and unique opportunity to use a wide range of tools to promote inclusive global transitions across domestic, foreign, and development**

co-operation activities. By adopting policies that redress gender inequalities, remove structural barriers, and include intersectional, and multi-dimensional approaches across laws, regulations, budgets, public procurement, and other processes, governments can ensure that transitions promote gender equality. For example, gender budgeting is increasingly used in OECD countries. In 2022, over 60% of OECD countries reported engaging in gender budgeting, compared to 35% in 2015. Yet, there is a long way to go. For example, in the context of the climate change agenda, only 57% of OECD countries report that they systematically or occasionally consider the gender-environmental nexus in policymaking. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, around only 2.5% of environmental and green recovery measures employed by countries were considered gender-relevant. Closing these gaps requires gender-disaggregated and intersectional data, capacity building, and a clear monitoring and evaluation process, which are still underdeveloped across the sectors influencing transitions.

- In addition, automation and AI can play a key role in this context, offering innovative solutions that aid policymakers in integrating gender considerations into their decisions and tools. However, this potential can only be realised if the risks associated with AI, such as biases and ethical concerns, are effectively managed to ensure that the benefits of AI technology are shared by all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised groups.

We, as Co-Chairs, welcomed calls to strengthen gender mainstreaming and intersectional approaches in the context of the green, energy and digital transitions, in collaboration with stakeholders such as the Council of Europe, the OECD, the European Union, the United Nations, the World Bank and other international organisations, the private sector, academia, philanthropic actors and civil society, including women's organisations, to drive tangible progress towards a more inclusive and sustainable future, and leaving no one behind. In particular, we welcomed the calls for policy actions in the following areas, by leveraging the expertise of the OECD, including in line with its priorities highlighted by the OECD's Contribution to Promoting Gender Equality and the OECD Gender Recommendations⁴:

- **Addressing existing inequalities in the labour markets related to the green, digital, and energy transitions.** It is crucial to ensure that emerging jobs are accessible to all individuals, thereby fostering a more balanced and inclusive workforce. This relates to occupations in areas such as green innovation, clean energy, and AI research and development. Collaboration across sectors and disciplines is essential to develop and implement innovative solutions aimed at dismantling barriers to gender equality within the context of these global transitions. Efforts should include promoting the equitable distribution of paid and unpaid work, including through parental leave systems incentivising fathers' uptake of leave; enhancing access to affordable early childhood education and care; supporting effective and non-discriminatory flexible working arrangements; and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value.
- Additionally, fostering an inclusive workplace culture, addressing workplace sexual harassment, developing leadership programmes, and implementing policies that promote gender diversity in corporate leadership are critical steps toward achieving a more equitable workforce. The OECD standards (e.g. OECD Gender Recommendations) and tools (e.g. Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality) provide a comprehensive framework in this regard. Building on the OECD Dashboard on Gender Gaps, the OECD was encouraged to continue expanding its databases to systematically collect and disseminate gender data.

⁴ The 2013 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship [[OECD/LEGAL/0398](#)], the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life [[OECD/LEGAL/0418](#)], the 2023 OECD Recommendation on Improving the Gender Balance in the Nuclear Sector [[OECD/LEGAL/0496](#)] and the 2024 DAC Recommendation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance [[OECD/LEGAL/5022](#)].

- **Promoting the accessibility, attractiveness and inclusiveness of the skills needed to excel in the green, energy, and digital transitions.** This includes encouraging girls to explore opportunities in ICT, STEM, and the technologies of tomorrow, as well as fostering the appeal of workplaces and the jobs within these sectors. Policy makers play a crucial role in leveraging education as a strategic tool to close the inclusivity gap in these global transitions. This involves tackling biases and gender stereotypes associated with math and science, creating an environment that encourages all individuals, particularly girls and young women, to engage in ICT and STEM studies from a young age. It is also essential to ensure equal access to training in green skills and energy-related fields and that policymakers and employers provide young women with the necessary support to continue their career in these economically strategic fields. Supporting women and girls, particularly those coming from underrepresented groups to build confidence in their ICT, science, and math skills, and promoting diverse role models, mentors, and collaborators in these industries are key steps in empowering everyone to explore, pursue, and sustain careers in these fields. Building on the OECD Digital Economy Outlook and the OECD Going Digital Toolkit, the OECD can continue expanding these indicators in light of the gender-related challenges and opportunities presented by the global transitions.
- **Systematically mainstreaming gender equality into policies and strategies guiding the green, energy and digital transitions.** As part of the green transition, there is a need to develop comprehensive gender-responsive strategies in climate adaptation and mitigation policies and systematically embed gender considerations into climate resilience decisions. OECD efforts to conduct comprehensive analyses to identify good practices for gender integration in environmental policies can provide a strong foundation for advancing countries' efforts in this area. In addition, considering the gender-differentiated impacts of disasters, governments should accelerate efforts to strengthen gender-responsive approaches in their disaster risk management strategies, highlighting the much welcome OECD indicators in this area.
- Gender mainstreaming in the digital transition should also strive to minimise the risks of gender bias in AI systems and other digital technologies. In addition, governments can adopt proactive measures to tackle the challenges that the digital transformation imposes on the most vulnerable. This can be achieved through the implementation of comprehensive education programmes that emphasise digital literacy and responsible online behaviour. By leveraging its influence and resources, the OECD can help synchronise efforts and foster policies that promote equal opportunities and benefits in the digital realm for all.
- **Accelerating gender equality in the leadership of sectors that are guiding ongoing transitions can not only expedite their inclusiveness,** but also offer substantial benefits to the global economy. Diverse perspectives in leadership can foster fairer and more representative decision-making and can lead to greater equity, innovation, growth, and productivity. Countries should continue working towards ensuring a better representation of women in decision-making positions across all policy areas and sectors guiding the transitions through a wide range of policies, including through, for example, leadership development opportunities, use of targets and quotas. This work should build on broader efforts to ensure equal access to leadership in public and private sectors.
- Digital transition itself could act as a catalyst for women's political leadership in these domains, if increased threats posed by TF-GBV are appropriately addressed. In this regard, Forum participants have particularly welcomed the forthcoming OECD work on TF-GBV, and its accompanying indicators. They have urged the OECD to accelerate this work, including through multi-stakeholder approaches and promoting integrated legal and policy frameworks. At the same time, participants called for targeted policy initiatives to prevent online victimisation and problematic social media use, particularly affecting women and girls. In this area, we particularly welcome new OECD work on mental health in digital environments in the OECD Digital Economy Outlook 2024 (Volume 1)

and the associated new indicators on the OECD Going Digital Toolkit. Forum participants have also noted the OECD's work on identifying impact indicators in areas pertaining, among others, to women's political leadership.

- **Addressing discrimination and its intersection with gender, gender stereotypes and changing social norms remains paramount** in achieving a more inclusive and equitable future for all. This requires concerted efforts by governments to better understand and measure social norms, address the root causes that drive them, implement comprehensive education and awareness-raising programmes, promote sexual and reproductive health and rights and support community-based initiatives, in partnership with civil society. This also requires using effective regulatory reviews and gender impact assessments to amend and/or eliminate discriminatory legal and/or policy frameworks as well as address the implicit barriers that hamper human rights and equal participation in public and economic life. The OECD is encouraged to continue developing and expanding the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) to collect additional data on laws and social norms, including on masculinities to better understand the link between restrictive masculinities and persisting gender inequalities.
- Development co-operation plays an important role in this regard too. Recent advancements such as the commitment at the 2024 MCM to deliver a new whole-of-OECD Strategy on Development⁵ and the recently adopted DAC Recommendation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance demonstrate a renewed focus on bolstering gender equality efforts. These initiatives offer an opportunity to reflect on the challenges faced by women and girls in developing and emerging economies. By placing gender equality and women's economic empowerment at the core of a new development strategy, we can ensure a more inclusive and impactful approach to development cooperation.
- **Systematically gathering gender disaggregated data and evidence including intersectional approaches, and developing governance tools and capacities to support gender mainstreaming across sectors.** Achieving inclusive outcomes in green, energy, and digital transitions requires a comprehensive whole-of-government approach to gender mainstreaming. This should include the systematic collection of detailed gender-disaggregated and intersectional data and boosting institutional capabilities. It also requires integrating gender considerations into strategic planning across all areas affecting these transitions. Efforts must be made to eliminate harmful biases and stereotypes prevalent in government tools and processes, including policymaking, budgeting, and procurement practices. Investment in developing governance, policy, and data frameworks, as well as cross-sectoral capacities, is essential to support the integration of gender equality considerations into transformation strategies across sectors, leveraging the digital transformation and emerging technologies for efficient and inclusive policymaking.
- The OECD can play a vital role in bolstering and refining gender data and evidence to understand the impacts of major global transitions on gender equality, including intersections with other forms of inequality. This involves, among others, mapping existing data, pinpointing gaps, and facilitating the creation of a centralised database to inform targeted interventions, building upon initiatives like the OECD Dashboard on Gender Gaps, the Gender Data Initiative, the OECD Digital Economy Outlook 2024 and OECD Going Digital Toolkit indicators. The OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality and the OECD Gender Budgeting Framework have been developed to support countries and institutions in their efforts to implement gender mainstreaming across different policy and governance areas, which can be further developed to provide specific guidance on navigating gender equality in on-going transitions. Additionally, the OECD can support the development of governance and policy frameworks and cross-sectoral capacities that embed

⁵ [2024 Ministerial Council Statement](#) adopted at the Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial level on 3 May 2024.

gender equality into transition strategies across energy, green, and digital sectors, providing decision-makers with the necessary tools and data to effectively incorporate gender perspectives.

Finally, we, as Co-Chairs, look forward to the regular convening of the OECD Forum on Gender Equality, as noted in the OECD's Contribution to Promoting Gender Equality as an emerging platform for peer-to-peer dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, with a collective commitment to advancing gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in the context of the evolving global landscape, and shaping more equitable societies. We also welcomed the calls by participants to position the OECD Forum on Gender Equality as a cornerstone for strengthening global and cross-sectoral efforts to advance gender equality. The OECD serves as a catalyst for evidence-based policy formulation and implementation, setting the standard for effective gender strategies worldwide. By showcasing successful initiatives and results, we are committed to leveraging the Forum to emerge as a dynamic hub for advancing gender equality globally.

Recognising the diverse perspectives and realities across countries, the Forum has actively engaged with a wide range of countries and stakeholders, tailoring recommendations to their specific contexts and challenges. This inclusive approach fosters a collective effort towards gender equality, reinforcing the impact of initiatives within OECD Members and non-Members and catalysing substantive progress at the global level. Strengthening partnerships with non-Members extends the reach of OECD core values, such as gender equality, and ensures that the benefits of its work are widely shared around the world, promoting a fairer and more inclusive future for all.

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