

It's Time to Make Bold Commitments to Gender Data

AN URGENT OPPORTUNITY

If there was ever a moment for big, bold, and catalytic commitments to gender equality, this is it. Unlocking economic opportunities for women and safeguarding their rights is critical to driving global economic recovery. After a year that crushed women in the workforce, exacerbated social injustice, and rolled back progress on gender equality by a generation, urgent action is needed.

The Generation Equality Forum (GEF) provides an unprecedented opportunity for governments, companies, multilateral organizations, and civil society to accelerate progress on gender equality through bold, meaningful, and measurable commitments. Those commitments—if they are to truly make an impact—must be built on solid data. We need data about women and girls to make informed decisions and track if those decisions are improving their lives. Moreover, we need gender data that breaks down differences in impact across genders and reveals inequality so that we can better design policies and programs to tackle it.

Gender Data Defined

Data that is disaggregated by sex, and reflects gender issues, including roles, relations and inequalities. It can be both quantitative and qualitative, and collection methods account for stereotypes, social norms, and other factors that may introduce bias.

More and better data leads to more equitable, gender-informed policy—and more effective policy produces better results for countries, economies, and communities.

GENDER DATA IS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF A STRONG COMMITMENT

Meaningful, measurable, and tangible commitments to advance gender equality should align with the following principles:

- 1. Grounded in data and evidence:** Commitments should clearly identify the data sources they will use as benchmarks. High-quality, timely data may be drawn from both official and non-official sources as long as it is consistent with internationally accepted statistical standards. Where necessary datasets do not exist, commitment makers should present a clear framework for how they will collect the data they need to assess progress over time.
- 2. Built on and aligned with existing commitments, priorities, and strategies:** Commitment makers should map and analyze existing policies, programs, and available data across their area of focus and consider potential for alignment.
- 3. Benchmarked on disaggregated data sets:** Data sets underpinning commitments should be collected and analyzed along multiple dimensions, including by sex and age.
- 4. Designed using participatory processes that engage the communities they are meant to benefit:** Commitment makers should meaningfully partner with impacted groups throughout the commitment-making process, respecting and centering their voices and inputs.ⁱ
- 5. Visible and transparent:** Commitments and the data they are benchmarked on should be clearly communicated and accessible to all stakeholders.
- 6. Incorporating mutual accountability strategies:** Key stakeholders, including civil society, should be invited to partner in implementation and monitor progress. Civil society actors are key to supporting commitment development, implementation, and monitoring, as well as to fostering mutual accountability for the achievement of shared objectives.ⁱⁱ

7. Positions gender data as a key policy and/or funding priority: Gender data collection, dissemination, and use should be resourced and integrated into costed implementation plans and other strategic documents.

THE CHALLENGE OF GENDER DATA GAPS

Gender data is an essential tool to evaluate progress on any commitment made to advance gender equality, whether related to the Generation Equality Forum, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), or national-level targets. If we can't track it, we can't achieve it.

However, recent estimates reveal that gender data faces consistent challenges:



In 2020, fewer than 40 percent of countries had data available to monitor SDG 5 (gender equality); fewer still regularly collected that data over time.ⁱⁱⁱ



Worldwide, core gender data systems have been underfunded by roughly \$450 million per year over the past six years.^{iv}



At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and made the need for quality gender data to effect policy change more urgent.

However, gender data within the Generation Equality Forum is not yet a high priority. **Action Coalition blueprints inconsistently reference gender data, and only 13 percent of commitments in the official [Commitments Handbook](#) directly address gender data**, despite its identification as a cross-cutting issue necessary to achieve the [Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality](#).

To achieve meaningful and measurable progress on gender equality, we urge all commitment makers to make specific commitments to close critical gender data gaps, in addition to using gender data to guide decision-making around the design of all commitments.

EVERYONE CAN MAKE A COMMITMENT TO GENDER DATA

Progress on gender equality will require concerted action and partnership across all sectors. Government, private sector, or civil society actors can commit to:

- **Using data to inform decision making**
- **Funding gender data gaps**
- **Collecting and disaggregating data**
- **Sharing and using data best practices**
- **Increasing the visibility, inclusion, and accountability of gender data**

Commitment Type	Example ^v
Use data to inform decision making.	"Invest in capacity-building amongst national stakeholders and policymakers to enhance the quality, timeliness, and availability of statistics that measure the gender-environment nexus, and to promote their analysis and use for policy making, monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems and gender-responsive budgeting related to climate planning."
Fund gender data gaps.	"Organizations in all sectors finance the development of methodologies and collection of disaggregated data on intersectional discrimination and attacks against feminist activists, organizations and movements (including online) ..."

Collect and disaggregate data.

“Establish, conduct and institutionalize regular time-use surveys to collect sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender statistics on unpaid care and domestic work as part of national income accounting processes between 2021 – 2030 in 4 additional countries.”

Share and use data best practices.

“Use big data to identify innovative ways to measure the gendered impacts of digital transformation (building for ex. on Digital Gender Gaps).”

Increase visibility, inclusion, and accountability.

“Commit to increase accountability for the inclusion of women and girls experiencing multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination by committing (and/or asking partners receiving financial support to demonstrate progress towards) the systematic collection, analysis and reporting of sex, age and disability-disaggregated data on needs, risks and barriers to reporting and accessing services, in line with safe and ethical practices.”

KEY CONSIDERATIONS BY SECTOR

We encourage all commitment makers to explore opportunities to develop and announce commitments in tandem with partner governments, companies, and other global stakeholders, across sectors and Action Coalitions. Commitment makers from different sectors are encouraged to consider the following recommendations to further strengthen their gender data commitments:

Philanthropies and Bilateral Donors:

- Identify a baseline representing current investments in gender data.
- State the amount of the financial commitment and the period it applies to.
- Indicate whether the financial commitment represents funding at existing levels or new funding.
- Clarify which funds support multilateral organizations.

Governments:

- Include gender data indicators in national gender policies and programs to monitor, assess, and report progress.
- Explicitly fund gender data in national strategies and plans.
- Review gender data availability in national and international databases for SDG indicators.
- Consider development of data commitments across sectors and levels of government.

Civil Society:

- Consider commitments to sharing best practices on advocacy for gender data.
- Consider how citizen-led data collection efforts can strengthen social accountability for gender data use.
- Consider how media engagement can strengthen the policy-advocacy environment for gender data.

Private Sector:

- Disaggregate both internal and publicly available data by gender.
- Help develop industry-wide protocols to protect individual privacy while making data easily accessible.
- Consider partnerships that leverage staff expertise to address self-identified government and civil society gender data capacity needs.
- Consider aligning commitments with the [Women's Empowerment Principles](#).

i. For further information, see OECD's [Gender Indicators: What, Why and How?](#)

ii. See FP2030's [Government Commitments](#).

iii. Per the United Nations' [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020](#).

iv. Cited from Data2X and Open Data Watch's May 2021 report, [State of Gender Data Financing 2021](#).

v. Examples cited from [Action Coalitions: Commitments Handbook](#).