



## WOMEN LEADERS FOR GENERATION EQUALITY

**A virtual intergenerational discussion on how diverse leadership can change the world  
and how to make it happen**

**17 September 2020 from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. EST**

### BACKGROUND

In 2020, the global community marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women and the adoption of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#). This is also a milestone with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, making it a pivotal year for the realization of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the full exercise of the human rights of women and girls everywhere. But the world is also currently facing a historic pandemic, forcing a re-assessment of the effectiveness of many current socio-economic systems and re-emphasizing the need to move gender equality and women's leadership forward. The current COVID-19 crisis is deepening pre-existing inequalities and exposing vulnerabilities, which are in turn amplifying the devastating impacts of the pandemic over women and girls. Therefore, it is now more critical than ever to drive for irreversible and measurable progress towards gender equality everywhere.

Within this framing, Generation Equality is set for urgent action and accountability. The Generation Equality Forum (GEF), a joint effort convened by UN Women and co-chaired by the governments of Mexico and France with the leadership and active collaboration of civil society, will celebrate the power of women's rights activism, feminist solidarity, women's leadership and youth participation to achieve transformative change and set an agenda of concrete action to realize gender equality before 2030. In response to the pandemic, the GEF is also committed to shape innovative and in-depth Stakeholder Engagement strategies and to provide special attention to addressing the challenges that the COVID-19 global pandemic raises in terms of women's rights and empowerment, while also recognizing the critical role of partnerships, solidarity, and movement building for social transformation.

### WOMEN LEADERS FOR GENERATION EQUALITY

As part of its objective, the GEF will focus on women's leadership. Women's leadership and equal participation is also enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Decades later, evidence shows that from the local to the global level, women's leadership in formal spheres is still limited, whether in politics, the civil service, in private companies or other sectors even as women in their diversities and across generations are mobilizing to hold leaders to account on a slew of equality issues from racial justice to equal pay to ending violence and discrimination against women, to eliminating sexual harassment to climate justice and more.

This leadership gap in formal spaces must change. To fulfill the vision of the Beijing Platform for Action and to accelerate progress, the number of women in leadership must go up and the norms, regulations and standards around leadership must reflect greater diversity and inclusion and accountability.

Launched at UNGA 2019 and through the duration of the GEF in 2021, UN Women will be welcoming over 200 global women leaders who will lend their voice, impact and power to Generation Equality and support outreach and mobilization for the Forum. Leaders for Generation Equality started in cooperation with the Council of Women World Leaders, a network of more than 75 current and former women Heads of State and Government. While members of the CWWL constitute part of this group, the focus is on a diverse group of intergenerational leaders from all sectors such as the public and private sectors, civil society, arts, education, media, etc.

### THE EVENT

Within the rubric of the Generation Equality campaign and the Generation Equality Forum, the Government of Mexico together with UN Women and the Council of Women World Leaders is organizing a virtual intergenerational discussion on how diverse leadership can change the world. The event will convene the Women Leaders for Generation Equality with young leaders from different parts of world. This diverse and inclusive event with women leaders from across the world across ages and



sectors, in the context of the GEF, offers an opportunity to focus on the importance of inclusive leadership and the change it can bring for all girls and women. Such an event now, during a historic pandemic, is also important to understand the impact and importance of leadership in high-stakes situations as well as reflecting on how equal representation can help the world build back better and different.

The GEF will be taking place in Mexico and Paris next year. Until then, mobilization and momentum will be key. In that context, listening to the diverse strong voices of women leaders, based on lived experience will be an excellent way to set the stage for the GEF. Also, building on the intergenerational focus of the GEF, a virtual event with open discussion among Leaders for Generation Equality from governments, business, civil society and strong voices from youth, will offer an experience of learning, sharing and amplifying an inclusive and action-oriented leadership vision in line with the focus of the GEF.

The main objective of the event is to create a relevant, current and creative virtual dialogue on a vision of women's leadership, where women leaders from across the world can share their approaches, lessons learned, and experiences from before and during the COVID-19 outbreak, to speak about the value of women's leadership and address the conditions needed for women to take on leadership roles and participate in decision-making as well as making sure the younger generation shares their recommendations, reflections and advice. The goal is to offer standards of effective, feminist, intergenerational leadership and change the global picture of a leader and share perspectives from Leaders for Generation Equality on how the world can best be built back better and different.

#### **FORMAT**

Livestream virtual event with the participation of 10-12 women leaders in conversation with each other and young people. The event will take the form of an interactive moderated intergenerational roundtable dialogue with women leaders from across sectors, including youth leaders and will include a Q&A segment with the audience.

**Hosts:** UN Women, Government of Mexico and Council of Women World Leaders in partnership with the Generation Equality Forum, including the Government of France

**Audience:** Open Event. Civil Society, Member States, etc. Invitation list TBD. Audience will have to sign up in advance.

**Language:** English. Interpretation will be provided into Spanish and French. If possible, Arabic and International Sign Language. Ensure disability access.

#### **Suggested Guiding Questions:**

- Why is diverse leadership important and why is it vital to ensure women are equally represented as leaders and decision-makers of the world?
- What conditions do countries need for women to take on equal leadership roles and participate in decision-making? And what are the main reason for the slow progress? And where are the main and most important gender gaps when it comes to leadership?
- How can we harness the lessons learned from women leaders during COVID-19 to ensure we build back better? And what are examples of effective mobilizing for gender equality in the COVID-19 context?
- How do we ensure the leadership, needs, and demands of adolescent girls and young women are at the heart of the agenda?
- How can we ensure that the Generation Equality Forum delivers on the urgent need for diverse and equal leadership for all women and girls? What are the concrete steps, alternatives, scenarios to close the gender gap in representation and participation in cabinets, parliaments, corporate boards?