



Open letter to G20 leaders on adolescent girls' rights and the SDG summit

5 September 2023

Honourable Leaders of G20 States,

As you prepare for the G20 Summit on 9-10 September 2023, the United Nations is also preparing for its 78th General Assembly (UNGA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit that comes at the midpoint of implementing the 2030 Agenda. This puts you in a unique and strategic position to take the lead in raising the urgency for the achievement of the SDGs.

Plan International welcomes India's commitment to women-led development to achieve the SDGs, as this year's G20 President, and we call on all G20 Leaders to set more ambitious goals and investments in the G20 Leaders' Declaration to advance gender equality, and particularly to advance the rights and well-being of adolescent girls.¹ We further call on Leaders to reflect these goals and investments as national commitments at the upcoming SDG Summit.

Adolescent girls are at a critical stage in their lives when they face different and intersecting forms of discrimination due to their age and gender and evidence shows that investing in adolescent girl-centered interventions provides gains across multiple SDGs. With the growing anti-gender movements, shrinking civic space, and roll back on rights that exacerbate this discrimination, we urge G20 leaders to respond with appropriate actions to ensure adolescent girls, in all their diversity, fully enjoy their rights to protection from violence, nutrition, health including sexual and reproductive health, economic empowerment, education, and political participation.

Specifically, we call on G20 Leaders to:

(1) Institutionalise adolescent girls' and youth participation and prioritise and respond to their recommendations.

G20 Leaders must prioritise recommendations arising from the youth consultations regarding making sustainability a way of life, and responding to the demands of the future of work. Girls' and young people's right to be heard, meaningfully participate, and take leadership roles should be institutionalised in governance and SDG processes. In addition, appropriate financing mechanisms and investments should be made to ensure that they are supported.

(2) Address the gendered impacts of climate change.

We welcome the commitment in the 2023 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda to support and increase women's participation and leadership in decision making in climate change mitigation and adaptation but call for the inclusion of girls and young women in these

¹ "Accelerating the Achievement of SDGs for Adolescent Girls- Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa" 2023, Plan International

processes. This involves recognising their experiences and expertise, supporting their leadership and financing and implementing their ideas and solutions. This is important across all aspects of climate action, from reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to a green economy, adaptation and influencing policy processes. The inequality and discrimination experienced by marginalised girls and young women are amplified by climate change. They will feel the greatest impacts but often don't receive the information and resources needed to cope. Gender transformative education that advances climate justice and strengthens the resilience of education systems and protects girls' education is vital in supporting girls' engagement in climate action.

(3) Invest in gender transformative education².

We welcome the commitments made in last year's Leaders' Declaration and in the 2023 Action Plan on ensuring education is accessible to all, especially girls and women, particularly by bridging the gender digital divide. In support of this, we reiterate the need to support the agendas laid out in the Calls to Action on Financing Education and make explicit reference to prioritising, protecting, and increasing education financing (both Official Development Assistance and domestic budgets) and ensuring global initiatives are fully funded.

(4) End the global hunger crisis.

While there are commitments in the 2023 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda on women's food security and nutrition, Plan International reiterates the call in an Open Letter³ we released last year on ensuring that all funding and efforts to respond to the hunger crisis and prevent food insecurity would consider the needs of girls and young women who often eat the least and last. In addition, G20 Leaders should prioritise specific programmes that address child protection and gender-based violence in food insecure contexts, advance humanitarian diplomacy efforts to facilitate humanitarian access and enhance prospects of peace in conflict-affected hunger hotspots, and help strengthen the resilience of communities living in fragile contexts.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. We appreciate the efforts made during India's G20 Presidency to engage and listen to the voices and aspirations of young people and adolescent girls and boys towards One Earth, One Family, One Future. We count on your commitment to the rights and well-being of adolescent girls, who are essential partners in achieving sustainable development for all.

Sincerely,

Plan International

² Gender Transformative Education seeks to utilize all parts of an education system – from policies to pedagogies to community engagement – to transform stereotypes, attitudes, norms and practices by challenging power relations, rethinking gender norms and binaries, and raising critical consciousness about the root causes of inequality and systems of oppression. Gender Transformative Education moves beyond simply improving access to education for girls and women towards equipping and empowering stakeholders – students, teachers, communities and policy makers – to examine, challenge, and change harmful gender norms and imbalances of power that advantage boys and men over girls, women and persons of other genders.

³ <https://plan-international.org/news/2022/11/14/g20-must-address-hunger-crisis/>