



Harvard Model Congress

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Women Led Economic Development Update

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The September 2023 G-20 Summit in New Delhi resulted in new action on women's empowerment. The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, approved unanimously by member nations, included a section on gender equality and empowerment. Specific focuses include improving digital literacy and empowerment, increasing women's roles in climate change mitigation, improving women's health, and notably, creating a working group focused specifically on the empowerment of women. The first meeting of this working group will take place during the 2024 G-20 Summit hosted by Brazil. The declaration supported investments in "social protection" as well as in childcare support to decrease the burden on mothers, microfinancing solutions to increase economic empowerment, and in agricultural systems that support female farmers. It also called for social change in decreasing bias and stereotypes that prevent women from accessing economic resources and joining the workforce.

While these goals mark progress in the realm of women's empowerment, it is up to individual nations to implement the policy, infrastructure, and investment recommendations outlined in the declaration. The creation of a working group is also a step towards facilitating progress and keeping the discussion of women's empowerment at the forefront of future G20 summits.

Developments in the G20: Creation of G20 Social, Inclusion of AU
The new Brazilian presidency of the G20 has created the "G20 Social", composed of 13 engagement groups as well as initiatives and events specific to civil society. The Social Summit will be held just prior to the Leaders Summit in November 2024 and will highlight efforts by non-governmental organizations to promote social and economic well-being and improve the lives of civilians. Notably, one engagement group is "W20", which aims to represent women. The goal of this creation is to improve the ability of the

G20 to address civilian concerns and provide a more robust platform for civilians to inform public policy.

The 2023 G20's focus on development, especially through the creation of partnerships between developing nations and increased investment in multilateral banks, was seen as a win for lesser developed nations. One major advancement was the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20, allowing the voices of more African nations to be heard at the summit. With India at the helm in 2023 and Brazil taking over the presidency in 2024, this trend may be poised to continue at the next summit as well. An increased focus on developing nations could also facilitate more initiatives for female empowerment, as the inclusion of women in the economy is critical for global development.

The UN's 2023 Gender Snapshot revealed that significant action is still needed to achieve gender equality in line with 2030 goals. Inequality has been exacerbated by global conflict, with the number of women living in conflict-affected areas increasing by 50% since 2017. The report also laments the lack of gender pay equity, noting that women globally earn only 51 cents to each dollar earned by men. It ultimately concludes that in order to stay in line with gender equality goals for 2030, \$360 billion will need to be invested in women's empowerment.

Along these lines, while the creation of a women's working group for future G20 summits signals progress, leaders in global development argue that more action needs to be taken beyond initiatives earmarked specifically for women's progress. For example, some experts advocate a "macro-critical gender lens", wherein policies focused on gender equity are implemented not just in departments specifically for labor and women, but throughout broader economic initiatives, including climate mitigation, technology, infrastructure and financial services (Sahay and Ajayi, 2023). Ultimately, the G20 must seek to ensure implementation of gender-empowering policies within individual nations.

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