



G7/G20 ADVOCACY ALLIANCE (U.S.)

March 2021

G7 POLICY PAPER

2021 G7 Summit Recommendations: Carbis Bay, Cornwall,
United Kingdom



Introduction

The 2021 G7 comes during an extraordinary moment in history. The COVID-19 pandemic has sparked the deepest economic recession in nearly a century, disrupting economic activity and livelihoods, and has resulted in more than 2.7 million deaths globally.¹ Meanwhile, as the world begins recovery efforts, we also face a tipping point for addressing climate change, a crisis which has far-reaching impacts ranging from agriculture and water security to health, infrastructure to economic opportunities, all of which worsen global inequality and poverty and exacerbate humanitarian crises.

In the face of these challenges, the G7 can and must work together to tackle COVID-19 and build back better. By drawing on their strengths and shared values as democratic and open societies and economies, the G7 can work to reestablish multilateralism as the key means to addressing the world's most pressing challenges.

This paper contains the recommendations of the G7/G20 Advocacy Alliance (U.S.), a group of more than 40 U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). They call for the United States to play a leading role in encouraging the G7 to take the following actions to shape a global recovery that promotes the health and prosperity of all people and the planet:

Climate

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The 2021 G7 comes at a critical juncture for the climate and environment. The G7 has a unique opportunity to build political momentum ahead of the G20 Summit and the 2021 U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP26), by demonstrating ambitious action and leadership to accelerate the international agenda on climate and environment. The U.S. Government should work with other G7 countries to:

1. **Prioritize climate adaptation and resilience support, especially for the most climate-vulnerable people and countries.**
 - a. Reaffirm the commitment to at least double G7 countries' climate finance pledges for the post-2020 period.
 - b. Commit to allocating 50% of all new and additional climate financing resources to adaptation, and drive concessional finance to fragile, conflict-affected states and agents of change, especially women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples.

- c. Support and implement the Principles for Locally-Led Adaptation to empower local communities with more decision-making power and resources to build resilience to climate change.²
2. **Support a just transition toward a low-carbon, resilient, regenerative global economy.**
 - a. Ensure workers and their communities actively and meaningfully participate in shaping policy and determining resource usage as they relate to the design and implementation of economic transition.
 - b. New or transitioning jobs should provide decent work, and freedom of association must be respected.
 - c. Repurpose fossil fuel subsidies toward a just transition and clean energy investments. Ensure the energy transition is fair and equitable to those reliant on fossil fuels.
 - d. G7 members should include Just Transition plans in their 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions and in their 2050 net-zero plans.
3. **Ensure a green recovery from COVID-19 that is inclusive and builds resilience in the face of climate change.**
 - a. Ensure recovery efforts bolster existing community structures, social protection, public health systems, and other risk management systems to withstand climate impacts.
 - b. Ensure local actors are in leadership roles, shaping recovery solutions.
 - c. Ensure debt relief and stimulus packages support climate adaptation and end development finance for fossil fuels.

Education

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The United States has consistently championed education for all and must redouble progress on Sustainable Development Goal #4 to tackle quality of and access to learning from early childhood through adolescence. While bolstering existing investments, the U.S. must address exacerbating education inequities as a result of crises—including COVID-19—to build back better, funding and scaling effective interventions in foreign assistance.

1. **Commit robust financing to strengthen inclusive education systems, recognizing the importance of safe, equitable, quality education for all children and youth.**

- a. Dedicate flexible, multi-year financing for education as a lifesaving intervention throughout any humanitarian response, including increased contributions to Education Cannot Wait.
 - b. Pledge \$1 billion over five-years toward the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) replenishment and increase U.S. bilateral funding providing more children in low-income countries, especially girls, access to education.
 - c. Define and measure progress towards attendance, safety, and learning outcomes, including disaggregation by gender, type of disability, refugee status, ethnicity, and race through inclusive education sector plans.
 - d. Endorse global targets on girls' education and fulfill the Charlevoix commitment to tackle barriers that prevent girls from reaching their full educational and economic potential.
2. **Within the communique, commit to investing in holistic, resilient, and innovative systems that mitigate learning loss and improve access to quality education for children and youth, especially the most vulnerable.**
- a. Develop and finance remedial, accelerated, and distance learning programs, including for refugee and internally-displaced children, to get students safely back to learning and to school.
 - b. Prioritize climate financing and invest in high-, low-, and no-tech solutions to support education systems respond to shocks, bridge the digital divide, and reimagine education delivery mechanisms.
 - c. Strengthen cross-sectoral child development—particularly health and protection—within education investments, including adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities; gender-responsive learning environments; and social protection programs.

Food Security and Nutrition

Lead: Mary Laurie, Specialist, Global Health and Development Policy, Save the Children
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As world hunger continues to rise, the need for healthy, affordable, and widely accessible nutritious foods—especially for the most marginalized communities—is more urgent than ever before. The COVID-19 pandemic is putting additional stress on global food systems, threatening the lives of those who were already experiencing food insecurity and malnutrition prior to the pandemic. The U.S. Government should work with other G7 countries to:

1. **Commit to strongly funding food security and nutrition programs to mitigate extreme hunger and prioritize women and children in the first 1,000 days to promote long-term solutions towards recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.³**
 - a. In a formal statement, preview ambitious, multi-year financial and policy pledges in support of the most vulnerable populations to be released at the U.N. Food Systems Summit and the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit and ensure these commitments are in line with the N4G Commitment-Making Guide and recognize the resource gap for nutrition-specific interventions.
 - b. Fully fund the 2021 Global Humanitarian Response Plan and provide emergency resources for famine relief and mitigation to reach over 30 million people at the highest risk of famine.
 - c. Scale up long-term nutrition and food security investments that are aligned to country plans and target the poorest and most marginalized groups.⁴
 - d. Ensure investments are cross-cutting as to target contributing factors to food insecurity and malnutrition, such as the changing climate and inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services which account for half of the world’s malnutrition.⁵

2. **In a formal statement, provide time-bound and measurable indices for progress on initiatives that the G7 has adopted to date to ensure that they reach the most vulnerable populations and “will leave no one behind.”**
 - a. Incorporate outcome-based indicators (e.g., addressing stunting and wasting) to complement the existing output-based indicators and demonstrate how G7 investments concretely address food security and nutrition.

Gender Equality

Co-Leads: Lyric Thompson, Director, Policy & Advocacy, International Center for Research on Women (lthompson@icrw.org); Spogmay Ahmed, Global Policy Advocate, International Center for Research on Women (sahmed@icrw.org)

This year, the global community will gather at the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) to make commitments and drive urgently needed progress towards achieving gender equality. We urge the U.S. Government to align its commitments at the 2021 G7 with the themes of the GEF’s six Action Coalitions (A.C.s), as follows:

1. **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

- a. Dedicate at least 2% of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to GBV prevention, mitigation, and response, including as essential services in all pandemic response plans, and at least 25% of GBV funding to women’s rights and feminist organizations.^{6 7} Ensure access to shelters and comprehensive and inclusive support services for all women and girls facing violence.
- b. Ratify ILO Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, and incorporate core elements into trade and international assistance programs and policies.⁸
- c. Urgently increase investments and focus on ending child marriage globally in both humanitarian and development settings.

2. Economic Justice and Rights

- a. Invest at least 2% of GDP into social infrastructure domestically and 2% of ODA into social infrastructure globally, to reduce women’s unpaid care burdens and increase jobs.⁹
- b. Ensure paid, safe, and decent work and work facilities for health and care workers, a majority of whom are women, as part of commitments to COVAX.
- c. Ensure economic empowerment initiatives reach the most marginalized women affected by crisis and conflict, in line with the joint G7/G5 Sahel Communique commitments and promoting women’s entrepreneurship in Africa—as committed to during the G7 in 2019.¹⁰

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3. Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

- a. Safeguard the basic right of and access to essential healthcare, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and information, for all people.

4. Feminist Action for Climate Justice

- a. Ensure that at least 20% of ‘principal’ and 100% of ‘significant’ climate funding promotes gender equality.¹²
- b. Directly support women’s rights organizations and eco-feminist efforts, including in countries most impacted by the climate crisis, and integrate gender considerations into all climate change plans and initiatives.

5. Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality

- a. Support countries in combating technology-facilitated gender-based violence, protecting women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ persons from online harassment and abuse.¹³

6. Feminist Movements and Leadership

- a. Commit to achieving 20% of ODA for gender equality as a 'principal' and 100% as a 'principal' or 'significant objective' within 5 years.¹⁴
- b. Announce intention to draft a feminist foreign policy, in line with commitments from other G7 members, Canada, France, and the European Union.
- c. Increase funding and programming in support of adolescent girls' civic and political participation and skills building.

Health

Lead: Philip Kenol, Policy & Advocacy Officer, Global Health Technologies Coalition
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We recommend that G7 countries take the following actions:¹⁵

1. **Ensure the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerators (ACT-A) is fully funded and commit to investing in research and development for new technologies and scale-up of proven tools to prevent, test, and treat COVID-19.**
 - a. G7 countries must help close the resource mobilization gap for ACT-A. An estimated \$27.2 billion is required in 2021, including an additional \$1.8 billion to support the R&D agenda.
 - b. Build on ACT-A's response to COVID-19 to ensure robust and sustainable investment in global pandemic preparedness, including through infection prevention and control (IPC), training for community health workers, and tools such as PPE and oxygen therapies.
2. **Prioritize the equitable global distribution of vaccines by sharing COVID-19 vaccine doses in parallel to the vaccine roll-out in G7 countries, especially those stockpiling excess doses, as well as equitable access to testing, therapeutics, and other health technologies and services.**
 - a. 'Slot swaps' should be undertaken whereby high-income countries reallocate some of their existing orders immediately, ordering replacement vaccines to arrive later in the year, effectively giving their earlier 'slots' to COVAX to help provide vaccines in early 2021 for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to close the current acute gap in supply which is likely to last until at least mid-2021.
3. **Increase investments to build resilient health systems that provide quality primary health care and can withstand threats, including infectious disease outbreaks, climate change, and political unrest.**

- a. Sustain investments, including for R&D and manufacturing, disease surveillance, workforce development, and other programmatic activities in the fight against major infectious epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases in order to achieve UHC and the SDGs by 2030.
 - b. Prioritize flexible financing and technical support to strengthen the capacity of national health, nutrition, and WASH systems.
 - c. Prioritize support to the most vulnerable countries to enable preparedness, response and continued delivery of essential health and nutrition services, free at the point of use.
 - d. Ensure additional support and compensation for health responders, particularly for paid and unpaid frontline health workers and women in vulnerable communities.
 - e. Prioritize support for water and sanitation utilities and providers to ensure and expand reliable access to WASH services.
- 4. Leverage multilateral institutions in new ways to provide sustainable investment in innovation to combat global health challenges.**
- a. Ensure R&D investments are eligible for financing from international financial institutions to provide LMICs the necessary resources to strengthen research, laboratory, surveillance, and manufacturing capacities to respond to health emergencies.
 - b. Invest in innovative financing mechanisms such as the proposed Pandemic Preparedness Fund, which would provide catalytic and sustainable global health financing.
 - c. Ensure World Bank lending in the context of COVID-19 addresses human resource challenges.

BACKGROUND

CLIMATE

Our world is at a tipping point for the climate and environment. While some progress has been achieved under the Paris Agreement, more is required to achieve its goals. Failure to do so will have far-reaching impacts ranging from agriculture and water security to health, infrastructure, to economic opportunities, all of which worsen global inequality, especially gender inequality and poverty, exacerbate humanitarian crises, and erode decades of development progress.

Left unaddressed, climate change could push up to 132 million people into extreme poverty by 2030, while the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance for climate-related disasters could double by 2050.^{16 17} An estimated 140 million people will be displaced within their national borders by 2050. Nearly 90% of those who fall ill due to climate change are children under five, and by 2040, almost 600 million children—1 in every 4—will live in areas with extremely limited water resources.^{18 19} Climate change exacerbates drivers of conflict and fragility, worsening health disparities, food and economic insecurity, and limits access to essential services. Seven of the 10 countries most vulnerable and least prepared to deal with climate change host U.N. peacekeeping operations or special political missions.²⁰

In this context, the international climate agenda is inextricably linked with the broader development and humanitarian agenda.

With the U.K. and Italy hosting the G7 and G20, respectively, and co-hosting COP26, 2021 presents a critical opportunity to accelerate the international climate and environment agenda through multilateral fora. G7 countries can demonstrate ambitious climate action and leadership at the Cornwall Summit, using it as a launchpad to build momentum in the leadup to the larger G20 and COP26, leading the way towards a fully decarbonized, more equal, safer, healthier, and more prosperous future.

EDUCATION

Access to safe, inclusive, equitable, quality education from early childhood through adolescence is critical for building stable nations and growing economies. Yet, children face a learning crisis. Prior to the pandemic, more than half of 10-year-olds in LMICs could not read and comprehend a basic text.²¹ COVID-19 has further disrupted education globally, affecting 90% of the world's students through school closures, widening learning gaps.²² One-third of children globally could not access remote learning during school closures and two-thirds of LMICs have cut their public education budgets since the pandemic's onset.^{23 24}

818 million children also risk returning to schools without basic handwashing services, exposing children and school communities to COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.²⁵

Girls face particular barriers to continuing their education, including high risks of child marriage, gender-based violence, and early pregnancy. Educating girls pays dividends for families, communities, and countries; education is linked to lowering maternal and child mortality.²⁶ Significant commitments must be made to ensure that, by 2025, 40 million more primary and secondary school girls in LMICs are in school and learning, and one-third more girls are reading by age 10.

In crisis and conflict settings, education is a lifesaving response and requires immediate investments to mitigate the harmful impacts of emergencies on children and youth. At least 127 million crisis-affected children are out of school, comprising 50% of all out-of-school children globally. However, the education sector consistently receives less than 3% of humanitarian aid.²⁷ Lack of access to digital tools and technology compounded learning challenges for refugee and internally displaced children during school closures.

Education can be a driver for recovery and resilience across the life-cycle. Early Childhood Development prioritizes screening children for developmental delays or disabilities, while holistic programming ensuring adolescent girls complete their secondary education could lift the GDP of developing economies by around 10%.²⁸ The safe reopening of schools can simultaneously serve as an access point and distribution channel for other basic services critical to child development notably, water, sanitation, and hygiene; health and nutrition; psychosocial support; and protection.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

The wide-ranging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly have long-term effects on food security and nutrition, lessening our odds of reaching a world free of hunger by 2030. Protracted conflict, serious impacts of climate change, and restrictions, and increased food prices due to the pandemic are driving deeply concerning levels of hunger and malnutrition around the world.

The World Food Programme warns that over 30 million people in 41 countries are currently facing emergency levels of acute food insecurity and are highly vulnerable to famine—and three countries already have populations in famine or famine-like conditions.²⁹ This situation is predicted to worsen over the coming months, which will have devastating impacts.

In addition to addressing the serious threat of famine and long-term food insecurity due to unprecedented levels of poverty from the pandemic, the G7 must ensure millions of people do not become malnourished and maintain global progress on lowering chronic malnutrition. An additional \$1.2 billion per year is estimated to be needed to mitigate the additional impacts caused by the pandemic.³⁰ Save the Children warns that unless urgent action is not taken, pandemic-related malnutrition could kill an average of 153 children a day over the next two years.³¹ An additional 9.3 million children are predicted to be wasted (i.e., suffer from severe malnutrition) over the next two years unless urgent action is taken.³² Currently, despite a strong correlation between wasting and child mortality, only 20% of children who suffer from wasting receive treatment.³³ Increased caseloads will place further stress on already fragile health systems.

Leading economists rank nutrition interventions as among the most cost-effective ways to save and improve lives around the world.³⁴ Now is the time for G7 leaders to make bold investments to ensure healthy nutrition vital to building prosperous communities, preventing long-term damage, and ultimately breaking its intergenerational cycle. We urge G7 leaders to set out strong financial and policy commitments to address hunger and malnutrition at the U.N. Food Systems Summit and Nutrition for Growth Summit, as well as in a formal statement from the G7.

GENDER

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender, racial, social, and economic inequalities in the United States and worldwide. Women are more likely to be employed in sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, particularly the informal sector, and lack adequate access to social protection.³⁵ At the front lines of our current health crisis, women make up 70% of the global health workforce and are overwhelmingly responsible for paid and unpaid care work, and often lack access to safe and dignified facilities.³⁶ As health systems strain, so too does women's and girls' access to essential services like SRHR. Research finds that in low- and middle-income countries, a 10% drop in reproductive health services due to COVID-19 could result in 15 million unintended pregnancies, 28,000 maternal deaths, and 3.3 million unsafe abortions.³⁷

The COVID-19 pandemic has also increased the prevalence of GBV—now recognized as the “shadow pandemic.” Rising rates of intimate partner violence, aggravated by quarantine restrictions, make access to essential services and investing in GBV prevention and response ever more urgent. As schools, workplaces, and everyday in-person interactions move online, unfortunately, so does harassment and abuse.

Technology-facilitated GBV was already rampant but becomes even more pressing in this new virtual era. Female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage were already increasing and projected to increase even more.³⁸ Experts estimate an additional 13 million child marriages over the next 10 years as a result of the

secondary impacts of COVID-19.³⁹ This is in addition to the 12 million child marriages already occurring each year.⁴⁰

Women and girls are critical agents of change in the ongoing climate crisis but are continually undermined, unrecognized, and excluded from key decision-making. The COVID-19 pandemic has also laid bare the impacts of structural racism, and the overlapping disadvantages facing women and girls of color in the U.S. and worldwide. The G7 and the GEF offer opportunities for the U.S. government to reiterate its commitment to gender equality and human rights and to implement actionable steps—like those outlined above—to “build back better” toward a more promising future.

HEALTH

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown with devastating clarity that the current global health architecture is inadequate to effectively address pandemics. The multilateral community has been slow to build—and adequately resource—health systems, innovation, and the health workforce in LMICs to prevent and respond to outbreaks while providing routine health services.

We support the U.K.’s five-point plan, including calling on country leaders to prioritize health equity as a key factor in overcoming the current pandemic and ensuring funding for the COVID-19 response does not derail decades of investment in other health areas. A robust integrated and cross-sectoral response is needed from the global health community to maintain health and nutrition services that are central to maternal and child survival and the effective prevention and control of malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases. G7 leaders must ensure that while the current crisis is being addressed, these other key global health priorities are not neglected. While COVID-19 has dominated global health programming and dialogues this past year, global leaders must recalibrate their efforts and underscore their commitment to advancing the fight against these challenges through increased investment in primary healthcare, research and development, and the health workforce to regain ground and ensure that Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved by 2030.

In addition, fully resourced coordinated international frameworks and mechanisms are needed to advance the development of and equitable access to health technologies and to strengthen the R&D capacity of LMICs for pandemic response. While we welcome the progress to date that has been made by the ACT-A, the G7 must step up quickly to ensure the mechanism is properly resourced so that all countries have access to diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines, and other tools and resources, including human resources, needed to get COVID-19 under control.



The lessons learned from this pandemic present an opportunity to rethink the architecture for global health and develop the systems that will allow us to adequately tackle the major global health priorities of the 21st century. Now is the time for G7 to make long-term investments in mechanisms that strengthen pandemic preparedness and health systems globally.

ABOUT INTERACTION

InterAction is a convener, thought leader, and voice for more than 180 NGOs working to eliminate extreme poverty, strengthen human rights and citizen participation, safeguard a sustainable planet, promote peace, and ensure dignity for all people.

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