



G7/G20 ADVOCACY ALLIANCE (U.S.)

APRIL 2021

G20 POLICY PAPER

2021 G20 Summit Recommendations: Rome, Italy



The 2021 G20 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 3.1 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 on areas ranging from food and water insecurity to health, infrastructure, and economic opportunities, all of which worsen global inequality and poverty and exacerbate humanitarian crises.

The countries in the G20 – representing over 80% of global GDP and 60% of the world’s population – have a responsibility to collaboratively tackle these challenges and build back better.

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

CLIMATE

Lead: Lindsey Doyle, Senior Manager, Global Development Policy and Learning, InterAction (ldoyle@interaction.org)

The 2021 G20 comes at a critical juncture for the climate and environment. As the last major leaders’ meeting before COP26, the G20 Summit has a unique opportunity to build political momentum by demonstrating ambitious action and leadership to accelerate the international agenda on climate and environment. The U.S. Government should work with other G20 countries to:

1. **Prioritize climate adaptation and resilience support, especially for the most climate-vulnerable people and countries.**
 - a. Mobilize finance, financial products, and debt relief to support climate adaptation and resilience in communities hardest hit by climate change; press the World Bank and other international financial institutions to ensure financing is consistent with their commitments on co-benefits and aligned with science-based targets under the Paris Agreement.
 - 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, Indigenous Peoples, and workers.

- 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. **Through updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), commit to science-based targets that limit the global average temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.**
 - a. Commit to no new coal and encourage a rapid transition away from fossil fuels, including by pressing international financial institutions to shift finance out of fossil fuels.
 - b. Commit to greater transparency in climate finance accounting, including systematically disclosing activity-level data and climate finance assessments. G20 members should press the World Bank and other international financial institutions to do the same.
3. **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 for those reliant on fossil fuels.
 - d. G20 members should include Just Transition plans in their 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions and in future emission reduction plans.
4. **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, conflict prevention and mitigation initiatives, and other risk management systems to withstand climate impacts, without furthering fossil fuel extraction, refining, and consumption.
 - b. Ensure local actors are in leadership roles, shaping recovery solutions.
 - c. To enhance liquidity, advocate for an issuance of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) based on need, and support the IMF's climate change policies, specifically those aligned with the Paris commitments.
 - d. Exhort private creditors to support climate-resilience debt management in coordination with international financial institutions, regional development banks, and bilateral donors.

EDUCATION

**Lead: Rachel Wisthuff, Assistant Director, Public Policy & Advocacy, UNICEF USA
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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 resulting from crises—including COVID-19—to build back better and strengthen public education systems.

1. **Aligning with the Italian Government’s support for ensuring universal access to education, strengthen inclusive education systems and recognize the importance of safe, equitable, quality education for all children and youth.**
 - a. Accelerate and push for increased flexible, multi-year financing, as well as debt relief, for education across development, conflict-affected, and humanitarian settings, particularly in recovering from the pandemic.
 - b. 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.
 - c. Recognize and promote vocational skills-building for adolescents within education systems to enable youth, particularly girls, to reach their full educational and economic potential.
 - d. Commit funding for accessible and affordable, quality early childhood development, including inclusive early childhood education, as a workforce development tool laid out in the 2020 G20 Leaders’ Statement.

2. **Within the Leaders’ Declaration, commit to investing in holistic and resilient education systems that mitigate learning loss, enable academic continuity and improve access to quality education for children and youth, especially the most vulnerable.**
 - a. Develop and finance remedial, accelerated and inclusive distance learning programs, including for refugee and internally-displaced children and children with disabilities, 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 public education systems’ response to shocks, bridge the digital divide, and reimagine education delivery mechanisms.

- c. Strengthen cross-sectoral child development--particularly health and protection--linked to education 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 (mlaurie@savechildren.org)

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 G20 countries to:

1. **In line with the Government of Italy's priorities of eradicating poverty and promoting food security, commit to strongly funding food security and malnutrition 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 Pre-Summit in July in advance of the G20 and the Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G) in December 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 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 and conflict-affected groups.
 - d. Ensure investments are cross-cutting as to target contributing factors to food insecurity and malnutrition, such as the conflict, fragility, changing climate, and inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, which account for half of the world's malnutrition.⁴
 - e. Provide lessons learned and recommendations to guide future action by G20 members to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals in coordination with multilateral partners, including the Committee on World Food Security, World Food Program, IFAD, and FAO.

2. In a formal statement, provide time-bound and measurable indices for progress on initiatives that the G20 has adopted to date, including the 2014 Brisbane G20 Food Security and Nutrition Framework, the 2015 Implementation Plan of the Food Security and Nutrition Framework, and the 2015 G20 Action Plan on Food Security and Sustainable Food Systems.
 - a. Incorporate outcome-based indicators (e.g., addressing stunting and wasting) to complement the existing output-based indicators to demonstrate how G20 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 Generation Equality Forum (GEF) is being convened to drive urgently needed progress towards achieving gender equality. To demonstrate global leadership on these issues, we urge the U.S. Government to align its commitments at the 2021 G20 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 ODA to GBV prevention, mitigation, and response, including as essential services in all pandemic response plans⁵, and at least 25% of GBV funding to women's rights and feminist organizations.⁶ 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.⁷
 - 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.⁸ This includes providing quality and affordable social services and compensating unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW).
 - 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, including social protection systems, reach the most marginalized women and girls—including migrants—affected by crisis and conflict.
- 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.
 - b. Strengthen legal and policy frameworks by making comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) part of national education curricula and by ensuring adolescents have equal access to education, free from limitations related to marital, pregnancy, HIV, or childbearing status.
- 4. Feminist Action for Climate Justice**
 - a. Commit to gender mainstreaming 100% of all climate financing and to targeting gender equality in 20% of climate financing. Increase support for women- and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)-led organizations in ODA, including for humanitarian response to climate disasters.⁹
 - 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.¹⁰
 - b. Invest in technological solutions to promote women’s and girls’ access to services, employment, and entrepreneurship, including funding and skills building to narrow the gender digital divide.
- 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.¹¹
 - b. Announce intention to draft a feminist foreign policy, in line with commitments from Mexico, Canada, France, the European Union, and other G20 countries.
 - c. Increase funding and programming in support of adolescent girls’ civic and political participation and skills building.
 - d. Increase funding and programming in support of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda.

HEALTH

Lead: Philip Kenol, Policy & Advocacy Officer, Global Health Technologies Coalition
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We recommend that G20 countries take the following actions:

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. An estimated \$27.2 billion is required in 2021, of which \$14.2 billion is needed in the first half of this year. In order to respond to emerging variants and programmatic needs the ACT- Accelerator will need \$1.8 billion to support the R&D agenda in 2021.
 - b. Support the necessity of building 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) measures such as access to PPE and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services in healthcare facilities; training for a broad range of health worker cadres; and access to existing technologies such as oxygen therapy for acute respiratory illness.
2. **Prioritize the equitable global distribution of vaccines by sharing COVID-19 vaccine doses in parallel to the vaccine roll-out in G20 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 universal health coverage and the SDGs by 2030.

- b. Prioritize flexible financing and technical support to strengthen the capacity of national health, nutrition, and WASH systems and domestic resource mobilization efforts to increase the fiscal space for health, nutrition, and WASH.
 - c. Prioritize support to the most vulnerable countries, including those with weak health systems and those in fragile or conflict-affected settings, to enable preparedness, response, and continued delivery of essential health and nutrition services, free at the point of use.
 - d. Work with partners to ensure additional support and compensation for frontline health workers, as needed, particularly for unpaid community health workers, including on- or near-site temporary housing, childcare, hazard pay, meals, safe transportation that allows for social distancing, costs, and access for telemedicine visits, and funds for health-related expenses such as mental health services.
 - e. Prioritize support for water and sanitation utilities and providers to ensure and expand reliable access to WASH services in healthcare facilities, schools, and households.
- 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, as recommended by the 2020 Global Preparedness and Monitoring Board report.
 - 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.¹²
- 5. Re-prioritize antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and invest in preventive measures, new tools, and technologies to fight the rising threat of the silent pandemic. Develop and operationalize national action plans.**
- a. Invest in quality-assured, new, and improved antimicrobials, novel compounds, diagnostics, vaccines, and other health technologies to fight AMR, including but not limited to hospital-acquired infections. This includes new technologies that address the WHO Priority Pathogens List, multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB), and new tools to combat antimalarial and antiretroviral resistance as a part of the AMR response.

- b. With MDR-TB the biggest of the AMR killers, G20 members should invest in the full restoration of tuberculosis services, including active case funding, to diagnose, prevent, and treat multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and put the fight against T.B. back on track while integrating COVID-19 screening where appropriate.
- c. Support preventive measures, such as access to WASH, which are critical to IPC.

LABOR

Lead: Molly McCoy, Policy Director, Solidarity Center (mmccoy@solidaritycenter.org)

We recommend that G20 countries take the following actions:

1. **Keep workers safe and healthy on the job.**
 - a. Improve worker protection by making occupational health and safety a fundamental right at work, recognizing COVID-19 as an occupational disease and providing vaccination and mass testing starting with frontline workers.
2. **Build a better safety net.**
 - a. Strengthen social protection systems and demonstrate global solidarity by supporting international efforts for debt reduction and write-offs and establishing a Global Social Protection Fund to support universal social protection in the world's least developed countries.
 - b. Support domestic revenue mobilization to create the needed fiscal space for national governments to ensure universal social protection, ending international tax avoidance practices and supporting progressive taxation measures, such as a minimum rate of corporate taxation, financial transaction taxes, effective taxation of the digital economy, and wealth taxes to curb the rise of excessive wealth.
3. **Prepare for a Just Transition to a zero-carbon economy.**
 - a. Adopt an industrial policy framework to anticipate sectoral transformations and transitions and coordinate generous jobs creation plans to restore employment levels and restart the economy. Emphasize the creation of quality, climate-friendly jobs underpinned by minimum living wages.

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, increase conflict drivers, undermine peace and security, and erode decades of development progress.

Left unaddressed, climate change could push up to 132 million people into extreme poverty by 2030¹³ while the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance for climate-related disasters could double by 2050.¹⁴ 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,¹⁵ and by 2040, almost 600 million children—1 in every 4—will live in areas with extremely limited water resources.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

In this context, the international climate agenda is inextricably linked with the broader development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding 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. The G20 Summit will be the last major leaders' meeting before COP26. With G20 countries representing more than 75% of global emissions, G20 leaders have both a unique opportunity and a responsibility to demonstrate ambitious climate action and leadership at the Rome 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 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) could not read and

comprehend a basic text.¹⁸ COVID-19 has further disrupted education globally, affecting 90% of the world's students through school closures, widening learning gaps.¹⁹ One-third of children globally could not access remote learning during school closures²⁰ and two-thirds of LMICs have cut their public education budgets since the pandemic's onset.²¹ New research shows that 10 out of 35 countries in Africa spend a higher percentage of their national budget on debt servicing than on education.²²

In crisis and conflict settings, education is a life-saving 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.²³ Lack of access to digital tools and technology compounded learning challenges for refugee and internally displaced children, children with disabilities, and marginalized groups during school closures.

Educating girls pays dividends for families, communities and countries; education is linked to lowering maternal and child mortality.²⁴ Education can also be a driver for conflict and violence prevention, as well as 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%.²⁵ However, adolescent girls face particular barriers to continuing their education, including high risks of child marriage, gender-based violence, and early pregnancy and attendant health complications. 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 and increasing 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.²⁶ 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 G20 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.²⁷ 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.²⁸ 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.²⁹ Currently, despite a strong correlation between wasting and child mortality, only 20% of children who suffer from wasting receive treatment.³⁰ 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.³¹ Now is the time for G20 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 G20 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 G20.

GENDER

The Italian G20 Presidency is prioritizing a “sustainable, just, inclusive and resilient recovery” from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated gender, racial, social, and economic inequalities worldwide. Centralizing women and girls in all recovery efforts both advances gender equality and contributes to a more prosperous, sustainable economy.³² 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.³³ This hinders G20 leaders’ target of reducing the gender gap in labor force participation by 25% by 2025.³⁴ 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.³⁵ 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.³⁶

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 are already increasing and projected to increase even more.³⁷ Experts estimate an additional 13 million child marriages over the next 10 years as a result of the secondary impacts of COVID-19.³⁸ This is in addition to the 12 million child marriages already occurring each year.³⁹

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 G20 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—towards a prosperous 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 continuing to provide 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 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. G20 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 G20 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 G20 to make long-term investments in mechanisms that strengthen pandemic preparedness and health systems globally.

LABOR

As the world begins to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy risks a fragile and unequal recovery marked by precarious work, high unemployment, and economic uncertainty. Hundreds of millions of workers, formal and informal, have lost jobs and income. The impact of COVID-19 hit the lowest paid and vulnerable workers the hardest—including women, youth, informal economy workers, migrant workers, and workers in non-standard forms of employment. The devastation that the pandemic wrought on these workers underscores the need for comprehensive social protection systems, including free universal health and care services, mental health, elderly care, early childhood education, childcare, and other social care services.

Workers continue to be exposed to enormous health and safety risks, not only on the frontlines of healthcare but also in protecting food security and providing other vital services, particularly as conflict drivers and violence have increased dramatically worldwide. The G20 must recognize the value of these jobs by committing to improve working conditions and pay. Higher wages would contribute to aggregate demand, fostering growth and, ultimately, resilience.

The challenges for the international community are immense. It needs to redouble efforts to fight the pandemic while working collectively to pave the way toward sustainable recovery and resilience firmly based on democratic values and social justice. Governments must rebuild economies with the ambition to fight inequality and act on past G20 commitments to legislate, monitor, and enforce the implementation of the ILO principle of “equal pay for work of equal value” between women and men, and ratify ILO Convention 190 to eliminate gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace; address occupational segregation; and ensure equal treatment for migrant workers. Multilateral coordination and a collective move toward a new model of growth and zero-carbon economy are critical. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards on decent work and the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Paris Agreement, and the 2030 agenda should serve as foundations.

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.

¹ World Health Organization. “WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard.” Accessed 27 April 2021. <https://covid19.who.int/>.

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