Global Leaders Call For Urgent Action On Gender Equity
“We live at a watershed moment. Seldom has the world more urgently needed gender equality. It is up to us to demand it.”

— Hillary Clinton

At the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, representatives from 189 nations came together to commit to achieving the full and equal participation of women. The rallying cry, “women’s rights are human rights,” catalyzed unprecedented advances in education, health care, economic inclusion, and political participation.

We cannot take this progress for granted. Today, the rights of women and girls around the world are threatened by widespread democratic recession, the existential threat of climate change, disproportionate consequences of Covid-19, and proliferating global crises. Women political leaders and human rights defenders face an increasingly hostile environment and unchecked abuse both on and offline. And in every region of the world, cultural norms, traditional practices, and patriarchal attitudes still hold women back.

This moment of crisis requires us to both hold the line and continue to advance gender equity with cohesion and resolve.

The upheaval we face is not a challenge to ignore, but an opportunity to seize to advance gender equity and transformative change. Women’s progress is not a zero-sum game. It is a fundamental precursor to economic productivity, peace, and prosperity. From peace operations and climate action to countering violent extremism and aid provision, women are essential to progress for all of society.

Shifting the global status-quo requires buy-in and commitment from across every sector. Women political leaders need high-level training, mentoring programs, and support networks to navigate and thrive amidst pushback. Addressing the vitriol of online platforms demands greater regulation and accountability mechanisms to transform the social media space. Women leaders should use their own platforms to elevate other women leaders’ successes and call out attacks.

To combat the climate crisis, we must center women in climate action and the green transition. This includes ensuring local climate organizations have equitable access to climate financing, and unlocking new capital investments to scale women-led businesses and programs that promote the use of renewable energy and regenerative agriculture. Women are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and key agents for adaptation and mitigation.

From Afghanistan and Myanmar to South Sudan and Ukraine, women peacebuilders must be meaningfully included in all levels of conflict resolution and have their calls to action reflected in policy frameworks. There is a critical need to bridge global and local actors to expedite the flow of information and ensure women are influential and visible in humanitarian aid processes, crisis response, and post-conflict recovery. These efforts can only be realized if they are matched with political will and resources.

We are overdue for equity. Now is the moment to embrace transformation and unleash our collective power for purpose. While we must double down on commitments made, bold and innovative thinking is required to meet today’s challenges.

Our best future is still before us. We must make it so.
This statement resulted from the 2022 Global Women Leaders Summit in Bellagio, Italy, chaired by Secretary Hillary Clinton and coordinated by The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and The Rockefeller Foundation. Their ideas for transformation will be taken forward in the coming months and an overview can be found in summary briefings.

Signatories include:

**Helen Clark**, Former Prime Minister, New Zealand; Former UNDP Administrator

**Hillary Rodham Clinton**, 67th Secretary of State, United States

**Rola Dashti**, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

**Bineta Diop**, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on WPS

**Patricia Espinosa**, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Former Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico

**Maria Fernanda Espinosa**, Former President of the UN General Assembly

**Anne Finucane**, Chairman, Bank of America Europe; Former Vice Chair, Bank of America

**Dalia Grybauskaité**, Former President of Lithuania

**Natalia Kanem**, Executive Director, UNFPA

**Reema Nanavaty**, Head of Self-Employed Women’s Association of India

**Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**, Director General of the World Trade Organization

**Mary Robinson**, Former President of Ireland; Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Nicola Sturgeon**, First Minister of Scotland

**Melanne Verveer**, Executive Director, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security; Former U.S. Ambassador for Global Women’s Issues

Also pictured:

**Carla Koppell**, Distinguished Fellow, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security

**Eileen O’Connor**, Senior Vice President of Strategic Communications and Policy, The Rockefeller Foundation