

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House, Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Kamala Harris
Vice President of the United States
The White House, Office of the Vice President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President and Madam Vice President,

We, the undersigned organizations, care deeply about advancing gender equity and equality around the world and are writing to express our appreciation for the steps your administration has taken in your first 50 days to signal the United States' renewed leadership on this issue. In particular, we are pleased to see early action on announcing the co-chairs of the new White House Gender Policy Council and were excited to see its official establishment by Executive Order on International Women's Day. We also applaud the U.S. decision to re-engage immediately with the UN Human Rights Council and to seek a seat on the Council at the first opportunity, as well as the announcement that Vice President Harris will provide remarks during the UN Commission on the Status of Women next week.

Advancing gender equity and equality for all women and girls, as well as those in the LGBTQI+ community and individuals with disabilities, is first and foremost a matter of human rights and should be a goal in and of itself. It is also a necessary precondition for achieving key U.S. foreign policy objectives. We urge your Administration to ensure gender equity and equality are key tenets of U.S. foreign policy and assistance efforts through urgently taking the below critical actions:

1. Announce unprecedented strong support in your first budget proposal to Congress with robust funding for gender equity and equality programs around the world, including significantly increasing funds to directly support women's and LGBTQIA+ rights organizations;
2. Announce your plan to appoint a Senior Gender Coordinator to the National Security Council to ensure that gender equity and equality issues are addressed at our nation's most critical foreign policy making table; and,
3. Announce your intention to appoint a foreign policy task force and staff lead for the new White House Gender Policy Council to ensure that the power of your office is brought to bear on gender issues everywhere, not just within the United States.

There are two quickly approaching global moments that are critical opportunities for the U.S. to signal to the global community its commitment and re-emergence as a leader on global gender equality. **As noted above, we commend the decision for Vice President Harris to attend and give an address at the 65th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and also urge similar high-level participation at the upcoming Generation Equality forum in Mexico.** We strongly support

the United States sending its highest ranking woman ever to these important gatherings. We further encourage you to leverage these high-visibility global moments to make progress towards the above actions and demonstrate more than rhetorical support for women, girls and gender minorities worldwide.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We stand ready to support your team in advancing the above actions and others in furtherance of global gender equity and equality.

Signed:

Advocates for Youth
AfricAid
Alliance for Peacebuilding
Association for Farmers Rights Defense, AFRD
Batonga Foundation
CARE USA
Center for Victims of Torture
Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy
ChildFund International
Church World Service
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University
Equity Forward
Foreign Policy for America
Foreign Policy Interrupted/Interrupter
Futures Without Violence
Girl Up, United Nations Foundation
Global Justice Center
Global Rights for Women
Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation
Global Women's Institute
Human Rights Watch
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
International Rescue Committee
Iowa Division, UNA-USA
John Snow, Inc. (JSI)
Just Like My Child Foundation
Kakenya's Dream
Last Mile4D
National Democratic Institute
North American Men Engage Network (NAMEN)
Oxfam America
Plan International USA
Ploughshares Fund
Population Media Center
Project Concern International
Promundo-US
Radiant International
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
Restless Development

Save the Children
Sukaar Welfare Organization
The Hunger Project
The Well Project
Together for Girls
UNICEF USA
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights
Vital Voices Global Partnership
Women for Afghan Women
Women's Refugee Commission
WomenStrong International
World Education, Inc.
World Learning

CC:

Antony Blinken, Secretary of State
Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor
Linda Thomas Greenfield, US Ambassador to the United Nations
Jennifer Klein, Co-Chair, White House Gender Policy Council
Julissa Reynoso Pantaleón, Co-Chair, White House Gender Policy Council
Gloria Steele, Acting Administrator, USAID
Katrina Fotovat, Senior Official, Office of Global Women's Issues, Department of State
Robert Fairweather, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget