

DECENT WORK FOR WOMEN

WHY THIS MATTERS

Women make up more than 40% of the G20 workforce, yet gender disparities persist in every dimension of decent work. Women continue to have lower labor force participation, higher rates of under- and unemployment, less access to workplace protections, and greater exposure to informal and precarious employment. They face persistent pay gaps and occupational segregation, are underrepresented in workplace decision-making, and are disproportionately vulnerable to exploitation, violence and harassment. Technological change threatens to exacerbate these inequalities.

Closing these gaps is not only a matter of fairness and women's economic security; it is an economic imperative. Increasing women's participation in decent work expands the labor supply, helps address shrinking working-age populations, and can increase productivity through greater diversity, innovation and better allocation of talent; it is essential to inclusive growth, resilient economies and the G20's ability to make full use of its human capital. The G20 has recognized the importance of decent work and gender equality but more needs to be done to turn those commitments into enforceable national policies and protections that reach women in every form of work.



ADVOCACY BRIEF
Decent
Work

THE CHALLENGE

Structural barriers–

including care responsibilities, occupational segregation, discrimination, and unequal access to leadership and workplace decision making—limit women's entry and advancement and keep women concentrated in lower-paid and less secure work. Despite progress, pay gaps persist, and existing legal protections often lack effective enforcement, transparency and accessible remedies.

Technological change could widen existing inequalities unless

governments act now. Women-dominated occupations are almost twice as likely to be exposed to generative AI as male-dominated occupations, and women are more exposed than men in 88% of countries. The risk is not only job displacement: AI can degrade job quality through increased workloads and algorithmic bias. Yet technological change also offers an opportunity to move women into growing, better-paid sectors if reskilling and transition policies are designed accordingly.

Informality leaves millions of women without basic protections.

Within the G20, approximately a third of women who are employed work in conditions of informality, often lacking labor rights and access to social programs that provide income security, health care and childcare. In the formal sector, the informalization of previously formal jobs is shifting risks from employers to workers

Women in vulnerable forms of work face

heightened risks of exploitation and workplace violence but often lack effective labor protections or safe ways to report abuse and obtain remedies. Approximately 6 million women and girls are in forced labor exploitation in the private economy, nearly a quarter of whom are domestic workers, Migrant workers are at heightened risk of forced labor often due to exploitative recruitment practices.



1. CLOSE GENDER GAPS IN LABOR PARTICIPATION AND PAY.

Adopt and fund national strategies to achieve the W20 Johannesburg Goals of reducing both gaps by 35% by 2035. Remove barriers through paid parental leave, accessible care and flexible work; improve pay and conditions in women-dominated sectors; support women's advancement in male-dominated fields; and strengthen equal-pay laws through objective job evaluation, pay transparency, living-wage policies and accessible remedies. Ensure women's meaningful participation in workplace decision-making, collective bargaining and social dialogue.

2. ENSURE TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE ADVANCES DECENT WORK FOR WOMEN.

Establish gender-responsive AI governance frameworks that include assessment of impacts on women's employment, earnings and working conditions before deployment and throughout technological transitions, prevent algorithmic bias; extend labor rights, occupational safety and health and social protections across AI value chains regardless of employment classification; and invest in reskilling and transition support that takes caregiving responsibilities into account.

3. EXTEND LABOR RIGHTS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION TO WOMEN IN INFORMAL AND NON-STANDARD WORK.

Adopt gender-responsive pathways from informal to formal employment while preventing informalization within the formal economy. Extend labor rights and social protection regardless of employment status; simplify access to contributory social insurance; provide adequately financed non-contributory protection for workers with low or irregular incomes; and ensure access to health care, pensions and childcare. Tailor strategies to sector and local context and involve informal workers and their representative organizations in policy design and implementation.

4. ELIMINATE FORCED LABOR AND EXPLOITATIVE RECRUITMENT.

Enact and enforce laws prohibiting imports made with forced labor and require company due diligence and effective remediation. Prohibit recruitment fees charged to workers; require clear, fair contracts; protect identity documents and freedom of movement; hold recruiters and employers accountable; and guarantee accessible remedies for abuse.

5. PROTECT WOMEN IN VULNERABLE WORK FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION.

Extend full labor rights to domestic workers, including minimum wages, working-time protections, paid leave, safe conditions, freedom of association and effective remedies, and ratify and implement ILO Convention No. 189. Ratify and fully implement ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work through legislation, action plans, workplace policies and enforcement.

GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

Indicator	G20 / Global picture
Gender labor force participation gap	G20: 18.0% in 2024
Gender wage gap	G20: 15.4% average unadjusted gap in 2022/23
Women in informal employment	G20: Approximately 33% of employed women
Women and generative AI	More exposed than men in 88% of countries
Women in forced labor	Approximately 6 million women and girls

The W20 Decent Work full report, in the [W20 Guidebook for Policymakers](#), presents additional recommendations each accompanied by measurable targets, implementation metrics, and illustrative case studies to support adaptation and implementation across diverse national contexts.