

Gender Equality

Sustainable Development Goal 5

International Environment Forum

Youth Discourse - Gender

Sustainable Development Goal 5

5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5 GENDER
EQUALITY





Zambia

Gender Equality

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. There has been progress over the last decades, but the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030.

(UN Sustainable Development)

Gender Equality

Women and girls represent half of the world's population and therefore also half of its potential. But gender inequality persists everywhere and stagnates social progress.

On average, women in the labor market still earn 23 percent less than men globally and women spend about three times as many hours in unpaid domestic and care work as men.

(UN Sustainable Development)

Gender Equality

Sexual violence and exploitation, the unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work, and discrimination in public office, all remain huge barriers. All these areas of inequality have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

(UN Sustainable Development)

Gender Equality

At the current rate, it will take an estimated 300 years to end child marriage, 286 years to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws, 140 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace, and 47 years to achieve equal representation in national parliaments.

(UN Sustainable Development)

Human Rights

Gender equality is at the very heart of human rights.

Gender-based discrimination is prohibited under almost every human rights treaty. Despite much progress made in securing women's rights globally, millions of women and girls continue to experience discrimination and violence, being denied of their equality, dignity and autonomy, and even a life.

(UNHCR)

Human Rights

This discrimination and violence against women and girls, deeply rooted in the fabric of societies, is persistent and systematic. And in recent years, there has been a recurrence of scepticism against and denial of international standards concerning women's human rights, gender equality and gender-based violence, while women and girls are increasingly raising voices to demand equality, including through feminist movements.

(UNHCR)

Climate Change

Climate change is a threat to continued progress on gender equality and human rights. Due to women's unequal access to and dependence on natural resources, public services and infrastructure, they are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation. In combination with other crises, this can lead to rapid reversals in progress made in areas such as the elimination of extreme poverty and gender-based violence.

(UN Women)

Social Justice

It is pressing to advance social justice as we transition economies away from fossil fuels towards greater environmental sustainability. Against this context, women, including Indigenous women and youth, are mobilizing to demand climate justice and for their voices to be heard and heeded in decision-making on climate policy.

(UN Women)



Vanuatu

Barriers to women

At the root of countless barriers to women and girls assuming their rightful place in society is a refusal to embrace the reality that women and men are equal, and that all human beings are one. When left unexposed to the light of justice and reason, distorted conceptions of reality manifest themselves in patterns of superiority, jealousy, mistrust, and fear.

(Bahá'í International Community, [Beyond Mere Economics: A Moral Inquiry into the Roots of Empowerment](#), 2018)

Barriers to women

Under such conditions, women and girls are systematically disadvantaged in relation to their male counterparts. Their advancement is then viewed as threatening or demeaning. Their contributions can be overlooked and their perspectives discounted.

(Bahá'í International Community, *Beyond Mere Economics: A Moral Inquiry into the Roots of Empowerment*, 2018)

Domination

These systems adhere to the pattern of domination that has characterized society for thousands of years: men have dominated women; one racial or ethnic group has dominated another; and nation has dominated nation.

(Bahá'í International Community, [Women and Men: Partnership for a Healthy Planet](#), 1991)

Denial of Equality

The denial of equality perpetrates injustice against one half of the world's population and promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that are carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations. There are no grounds, moral, practical or biological, upon which such denial can be justified.

(Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development*, 1998)

Balance

Notwithstanding humanity's reluctance to change, "the balance is already shifting" - according to the Bahá'í Writings, "force is losing its weight and mental alertness, intuition, and the spiritual qualities of love and service, in which woman is strong, are gaining ascendancy. Hence the new age will be an age less masculine, and more permeated with the feminine ideals-or, to speak more exactly, will be an age in which the masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more evenly balanced."

(Bahá'í International Community, *Women and Men: Partnership for a Healthy Planet*, 1991)

Cuna Indians
Panama



Gender equality

"Women and men", Bahá'u'lláh has said, *"have been and will always be equal in the sight of God."* The rational soul has no sex, and whatever social inequality may have been necessary for survival in the past, it cannot be justified as humanity reaches maturity. Global development will only succeed with a commitment to establish full equality between men and women, in all parts of life and at every level of society.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

Equality of the Sexes

The principle of the equality of the sexes is fundamental to all realistic thinking about the future well-being of the earth and its people. It represents a truth about human nature that has waited largely unrecognized throughout the long ages of humankind's childhood and adolescence. Whatever social inequities may have been dictated by the survival requirements of the past, they clearly cannot be justified at a time when humanity stands at the threshold of maturity.

(Bahá'í International Community, Valuing Spirituality in Development, 1998)

Equality of the Sexes

The world of humanity is possessed of two wings: the male and the female. So long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength, the bird will not fly. Until womankind reaches the same degree as man, until she enjoys the same arena of activity, extraordinary attainment for humanity will not be realized; humanity cannot wing its way to heights of real attainment.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912](#), page 3759)

Equality of Man and Woman

Bahá'u'lláh emphasized and established the equality of man and woman. Sex is not particularized to humanity; it exists throughout the animate kingdoms but without distinction or preference.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), §63, p.182)

Gender Equality

He (Bahá'u'lláh) has declared that in the estimation of God there is no distinction of sex. The one whose heart is most pure, whose deeds and service in the Cause of God are greater and nobler, is most acceptable before the divine threshold—whether male or female.

Mary Robinson
former President
of Ireland and
Chair of the Elders

Monica Maghami
international lawyer
Brazil/UK



Equal Education

There must be no difference in the education of male and female in order that womankind may develop equal capacity and importance with man in the social and economic equation. Then the world will attain unity and harmony. In past ages humanity has been defective and inefficient because it has been incomplete.... Therefore, the standard and status of man and woman must become equalised.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 108)

Equal Education

Woman's lack of progress and proficiency has been due to her need of equal education and opportunity. Had she been allowed this equality, there is no doubt she would be the counterpart of man in ability and capacity. The happiness of mankind will be realized when women and men coordinate and advance equally, for each is the complement and helpmeet of the other.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), §63, p.182)

Woman will abolish warfare

War and its ravages have blighted the world; the education of woman will be a mighty step toward its abolition and ending, for she will use her whole influence against war. Woman rears the child and educates the youth to maturity. She will refuse to give her sons for sacrifice upon the field of battle. In truth, she will be the greatest factor in establishing universal peace and international arbitration.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 108)

Woman will abolish warfare

Assuredly, woman will abolish warfare among mankind. Inasmuch as human society consists of two parts, the male and female, each the complement of the other, the happiness and stability of humanity cannot be assured unless both are perfected.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 108)



Family in Samoa

Science of Equality

The refusal to give women full equality with men is a challenge where science and religion can help. Science shows that the equality of the sexes is fundamental to all realistic thinking about the future well-being of the earth and its people. It is a truth about human nature that has been unrecognised during humanity's childhood and adolescence.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

Cooperation of Men

While women must develop their capacities and step forward to play an active role in solving the world's problems, the impact of their actions will be limited without the full cooperation of men. Women working together in unity and harmony have already achieved a great deal within the spheres of influence open to them. Now women must come together with men as equal partners.

(Bahá'í International Community, [Women and Men: Partnership for a Healthy Planet](#), 1991)

Cooperation of Men

When men lend their full support to this process, welcoming women into all fields of human endeavor, valuing their contributions, and encouraging their participation, men and women together will help create the moral and psychological climate in which peace can emerge and an environmentally sustainable civilization can advance and flourish.

(Bahá'í International Community, [Women and Men: Partnership for a Healthy Planet](#), 1991)

Equality

The transition will be eased when men realize that they will be unable to achieve their full potential as long as women are prevented from attaining theirs. Indeed, when men actively promote the principle of equality, women will no longer have to struggle for their rights. Gradually, both women and men will discard long-held unhealthy attitudes and progressively incorporate into their lives the values conducive to true unity.

(Bahá'í International Community, [Women and Men: Partnership for a Healthy Planet](#), 1991)

Equality of the Sexes

Only as women are welcomed into full partnership in all fields of human endeavor will the moral and psychological climate be created in which peace can emerge and a just and united world civilization develop and flourish. Therefore, a deep commitment to the establishment of equality between men and women, in all departments of life and at every level of society, will be essential to humanity's advancement.

(Bahá'í International Community, Valuing Spirituality in Development, 1998)