

High Level Political Forum Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality

United States Draft Intervention Statement

Today we reflect on the vital contributions women make in every sector of society, and we recommit ourselves to ending all forms of discrimination and breaking down the barriers that women and girls face in the United States and around the world.

The United States recognizes that addressing gender inequality is a critical enabler to achieve sustainable development, peace and prosperity. Fully empowering women and girls and enabling their full economic and social participation is transformative for communities, societies and economies. It disrupts intergenerational cycles of poverty and makes it possible to achieve greater growth for all.

We have seen firsthand the benefits of women's empowerment—politically, economically, and socially. When women participate in the labor force, the world economy grows stronger. It is estimated that if women participated in today's labor markets to the same extent as men, the global annual GDP would see an additional \$28 trillion annually by 2025. It should therefore come as no surprise that countries with greater gender equality tend to have less poverty and more sustainable security. Women also tend to reinvest their earnings in activities to strengthen their families and communities. Women spend a higher portion of their earnings on their families than do men, driving greater prosperity and healthier communities,

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starting with their own children. Women's empowerment is a strategic investment in our future.

In order to realize the full return on this investment, women and girls must have the tools they need to succeed. That means ensuring that girls grow up safe, educated, and healthy, and that they are free from violence in the home, in their communities, and at school. When a woman suffers physical or sexual violence and is unable to access health care, or when a girl is forced to marry early and drops out of school before she is able to read or write, it is not just her life that is short-changed; we all lose. In fact, a recently released study examining the economic impacts of child marriage estimated that this harmful practice will cost the global economy trillions between now and 2030.

From human rights to human security, gender equality and women's participation makes the world a better place. That is why the United States is deeply committed to empowering women both at home and abroad. We have launched new efforts to encourage women's participation in science, technology, engineering, and math - or STEM - fields and as entrepreneurs. As one of its first initiatives, this Administration ramped up efforts to promote women in business by launching the United States-Canada Council for Advancement of Women Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders. And just last week, we announced a \$50

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million commitment to a new facility housed at the World Bank - the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative - that will help women around the world overcome the hurdles they face as entrepreneurs, such as access to finance and regulatory barriers.

We recognize the importance of gender equality for sustainable development, and that we need everyone's participation – including the creativity and energy of women and girls – to drive progress. Women and girls are not only the beneficiaries of the change we envision; they are also the agents of change, global security, and economic prosperity.

The United States will continue to work with our international partners to harness the full potential of women's participation, including by working to address harmful practices and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls, advancing their rights and well-being, promoting their equal access to education and economic opportunities, and encouraging their engagement in politics and peace processes.

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