

Government launches G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council

- Liz Truss appointed Ministerial lead, with Sarah Sands as Chair
- Council will make recommendations to the G7 on policy to drive women's empowerment, with a particular focus on science and technology.
- Members will include Prof Sarah Gilbert – who led work on the AZ/Oxford vaccine – and other high-profile women from the world of tech, science and engineering.

The government has today announced the creation of a new advisory council – led by Liz Truss at ministerial level – to lead the UK's gender equality work at the G7.

The Gender Equality Advisory Council will produce recommendations to drive women's empowerment across the world to ensure women are at the heart of the build back better agenda as we recover from COVID-19.

Distinguished journalist and author, Sarah Sands, has been appointed as the Chair of the GEAC, with further members set to be announced in the coming weeks. Sands' career has showcased an ability to drive forward the UK's news agenda and hold politicians to account, both of which will support the work of the Council.

The Prime Minister has asked Truss to lead the work of the Council at ministerial level, which he sees as a crucial part of the UK's broader work as G7 president this year. With the role of women in science, tech and engineering amplified by the UK's vaccine development and rollout, Ministers will also use the G7 to encourage more women and girls to take up STEM based careers or education opportunities.

Building on the foundations laid by the Canadian and French G7 presidencies, the GEAC will champion the core principles of freedom, opportunity, individual humanity and dignity for women and girls around the world. They will produce an independent report and set out recommendations as to how the G7 should work together so that women across the globe drive and benefit from the pandemic recovery.

International Trade Secretary and Minister for Women & Equalities, Liz Truss, said:

"The UK has long been a leading champion of women and girl's rights at home and around the globe.

"We have today announced a fantastic Chair of the GEAC and will assemble a

council of world leaders in fields from science and health to economics, education and technology.

“Women are at the forefront of our recovery from COVID-19 and the work of GEAC will advance these efforts on a global scale, helping women build back better everywhere.”

Chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council, Sarah Sands, said:

“The G7 is an opportunity to tear down the hurdles that hold women back.

“Across the world we share common objectives: protection from violence, the liberating force of education and economic empowerment.

“I am honoured to chair the GEAC council and delighted that women are placed at the centre of the UK’s global vision.”

Against the backdrop of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 GEAC will focus on supporting action on education, economic empowerment and ending violence against women. This will build on the government’s commitment to build back better, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

The UK is determined that gender equality is viewed as vitally important throughout this year’s presidency, which is why GEAC members will report to G7 Leaders, whilst being invited to support each G7 ministerial group in integrating gender equality across all of their actions.

On International Women’s Day, the UK will unite to recognise the role of women in combating the pandemic, whether that is on the front line in healthcare and retail roles, providing unpaid care work or playing a crucial part in developing vaccines. The GEAC will build on this, putting gender equality at the heart of the recovery effort across the world.

Further Information:

Council members will be selected based on the wide-ranging experiences and perspectives on gender equality they can bring to the G7 Summit themes: COVID-19 response and recovery, prosperity and trade, climate and environment, and global values. The GEAC will include members from each G7 country.

Full membership of the Council will be announced in the coming weeks.