

# Over 100 organisations '#PledgeforProgress' towards gender equality

A collective of 114 organisations – spanning government, business, and civil society – committed to taking practical steps to tackle gender inequality and be the change to catalyse further action.

Gender equality is a shared global challenge and people of all genders have an important role to play to advance a gender-equal society. Women and girls represent half the world's potential yet continue to be paid less, have fewer rights and only make up 24% of representatives in national parliaments. The International Labour Organisation estimates that at the current rate of progress it will take 75 years to make the principle of 'equal pay for equal work' a reality.

The Pledge for Progress aims to empower organisations and individuals to break down prevailing gender norms and, together, build a gender-equal society. Signatories to the Pledge have all committed to champion five key commitments:

- Lead: using our platforms to amplify the voices of women leaders, within our organisations and beyond.
- Represent: seeking gender diverse representation when hosting and participating in panels and round tables.
- Embed: striving to include gender analysis in the design, implementation and evaluation of our activities.
- Include: making our organisations great places for people of all genders to work and ensuring our internal policies fulfil that aim.
- Mobilise: working as a collective of gender equality champions, and developing and sharing best practice to together implement this Pledge.

Some examples of commitments made under the Pledge for Progress include:

- The Confederation of British Industry will 'lead' by empowering women business leaders through the UK-India Women's Leadership Network
- The University of Birmingham's India Institute will ensure 'representation' for women researchers and scientists through fellowships
- Fortis Healthcare will 'embed' policies to build a diverse talent pipeline
- Vistara will 'include' through staff sensitisation programmes to create

an inclusive workplace and work culture.

The British High Commission will 'mobilise' by convening this collective of like-minded partners to share best practice and amplify each other's positive initiatives. In the coming months, the campaign will convene partners to identify key gender equality challenges and review actions partners are undertaking to foster gender-equal practices. Other partners of the Pledge include HCL Technologies, ActionAid India, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Australian High Commission and the High Commission of Canada in India.

**Jan Thompson, Acting High Commissioner to India, said:**

Achieving true gender equality is a priority for us all – in the UK, India, and the world over. Real progress can take time, but it starts with small, practical steps. I am hugely excited to see what we can accomplish by bringing together the best of British, Indian and global expertise under this humble initiative. This is just the start, and I hope that this group of like-minded partners committing to be the change and implementing tangible measures in their own organisations will together deliver truly transformative results.

**Professor Rajendra Srivastava, Dean, Indian School of Business (ISB), said:**

Gender Equality is critical to bring out the full potential of any society and also ensure sustainable development. This is one of the core values that ISB cherishes and attributes its success story to. With nearly 40% women in our flagship Post Graduate Programme in Management and a similar percentage amongst employees, we are getting there. Most recently, we have launched 'ISB Women' – a development programme targeted at our women alumni. I congratulate and support the British High Commission's initiative of Pledge for Progress and hope that through such advocacy initiatives backed by real action, we can build an equitable society.

**Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), said:**

ORF supports the Pledge for Progress. It is essential for all organisations, governments and communities to catalyse a gender-first approach across professions and public life. Our forums, research endeavours and teams are designed for and sensitive to this objective. Gender-positivity is crucial to our common future and for a sustainable, inclusive and just world.

The Pledge for Progress forms part of wider UK-India work on gender equality.

The UK in India network works with state governments, law enforcement agencies, education authorities and businesses in India to empower women as leaders and trailblazers, build better and more economic opportunities for women, and promote girls' education and positive gender roles in schools.

### **Further information**

The Pledge for Progress campaign was launched with a virtual event on 5 November where various signatories shared how they are striving to fulfil the commitments in the Pledge. The event also included an interactive discussion among the signatory organisations exploring ways to collaborate as partners for change on gender equality.

The Pledge for Progress and full list of signatories can be found [here](#).

The UK in India network comprises the British High Commission New Delhi and 9 Deputy High Commissions, trade and consular offices across India. It is the UK's largest overseas network anywhere in the world.

### **UK and India gender equality work**

The UK and India are working together to help ensure women and girls can reach their full potential. Examples of ongoing programmes include:

- Working with the Ministry of Rural Development to strengthen resilience to the impacts of climate change and promote livelihood security among women in rural communities, as part of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.
- Empowering adolescent girls from socio-economically marginalised communities to develop their English, digital and leadership skills.
- Supporting financial inclusion programmes focusing on financial and digital literacy, which have given 12 million Indian women access to credit to build livelihoods. Projects have helped set up or scale 10,000 women-owned micro businesses, created 6,000 jobs, and supported over 270 micro-entrepreneurs.

### **Media**

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