

UN Economic and Social Council:UK statement on gender equality

We all know that the pandemic has halted progress on the long march toward gender equality. Tragically, we have seen a sharp increase in all forms of violence against women and girls. Meanwhile, climate change continues disproportionately to affect women and girls, as a result of displacement, food insecurity and its impact on those living in conflict-affected areas.

We also know that greater gender equality is vital for effective humanitarian action, not least because it harnesses the voices and capabilities of women and girls, alongside men and boys, as leaders, decision-makers, and first responders. The UK remains committed to tackling gender inequality and sexual and gender-based violence in all its forms.

The G7's first ever Compact to tackle the drivers of famine, agreed last month under the UK Presidency, doesn't just mobilise urgent funding for humanitarian assistance. It also commits the G7 to support action to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation, and reduce the economic harm and health impacts experienced by women and girls in conflicts and crises.

The Grand Bargain provides a unique platform for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action. Through membership of its Facilitation Group, we have supported an increased focus on gender equality in the next iteration of the agreement, including funding for national and locally-led women's organisations that is flexible, predictable and transparent. We also recently renewed our commitment to support and promote gender equality and inclusion in humanitarian action through the Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies.

The climate crisis and the pandemic risk reversing progress towards gender equality. We can't let this happen. At COP26 in Glasgow we will champion inclusion and amplify the voices and solutions of women, girls and others whose views are often marginalised, empowering them as decision-makers, advocates and leaders. We believe this will support women and girls, their families, and their communities to be more resilient in the face of climate change.

We are also working to ensure all girls can access twelve years of quality education by tabling, with the UAE, an ambitious resolution at the Human Rights Council. And, next month, we and Kenya are co-hosting a Global Education Summit to raise funds for the Global Partnership for Education to get children back into school and learning. Education empowers and equips girls to lead change in their communities.

It is vital to ensure the systematic and meaningful participation of women and girls, and women-groups, as change agents and leaders, and prioritise and finance responses to sexual and gender based violence, if we are successfully

to address the differential and disproportionate humanitarian and climate impacts faced by women and girls. The UK is and will remain at the heart of this global effort.