

# Making the Case for Gender Equality

Male allies may need to defend their commitment to gender equality in different parliamentary contexts, explaining to others that it is both *the right thing to do* from a moral standpoint and *the smart thing to do* given its benefits to economic and social development. The talking points below can be used in discussions with colleagues on the importance of supporting and investing in this agenda.

## Women's participation strengthens political parties

- Parties that adopt reforms to promote gender equality can increase their support base and make potential electoral gains through access to new groups of voters<sup>1</sup>
- Higher numbers of women members correlate with greater efforts by parties to fight corruption<sup>2</sup>

## Gender equality enhances democratic governance and citizen trust in institutions

- Countries where women hold more than 30% of the seats in political bodies are more inclusive, egalitarian, and democratic<sup>3</sup>
- Equitable representation in governments and parties increases citizen perceptions of credibility and legitimacy, and increases levels of support<sup>4</sup>

## Improving gender equality in the workforce is good for businesses

- Companies with more women on their board of directors are more profitable, have higher sales, and see greater return on invested capital<sup>5</sup>
- Eliminating discrimination against women workers and managers would increase work productivity by 25-40%<sup>6</sup>

## Women's economic empowerment has national and global economic benefits

- Enabling more women to join the workforce could boost the world's economy by \$12 trillion USD over the next decade<sup>7</sup>
- There can be a \$7 USD return for every dollar invested in programs to improve income generation for women<sup>8</sup>

## Gender equality helps to achieve sustainable development

- Higher levels of gender equality are associated with lower rates of poverty, higher standing in the Human Development Index, and less environmental degradation<sup>9</sup>
- Out of the 169 SDG targets, economists found eliminating gender-based violence to be one of 19 that would yield the highest social benefits from investing in its achievement<sup>10</sup>

## Pursuing gender equality as part of the national development strategy also grows the economy

- Increasing women and girls' access to the internet could boost national GDP<sup>11</sup>
- Each USD spent on family planning can save governments up to \$6 on health, housing, water, and other public services<sup>12</sup>

## Incorporating gender equality into education results in better health outcomes

- Maternal mortality would fall by 66% if all women completed primary education, and each additional year of education has been found to decrease child mortality by 9.5%<sup>13,14</sup>
- Educating boys and men on responsible sexual behaviour can reduce school pregnancy rates by two-thirds<sup>15</sup>

## Gender equality improves quality of life for all members of society

- Agricultural yield could increase by 20-30% if women farmers had equal access to resources, which could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17%<sup>16</sup>
- Women's political participation can improve socio-economic conditions, as many will more readily prioritise poverty reduction and service delivery than male counterparts<sup>17</sup>

## Gender equality is critical to adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change

- Corporations led by women are more focused on sustainability, and countries with more women in parliament are more likely to ratify environmental treaties<sup>18,19</sup>
- Meeting women's family planning needs would decrease global carbon emissions by 8-15%—the equivalent of stopping all current deforestation<sup>20</sup>

## Families are strengthened by equitable gender relations

- Equitable division of responsibilities related to managing the home, paid employment, and parenting benefits all members of a household<sup>21</sup>
- If women and men were to share unpaid tasks equally, women would gain 5 hours of time per week which could be dedicated to education, productive pursuits, or self-care<sup>22</sup>

## Sources

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