

JOINT PRESS RELEASE: Cross-Sectoral Commitment from Four Leading Organizations to Achieve the Global Goals through a Gender Lens

NEW YORK, 26 Sept - Acknowledging the world's insufficient progress towards achieving the 2030 Global Goals and determined to accelerate our collective efforts, the leading global impact business Dalberg, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), the Indian not-for-profit Educate Girls and the UN Agency UNICEF signed the *Neutral is Not Enough* pledge to place gender inclusion at the center of their organizations' efforts. This pledge was signed at a jointly hosted event of the same name, which discussed how achieving any and all of the Global Goals demands a gender lens, and how we must start working differently.

Only 10 years remain to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and momentum towards meeting these goals needs to significantly increase in order to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for all – the key ambitions set out in the SDGs. For example, only four of 19 basic needs indicators are on-track to deliver at least half of the intended progress by 2030.

Women and girls are being left behind across the Global Goals. The 2019 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Gender Index, which looks at gender progress across 14 SDGs, shows that nearly 40% of the world's girls and women – 1.4 billion – live in countries failing on gender equality across these SDGs and another 1.4 billion live in countries that 'barely pass'.

Working with women and girls is both the right and the smart thing to do, and will not be achieved without deliberate, gender-inclusive efforts. For example, closing the gender productivity gap, whereby women farmers produce 20-30% less than men, would contribute to increasing agricultural outputs by 2.5-4% globally. This would improve nutrition and dietary diversity through reducing the population in a state of hunger by 12-17% globally, and reducing poverty through agricultural growth.

In recognition that the Global Goals will only be achieved through cross-sector commitment, each organization signed the pledge in the hope that other businesses, foundations, NGOs and UN Agencies will follow suit. Each organization will fulfil the pledge and support their longstanding commitments to gender-related issues by announcing the following commitments:

- **Dalberg** will proactively apply a gender lens across their portfolio of work in all sectors, by deliberately drawing out the gendered dimensions of a given problem or opportunity and developing solutions that take into account the needs and realities of women and girls.
- **CIFF** will incorporate further meaningful youth engagement into their portfolio, ensuring programs are developed both with and for young women and girls. More specifically, CIFF are developing the GIRL Capital strategy, working towards providing girls and

young women with long-term personal agency, opportunities, and access to quality education and a successful transition to employment.

- **Educate Girls** will scale its model to 35,000 most marginalized villages with up to 1.5million out of school girls.
- **UNICEF**, through its Gender Action Plan, will integrate gender considerations across all our programmes and operations so that every child has every right.

Yana Kakar, Dalberg Advisor's Global Managing Partner, said, "There is no such thing as gender neutral approach if we are serious about achieving the Global Goals. Not taking into account the needs and realities of women and girls sets us and our efforts back. And yet 62% of \$117 billion in OECD ODA commitments are gender neutral. We must do more, and that is why Dalberg senior leadership commits to steering our portfolio towards addressing the needs and realities of women and girls, and bringing a gender lens to the work we do with all our partners across any and all sectors – whether that is in agriculture, health, energy, or economic development writ large."

Hisham Mundol, Executive Director in India, said, "We are both thrilled and privileged to support such an important pledge. Young women and girls' rights are not only human rights but are also essential to achieve national and global goals. Unless the root causes that contribute to their inequality, poverty and lack of opportunity are tackled, progress simply cannot happen. The empowerment and prosperity of girls and young women is integral to such success, and ClIFF's work on GIRL Capital seeks to fulfill this purpose. For girls and young women all over the world, ClIFF pledges to keep their context and aspirations central to our investments."

Safeena Husain, Educate Girls Founder and Executive Director, said, "It is very heartening to be on this platform because investment in girls' education is by far the best investment the world can make. Girls and women, especially in the middle- and lower-income countries have always been marginalized and I strongly feel that intentionality and partnerships like this one could propel "neutral is not enough" to be a template for like-minded and strategic organizations to come together and help expedite the gender progress across 14 SDGs."

Carla Haddad Mardini, UNICEF Director of Public Partnerships, said, "Every child, both girls and boys, must have every right. Yet in early adolescence, the life trajectories for girls and boys begin to diverge. Girls will face more poverty, exclusion and marginalization. Their vulnerability to violence increases during adolescence and worsens in emergency settings. If we are to achieve the Global Goals, it's imperative that girls and women are at the top of our agenda."

Press contacts:

Dalberg is an impact-driven firm with 26 offices worldwide that provides strategy, human-centred design, research, data, implementation and investment advisory services to partners across the public, private and philanthropic sectors. Follow Dalberg on [Twitter](#).

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The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) is an independent philanthropic organisation, with offices in Addis Ababa, Beijing, London, Nairobi and New Delhi. Established in 2003, CIFF works with a wide range of partners seeking to transform the lives of children and adolescents across the world. CIFF's areas of work include maternal and child health, adolescent sexual health, nutrition, education and income generation, child protection and supporting smart ways to slow down and stop climate change.

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Educate Girls is a not-for-profit organization that focuses on mobilizing communities for girls' education in India's rural and educationally backward areas. Educate Girls currently operates successfully in over 14,000 villages in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. By engaging with a huge base of community volunteers, Educate Girls helps to identify, enrol, and retain out-of-school girls and to improve foundational skills in literacy and numeracy for all children (both girls and boys).

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