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FACT SHEET: USAID HIGHLIGHTS GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENTS AT 68th SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

BACKGROUND

USAID is committed to strengthening financing for gender equality globally, which we highlighted at the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the United Nation's largest annual gathering on gender equality and women's empowerment. These commitments, aligned with the priority theme of this year's CSW, include a focus on strengthening care infrastructure; jointly addressing gender equality in agrifood systems; advancing the [Women in the Digital Economy Initiative](#)—which brings together public and private partners to invest in closing the gender digital divide; and growing the [Women in the Sustainable Economy Initiative](#)—which supports women's jobs, training, and leadership in industries such as energy and natural resource management that are critical to our future and the future of our planet.

Care Infrastructure

Launched New Partnership to Support Care Workers: USAID announced a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ford Foundation and the Care for All with Respect and Equity (CARE) Fund to advance decent work for care workers worldwide. The MOU will amplify USAID's commitment to investing in care infrastructure and is an ongoing partnership open to additional donors. In alignment with this MOU, USAID, the Ford Foundation, and the CARE Fund are partnering to support “Together We Care: Partnerships for Equitable Health Systems,” an activity implemented by UNI Global Union. This partnership builds on USAID's previously pledged \$4 million towards the activity, with commitments by the Ford Foundation and the CARE Fund of \$300,000 and \$500,000, respectively. “Together We Care: Partnerships for Equitable Health Systems” will advance women's economic security and resilient health and care systems. Its objectives are to strengthen community health and care workers' representation through unions and worker organizations; train women leaders; support advocacy for decent work and the formalization of informal workers; and address gender-based violence, harassment, and stigma. USAID is supporting programming in Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ghana, and Philippines, with partners supporting additional programming in Brazil.

Gender Equality in Agrifood Systems

Established 2030 Target to Reach Gender Parity in Access to Agricultural Financing: Access to financial services—savings, credit, insurance and payments—is critical for women across agrifood systems to invest in their farms, seek economic opportunities off-farm, increase their incomes, and build resilience and economic security. In FY 2022, through our programs, women accessed only \$0.47 of agricultural financing for each dollar accessed by men. To address this gap, the United States announced a new Feed the Future FY2030 target to reach gender parity in access to finance through our programs, ensuring that women will have equal access to agriculture financing.

Supporting Increased Financing for Women-Led Agricultural Small-and-Medium Enterprises in Africa: At last year's UN General Assembly, USAID and Norway announced the Financing for Agricultural Small and Medium Enterprises in Africa (FASA) Fund to spur investment in Africa's agricultural growth. Working with the U.S. Congress, USAID and Norway will each provide an initial commitment of \$35 million to the Fund in order to de-risk investment in agri-SMEs in Africa. One of FASA's priorities is to eliminate barriers for women business owners and farmers to tools and services. To advance this priority, USAID announced FASA's commitment to apply the 2X gender lens investment criteria to support women in agrifood systems through improved access to entrepreneurship and leadership opportunities, decent and skilled employment, finance, and products and services to enhance their economic participation in the sector.

Advancing Women's Economic Security Investment in Malawi through Feed the Future Peanut Innovation Lab: In Malawi, USAID—as part of our [GROW](#) commitment—is investing \$2.7

million to secure women farmers' economic futures by providing them the tools to succeed and build resilience to shocks. With additional funding from Irish Aid, the Feed the Future Peanut Innovation Lab (Innovation Lab)—USAID/Malawi's flagship Feed the Future program—is undertaking concerted actions, together with local private sector and civil society partners, to help women maintain control over peanut production (traditionally a “woman’s crop”), even after the crop is commercialized and its value goes up. In addition, the Innovation Lab has launched a five-year research project to understand the impacts of Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) training, which engages women, their partners, and communities to tackle discriminatory gender norms in agricultural production and household decision-making.

Launched Research on Increasing Women’s Agricultural Income: USAID launched the [Improved Activity Cost-Effectiveness Review on Women’s Agriculture Income](#) report on evidence-based approaches to empower women across agrifood and water systems. The report identified that the most effective interventions to increase women’s agricultural income include: (1) providing lump-sum cash grants for women in rural households to enable investment and build empowerment; (2) training to shift intra-household decision dynamics through GALS; (3) formalizing women’s land rights and expanding co-titling; and (4) subsidizing/financing adoption of inputs or equipment adapted to specific constraints faced by women, related to their time, mobility, or access to complementary inputs.

Women in the Sustainable Economy Initiative (WISE)

Supported African Women-led Funds Promoting Climate Solutions: Through the Climate Gender Equity Fund (CGEF), a WISE flagship program, USAID and its partners announced grants to two African women-led funds—ATG Samata and wCap Limited—to accelerate financing for women-led and women-benefiting organizations that address climate change across Africa. [CGEF](#) is a public-private partnership that expands financial inclusion for women-led organizations and businesses focused on advancing sustainable economic growth by increasing access to climate finance for investment vehicles, intermediaries, businesses, and community-based organizations in developing countries.

Women in the Digital Economy Fund (WiDEF) and Initiative

Launch of WiDEF’s First Request for Applications and Community of Practice: WiDEF launched its first request for applications to close the gender digital divide and announced the WiDEF Advisory Council, a nine-member group of Global South gender digital divide experts. The [request for applications](#) will be open to local organizations and focus on programs that support digital access and affordability; the design and development, especially women-led development, of relevant products and tools; digital literacy and skills training; online safety and security; and sex-disaggregated data and research.

In addition, USAID launched the WiDEF Community of Practice with governments, private sector companies, foundations, multilateral organizations, and civil society partners committed to closing the gender digital divide as part of the [Women in the Digital Economy Initiative](#). The Community of Practice highlights ongoing initiatives by key stakeholders, facilitates matchmaking and collaboration, and provides a platform for knowledge-sharing and cooperation.