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Gender Issues in the G20 and the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

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The Group of Twenty (G20) addresses Gender issues from the perspective of women's economic and financial insertion in the global economy and development. The Gender issue was incorporated to the G20 agenda from 2012 on and its treatment has been progressively widened and deepened. In 2018, during the Argentine Presidency of the G20, our country forwarded a Gender mainstreaming strategy for the whole Mechanism's Agenda.

Key words: gender; equality; parity; woman; inclusion; mainstreaming strategy; cross-cutting issues; gaps; development.

Abstract

The question of gender equality had not been specifically treated by the G20 until the Brisbane Summit (2014), when Leaders agreed on an ambitious objective, that is, to reduce the gender labour gap by 25 percent by the year 2025. During the German Presidency (2017), progress was made towards a greater inclusion of girls and women in the digital economy and the labour market in general.

In 2018, the Argentine Presidency forwarded an initiative to apply a cross-cutting strategy to the issue, by incorporating a gender perspective to the whole

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G20 agenda. This led to specific proposals in each Ministerial Meeting and to the adoption of concrete recommendations by the Leaders' Summit in Buenos Aires. Recommended measures were oriented to close all kind of gender gaps: labour, pay, digital, as well as financial gaps, and to achieve a full participation of women in the world's economic development.

The participation of all members of society in the global economy, regardless of their gender, is a pre-requisite to reach a really fair and sustainable development.

To achieve this objective, it is indispensable to eradicate structural inequities in labour, finance, education and health, with the ultimate objective of reaching equality among genders.

The problems of a global nature that the international community as a whole is currently facing, can only be solved through common strategies, multilaterally convened.

This is the spirit that led to the creation of the Group of Twenty -G20- in the late nineties, as well as to its renovation in 2008, as a reaction to the severe financial crisis that was taking place at that moment.

The G20 has functioned since its conception, as an informal mechanism whose recommendations are not mandatory for its members, though they generally inform their public policies and contribute to the coordination of responses to the international community's most urging problems.

Within the mechanism's framework, of a predominant economic and financial character, the Leaders of the most prominent

developed and emerging countries, – representatives of the systemically significant economies– debate under the rule of consensus the strategies which could solve the central issues in the international conjuncture. The G20 agenda, initially centered almost exclusively on economic and financial issues, has been progressively widened to deal with subjects such as sustainable infrastructure and alimentation, employment, education, equity and anti-corruption policies, though –in every case– from the original optic of economy and finance.

In this respect, it is worth noting that Member countries in the G20 represent, as a whole, approximately 85% of the global IBP, 80% of global trade and two thirds of the world's population.

The G20 is formed by the twenty most significant economies in the planet: Germany, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, South Korea, the United States, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, United Kingdom, South Africa, Turkey and the European Union.

In 2018, Argentina held the Group of Twenty's Chairmanship and invited Chile, the Netherlands and Spain –which is usually invited to the meetings– to participate in the G20 deliberations, as well as the Chairmans of the

CARICOM –Caribbean Community– (Jamaica), ASEAN (Singapur), the African Union (Rwanda) and the New Alliance for Africa's Development (Senegal).

Likewise, having in mind the priority given by the Argentine Presidency to infrastructure for development, other organizations that usually participate of the G20's Working Groups's meetings prior to the negotiations were invited: the Inter-american Development Bank (IDB) and the Latin-American Development Bank, along with other international organizations, such as the United Nations Organization (UN), the World Bank (WB), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In the framework of its strategy of international insertion, Argentina gives preeminence to the G20, as a means to participate in the debate and consensual proposals to solve the main challenges in the global agenda. Having held its Presidency and still participating of the G20's Troika together with Japan –present Presidency– and Saudi Arabia –next Presidency– during 2018 and 2019, has constituted one of the most defying diplomatic challenges in the recent history of

our country.

The G20's ways of functioning

Background work in the G20 is mainly developed in two channels: Sherpas' and Finance's, through various Working Groups with specific responsibilities, and whose conclusions and recommendations are brought to consideration of the Sherpas's Meetings, the respective Ministers' Meetings and, finally, to the Leaders' Summit.

The Sherpas' channel coordinates the country's participation in the G20 and addresses subjects such as development, trade, employment, agriculture, energy, food security and anti-corruption policies, among others, as well as the procedural rules for its functioning. The Finance's channel concentrates its works on economic and financial matters.

To this organization at governmental level we count, additionally, on contributions by the Engagement Groups, which are integrated by representatives of civil society in their respective focus areas. These Engagement Groups present their conclusions and recommendations to the Sherpas' meetings which in turn elevate them to the Leaders' Summits for their consideration.

Objectives of the Argentine Presidency 2018

According to G20's practices, the country that holds the rotating Presidency defines the working agenda for that year and proposes the main axes around which it will evolve.

Under the premise "Building consensus for a fair and sustainable development" Argentina proposed as objectives for 2018, the "Future of Work", "Infrastructure for Development" and a "Sustainable Food Future", the three of them conceived as pillars of the Mechanism's whole agenda.

To these objectives, the Argentine Presidency added two other fundamental axes, also considered from a cross-cutting perspective: the "Gender issue" and "Fight against Corruption". It is worth noting, nevertheless, that in the development of the G20's work during 2018, the anti-corruption measures were discussed mainly in the framework of the Working Group specially devoted to that matter, while the Gender strategy was effectively mainstreamed to the whole agenda.

Evolution of the Gender issue's treatment in the G20

The Gender issue was initially included in the

Leaders' Declaration issued from the Leaders' Summit that took place in Los Cabos, Mexico, on June 18th and 19th, 2012.

In its paragraph 23, the Declaration states:

"23. We commit to take concrete actions to overcome the barriers hindering women's full economic and social participation and to expand economic opportunities for women in G20 economies. We also express our firm commitment to advance gender equality in all areas, including skills training, wages and salaries, treatment in the workplace, and responsibilities in care-giving".

In paragraph 24, it is demanded from the Ministers of Labor the follow-up of this commitment:

"24. We ask our Labor Ministers to review progress made on this agenda and we welcome consultations with social partners. In this regard, we appreciate the contribution of the Business-20 (B20) and Labor-20 (L20) to the process of the G20 under the Mexican Presidency".

Paragraph 53 in the same Declaration deals with women's and youth's access to financial services and education:

"53. We recognize the need for women and youth to gain access to financial services and financial education, ask the GPMI, the OECD/INFE, and the World Bank to identify barriers

they may face and call for a progress report to be delivered by the next Summit."

In paragraph 54, though without specifically mentioning 'women', there is a reference to the need of finding innovative solutions in order to eliminate barriers that impede financial inclusion:

"54. We welcome the launch of the Mexico Financial Inclusion Challenge: Innovative Solutions for Unlocking Access, a call for innovations that address barriers to financial inclusion through the creation of valuable, affordable, secure, and comprehensive financial services".

The Declaration issued as a result of the Summit held in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on September 5th and 6th, 2013, included several paragraphs dedicated to inclusion -and, in particular, financial inclusion- of human groups considered "vulnerable" or "underrepresented", such as youth and women. In that context, it was decided, together with the World's Bank International Finance Corporation (IFC-WB), the launching of the Women Finance Hub:

"31. We recognize the importance of ensuring that underrepresented and vulnerable groups are given both incentives and support to find productive and rewarding jobs. Special

attention must be given to those groups facing the greatest barriers to finding or remaining in employment such as youth, women, long-term unemployed, low skilled workers, single parents, people with disabilities and older workers. We are committed therefore to develop and strengthen tailored activation strategies for these groups that combine income support for those out of work with measures to improve their employability through job search assistance, work experience, public employment programs, hiring subsidies, conditional transfers and training as well as reduced obstacles for employment as per country's circumstances. These measures should be linked to more general efforts to provide better opportunities to gain formal employment (...)."

"80. We welcome practical tools to measure financial literacy and evaluate financial education programs... We welcome progress reports on barriers for women and youth in financial inclusion and education prepared by the OECD/INFE and the World Bank Group and endorse the OECD/INFE policy guidance on addressing women and girls' needs for financial education. We endorse the recommendations of the progress report on women and finance, including that the GPFI, the OECD and the World Bank Group conduct a stocktaking of

promising and successful initiatives to enhance women's financial inclusion(...)."

"81 (fourth par.) "Financial Inclusion: Enhanced coherence with the G20 finance track through the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI) to pursue efforts to strengthen financial inclusion including work to further reducing the global average cost of transferring remittances to 5% including through innovative result-based mechanisms, to enhance financial literacy and consumer protection for the poor and to foster access to finance for investment, for SMEs for growth, job creation and poverty reduction; and together with the IFC launching the Women Finance Hub".¹

Even when Gender issues started to be considered at Leaders' Summits in 2012, it was only at the Brisbane Summit –Australia, November 2014– that a specific recommendation on this matter was adopted, fostering a reduction in the labor gap between men and women by 25 per cent by the year 2025, objective which is currently known as the "Brisbane goal 25/25":

"9. Our actions to increase investment, trade and competition will deliver quality jobs. But we must do more to address unemployment, raise participation and create quality jobs. We

agree to the goal of reducing the gap in participation rates between men and women in our countries by 25 per cent by 2025, taking into account national circumstances, to bring more than 100 million women into the labour force, significantly increase global growth and reduce poverty and inequality”.

This “Brisbane goal”, though not yet achieved, guides the efforts to adopt public policies that lead to an effective reduction in the labor gap. The objective of diminishing the labor gap was reassumed in the following Leaders’ Summit, in Antalya, Turquía, celebrated on November 15th and 16th, 2015:

“7. Unemployment, underemployment and informal jobs are significant sources of inequality in many countries and can undermine the future growth prospects of our economies. We are focused on promoting more and better quality jobs in line with our G20 Framework on Promoting Quality Jobs and on improving and investing in skills through our G20 Skills Strategy...

We will continue monitoring the implementation of our Employment Plans as well as our goals to reduce gender participation gap and to foster safer and healthier workplaces also within sustainable global supply chains”.

On the occasion of the Antalya Summit, the

Leaders agreed to the creation of the Women-20 Engagement Group (W20), which would represent from that moment on, the interests and concerns of civil society in Gender issues. It is also in the Antalya Declaration that the question of rural women is specifically mentioned for the first time, in the context of food security and responsible agriculture:

“20. Our work this year supports key areas for sustainable development such as energy access, food security and nutrition, human resource development, quality infrastructure, financial inclusion and domestic resource mobilization. ...We will pay particular attention to the needs of smallholder and family farmers, rural women and youth. We also commit to reducing food loss and waste globally(...)”.

The question of rural women was one of Women-20’s main subjects of interest during the Argentine Presidency.

Among the Annexes to the Antalya Declaration (Documents issued by the Working Groups and Support Documents), the following were included: “Digital Financial Solutions to Advance Women’s Economic Participation” and “Monitoring Progress in Reducing the Gender Gap in Labour Force Participation”. This is proof of the increasing

attention that was given to Gender issues in the G20 mechanism.

In the Hangzhou Summit, that took place in China on September 4th and 5th 2016, women's issues were dealt with from the point of view of less favored groups' inclusion. In paragraph 6 of the Hangzhou Declaration there is a detail of the principles on which the adoption of policies and actions agreed by the Leaders are adopted:

"6. In this context, we, the G20, as the premier forum for international economic cooperation, forge a comprehensive and integrated narrative for strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth, and thereby adopt the attached package of policies and actions –the Hangzhou Consensus– based on the following:

(...) Inclusiveness. We will work to ensure that our economic growth serves the needs of everyone and benefits all countries and all people including in particular women, youth and disadvantaged groups".

Further on, when dealing with technological innovation and capacity training matters, as well as in the field of the New Industrial Revolution, the compromise with women's access to the respective benefices is reaffirmed:

"12. To achieve innovation-driven growth and the creation of innovative ecosystems, we support dialogue and cooperation on innovation,

which covers a wide range of domains with science and technology innovation at its core. We deliver the G20 2016 Innovation Action Plan. We commit to pursue pro-innovation strategies and policies, support investment in science, technology and innovation (STI), and support skills training for STI –including support for the entry of more women into these fields– and mobility of STI human resources...".

"13. To seize the opportunity that the new industrial revolution (NIR) presents for industry, particularly manufacturing and related services, we deliver the G20 New Industrial Revolution Action Plan.

We are committed to supporting our workforces throughout this transition and to ensuring that the benefits of the NIR extend to all, including women, youth and disadvantaged groups. We call for cooperation to maximize the benefits and mitigate the negative impact of the expected technological and industrial changes (...)".

The Hangzhou Declaration also includes, in particular, the Leaders' support to women's entrepreneurs' and youth's access to global value chains:

"30. We also support policies that encourage firms of all sizes, in particular women and

youth entrepreneurs, women-led firms and SMEs, to take full advantage of global value chains (GVCs), and that encourage greater participation, value addition and upward mobility in GVCs by developing countries, particularly low-income countries (LICs)...”.

In the launching, on the same occasion, of the G20’s Initiative for the Support to Africa and Less Developed Countries’ Industrialization, the need to prioritize women’s and youth’s access to domestic and foreign investment is underlined:

“35. We launch the G20 Initiative on Supporting Industrialization in Africa and LDCs to strengthen their inclusive growth and development potential through voluntary policy options including: ...and leveraging domestic and external finance and supporting equitable access to finance –with a focus on women and youth (...)”.

In the Hamburg Declaration issued as a result of the Leaders’ Summit held in that German city on July 7th and 8th, 2017, Gender issues are included already in its Preamble and in several paragraphs of the document:

Preamble: “We, the Leaders of the G20, met in Hamburg, Germany, on 7-8 July 2017 to address major global economic challenges and to contribute to prosperity and well-being.

Mastering the challenges of our age and shaping

an interconnected world is the common goal of the G20 as our premier forum for international economic cooperation...

...We are resolved to tackle common challenges to the global community, including terrorism, displacement, poverty, hunger and health threats, job creation, climate change, energy security, and inequality including gender inequality, as a basis for sustainable development and stability. We will continue to work together with other, including developing countries, to address these challenges, building on the rules based international order...”.

The Hamburg Declaration included, for the first time, a specific paragraph on women’s empowerment, in which the need for equal access for men and women to labor market, property, quality employment and financial services is recognized:

“29. Women’s Empowerment. Enhanced equal access to the labour market, property, quality employment and financial services for women and men are fundamental for achieving gender equality and full realization of their rights as well as a prerequisite for sustainable and inclusive growth. We are making progress in achieving our 2014 Brisbane commitment to reduce the gender gap in labour force

participation by 25 percent by 2025 but agree that more needs to be done. We also commit to take further action to improve the quality of female employment and eliminate employment discrimination, and reduce gender compensation gaps and provide women with protection from all forms of violence. We will improve women's access to labour markets through provision of quality education and training, supporting infrastructure, public services and social protection policies and legal reforms, where appropriate”.

G20 Leaders also recognized the importance of breaching every kind of digital gap, including the gender digital gap, with the purpose of reaching full inclusion and global and sustainable development, according to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's objectives:

“10. Harnessing Digitalization: Digital transformation is a driving force of global, innovative, inclusive and sustainable growth and can contribute to reducing inequality and achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To this end, we need to bridge digital divides along multiple dimensions, including income, age, geography and gender. We will strive to ensure that all our citizens are digitally connected by 2025 and

especially welcome infrastructure development in low-income countries in that regard. We will promote digital literacy and digital skills in all forms of education and life-long learning...”.

In that framework, the Leaders approved the launching of the #eSkills4Girls initiative, a platform to promote opportunities and the equal participation of women and girls in digital economy:

“30. Digitalization and access to ICT serve as powerful catalysts for the economic empowerment and inclusion of women and girls. Access to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) related trainings and occupations is therefore key to establish an enabling environment for women's empowerment. We welcome the launch of the #eSkills4Girls² initiative to promote opportunities and equal participation for women and girls in the digital economy, in particular in low income and developing countries (see Annex)”.

From the standpoint of financial inclusion, G20 Leaders celebrated the launching, by the World Bank, of the Women Entrepreneurs Financing Initiative (We-Fi) and decided to establish the Business Women Leaders' Task Force (BWLT), which was brought into

functioning during the G20's Argentine Presidency. From its conception, it was foreseen that the BWLT were composed by Business and high level Executive Women and that it would work in close cooperation with two Engagement Groups: Business-20 (B20) and Women-20 (W20):

“31. In order to scale up support for women's entrepreneurship, we welcome the launch of the Women Entrepreneurs Financing Initiative (We-Fi), housed at the World Bank Group (see Annex). The We-Fi will support ongoing G20 efforts to reduce barriers to financial inclusion and increase women's access to capital, markets and technical assistance as well as contribute to achieving the goals of the G20 Africa Partnership and the G20 Entrepreneurship Action Plan. We will also establish a Business Women Leaders' Taskforce, which will, in close cooperation with the W20 and B20, bring together business women from G20 countries to examine ways to increase women's participation in the economy and will make recommendations at next year's summit on the implementation of G20 commitments regarding the economic empowerment of women”.

In the same direction, the Leaders expressed their support to the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion and to the G20 Action Plan

for Financial Inclusion:

“28. The Annual Progress Report documents for the first time progress on selected prior G20 commitments on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Recognizing the importance of financial inclusion as a multiplier for poverty eradication, job creation, gender equality, and women's empowerment, we support the ongoing work of the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion and welcome the 2017 G20 Financial Inclusion Action Plan. We note the UN Secretary-General's proposal to establish an International Finance Facility for education taking into account other existing initiatives, such as the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait, and look forward to examining it in further detail under Argentina's Presidency with a view to making recommendations on it”.

With the purpose of surmounting challenges and reinforcing opportunities in African countries, as well as to comply with the 2030 Agenda's Objectives, the G20 Africa Partnership was launched in Hamburg. This Partnership is oriented to the creation of decent jobs, in particular for women and youth.

“35. Africa Partnership: We launch the G20

Africa Partnership in recognition of the opportunities and challenges in African countries as well as the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Our joint efforts will foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development, in response to the needs and aspirations of African countries, contributing to create decent employment particularly for women and youth, thus helping to address poverty and inequality as root causes of migration. The Partnership includes related initiatives, such as #eSkills4Girls, Rural Youth Employment, African Renewable Energy and facilitates investment Compacts, as outlined in the Annex”.

In the paragraph concerned with the needs and human rights of refugees and migrants, a special emphasis is given to groups considered vulnerable, including women at risk and children:

“42. We commit to addressing the distinct needs of refugees and migrants, in particular close to their region of origin and, when applicable, to enable them to return home safely. At the same time, we place special emphasis on vulnerable groups, including women at risk and children, particularly those unaccompanied, and to protecting the human rights of all persons regardless of their status”.

On this occasion, four Annexes related to gender gaps’ reduction were joined to the Hamburg Declaration:

- An initiative on the financing of women entrepreneurs (“Women Entrepreneurs Financing Initiative”);
- An initiative for girls and women’s digital education and inclusion (“G20 Initiative #eSkills4Girls”);
- Policy recommendations to reduce labour and pay gender gaps through the improvement of labour conditions in women’s work (“G20 Policy Recommendation to reduce gender gaps in labour force participation and pay by improving women’s job quality”), which had been agreed upon by the G20’s Employment Ministers;
- A document on women’s experiences – opportunities and challenges– in the digital sector (“Women’s Pathways to the Digital Sector: Stories of Opportunities and Challenges”), elaborated by the Working Group on Digital Economy.

Mainstreaming Gender Strategy

We thus enter 2018, year in which the

Argentine Republic assumed G20's rotative Presidency. Since 2012, former G20 Presidencies had included the Gender issue in the framework of different specific matters and in 2017, for the first time, into a paragraph specifically referred to women's empowerment.

The innovative approach of the Argentine Presidency was to incorporate a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy to the whole G20's Agenda. The reasons that justify this approach are fully explained in the Conceptual Framework presented by our country in the beginning of its Presidency:

“Empowering women: As a result of structural inequality, policy action has different implications for women and men. That is why it is mandatory for our presidency to foster a gender mainstreaming strategy across the whole G20 agenda. We know that the only way to achieve truly fair and sustainable development is by ensuring that women and men will benefit equally from it. We will boost women's empowerment, the elimination of gender disparities in employment, science, technology and education, and protection from all forms of gender-based violence”.

This Argentine initiative –based on the conviction that a fair and sustainable development can only be achieved by

eradicating social and gender gaps in economy, finance, employment, education and health– took into account the world tendencies in the treatment of this matter.

Indeed, public and private international organizations, such as the United Nations Organization –in particular UN Women–, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and different “think tanks” at international level, which have consistently dealt with Gender matters, are fostering a “mainstreaming gender strategy” to tackle disparities and equity deficits.

The Argentine initiative to deal with all subjects in the G20 Agenda from a Gender perspective, was proposed by the Presidency at its very first stages and enthusiastically accepted by G20 Members.

Within the Sherpa's Team, the Presidency established a Coordination Unit for the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, with the responsibility of fostering and supervising the inclusion and treatment of Gender issues in each area of work.

This Coordination Unit established a direct line for consultations and coordination with all Working Groups, with the purpose of developing the proposals received as a legacy

from former Presidencies –such as the reduction of labour and pay gaps– and, at the same time, advancing on new, concrete and measurable proposals in the fields of digital, financial, educational, health and infrastructural inclusion. On the other hand, since the G20 is a predominantly financial and economic forum, Gender issues were mainly dealt with from that perspective. The engagements the Leaders assumed tend to the elimination of all barriers that hinder a full economic and financial participation of women, as well as to achieve equality between men and women in every field, including equality in labour and salaries, equal distribution of care responsibilities and equal access to financial services, among others.

During 2018, the Gender issue was included in each G20 Group's works, as well in the Sherpas Channel as in the Financial channel, with different degrees of enforcement, depending on the main objective of each Group. In some cases, the Gender issue was jointly treated by two or more Working Groups, as in the case of Digital Inclusion, which was dealt with by the Digital Economy, the Employment and the Education Working Groups.

On a parallel level, it was noted that the Engagement Groups identified themselves with the Mainstreaming Strategy to cope with Gender

issues in their respective areas of interest, which allowed a close cooperation, in particular with Women20, given the specificity of its interests.

It was interesting to observe the interaction between the Engagement Groups and the governmental Working Groups, thus creating a synergy which allowed to look closer into the different subjects and to put forward very valuable proposals.

Within the Women-20's framework, there was a great amount of work throughout the whole year, around four main axes: Labor Inclusion, Financial Inclusion, Digital Inclusion and Rural Women. These four issues related to the Presidency's priorities, accepted by all the other G20 Member States. That approach paved the way for a deep and enriching exchange between the governmental sector and civil society, represented in this case by the W20, with the purpose of reaching consensual solutions to problems that affect parity among genders.

Other Engagement Groups also established working groups specifically centered on Gender issues, as it was the case with Think-20 (T20), representatives of G20 Member States' Think Tanks, Civil-20 (C20) which represents civil society, or Labor-20 (L20),

integrated by representatives of Member States' Labor organizations.

The Sherpa's Team also participated very actively –in particular through the Coordination Unit for the Gender Mainstreaming Initiative– in the constitution and labor of the Business Women Leaders Task Force –BWLTF–, which creation –as it was mentioned before– was decided in the Hamburg Summit, immediately before Argentina's G20 Presidency.

The BWLTF, integrated by business women and representatives of private companies and governmental organizations, held two meetings during 2018: the first one in London and the second one in Buenos Aires. The result of its work was translated into Recommendations to the G20 Leaders, which were delivered through the Sherpa's channel. These Recommendations to G20 Governments include measures to achieve greater transparency in women' participation rates in public and private companies at managerial level; support to education policies oriented to surmount social and cultural stereotypes, and to provide boys and girls with incentives to follow STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) careers; certifications to companies that apply care policies and wage transparency, giving visibility to the gap among men and women, among

others.

The Buenos Aires Declaration, issued as a result of the Leaders' Summit that took place on November 30th and December 1st, 2018, reflects the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy already in its Preamble: "1. Ten years since the first G20 Leaders' Summit, we met in Buenos Aires –Argentina–, on 30 November-1 December 2018 to build consensus for fair and sustainable development through an agenda that is people centered and forward-looking.

2. We focused on three pillars: the future of work, infrastructure for development, a sustainable food future and a gender mainstreaming strategy across the whole G20 agenda.

3. We welcome the improved global economic outlook while recognizing that growth has been increasingly uneven and some of the risks we identified have partially materialized. We reaffirm our pledge to achieve strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth, and safeguard against downside risks...".

Paragraph 11 of the Declaration deals specifically with the issue of Gender equality: "11. Achieving gender equality is crucial for fair and sustainable development. We commit to reduce the gap in participation rates

between men and women in line with the related goal of the G20 Brisbane Communiqué, and to promote initiatives aimed at protecting women and girls from discrimination and all forms of gender based violence. We will also foster their economic empowerment by improving labour conditions such as care infrastructure, parental leave and the inclusion of women in managerial levels, and by developing digital skills and increasing their participation in STEM and high tech sectors”.

Other paragraphs in the Buenos Aires Declaration have punctual references to the Gender issue in matters such as labor inclusion or digital inclusion, or references were made indirectly through the “inclusion” concept, since the purpose of the whole exercise was to reduce the number of references in specific subjects by redirecting to main documents in the different Working Groups respective fields, with a comprehensive approach of inclusion and gender equality:

“6. Education is a human right, a strategic public policy for the development of more inclusive, prosperous and peaceful societies, and a key element of early childhood development...

7. We will promote decent work and the improvement of labour conditions focused on formalizing workers, and strengthening social

protection systems and their portability. We will promote increasing labour force participation of underrepresented as well as vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities...

8. To harness the benefits of technology for growth and productivity, we will take measures to boost micro, small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs, bridge the digital gender divide, and improve digital government, infrastructure, and economy measurement...

9. Infrastructure is a key driver for economic prosperity, sustainable development and inclusive growth...

12. Strengthening financial inclusion and mobilizing sustainable finance are important for global growth...”

This comprehensive approach was evident in the inclusion of Gender issues in the different Working Groups’ documents, which were in turn incorporated as Annexes to the G20 2018 Leaders’ Buenos Aires Declaration, such as:

- Ministerial Declaration on Digital Economy: G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting -August 24-
- G20 Education Ministerial Meeting Declaration -September 5-
- G20 Joint Education & Labour and

Employment Ministers' Declaration - September 6-.

Follow-up of the Gender Mainstreaming Initiative in successive G20 Presidencies

Fortunately, meeting Argentine Presidency's expectations, this Gender Mainstreaming Initiative was adopted by the Japanese G20's Presidency in 2019, in the different Working and Engagement Groups, and it was accurately reflected in the Leaders' Declaration (Osaka, July 1st, 2019). Also, gender equality 'in all aspects of G20 policies' and "as a cross-cutting issue at upcoming Summits" was reaffirmed:

"Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth. We reconfirm their importance in all aspects of our policies and as a cross-cutting issue at upcoming Summits."

Indeed, the G20 Leaders' determination to face "global challenges to pave the way towards an inclusive and sustainable development, in accordance to the 2030 Agenda" is already reflected in the Declaration Preamble and reiterated in paragraphs 5., 6., and throughout the whole document.

In addition to all other references regarding the Gender Issue, the Osaka Declaration includes a

specific chapter on Woman's Empowerment, in which every aspect of gender gaps and the policies to overcome them are dealt with. At the same time, Labor Ministers are required to present an annual report on their actions' progress to reach the Brisbane goal.

It is also worth noting the inclusion of the relevance of fighting stereotypes and ending with all forms of discrimination against women.

In addition, the Declaration introduces a recognition to the role of women as agents for peace and in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. This recognition exceeds the field of gender gaps and highlights women's role in international peace and security issues.

Special emphasis is made on the necessity of providing a better education and training to girls and women, specifically mentioning areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, as well as to breaching the digital gap among genders.

It is highlighted as well the importance of encouraging women entrepreneurs and of facilitating women's access to leadership posts, by promoting recognition to private companies that adopt measures oriented to such objective. The Declaration also recognizes the World Bank We-Fi initiative

and the launching of the new private sector alliance for the economic growth of women in that area (EMPOWER).

Women's Empowerment

“22. Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth. We reconfirm their importance in all aspects of our policies and as a cross-cutting issue at upcoming Summits. We note that further progress has been made towards the Brisbane Goal, to reduce the gap in labor force participation between men and women by 25 per cent by 2025. We take note of the progress report Women at Work in G20 countries prepared by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and OECD, and acknowledge the need to accelerate our efforts. Building on the continued efforts by Labour and Employment Ministers, we will exchange our respective progress and actions taken in the G20 towards the Brisbane Goal, including the quality of women's employment, on the basis of the annual report. We will also address the gender gap in unpaid care work which remains a major obstacle to women's participation in the labour market. We commit to take further action to improve the quality of women's employment,

reduce gender pay gaps, and end all forms of discrimination against women and combat stereotypes and to recognize women as agents of peace, and in the prevention and resolution of conflict.

23. We commit to continue support for girls' and women's education and training, including providing quality primary and secondary education, improved access to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education and raising awareness toward eliminating gender stereotypes. In order to close the digital gender gap, we will continue enhancing girls' and women's access to digital technology with a focus on the needs of those in poverty and rural areas. We reaffirm the importance of taking measures to eradicate all gender-based violence, abuse and harassment, including in the digital context. We welcome efforts, particularly by the private sector, to promote women's access to managerial and decision making positions and foster women business leaders and entrepreneurship. We reaffirm the importance of taking measures to support skills development and provide access to funding to promote women's entrepreneurship and welcome the continued implementation of the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative

(We-Fi) in support of women's entrepreneurship in developing countries including in Africa. We recognize the importance of encouraging efforts by the private sector including by acknowledging companies that are taking measures to increase the number of women in management and decision making positions and making gender responsive investments. We welcome the launch of the private sector alliance for the 'Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (EMPOWER)' and call upon the alliance to advocate for the advancement of women in the private sector, and we will take stock of their progress and share their concrete efforts at our upcoming Summits".

Other paragraphs in the Osaka Declaration also refer to the Gender Issue, as a token of the mainstreaming approach applied.

In the Global Finance chapter, specific reference is made to financial inclusion's relevance for global growth, as well as the private sector's participation and transparency in that area:

"19. ...Mobilizing sustainable finance and strengthening financial inclusion are important for global growth. We welcome private sector participation and transparency in these areas."

Likewise, in the Anti-Corruption chapter, Leaders underline the work done by relevant

international organizations on the linkages between Gender and Corruption:

"20. ...In addition, we also welcome the work on the linkages between corruption and gender being undertaken by relevant international organizations".

Those linkages had already been extensively analyzed during the Argentine Presidency, in particular in the framework of the Civil Society Engagement Group –Civil20– works, with the participation of civil experts and government officials from anti-corruption entities.

Labour and Employment

"21. ...Taking into account the commonalities and differences among G20 demographics, we recognize the importance of promoting a healthy and active aging society that enables workers to participate in the labour market at older ages, while continuing to increase participation of youth, women and persons with disabilities in economic activities...".

Tourism

"24. ...We will work to maximize the sector's contribution to the creation of quality jobs

and entrepreneurship, especially for women and youth and in the creative industry...”.

Agriculture

“25We also encourage innovation, skills training and lifelong education for all, in attracting new entrants and empowering youth and women in the agro-food sector...”.

Development

“27. ...We support developing countries in their efforts to advance progress towards the timely implementation of the SDGs in such areas as poverty eradication, quality infrastructure investment, gender equality, health, education...”.

As we can see in the previous citations, the Osaka Leaders’ Declaration reflects a real transversal perspective in the Gender issue’s treatment, dealing specifically with it in practically all G20 Agenda’s items, in accordance with our country’s national interest and with the G20 Argentine Presidency’s Initiative in 2018.

Stereotypes and public policies

The national government has the responsibility to use every available means to eliminate disparities among its citizens through public policies that contribute to remove social and cultural stereotypes and to reduce and eventually eradicate structural inequalities.

Today’s society still confronts us with rigid cultural stereotypes which are difficult to eradicate, specially in some less developed countries or regions. Attitudes, rules, social institutions and discrimination, are factors that result in substantial pay gaps, particularly in less developed G20 Member countries, where women can be family workers without any salary or be employed in the informal labor market. On average, women earn 15% less than their male pairs, though that difference tends to diminish among younger men and women.

Women participation in the labor market is also reduced when children are born in the family since, specially in less developed countries, it is usually the woman who takes care of their up-bringing. Or older people’ care as well. Therefore, it is important to design employment policies that include parental and family leaves, care infrastructure

and other measures that favor equal possibilities for men and women to continue developing their professional career and their participation in family life.

In developing these policies it is also relevant the collaboration between public and private sector: enterprises must assume their share of social responsibility, by developing clear and equitable policies in the management of their human resources, as well as by providing the necessary care infrastructure. The State, in its turn, can promote those private policies through different incentives, such as the establishment of a ranking for companies that apply good employment practices, preferences in public tenders or other measures.

Lesser labor participation of women, a stronger probability that they interrupt their careers to take over family members' care and the higher proportion of part-time jobs among women, along with stereotypes and discrimination, affect the number of women that reach leadership positions.

Gender stereotypes (mental models of what means to be a man or a woman in society) have still a big influence in the choice of studies or professions. When we imagine an engineer, rarely that image comes back as a woman.

The State must contribute to surmount those

stereotypes through a more inclusive education and through legal dispositions oriented to fair and equitable societies, recovering women' role in economic and technologic development. It must pursue, at the same time, an increasing participation of women in technology, through different instruments: in addition to education and capacity building, it must promote the development of infrastructure for a larger and deeper connectivity and the access to new technologies, as well as to provide incentives for women's participation in high impact technological enterprises.

It is also essential to elaborate and adopt national, regional and local budgets with a gender perspective ("gender budgeting"), in order to assure the effective implementation of women capacitation, their empowering, their labor, financial and digital inclusion, and their access to leadership positions. For this perspective to be effective, there is the need for gender disaggregated data, and a proposal of specific, measurable and realistic objectives within a temporal framework, as well as external gender audits. At the same time, it must involve the legislative bodies, for the opportune adoption of legislation that allows the advancement to parity and equality

among all members of society.

We consider that among the necessary public policies to reduce equality gaps between men and women in the G20 Member States, the following general measures should be evaluated:

- To advance towards the Brisbane goal: 25 percent reduction of the labor participation gap by the year 2025 (25 by 25), with concrete and measurable actions.
- To promote women's labor inclusion tending to the elimination of inequalities due to their social condition and applying regional criteria, with special emphasis on rural women's situation.
- To adopt policies oriented to the reduction of the pay gap among men and women.
- To promote the labor inclusion of women in the productive value chains and in sectors in which there is under-representation of women.
- To promote policies of gender budgeting to achieve gender parity in all sectors of Public Administration.
- To foster banking, credit and assurance policies for a greater financial inclusion of women.
- To promote the adoption of parental and family leave systems with the purpose of achieving parity in labor conditions for all

genders, as well as an equitable participation of men in their family's attention and care.

- To promote the reduction of the digital gap, as a tool for a greater inclusion of women.
- To promote the diffusion of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines among girls and youth in general.
- To promote the application of measures for achieving equity in managerial and leadership positions, both at public and private level.

Conclusions

Without being excessively optimistic, the precedent remarks allow us to perceive a progressive improvement in the labor, economic and financial conditions of women. There is, though, a long road ahead: some World Bank reports indicate that at this pace, there will be needed more than one hundred years to reach parity between men and women.

The "Brisbane goal" of labor gap reduction in a 25% by the year 2025 will probably not be

reached. Even if some countries have experienced a substantial improvement that could approach them to this goal –or even to reach it–, most of G20 Member countries are far from it.

It is worthwhile noting, however, that G20 countries have assumed, as an essential challenge to reach a fair and sustainable economic development, that men and women participate in equal conditions in the economy's growth, and equally benefit from it as well.

Today, it is a certainty that increasing women's participation in business and politics is not only a question of justice or human rights; there are powerful economic reasons to do it, since the full participation of women in the labor market and in economy in general, represents many points of global GDP.

On a parallel level, it is imperative as well to promote –particularly in less developed countries– a cultural change which eradicates old stereotypes, and allows unrestricted economic and financial inclusion to women, be them employees or employers.

This will engender a change of parameters in family's life and economy's management, a change that should be promoted through public policies oriented to an equitable distribution of care responsibilities among both parents, or to

avoid them being an obstacle to women's economic inclusion.

It is also a responsibility and, to a considerable extent, in the interest of private enterprises, to provide care infrastructure and to assure the application of parental leave, as well as women's access to managerial levels.

This is, undoubtedly, a propitious field for public and private sectors' collaboration and joint work, striving for a long-cherished objective: labour and professional accomplishment, as well as social progress and development for all members of society in a framework of full equality.

References:

- (1) The “Women’s Finance Hub” is a World Bank’s initiative to foster and facilitate women’s financial inclusion –in particular in countries and backgrounds of relative lesser development– and materializes through projects with micro or medium enterprises. It is an online platform to help advance women’s enterprises’ access to finance, through investigations and market information sharing.
- (2) The #eSkills4Girls platform is a joint project by G20 Member-States, with the support of a consortium formed by the UNESCO, UN Women, ILO, OECD and Germany’s Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (GIZ). It gathers and shares information on women’s digital inclusion, as well as initiatives, good practices and recommendations, and examples of successful women and girls that serve as “role models”. It is also useful as a tool for knowledge exchange among experts, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and academia.

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