

G20 EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN MINISTERIAL MEETING

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

31 OCTOBER 2025

The second meeting of the G20 Ministers Responsible for the Empowerment of Women took place under the South African G20 Presidency, in Johannesburg, South Africa on 31 October 2025. The meeting was held within the context of the 30th anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

This meeting of Ministers provided an opportunity for reaffirmation of global commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Despite extensive discussions by the Empowerment of Women Working Group (EWWG), consensus could not be reached on a final Ministerial Declaration.

The Chair's Statement reflects the deliberations and outcomes of this process.

Gender equality and women's empowerment was placed at the centre of the G20 agenda by prioritising three interrelated pillars as critical pathways to inclusive and sustainable growth. These key priorities are: (i) advancing the care economy, (ii) expanding women's financial inclusion, and (iii) eliminating gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF).

Ministers acknowledged that the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work, and the rewarding and representation of paid care work, is essential to address structural barriers to women's empowerment and advancement. Ministers also promoted the expansion of women's access to finance, digital tools, and entrepreneurship opportunities, alongside efforts to strengthen protection systems and accountability mechanisms to end GBVF.

Ministers appreciated that under the South African Presidency, the EWWG convened four technical meetings; a Global Conference on Financial Inclusion; a Dialogue on the Care Economy; and a Ministerial Dialogue on Positive Masculinities. Ministers recognised the contributions through several collaborative partnerships with international organisations such as the OECD, ILO, the World Bank, UN Women, among others that have resulted in processes that can be taken forward in the coming years by G20 members.

Ministers noted that these collaborations have also produced many knowledge products. This includes a series of policy briefs on the three key priorities, an Action Plan and Measurement Framework (2025–2030) on financial inclusion, and a series of papers produced in a book of abstracts to promote women’s entrepreneurship and gender equality.

The Ministers’ meeting highlighted that these collective efforts affirm their commitments to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment, enhancing policy coherence across sectors, and embedding care, financial inclusion, and safety of all women and girls as integral dimensions of transformation within the G20 framework, in line with SDG 5, the Beijing Declaration, and prior G20 commitments under different Presidencies.

Ministers widely supported the development of national care strategies by 2030. There was strong alignment around the principle that the care economy constitutes essential social and economic infrastructure, vital for job creation, human capital development, and equitable growth. Ministers underscored the importance of engaging men and boys to promote positive masculinities, and as active agents of change. Furthermore, Ministers emphasised the critical importance of closing the gender digital divide and strengthening data systems to track progress on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Despite this broad convergence in the meeting, consensus was not reached due to the reservations of Argentina, regarding the inclusion of core gender-related terminology. Objections were raised to established references to “gender equality,” “gender-responsive policies,” “the gender pay gap,” “gender-based violence,” “the gender digital divide”, gender stereotypes”, and “all women and girls”, as well as references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG 5.

While some delegations did express concerns with some of these terminologies as well, including that of “sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights”, there was willingness to compromise and reach agreement.

Notwithstanding the progressive decision of Leaders at the New Delhi Summit to establish the Empowerment of Women Group to promote, advance and accelerate the empowerment of all women and girls and achieve gender equality, Ministers in the meeting were unable to adopt a consensus Declaration. It is with deep regret and profound sadness that two years in a row, this Working Group has not been able to adopt a Ministerial Declaration.

This is attributable to global geopolitics, the persistent pushback against women’s rights and the roll-back on hard earned gains, even in the G20. It is unfortunate that women and girls are becoming voiceless within the G20, exacerbated by the high rates of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and gender-based violence and femicide across all regions. It is astounding how the concept of gender is being reduced to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Nevertheless, the Chair recognises the strong alignment among most G20 members and appreciates the spirit of constructive engagement and flexibility demonstrated throughout the negotiations.

Future G20 Presidencies are encouraged to build on the progress made under South Africa’s Presidency. As the Chair, I express gratitude to all Ministers for their active engagement and reaffirmation of the G20’s shared responsibility to advance the full, equal and meaningful participation, empowerment of all women and girls and achievement of gender equality.