



C7 communiqué 2021

International development priorities

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The following recommendations are relevant to all G7 ministerial tracks, and are especially relevant to the international development and the foreign policy discussions.

Development Finance

Development finance and assistance is crucial to supporting countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in particular, research from the Overseas Development Institute has found that even if countries pursue policy reforms and take measures to increase their tax-revenues, they will still need support in the form of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to provide a basic package of health, education and social protection services to their citizens.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused the largest global recession since World War II. The pandemic has created an even more challenging set of circumstances in LDCs and other vulnerable countries, as they have sought to raise the additional financing needed to strengthen their public services and respond to the pandemic. A growing number of countries are experiencing a new debt crisis, and need support with unsustainable debt. In Nigeria for example, falling revenues as a consequence of the pandemic have led to the Federal Government spending 99% of its budget in the first quarter of 2020 servicing debt.

Collectively G7 countries provide 75% of all ODA provided by countries on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), so the G7 plays a crucial role in helping countries to finance and deliver the SDGs. In 2015, G7 leaders re-committed to reaching the 0.7% aid target at the G7 meeting in Schloss Elmau and made ambitious commitments to support countries to finance the SDGs at the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa.

Encouragingly, some G7 countries, particularly Germany, France and the USA, are increasing their aid budget in response to the crisis - but this has not been consistent and civil society organisations are disappointed by the UK's decision to renege on the commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on ODA and to temporarily cut the UK aid budget at a time when lower-income countries need this support most. The scale of cuts announced by the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), including in areas designated as development priorities such as health and education will have devastating consequences for the world's poorest people and countries and undermine the credibility of the G7 Presidency.

Recommendations:

Finance	Recommit to delivering the 0.7% target and publish a clear timeline for when each country will reach this target. ODA must prioritise the poorest and most vulnerable countries, including the Least Developed Countries and fragile states, rather than the strategic interests of each donor.
Policy	1. A comprehensive mechanism should be created for relief and cancellation of debt to a level consistent with sustainable development, for all countries which request it. Debt sustainability assessments should explicitly incorporate the SDGs, climate goals, human rights and gender equality commitments. The UK, New York and any other major jurisdictions where debt contracts are based should enact effective

	<p>legislation to ensure external private lenders are included in debt relief and cancellation.</p> <p>2. Strengthen and extend the Common Framework to include private creditors and extend the framework to highly indebted / climate vulnerable middle income countries.</p>
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Education

Education is a human right and it is necessary for economic growth, health, stability and climate resilience. At the peak of the pandemic, Covid-19 had pushed over a billion children out of school, including 650 million girls.

The world was facing a global learning crisis even before the pandemic, with 90% of children in low-income countries unable to read and understand a simple story by their 10th birthday – the critical milestone at which children transition from ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’. In 2020, four out of five children reported that they felt they were learning little or nothing while out of school, with girls, displaced children and those living in low-income households most likely to report learning nothing at all. The World Bank predicts that this lost learning will result in a \$872 reduction in annual earnings for today’s primary and secondary-aged children, totalling a long-term economic loss of up to \$10 trillion.

Civil society is concerned about the long-term impact of the pandemic on children’s education and future opportunities. There should be a focus on the gendered impact of COVID-19 and the disproportionate impact on girls’ education in particular. The hardest places for girls to get an education are still deeply affected by poverty and conflict and we are particularly concerned about the risks to girls’ education in some countries, including in Afghanistan and Nigeria where there has been an increase in attacks on schools.

Civil society welcomes the focus on girls’ education from the G7 Presidency and the commitment to work towards delivering 12 years of education for girls, to improve learning and support 40 million and girls to access education and 20 million more girls to reach the foundational literacy milestone at age 10 by 2025. Reaching the ambitious goal to deliver 12 years of quality education will require G7 leaders and national governments to also address the barriers such as gender-based violence and unpaid caring responsibilities that prevent girls and children with disabilities from accessing education. Ambitious funding commitment to education will be particularly important with the upcoming Global Education Summit, co-hosted by the UK and Kenya to fund the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and aiming to raise at least \$5 billion to enable 175 million more children to learn.

G7 leaders must also recognise and address the funding crisis in the global education system. New research has found that an additional USD \$75 billion a year, on average, is needed to meet the United Nations’ goal of quality education for every child by 2030. Current aid to education is just \$16 billion a year and is projected to fall, leaving an education funding gap of at least \$59 billion a year which is not accounted for in any plans or proposals on the table.

Recommendations:

Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase financial support to address all elements of the Girls' Education Initiative inclusively and equitably, with a progressive commitment to 15% of ODA by G7 countries going to education by 2025. 2. Implement the commitments made in the Charlevoix Declaration, including: ensuring 50% of international development financing is spent in conflict-affected and fragile states; designing Education in Emergencies funding to achieve learning outcomes for girls, boys and all children equally; and investing in research, and monitoring and communicating progress towards these outcomes.
Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commit to and adequately resource the meaningful participation of children's led groups and activists in key global decision-making processes through collaborative partnership models, ensuring accessible information and providing flexible funding to support their participation and self-organising. 2. The 5:10:25 paper outlines the 10 measures G7 leaders can take over the next five years to help get the SDGs for education back on track by 2025. A strong accountability mechanism is essential to monitor progress against any new G7 commitment for girls. 3. Agree a significant investment in digital education to help to address the digital divide exposed by COVID-19 and address inequalities both within countries and between them. 4. Commit to the two girls education targets to 1) increase the number of girls' attending school by 40 million by 2026 and 2) increase the number of girls' able to read a simple story by age 10 by 20 million by 2026, in order to address the global learning crisis and ensure more girls' are accessing a quality education

Health

The pandemic has intensified existing health inequalities within and between countries. The pandemic has also demonstrated the urgent need to invest in strengthening health systems for a sustainable recovery, regionally and globally, as strong universal health systems provide the basic foundation from which all other health outcomes that governments and donors work to achieve - from child and maternal health, to vaccination programmes and preventative services - are delivered. This is the moment for a significant investment in, and political commitment to, universal health coverage to address the many inequities in global health systems.

The climate and health crises are interrelated and the measures to combat climate change, reduce pollution and improve environments will also strengthen the health of people and the planet. A "One Health" multidisciplinary approach is needed for the prevention and early detection of future pandemics, as well as to holistically improve health and wellbeing for all people, and at all ages. There should be a push for an ambitious '**Global Health Treaty**' that covers all aspects of global health systems and illnesses, understanding the need to prioritize the most vulnerable members of society.

Recommendations:

Finance	Implement the commitment to spend at least 0.1% of Gross National Income (GNI) on Official Development Assistance (ODA) for health, and support countries to equitably mobilise progressive and sustainable domestic resources to reach at least 5% of GDP for universal public health systems, including through tackling corruption in the health sector.
Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support a 'One Health' approach to the prevention and early detection of future pandemics, and to holistically improve health and wellbeing for all, at all ages. 2. Prioritise health system strengthening in the ODA provided for health by G7 countries.

Food security and nutrition

Food insecurity and malnutrition are fuelled by poverty, climate change, poor governance, conflict and inequality. These factors have been exacerbated by the pandemic – delaying the G7's previous commitment to lift 500 million people in low-income and vulnerable countries out of hunger and malnutrition by 2030. 1 in 9 people go hungry or undernourished globally, while 1 in 3 are obese or overweight. More than 30 million people in 36 countries face emergency levels of acute food insecurity, the last warning before famine. An additional 9.3 million children are predicted to become wasted due to the impact of the pandemic, and an additional 165,000 children under-five are predicted to die due to associated disruption to nutrition services.

Civil society supports the establishment of a new Famine Prevention Compact and calls for a clear accountability framework with clear roles and responsibilities included in the Compact to ensure it is effective, and a commitment that the policy initiatives outlined in the Compact will be fully-funded. Further, civil society recognises the importance of the Nutrition for Growth Year of Action, including the Tokyo 2021 Nutrition for Growth Summit and the UN Food Systems Summit, and calls for the G7 to commit to actively participate in these processes, through making financial and policy commitments.

Recommendations:

Finance	Lead global efforts to prevent food and nutrition crises. The UN requires at least \$5 billion this year to stop millions from dying of starvation. Significant additional resources are needed to enable comprehensive, famine prevention to reach people at greatest risk.
Programme Delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Help to catalyse a system-wide shift to preparedness and anticipatory action that delivers rapid, flexible and multisectoral funding and support where it is most needed. Ensure this support is aligned with national governments' nutrition and health plans. 2. Commit to preventing and treating undernutrition, diet-related chronic disease and nutrient deficiencies, and prioritising access to nutritious

	food. Each G7 country should make an ambitious financial commitment at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2021.
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Prevent conflicts and protect refugees

Conflict prevention and civilian protection are entwined with complex global issues resulting from climate change, environmental degradation, demographic pressures, poor governance and institutional capacities, lack of energy access, and increasing inequalities. Conflict is one of the main drivers for migration and refugee flows. Globally, there are more than 79 million refugees and displaced people.

Prolonged conflict situations from Syria to Yemen, Afghanistan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, the Sahel and elsewhere risks creating a crisis of confidence about the willingness and capacity of the G7 and other multilateral institutions to work effectively to achieve peaceful resolutions to these conflicts. The failure to respond to refugee crises around the world risks creating more conflict, triggering further refugee flows and creating a cyclical problem with no clear end in sight.

The world needs bold and ambitious leadership from the G7, with a strong message that G7 leaders are committed to supporting the most vulnerable people, especially refugees, and are willing to act fast to help to resolve emerging crises including in Tigray, Ethiopia. Civil society is also deeply concerned about the measures and threats from some refugee hosting countries to forcibly return or relocate refugee populations to unsafe areas.

G7 countries have been inconsistent in their support and openness to providing safety and sanctuary to refugees. The so-called ‘migrant crisis’ on Europe’s borders, and especially the border between Greece and Turkey, exemplifies the ongoing challenges in Europe to providing a fair system of asylum and protection for refugees and migrants inside Europe. We call for a coherent policy approach so government departments like foreign, defence, trade and aid agencies complement, rather than undermine, development efforts; for example when governments contribute aid and development assistance at the same time as selling weapons to countries linked to conflicts and civilian atrocities.

Recommendations:

Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognise the vulnerability of fragile and conflict affected states and protect G7 ODA-funding to these countries, at a minimum at the levels disbursed by the G7 in 2020. 2. Support the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan, which at its last review remained only 50% funded and other UN appeals in 2021 and 2022.
Policy	Pursue all diplomatic channels to pressure conflict parties to return to a fully inclusive peace process. G7 leaders must be willing to introduce sanctions if conflict parties do not comply with UN/government led resolutions/recommendations aimed at promoting peace.