

Global Leaders Use Women Deliver 2016 to Call for More Investment in Girls and Women

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Announces \$80 Million Over Three Years to Close Gender Data Gaps and Accelerate Progress for Women and Girls

The McKinsey Global Institute Releases New Report Providing Roadmap for Action and Investment Toward Gender Equality

Copenhagen, Denmark (17 May 2016) – On the second day of the [Women Deliver 2016 Conference](#), global leaders emphasized that investing in solutions that advance the health, rights and wellbeing of girls and women will drive economic growth and development and ignite change across communities. Plenary sessions and partner announcements showcased how when girls and women are given equal opportunities – whether in education, family planning, innovation or sport – societies are healthier, more productive and more stable.

During today's morning plenary session, Melinda Gates, Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, [announced](#) a three-year, \$80 million commitment to close the gender data gap. More reliable data about women's lives, such as time spent on unpaid work or farming, is needed to inform policy and programs and accelerate progress for women and girls. This funding will help fill critical gender data gaps; improve the accuracy and reliability of data collection; equip decision makers with better evidence; and support civil society's efforts to hold leaders accountable for their commitments.

"It's great that women and girls are at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals. But right now there is insufficient data to build a baseline for nearly 80% of SDG 5 indicators," said **Melinda Gates**, Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, at today's morning plenary session. "If advocacy for women and girls is about giving voice to the voiceless – gathering and analyzing data is about making the invisible visible."

Also at the Conference today, the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) released a new discussion paper, [Delivering the power of parity: Toward a more gender-equal society](#), which provides an agenda for action and investment toward gender equality. MGI finds that achieving the economic potential of women and making progress toward the United Nations' recently-adopted Sustainable Development Goals will require \$1.5 trillion-\$2 trillion in annual spending on essential services in 2025—but the potential economic gains could be six to eight times this outlay. Previous MGI research found that if every country bridged its gender gap at the same historical rate as its fastest-improving regional peer, the world could add \$12 trillion to annual GDP in 2025, an 11 percent boost over current trends.

"Narrowing the gender gap can unleash massive growth," says **Vivian Hunt**, managing partner of McKinsey's United Kingdom and Ireland offices. "But in order to realize the \$12 trillion opportunity that comes from advancing gender equality in the world of work, we have to tackle gender gaps in society more broadly. Our new analysis finds that the economic benefits of narrowing gender gaps far outweigh the additional social spending required."

Among the key findings, McKinsey pinpoints six areas where improved access to services could unlock economic opportunities for women: education; family planning; maternal health; financial inclusion; digital inclusion; and assistance with unpaid care work. In each of these areas, MGI explores how many

women and men could be empowered through concerted action and how much investment would be needed.

“Investing in gender equality – and in girls’ and women’s health – is investing in human progress,” said **Katja Iversen**, CEO of Women Deliver. “A woman multiplies investments made in her future by creating a better life for herself and her family, community and society. The announcements today show the ripple effect that these investments have for society and the world.”

In addition to the McKinsey Global Institute and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announcements, Bayer announced the launch of a new [Youth Ambassador Program](#) as a part of the World Contraception Day initiative. The program, launched with Women Deliver, aims to reach out to young people worldwide and to directly involve them in ‘youth-to-youth’ awareness-raising activities on topics such as sexuality and contraception.

A full archive of partner press releases and news announcements coming out of the Women Deliver 2016 Conference can be found [here](#).

Women Deliver 2016 continues through **Thursday, 19 May**, with discussions on the final two days focused on:

Wednesday, 18 May

- **Investing in Girls and Women: Everybody Wins:** Investments in women have major pay-offs. This panel will present examples of notable successes as well outline what is needed to make progress.
- **Making the SDGs Work for Girls and Women: Regional Perspectives:** This session will present regional views on SDGs, as well as specific regional challenges and solutions, from Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.
- **Powerful Women:** This session focuses on powerful women in different areas of work and their personal and professional challenges – what would make them feel their power was well used? Do they think of themselves as powerful? Do they think they use and see power differently than men?

Thursday, 19 May

- **Look to the Future, Part 1: Transformation, Innovation and Partnership:** This plenary will focus on the need to change as the world changes and present innovative strategies for social transformation through communications, as well as government, private and NGO partnerships.
- **Look to the Future, Part 2: The State of Philanthropy:** This session will feature an in-depth discussion about the role philanthropy can play in ensuring that resources are available to implement the SDGs in ways that benefit girls and women.
- **Men with Power: Delivering for Girls and Women:** On this panel, men who have committed themselves to women’s empowerment, health and wellbeing will discuss how they see men’s role in driving progress for women.
- **Be the Change You Want to See:** Global leaders and celebrities advocates have been invited to speak on what they commit to change and how they model that change in their own lives.

###

About Women Deliver: Women Deliver believes that when the world invests in girls and women, everybody wins. As a leading global advocate for girls’ and women’s health, rights and wellbeing,

[Women Deliver](#) brings together diverse voices and interests to drive progress, particularly in maternal, sexual and reproductive health and rights. It builds capacity, shares solutions and forges partnerships, together creating coalitions, communication and action that spark political commitment and investment in girls and women.

Social Media: To learn more about Women Deliver, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). Follow the hashtags: #WD2016 and #WDLive

Women Deliver Live: Register [here](#) to tune into [Women Deliver Live](#) – our online hub for downloadable footage of all Conference plenaries, select concurrent sessions, press conferences, and much more.

Media Resources: Online media resources – including the press program, press releases and 2016 b-roll – are available in the [Women Deliver Virtual Press Room](#). Official photographs can be found on [Flickr](#).

Media Contacts:

Guy Bloembergen, Global Health Strategies, ghswomendeliver@globalhealthstrategies.com