

2025 APEC Women and the Economy Forum
Joint Statement
“Promoting Women’s Economic Participation for Sustainable Growth”

Incheon, Republic of Korea
12 August 2025

1. We, the Ministers of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies, met in Incheon, Republic of Korea on August 12, 2025, for the APEC Women and the Economy Forum (WEF) chaired by the Minister of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea.
2. We recognize that the Asia-Pacific region is facing interconnected challenges, including digital transformations and demographic shifts, which present both new opportunities for all women and girls as well as potential risks that may exacerbate existing gender inequalities and hinder sustainable and inclusive growth. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, we reaffirm our commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including the outcomes of its review conferences, and continue to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. We will strengthen our efforts to implement the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, the Aotearoa Plan of Action as well as the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth (2019–2030). In this context, we support the 2025 APEC WEF theme, “Promoting Women’s Economic Participation for Sustainable Growth,” and the priorities of “Connect, Innovate and Prosper.”
3. Focusing on the following three priority areas, we underscore the need for a shared response among APEC economies. First, we make concerted efforts to strengthen gender equality and the economic empowerment of women and girls and to expand their full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in the economy to ensure that all women and girls have access to digital skills, including new and emerging technologies such as Artificial intelligence (AI)—critical tools for unlocking

employment opportunities, income generation, and personal advancement. Second, we support policies and mutual cooperation to create safe and enabling environments through the prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, particularly for those who may be more disproportionately affected due to age, disability, rural location, and geographic or linguistic factors. Third, emphasizing the importance of social responsibility in providing quality care in response to demographic and social changes, we promote policies designed to create societies that support work-life balance and enhance the value of paid and unpaid care work. We aim to achieve our common goal of growth and prosperity across APEC member economies through concrete actions in these priority areas and support relevant APEC initiatives, including gender equality structural reform principles and recommendations.

Promoting Growth for All through Women's Empowerment and Greater Economic Participation and Leadership

4. Women's economic empowerment will build economic resilience and is critical to the inclusive economic growth of the Asia-Pacific region as it ensures long-term prosperity for all. We recognize the importance of advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment and increasing women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in the economy, including to respond to labor supply imbalances caused by demographic shifts, such as declining birth rates and aging populations, and changes in industrial structures driven by advancements of digital technologies, including AI. Currently, women's participation and leadership in the labor force remain at a lower level than men, and the gender pay gap and inequalities persist, reinforcing the need for policies and practices that promote gender equality in the labor market. It is also important to note that the rapid advancement of new and emerging technologies, including AI, is accelerating the transition to the digital economy, creating new employment opportunities for women and opening up possibilities for expanding their participation and leadership in economic activities due to the possibility of flexible work arrangements. We emphasize that technology and AI, in particular, should not reinforce employment discrimination against women but promote fairness,

transparency and equal opportunities in the workplace. Limitations in access to and use of digital devices, along with insufficient education and training opportunities in new technologies, serve as factors that restrict women's participation in the digital economy.

5. To demonstrate APEC's commitment to the full, equal and meaningful economic participation and leadership of women, we will make efforts to increase and monitor the progress of women's representation at all levels of leadership and decision-making in private and public sectors. It is also critical to support emerging women leaders and promote women in leadership and share experiences among economies. In addition, we endeavor to develop and implement policies designed to eliminate gender inequality in the labor market, including in pay, through providing support for women's employment, entrepreneurship, and business growth, as well as enhancing access to quality education and capacity building, finance, technology, markets, resources, and more. In this regard, we recall the 2024 Joint Statement of APEC Ministers Responsible for Women and Ministers Responsible for Trade, which reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing women's access to global markets, supporting women-led MSMEs and addressing barriers that prevent their participation in trade. We recognize that women may experience career gaps in the labor market due to life-stage factors, such as pregnancy, childbirth and parenting. We commit to minimizing the negative impact of career gaps by strengthening tailored support, including access to high quality and affordable child care, career counseling, technical and vocational training, and job-matching services, to ensure that women return to quality employment and continue to engage in the labor force.
6. We strive to strengthen institutional support for all women and girls across all stages of life and further enhance their digital literacy and skills to ensure they can actively and safely engage in and fully benefit from the digital economy. In this context, we will continue to identify and promote the participation and leadership of women and girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and also across all other linked sectors, recognizing that the pervasive influence of digitalization and AI impacts a wide array of industries and professions.

We also recognize the importance of diversifying pathways for education, career entry, and career progression, such as technical and vocational training, networking, and mentoring, and facilitating family-friendly workplace arrangements to broaden career development opportunities to support women's entry, retention and advancement in digitally driven industries, including those leveraging AI.

**Creating Safe and Enabling Environments through the
Prevention and Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and
Violence against Women and Girls**

7. Recalling the 2024 APEC Leaders' Machu Picchu Declaration and the 2024 APEC Women and the Economy Forum Ministerial Statement, we acknowledge that gender-based violence continues to exist and can evolve into various forms and manifestations of violence, including technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and that it is important to prevent and respond to such violence to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the economy and to promote sustainable economic growth across the APEC region. We are also concerned that all forms of discrimination, including economic, financial and workplace discrimination, wage gaps and lack of financial autonomy, unsafe working conditions and barriers to accessing social and employment protections hinder women's economic participation and empowerment and impose significant socio-economic costs, thus undermining sustainable growth.
8. To create safe and enabling environments for women and girls, we strive to provide greater integrated services, such as counseling, protection, medical, legal and financial assistance, and stronger social and economic independence support by adopting approaches that take into account the needs of those experiencing violence. We recognize the need to strengthen prevention, including by creating and disseminating content on violence prevention education and advocacy in the workplace to raise awareness of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and also working with men and boys. Furthermore, we encourage efforts aimed at strengthening multi-stakeholder approaches, including public-private partnerships, and forming regional and global cooperation

networks, to promptly detect and address harmful content in digital spaces, including that which stems from AI systems in accordance with domestic laws and regulations. We recognize the need to consider opportunities that support safer digital and online environments by designing and sharing best practices and facilitating coordination on the issues related to economic, financial and workplace discrimination.

Achieving a Sustainable Future through Building Quality Care Systems

9. We acknowledge that emerging social-economic challenges, including demographic shifts, declining birth rates, aging populations, changing family structures and regional disparities, are fundamentally reshaping the landscape of paid care services. At the same time, these changes present opportunities for promoting the caregiving sector, creating new jobs, and expanding the economic value of care. We recognize that social norms and stereotypes, which traditionally regard women as primary caregivers, combined with the current status of access to quality care infrastructure, continue to perpetuate the unequal distribution of care onto families and women. Notably, both paid and unpaid care work, disproportionately undertaken by women, limit women's economic empowerment, full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in the economy. We recognize the importance of also engaging men and boys in transforming harmful social norms, including in the workplace, to promote equal participation in the labor market, care systems, and unpaid domestic and care work.
10. We recognize that robust and accessible care infrastructure and a shared responsibility of care are essential for economic productivity, labor force participation and inclusive economic growth. In line with PPWE's enduring commitment to inclusive economic growth, we commit to increasing and sustaining investments in care infrastructure that recognize the value of care work, reduce and redistribute care work and to strengthening support to enhance the affordability, quality and accessibility of care services to meet the different needs of children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and others who require care, thereby enabling greater economic participation of caregivers. We will also

integrate safe and accessible new technologies, including digital tools and AI, into care services to create an environment where a wide range of quality services can be delivered and maintained, contributing to the care economy's expansion. We acknowledge that both the public and private sectors should play a vital role in fostering an environment that supports shared care responsibilities and work-life balance. To this end, we support efforts to adopt flexible work arrangements, promote the access and utilization of parental leave, improve access to affordable and high quality child care and cultivate a family-friendly workplace culture. Governments play a key role in designing, operating and overseeing public care systems. Furthermore, we will work toward narrowing regional disparities in care services and addressing supply-demand imbalances while adopting social and employment protections for care workers and improving their working conditions.

11. Together with the concrete actions and joint efforts of member economies in the three priority areas, we emphasize the need for continued efforts to systematically mainstream gender equality across all APEC policies and initiatives as appropriate. We reaffirm the importance of strengthening the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of disaggregated data, including by sex, to identify existing barriers, design and implement responsive policies aimed at achieving gender equality. We call for the active use of instruments, such as the APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard, and greater utilization of toolkits, including gender equality budgeting and impact assessments in designing and implementing policies and strengthening institutions.
12. We will strive to remove the institutional and structural barriers faced by all women and girls of diverse backgrounds, including women in poverty, older women, women and girls with disabilities, Indigenous women and girls as appropriate, women and girls living in remote and rural areas, and women in the formal and informal sectors. In this regard, we commit our participation in the implementation of the Lima Roadmap to Promote the Transition to the Formal and Global Economies (2025-2040), which highlights the importance of promoting the economic empowerment of women and strengthening their participation in the formal economy. Particular attention should be given to those facing multiple forms of

violence and all forms of discrimination and structural inequalities, along with protection and support measures that are tailored to their needs. We also endeavor to establish and promote policy frameworks that provide tailored support for women and girls facing environmental challenges and health-related risks.

13. We reaffirm that gender equality and women's economic empowerment are key drivers of sustainable and inclusive growth in the Asia-Pacific region. We also call for enhanced collective efforts to eliminate diverse systemic barriers that impede women's full and equal economic and social participation and leadership. To this end, we commit to reinforcing partnerships not only across APEC member economies but also with the public and private sectors, as appropriate and where relevant.
14. We express our gratitude to the Republic of Korea for hosting our meeting and look forward to the next APEC Women and the Economy Forum and related activities in the APEC forum under the People's Republic of China's host year in 2026.