

“For Such a Time as This” Pray. Fast. Act.

INVESTING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS

We are all created equally in the image of God. Patriarchy and sexism disrupt God’s intention in creation because they deny this equality, causing harm and inequities affecting women and girls. St. Paul teaches that in Christ there is no male or female, that we are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:27-28). Nonetheless, we have long struggled to practice these essential values both as a community of faith, and as global citizens.

Studies show that when women and girls are meaningfully included in all aspects of decision-making, countries are more likely to be peaceful and prosper economically.¹ However, women and girls continue to suffer greater harm from lack of economic, political, and social opportunities, as well as from gender-based violence.² Our determination to improve the status of women and girls around the world must be met with a steadfast commitment to ensure policies and programs that address existing disparities are funded and implemented effectively.

Although the U.S. government has historically been a leader in funding programs that address the needs of women and girls globally, there are indications that such initiatives are in danger of being significantly reduced or eliminated. Cutting funds and eliminating programs would negatively impact communities that depend on the support of our government to improve the lives of women and girls—and their countries’ economic and security outcomes.

We urge Congress to ensure the following investments in the fiscal-year 19 budget:

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Allocate no less than \$200 million to implement a multi-year strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in both conflict and non-conflict settings.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS’ EMPOWERMENT

Appropriate no less than \$250 million for the coordination and implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls Globally. The first strategy of its kind of any government, the girl strategy outlines a comprehensive U.S. government approach to educate and empower adolescent girls, as well as mechanisms for inter- and intra-agency coordination to harness the full power of the U.S. government and avoid duplication of efforts.

CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE

Dedicate no less than \$25 million of the \$250 million for adolescent girls to the implementation of a coordinated and comprehensive effort to end child marriage and meet the needs of married girls, in fulfillment of the mandated child marriage strategy provision of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013.

WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP

Appropriate no less than \$50 million to increase leadership opportunities for women in countries where women and girls suffer discrimination due to law, policy or practice.

WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Robustly fund all activities that foster women’s economic empowerment. Investment in programs that strengthen women’s access to employment opportunities, support entrepreneurship, create market linkages, and break down legal and regulatory barriers to women’s participation in the economy creates far-reaching benefits.



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WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Appropriate robust funds to support a multi-year strategy to expand and improve coordination of the U.S. government’s efforts to empower women as equal partners in conflict prevention, peace building, transitional processes, relief and reconstruction efforts in countries affected by conflict or in political transition, and to ensure the equitable provision of relief and recovery assistance to women and girls.

GENDER EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION IN ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL DETERIORATION

Dedicate no less than \$1.3 billion for the Global Climate Change Initiative ([GCCCI](#)), the Green Climate Fund ([GCF](#)) and the Global Environmental Facility ([GEF](#)) for international climate assistance for inclusion of women who are most vulnerable and are disproportionately affected by climate change. The GCCCI is funded through programs at the Department of State, the Department of the Treasury, and USAID for (1) adaptation assistance, (2) clean-energy assistance, and (3) sustainable landscapes assistance. The GCF supports programming in all three areas and has implemented a policy for gender inclusion during all phases of its projects. The GEF works to include gender systematically in its projects creating effective synergies between environmental management and gender equality.

LEARN MORE:

¹ World Economic Forum, [Global Gender Gap Report 2017](#)

² United Nations Security Council, [Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security](#)

Congressional Research Service, [The Global Climate Change Initiative \(GCCCI\): Budget Authority and Request, FY2010-FY2016](#)

Green Climate Fund, [Gender Policy and Action Plan](#)

[Global Environment Facility](#)

ELCA Justice for Women, [ELCA.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Justice-for-Women](#)

