



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR THE STATE GREAT HURAL, MONGOLIA

## **FACT SHEET: The U.S. Government, in Collaboration with Partners, Launches Global Initiative to Advance Women’s Leadership in the Digital Age, Totaling Over \$850 Million**

July 8, 2024

Women remain grossly underrepresented at all levels of government and in peace and security processes. Women comprise roughly 25 percent of national legislators globally, despite evidence that women’s engagement in politics and government results in more equal, just, prosperous, and secure societies. Longstanding barriers to women’s political participation and leadership, including violence against women in politics (VAWP) and lack of access to political networks and resources, continue to undermine their inclusion in democratic processes. And in today’s digital world, women and LGBTQI+ political and public figures, particularly those in conflict and crisis-affected contexts and from marginalized groups, face threats to their participation in public life. Threats include new forms of violence, gendered information manipulation and gender-based online harassment and abuse, which are corrosive to democracy. These threats have proliferated with the increased adoption of digital technologies, and are likely to continue to grow with new and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, which has led to the rise of malicious deepfake non-consensual intimate images.

To strengthen democracy and reaffirm the U.S. government’s commitment to advancing women’s meaningful participation in peace and security processes ahead of the NATO 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit, the United States government — in collaboration with partners — launched Women Leading Effective and Accountable Democracy in the Digital Age (Women LEAD) in July 2024, an initiative that convenes governments, philanthropy, civil society, and multilateral organizations to advance women’s civic and political participation and leadership. The three goals of Women LEAD are to:

## GOALS

1. **Close the gap in women’s political leadership** by supporting initiatives to build and sustain a diverse pipeline of women and girl leaders, including network development and efforts to strengthen the enabling environment for their safe and meaningful participation.
2. **Support and scale activities to prevent and respond to violence against women in politics and public life, both on and offline**, including rapid response funds that address technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), and initiatives to counter gendered disinformation.
3. **Establish the Women LEAD Global Community of Practice (CoP)** to strengthen coordination and collaboration among partners and foster peer-to-peer learning and knowledge-sharing to advance women's participation in politics and public life.

Initiative partners have already pledged contributions totaling over \$850 million to further align efforts that will close the gap in women’s political leadership and tackle barriers to women in political and public life, both online and offline.

### Government-aligned efforts and actions that reinforce the goals of Women LEAD include:

- **Australia** is allocating approximately \$25.7 million between 2021 and 2026 through the following initiatives: Southeast Asia Women Peace Mediators, a platform of Southeast Asian women engaged in mediating, negotiating, and facilitating peace processes; Women Leading and Influencing, which provides developmental leadership opportunities and mentoring to women in the Pacific; The Balance of Power Initiative, which addresses negative perceptions of women in political leadership and decision-making through research and targeted advocacy; Amplify-Invest-Reach, which elevates the voices of women human rights defenders to advance policy change for gender equality globally; and The Women’s Resilience to Disasters program, which supports women’s leadership at the local level to tackle disasters, address the climate crisis, and build community resilience in Fiji, Kiribati, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands. Aligned with Women LEAD’s emphasis on countering TFGBV against women in political and public life, Australia’s eSafety Commissioner is delivering a Social Media Self Defense training for Women in the Spotlight, aimed at supporting women in the political sphere and leadership to safeguard their online presence.
- **Canada** will allocate approximately \$7.1 million between 2024 and 2027 for initiatives that will address political and structural barriers to gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean with programs that support parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, women’s advocates, and civil society to integrate a gender lens in domestic and regional policy and governance, and enhance the safety of women and girls online. Canada’s commitment includes the newly launched “Making All Spaces Safe” program, which United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) will implement globally, and in Kenya and Benin, to improve prevention and response to TFGBV, as well as laws and policies to ensure digital safety for women and girls. This work complements efforts underway through the Women’s Voice and Leadership program, which the Government of Canada renewed and expanded in 2023, and invests more than \$142 million in local women’s organizations and movements in developing countries working to advance the rights of women and girls and promote gender equality, including those in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts.
- **The European Commission** is implementing two global initiatives that have mutually reinforcing goals and objectives of Women LEAD: The Women and Youth in Democracy Empowerment (WYDE), which invests \$12.4 million between 2024 and 2026 in efforts that strengthen the rights, empowerment and participation of youth and women in public and political life; and the ACT Coalition to End Violence Against Women, a partnership with UN Women that will invest \$23.7

million between September 2023 and September 2026 to support civil society leaders who are countering gender-based violence, including the rise in TFGBV, and promoting women's rights.

- **Finland** commits to advancing Women LEAD's objective to counter TFGBV against women in politics and public life as co-leader of the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality, and in announcing Finland's participation as a new member of the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse.
- **Iceland** is investing approximately \$600,000 on an annual basis through 2027 in support of activities to promote women's political participation and leadership, counter gender-based violence online and offline, engage men and boys as allies in advancing gender equity and equality, and convene women leaders to discuss the most pressing issues related to women's leadership and gender equality through the annual Reykjavik Global Forum. This is in addition to Iceland's extensive support to gender equality and women's empowerment through Iceland's engagement in international fora, including development cooperation.
- **Japan** is committing more than \$3.3 million through 2025 in support of initiatives to strengthen women's leadership in disaster risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific, enhance climate and disaster resilience in Niger, and promote women's leadership and equal access to protection in Central America, including through efforts to support women-led responses to gender-based violence and human trafficking linked to migration.
- **Kenya** is committing to undertake programs and initiatives valued at \$7 million by the end of 2025 to advance women's political and civic participation and leadership, prevent and respond to TFGBV, and increase women's economic security and leadership. As part of this commitment, the Office of the Women's Rights Advisor for the President of Kenya will support local and national activities to strengthen existing laws and policies against TFGBV, increase support services for survivors, and engage media to improve reporting on and awareness of TFGBV. The Office will also hold regional fora across Africa to strengthen government and civil society approaches to promoting accountability for TFGBV.
- **The Republic of Korea** is committing more than \$2 million between 2023 and 2025 on activities to promote women's leadership and political participation, combat TFGBV in the Asia-Pacific and globally, bolster women's roles in addressing the effects of climate change, and support implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda, including through the Action with Women and Peace Initiative, which supports the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund to promote women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding and amplifies women's voices in international peace and security by hosting an annual international conference.
- **Romania** is working with a coalition of seven European Union (EU) partners (France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, and Portugal), who have committed more than \$3.8 million between 2025 and 2029 to increase Romanian women's representation in decision-making at all levels. More than \$320,000 of this EU-financed effort will facilitate Romania's economic growth through support for activities to implement their National Action Plan for Women's Economic and Political Empowerment, which includes a focus on achieving gender parity in decision-making in the political and economic sector, and addressing gender-based violence at work and in public spaces through better legislation and visibility among media, religious authorities, and the public.
- **The Netherlands** is committing, through its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 fund, more than \$292 million between 2021 and 2025 in support of women's political participation and economic empowerment, prevention and response to gender-based violence (online and offline) and the promotion of women, peace, and security in fragile settings, in large part implemented by women-

led organizations. In addition, the Netherlands invests in training and capacity building of women in cyber governance globally, including on the gendered dimensions of cybercrime.

- **Norway** is committing nearly \$3 million to advancing Women LEAD's objectives to support women's leadership and participation in peace and security processes through contributions to the UN Women Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which provides support to women leaders, organizations, and networks. Norway also co-leads the Women, Peace, and Security Humanitarian Action Compact under the Generation Equality Forum.
- **Spain** will allocate approximately \$18.4 million by the end of 2025 in support of activities that promote women's leadership in political and economic decision-making processes, finance innovative solutions to promote gender equity and equality globally, and accelerate efforts to prevent and respond to TFGBV in Mexico and Bolivia. In alignment with Women LEAD's objectives, Spain is announcing a special focus on projects that identify innovative solutions to promote women's civic and political leadership and counter TFGBV against women leaders in its 2025 call for proposals for development innovation grants.
- **Sweden**, through the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), has invested \$99.1 million in the past year, and is committed to continue working for the advancement of women's political participation and combating violence against women in politics and public life, both online and offline. Sida's partners are implementing a range of projects globally, and include grassroots and regional women's rights organizations, UN Women, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, and the private sector.
- **Ukraine** is working to counter sexist stereotypes that perpetuate social norms and expectations about women's roles and representation in political and public life, promote positive portrayals of women leaders, and develop recommendations for responsible media coverage of women officials, including a zero-tolerance approach to violence against women leaders, as part of ongoing efforts to implement their National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.
- **The United Kingdom (UK)** has invested more than \$1 million in targeted activities, research, and capacity-building between 2022 and 2025 to prevent and address TFGBV and counter gendered disinformation against women in politics, journalism, and public life. Through their leadership of the research and evidence working group of the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse, the UK has funded a preliminary landscape analysis of the state of evidence on TFGBV; is supporting an Early Warning System to detect escalation of online and offline violence and harassment against women journalists; and is supporting researchers at #ShePersisted to develop strategies for countering gendered disinformation and threats to democracy in Moldova and Brazil, with funds from the UK's Cyber Values campaign.
- **The United States** is planning to contribute \$150 million through 2025 in funds from the U.S. Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) toward Women LEAD's goals to advance women's political leadership, prevent and respond to gender-based violence against women leaders online and offline, and support women's meaningful participation and decision-making in the criminal justice sector, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution. This investment includes an intention from USAID to provide an additional \$10 million to expand the reach of the [Advancing Women's and Girls' Civic and Political Leadership Initiative](#); an intention from the State Department to provide an additional \$4 million to further scale activities under [Supporting Her Empowerment: Women's Inclusion for New Security \(SHE WINS\)](#); \$2 million through the launch of a new rapid response fund to aid women leaders experiencing extreme threats of TFGBV globally; \$4 million to advance women's political participation and empowerment through [Supporting Her Empowerment: Political Engagement, Rights, Safety, and Inclusion Strategies to Succeed](#) (SHE PERSISTS); and aligned efforts including [Transforming Digital Spaces](#), the Women, Peace, and

Security Incentive Fund, [Powered by the People](#), [Advancing Digital Democracy](#), Promoting Information Integrity and Resilience (Pro-Info), and Civic Defenders.

### **Aligned efforts by private sector, philanthropies, multilateral organizations, and civil society organizations include:**

- **Apolitical Foundation** commits an investment of up to \$250,000 by 2025 in projects and services supporting the Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network (PLEN), a non-partisan, global community of 80+ organizations working to cultivate more ethical, diverse, prepared, and supported people to run for political office, including efforts to support women running for office.
- **The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace**, through its Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, will build on recently published research critically examining international support for women’s political empowerment with a new research project analyzing the ongoing global pushback against women’s rights and gender equality, its drivers, and ways to limit or reverse such developments.
- **The Daniel Sachs Foundation** commits \$1 million by 2025 to promote the participation of women and other underrepresented populations in politics and democracy through a network of partners, including women-led organizations such as the Apolitical Foundation, the Raise Your Voice Foundation, and Multitudes Foundation. This investment supports initiatives that promote women into positions of political power and help to advance women’s participation in democratic processes in countries around the world.
- **Fundación Multitudes** commits \$297,000 in 2024 and 2025 to efforts that address TFGBV and gendered disinformation around the world through trainings and workshops to equip young women leaders to counter gendered disinformation, campaigns to raise awareness about digital rights and information integrity in elections, and the creation of a guide that instructs government leaders on how to establish a code of conduct to protect women parliamentarians from TFGBV.
- **The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS)**, with support from the Embassy of Denmark in the United States, has produced original research examining TFGBV as a threat to global peace and security, and therefore an urgent, under-addressed issue for the WPS Agenda. In a new report, “Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: An Emerging Issue in Women, Peace and Security,” GIWPS highlights how women are uniquely targeted by TFGBV, impeding their participation in political, public, and economic life, and impacting peace, security, and democracy globally. GIWPS has also developed a policy brief with recommendations for how NATO can adapt its WPS policy to address the rise of TFGBV.
- **Humane Intelligence** is committing \$60,000 by 2025 to professionalize the practice of algorithmic assessment to counter the harms and risks posed by artificial intelligence (AI), including gendered disinformation and TFGBV, which disproportionately impact women political and public figures. Humane Intelligence will work with the Network for Gender Inclusive Democracy and the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse in its “bias bounty” programs, which will crowdsource answers to specific problems, such as gender and other forms of bias, in AI models.
- **The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)** is advancing women’s civic and political participation and leadership through the implementation and expansion of its flagship “She Leads” and “Allies for Equality” programs in new countries and contexts around the world. “She Leads” works to provide women with the skills and knowledge to take on leadership roles in political and electoral processes. In 2024 IFES will launch a new “She Leads” program in the West Bank and Gaza, which will be informed by a new gender-responsive political economy analysis. The “Allies for

Equality” program focuses on harnessing men’s support for women’s leadership in political and democratic processes by addressing the social and cultural attitudes and gender norms which can impede women’s equal participation in political and public life.

- **The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)**, in partnership with UN Women, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and United Cities and Local Governments, is implementing the Women and Youth in Democracy Empowerment (WYDE) initiative, financed by the European Commission. Through WYDE, International IDEA commits \$1.7 million to strengthen the rights and participation of women and youth in public and political life, including through the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics) platform. Launched in 2007, iKNOW Politics is a collaborative project of International IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Nations Development Programme, and UN Women that serves as an online resource hub for experts and practitioners dedicated to women’s political participation.
- **The International Republican Institute’s Women’s Democracy Network (WDN)** commits \$1 million through 2025 to advance women’s political and civic participation, supporting more than 12,000 women from 120 countries. Through its country chapters, regional networks, and direct assistance, WDN provides resources, mentorship and networking opportunities, and training to women in politics, civil society, and government. In close collaboration with our local partners, WDN works to amplify women’s voices in advocacy and policy making, counter gender-based violence, including TFGBV, and advance democratic movements in a new digital era.
- **Mozilla Foundation** is committing \$800,000 through the end of 2024 to programs that include efforts aimed at monitoring, researching, and combating technology-facilitated gender-based violence and its effects on democracy. This includes through supporting a database of civil society actors working to advance gender justice in the AI era, fellowships to support thought leaders working to reduce online harms, and research and community-building grants to civil society organizations, with an emphasis on Africa.
- **The National Democratic Institute (NDI)** is working to accelerate the pace of change on gender equality in politics by 2030 through efforts including the Changing the Face of Politics campaign, and DISRUPTHER, a program that promotes the political engagement of adolescent girls and young women through education and training. NDI will continue advancing solutions to TFGBV and gendered disinformation against women political leaders, including as an advisor to the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse.
- **The Inter-American Commission of Women, Organization of American States** commits \$224,000 in 2024 toward training women electoral candidates in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the aim of strengthening the political leadership skills of 150 regional women aspiring to run for office, including a focus on countering gender discrimination and gender-based violence in electoral campaigns.
- **Open Society Foundations (OSF)** have committed \$58.5 million, including \$33.5 million to boost nonpartisan civic engagement among women and youth in the U.S. by supporting organizations focused on the pipeline of women leaders running for elected office; elevating women into leadership positions in foreign policy and national security; and advancing women of color in leadership roles at all levels. OSF is also investing in women-led organizations and leaders across the Global South to help ensure bold, transformative women political leaders become the global norm.
- **Save the Children** is investing at least \$140,000 in the expansion of the Girl-Led Movement Building project, which Save the Children is piloting in 11 countries around the world, to support groups led by girls and advance their advocacy efforts. Save the Children is also conducting research on TFGBV with UNFPA, and additional research focused on advancing adolescent girls’ and young women’s

leadership, which will inform a new programming model designed to promote girls' empowerment globally.

- **Skoll** is investing \$2.4 million in efforts to advance democracy and women's political leadership and participation in the U.S. and globally. This includes through support to: Vote Run Lead, which trains women across the United States to run for elected office at all levels of government; She the People, which supports training, research, and polling that helps women of color candidates identify and advance their policy priorities; and The Keseb Democracy Fellowship, which aims to counter authoritarianism and advance inclusive and resilient democracies through support for "democracy entrepreneurs" across South Africa, Brazil, and the United States—a majority of whom are women.
- **The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** is implementing global and country-level programs to address TFGBV, including "Making All Spaces Safe," a \$3.65 million program supported by the government of Canada, which will deliver TFGBV response and prevention interventions and support law and policy reform both globally and nationally in Kenya and Benin. UNFPA has committed over \$1million in 2024 to convene stakeholders nationally, regionally and globally, including the annual UNFPA TFGBV Global Symposium and the Safety Showcase: Re-imagine Gender in Technology program to promote technology to prevent TFGBV. UNFPA is also working to address TFGBV and its impact on women and girls' full participation in political, social, and economic life in over 150 countries through research as part of the kNOwVAWdata initiative in the Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Arab States as well an increased capacity to support response programming across the world. UNFPA works on the integration of digital and media literacy as well as youth engagement to prevent TFGBV across sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with an investment of nearly \$130,000 in the Eastern Europe region alone.
- **The Wallace Global Fund**, through partners including #ShePersisted, UltraViolet, and the Women's Disinformation Defense Project, is investing \$150,000 by 2025 to support groundbreaking research and strategic advocacy on gendered disinformation and TFGBV. Wallace Global also intends to invest \$50,000 in the U.S. Department of State's Global TFGBV Rapid Response Fund to support activists enduring extreme forms or threats of technology-facilitated gender-based violence globally.
- **The Women's Political Leadership Fund (WPLF)**, with seed funding from OSF, will invest \$25 million in the next four years to advance women's political leadership and democracy in the Global South, with a focus on serving women leaders from marginalized backgrounds. WPLF will support women political leaders through developing networks and alliances that foster solidarity and community, strengthening financial and technical capacities, deepening strategies to counter all forms of gender-based violence, including TFGBV and gendered disinformation, and promoting holistic protection, wellbeing, and safety.
- **Women Political Leaders** is committing \$150,000 by 2025 in support of high-level convenings to connect women political leaders globally and provide a safe space for coordination and community-building, with a focus on tackling violence against women in politics, both online and offline.
- **The Trawalla Foundation** is investing \$2.5 million over the next three years in Pathways to Politics for Women, an initiative of the Trawalla Foundation, Women's Leadership Institute Australia, and the University of Melbourne to increase the number of diverse women in Australian politics by equipping them to boldly embrace their political ambitions, thrive as leaders, and make a profound contribution to society. In collaboration with eight of Australia's leading universities in each Australian state and territory, Pathways to Politics offers comprehensive practical training, workshops, mentoring, and career-long support. Since its inception in 2016, the program has helped over 100 women run for office and achieved 48 electoral successes nationally across the political spectrum and at all levels of government.

Partners of Women LEAD will join a community of practice, coordinated by the [Network for Gender Inclusive Democracy](#).