



## PRESS RELEASE

Announcement date: 07 June 2021

### MESSAGE TO THE G7: JOIN THE DOTS ON SUPPORTING WOMEN, TECHNOLOGY AND ENTERPRISE FROM THE ORGANISERS OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> COMMONWEALTH WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT

1. The G20 said in December 2020, there is 'a missed opportunity - to tackle the gap that needs immediate action, which is the representation of women in emerging fields.'
2. The UK G7 Presidency has highlighted the need to take 'a collective approach to using new technologies' and made clear its commitment to 'promote global development and democracy, supporting girls' education and agree global girls' education targets'. This is a good start.
3. But with the World Economic Forum estimating that at the current rate of progress, it will take 267.6 years to close the economic gender gap, it is nowhere near enough or fast enough.
4. While COVID-19 is turbo charging our reliance on digital technologies, which are now key to how we connect with work, study and live as a family, it is clear that women and girls do not have the same access to digital services and often are still not choosing to pursue ICT careers.
5. As we move further into the digital age, it is becoming more crucial to ensure that women and men are equally represented within ICT-centred occupations.
6. When women and girls are empowered through digital technologies, ITU data shows that their families, communities and national economies benefit.
7. We can only unleash and unlock the potential and power of areas that Cleantech/Climatetech, Edtech, Healthtech, Fintech, Agritech, Fashiontech, Createch offer to the G7 and beyond as we build back better if girls and women are considered as structures, systems, policies and processes from these areas take shape, not later when it may be more difficult and take longer given the risks of embedded patriarchy.
8. There are three key messages: the need for more data and research to inform; the vital role of cities in supporting scalable start-up entrepreneurship, inclusive procurement and local economic development in bringing the ecosystem together including the private sector, women entrepreneurs and universities in evaluating impact and developing policies and programmes; and the need for a dedicated Women's Accelerator for the Commonwealth context geared towards emerging tech.
9. Governments have a key role to play in helping to close the gender digital divide. However, governments need to leave behind the 'siloes' approached of the past and instead focus on holistic efforts to address these important issues.
10. G7 leaders need to address three main priorities for further policy development: overarching policy frameworks for women's entrepreneurship need to be introduced; women's entrepreneurship policy interventions must reflect context; and more evaluation evidence is needed as a foundation for scaling policy initiatives.

The 10 point plan is available [here](#).





## Notes for Media

### About the Summit

The 1<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Women's Entrepreneurship Summit was convened on 19-20 May 2021 by the UK Government (Innovate UK) with the Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network (directly recognised by all 54 Commonwealth governments); the world's largest entrepreneurship community (Global Entrepreneurship Network) which supports entrepreneurship ecosystems across 180 countries; and Africa's largest network of women entrepreneurs (AWEP: African Women's Entrepreneurship Program) which was established and supported during and by the Obama-Biden Administration. With a special message from Her Majesty The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, it brought together 70 speakers, 20 talks, and 12 panel sessions with 1,400 participants from over 80 countries across 6 continents involving policy-makers, entrepreneurs, government agencies, entrepreneurship support organisations, funders and educational institutions.<sup>1</sup>

### About Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network

CBWN is a Community Interest Company and accredited organisation recognised by 54 governments across six continents, committed to advancing the Commonwealth Charter and SDG 5. This enables the organisation to advocate at all levels and promote inclusiveness. CBWN connects through a network of Ground Partners and with other Commonwealth organisations to influence policy, legislation, and to engage with global and national priorities across the world. It works with women in business to encourage, enable and embed women's economic empowerment and leadership potential through trade, talent and training. <http://cbwn.org>

### About GEN UK

GEN UK is a non-profit organisation set up to support and represent the entrepreneurial ecosystem across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, working with entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, researchers, public bodies and support organisations. GEN has built a presence around the world integrating the work of governments and NGOs to create one global entrepreneurial ecosystem that is open to all. Our network of 'alternative embassies' in over [180 countries](#) enables us to connect UK organisations with the rest of the world. <https://www.genuk.org>

### About Women in Innovation

Innovate UK's Women in Innovation programme empowers pioneering female entrepreneurs to develop innovations. KTN and Innovate UK work in collaboration to create a vibrant community of female role models, sharing knowledge and encouraging entrepreneurial growth for women throughout the UK. <https://ktn-uk.org/programme/women-in-innovation/>

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<sup>1</sup> A fuller report from the 1<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Women's Entrepreneurship Summit will be released during August 2021. All sessions from the Summit are freely accessible to watch or listen on-demand through registering at <https://www.worldlabs.org/cwesummit>





## About AWEP

African Women Entrepreneurship Programme (AWEP) is an outreach, education, and engagement initiative that targets African women entrepreneurs to promote business growth and trade through training, mentorship, and access to finance. Established in 2010, the African Women Entrepreneurship Programme (AWEP) is sponsored by the United States Department of State (DOS) to help more women entrepreneurs participate in international markets and take advantage of the benefits of AGOA and other trade initiatives.

<https://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/program/african-womens-entrepreneurship-program-awep>

## Links to the Summit website and social media channels

CWE Summit website <https://www.worldlabs.org/cwesummit>

Twitter @cwesummit

Facebook @cwesummit

Instagram @cwesummit

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/commonwealth-women-s-entrepreneurship-summit/>

Hashtag #CWESummit

## Images

Images of a selection of speakers and Summit event branding are available upon request.

## Contact

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