We, the undersigned, call on the IMF to immediately stop promoting austerity around the world, and instead advocate policies that advance gender justice, reduce inequality, and decisively put people and planet first.

As those who care about governments’ ability to fulfil human rights and advance progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, we express the utmost alarm at the IMF’s advice for countries to return to austerity once the current crisis recedes. This pandemic has laid bare the deadly repercussions of systematically weak investments in health, education and social protection, hardest felt by marginalized populations including women, older people, racial and ethnic minorities, informal workers and low-income families. This crisis has also shone light on the shrinking of the middle classes and worsening gap between rich and poor.

The IMF has spoken repeatedly of the need for a fair and green recovery. It has said that economic and gender inequality, climate change, and poor governance can weaken growth and undermine stability. In recent years, it developed operational guidance for staff on embedding gender and economic inequality analysis into its work and approved a macroeconomic framework for social spending. All of this would suggest that the IMF is ready to use its influence and authority to support countries in reducing inequality.

And yet, despite this rhetoric and its own warnings of deepening inequality, the IMF has already started locking countries into new long-term austerity-conditioned loan programs in the past few months. Beyond the conditionality in these recent programs, we note that a significant number of the IMF’s COVID-19 emergency financing packages contain language promoting fiscal consolidation in the recovery phase. And with governments struggling to pay increased debt servicing and expected to continue to need extraordinary levels of external financing for years to come, IMF loan programs - and the conditions that accompany them - will play a highly influential role in shaping the economic and social landscape in the aftermath of this pandemic.

Fiscal consolidation driven austerity would only worsen poverty and inequality and undermine the achievement of economic and social rights. The IMF’s own research corroborates this. Time and time again, rigid and rapid fiscal consolidation conditioned in IMF programs has meant devastating cuts in health and education investments, losses of hard-earned pensions and social protections, public wage freezes, layoffs, and exacerbated unpaid care work burdens. In all cases, it is the most vulnerable people in societies who bear the brunt of these reforms, while the elite, large corporations and creditors enjoy the benefits. Aside from the direct impacts, fiscal consolidation doesn’t ensure economic recovery and the creation of new jobs, and rapid consolidation could instead deepen the downturn. It won’t deliver a just transition towards climate resilient economies either.

Instead of austerity cuts, it is critical to create fiscal space and give governments the time, flexibility and support to achieve a sustainable, inclusive and just recovery. Immediate and urgent steps are needed to support the financial health of countries through grants and other highly concessional financing, supporting debt cancellation and restructuring, and issuing a new allocation of Special Drawing Rights. Medium to longer term recovery efforts, however, should continue promoting further fiscal and policy space that allows for an increase, rather than a decrease, in social spending, and progressive tax policies that collect sufficient revenue and redistribute wealth fairly.

This means systematically assessing the impacts of fiscal policy reforms on gender and economic inequality and rejecting those that have negative social impacts. It means negotiating agreements transparently with input from a range of stakeholders including civil society through national social dialogue. It means recommending and promoting progressive tax reforms such as taxes on wealth and the excess profits of large corporations, meaningfully combatting tax evasion, avoidance and illicit financial flows. And it means systematically supporting governments to restructure their debts so that they can prioritize investments in quality public services.

The global economy stands at a crossroads between further decades of austerity and debt crises, or adopting a macroeconomic framework compatible with fighting inequality, pursuing climate justice, realizing human rights and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Ahead of the 2020 IMF Annual Meetings, we call on the IMF to turn away from the mistakes of the past and finally close the dark chapter on IMF-conditioned austerity for good.
List of Signatories

Organization Signatories:

1. Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP)
2. Accountability Lab
3. Act Church of Sweden
4. Action against Hunger
5. Action contre la Faim – France
6. ACTION Global Health Partnership
7. ActionAid International
9. Africa Climate and Health Alliance
10. Africa Earth Environment and Wildlife Defenders
11. Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA)
12. African Coalition on Green Growth
13. Africans Rising
14. Afrihealth Optionet Association
15. Afrikajom Center
16. AFRIKCKEAN
17. AGERNA
18. AIPD
19. Al Hayat Center for Civil Society Development
20. Albanian Coalition for Education
21. Alliance contre la Pauvreté au Mali (GCAP Mali)
22. Alliance of CSOs in Tajikistan for Education
23. Alliance of Women Advocating for Change
24. Alliance Sud
25. amandla.mobi
26. AMPDI
27. Approche Participative, Développement et Santé de Proximité (APDSP)
28. Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA)
29. Arab Forum for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
30. Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)
31. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
32. Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)
33. Asian Peoples’ Movement on Debt and Development
34. Asociacion Ciudadana por los Derechos Humanos
35. Asociación Po Ti Mujer
36. Association Deme So
37. Association Beninoise de Droit du Developpement (ABDD)
38. Association Congolaise pour le Développement Agricole (ACDA)
39. Association de Développement Agricole Éducatif et Sanitaire
40. Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM)
41. Association for Promotion Sustainable Development
42. Association of Women Action (AWOA)
43. Association of Womens Organizations in Jamaica (AWOA)
44. Association Tunisienne de Droit du Développement
45. ATGL
46. Aube Nouvelle pour la Femme et le Développement (ANFD)
47. Bank Information Center
48. Beirut Cooperative Association
49. Blood Patients Protection Council, Kerala
50. Botswana Forum for Action and Reform
51. Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education
52. Bretton Woods Project
53. BUKO Pharma-Kampagne
54. Cadire Cameroon Association
55. CADTM International
56. CAFOD
57. Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)
58. Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación (CLADE)
59. Caritas Honduras
60. CCD-Terre Solidaire
61. Center for Economic and Social Rights
62. Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
63. Center for Women’s Global Leadership
64. Center Women and Modern World
65. Centre for Advancement of Civil Liberties and Development
66. Centre for Health Science and Law (CHSL)
67. Centro de los Derechos del Campesino/Nicaragua
68. Centro de Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos (PROMSEX)
69. Cetro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales (CDES)
70. Child Rights Centre Albania
71. Childhood Education International
72. Children and Young People Living for Peace (CYPLP)
73. Citoyens Actifs pour la Justice Sociale
74. Claim the Future
75. CNCD-11.11.11
76. Coalition for Education Solomon Islands (COESI)
77. Coalition Marocaine pour l'Education Pour Tous
78. Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres (CLADEM)
79. CoopeSoliDar R.L
80. Coordinadora de la Mujer
81. CPM Micaela Bastidas
82. Debt Free Project
83. Debt Observatory in Globalisation (ODG)
84. Delphi Capital
85. DemNet Hungary
86. De-Signature Casuals
87. Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)
88. Dianova International
89. Disabled People’s International (DPI)
90. Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality
91. Dominican Leadership Conference
92. Dominican Sisters of Peace
93. DUKINGIRE ISI YACU
94. Durakhshi Marifat NGO
95. Earthlife Africa Jhb
96. East African Centre for Human Rights
97. Echoes of Women in Africa Initiatives
98. Ecumenical Popular Education Program (ANPE)
99. Education for all Somalia coalition (EFASOM)
100. Education International
101. Ekvilib Institute
102. Emmaus International
103. Emonyo Yefwe International
104. EnaBanda
105. Entropía Social A.C.
106. Equal Education
107. Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia
108. Equipo Jurídico por los Derechos Humanos
109. erlassjahr.de
110. EuroMed Rights
111. EuSAIN
112. Faitima Jinnah OGA
113. Farmers’ Voice (Krisoker Sor)
114. Feminist Task Force
115. FEMNET
116. Finn Church Aid
117. FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development
118. Fondo Semillas
119. Foro Social de Deuda Externa y Desarrollo de Honduras (FOSDEH)
120. Forum Social Senegalais
121. Forum Social Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux
122. Foundation for Integrated Rural Development
123. Freedom from Debt Campaign Pakistan
124. Friends of the Earth US
125. Fundacion Arcoiris por el respeto a la diversidad sexual
126. Fundación de Mujeres Luna Creciente
127. Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar, A. C. (MEXFAM)
128. Fundacion para Estudio y Investigacion de la Mujer (FEIM)
129. Fundación Unid@s
130. Gatef organization
131. GCE-Italy
132. Gender Action
133. Gender and Development Network
134. Gender and Development in Practice (GADIP)
135. Genderccsa
136. Gestos (soropositividad, comunicação, gênero)
137. Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)
138. Global Alliance for Tax Justice
139. Global Campaign for Education
140. Global Campaign for Education Netherlands
141. Global Campaign for Education US
142. Global Health Advocates France
143. Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
144. Global Justice Now
145. Global Network of Sex Work Projects
146. Global Policy Forum
147. Global Social Justice Program at IPD
148. Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation
149. GRAP Senegal
150. Green Economy Coalition
151. Greenpeace
152. Health Alliance International
153. Health Poverty Action
154. Hope for the Village Child Foundation
155. Huldah Foundation
156. Human Rights Research Documentation Center (HURIC)
157. Human Rights Watch
158. IACE
159. IBON Foundation
160. Imaap Projects
161. Indus Consortium
162. Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER)
163. Institut National des Administateurs du Mali (INAM)
164. Institute for Economic Justice
165. Institute for Economic Justice (South Africa)
166. Institute for Gender & Development Studies - University of West Indies
167. Instituto de Estudios Socioeconómicos (INESC)
168. Instituto de Justicia Fiscal, Brazil
169. Instituto Popular de Capacitación Colombia (IPC)
170. Instytut Globalnej Odpowiedzialności (IGO)
171. International Accountability Project
172. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
173. International Trade Union Confederation
174. International Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW Asia Pacific)
175. JAGO NARI
176. Jamaa Resource Initiatives
177. Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs
178. Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE)
179. Jordan Coalition for Education for All
180. Jordanian Coalition for Education
181. Jubilee Debt Campaign
182. Jubilee Scotland
183. Jubilee USA Network
184. Justice Is Global
185. K.U.L.U. - Women and Development
186. KRuHA
187. Ladysmith
188. Latindadd
189. Laura Thompson Coaching & Consulting Services
190. Lebanese Union of Persons with Physical Disabilities (LUPD)
191. Lift Saxum
192. Live Alive Network LIAN
193. Local Green Party/Prairie Greens
194. Madhyam
195. Maharashtra State Bank Employees Federation
196. Make Mothers Matter
197. MARUAH, Singapore
198. Mediating for the less privileged and Women Development (MEWOOD)
199. Medical IMPACT
200. Medicus Mundi International - Network Health for All (MMI)
201. Medicusmundi spain
202. MENA PLATFORM for Renewable Energies & Energy Efficiency
203. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
204. Movimiento Manuela Ramos
205. Murna Foundation
206. National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal
207. National Coalition of Civil Society Organizations of Liberia
208. Nawi - Afrifem Macroeconomics Collective
209. Network for Women’s Rights and Feminist Perspectives in Development (WIDE)
210. Nigerian Women Agro Allied Farmers Association
211. NQBSS Livestock Breeders
212. Observatoire de Suivi des Indicateurs de Développement Économique en Afrique (OSIDEA)
213. Observatori DESC
214. Observatorio de la Deuda
215. Oikos - Cooperação e Desenvolvimento
216. ONG 3D
217. ONG Étoiles de la fraternité
218. ONG Un Monde Avenir
219. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Initiative
220. Oxfam
221. Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum
222. Panafricaine pour l'Education au Developpement Durable (PAEDD)
223. Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy Network
224. Participatory Development Action Program

225. PCQVP Mali
226. People's Health Movement Canada/Mouvement populaire pour la santé au Canada
227. Phakamani Trust
228. Phelyn Skill Acquisition Center (PSAC)
229. Phenix Center for Economic Studies
230. Piña Palmera A.C.
231. Plan International
232. Plataforma Auditoria Ciudadana de la Deuda
233. Policies for Equitable Access to Health (PEAH)
234. Policy Research in Macroeconomics (PRIME)
235. Princess of Africa Foundation
236. Public Services International (PSI)
237. Publicez Ce Que Vous Payez-Mali
238. Radha Paudel Foundation
239. Rapad Maroc
240. Rasheed for Integrity and Transparency
241. Rays of hope Support Initiative
242. Recourse
243. Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres (REPEM)
244. Red Dot Foundation
245. Red Nicaragüense de Comercio Comunitario (RENICC)
246. Red por la Justicia Tributaria en Colombia y Centro de Estudios Cedetabajo
247. Réseau Africain Pour le Droit à l’Alimentation Sénégal
248. Right to Education Initiative
249. Rose Academies
250. ROTAB Niger
251. Rural Area Development Programme (RADP)
252. Rwenzori Center for Research and Advocacy
253. Sadaqa
254. SECTION27 (South Africa)
255. Servicio Desarrollo Rural y Agricultura (SEDRA) Chile
256. Servicios Ecumenicos para Reconciliacion y Reconstruction
257. Shirakat - Partnership for Development
258. Sisters of Charity Federation
259. Social Justice in Global Development
260. Socialist Campaign Group of MPs
261. Society for International Development (SID)
262. Society for Rights of Persons with Disability
263. Society for the Improvement of Rural People (SIRP)
264. South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)
265. Southern Africa Climate Change Coalition
266. Strategic Initiative for women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA Network)
267. Success Capital Organisation
268. Sukaa Welfare Organization
269. Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment (SWAGEN)
270. Tamkeen for legal aid and Human Rights
271. Tedhelte
272. TENFOREST
273. The East African Centre for Human Rights
274. The Human Rights and Privatization Project at NYU School of Law
275. The Iraqi Institution for Development
276. The Jordanian Association for Basic Education
277. The Kota Alliance
278. The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
279. The People’s Fund for Global Health and Development
280. Third World Network
281. Transnational Institute
282. Tripla Difesa Onlus
283. Triumphant Health & Development Initiative (THAD)
284. UNABU-Rwanda
285. Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights
286. Uthema Maldives
287. Vision Spring Initiatives
288. VSO
289. Water Justice and Gender
290. Wemos
291. Win Without War
292. Woman Inc
293. Womankind Worldwide
294. Women Against Rape Inc.
295. Women and Modern World Social Charitable Center
296. Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)
297. Women In Development Europe+ (WIDE+)
298. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)
299. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
300. Women's Major Group
301. Wote Youth Development Projects
302. YDA
303. Yemen Organization for Promoting Integrity
304. Youth and Small Holder Farmers Association
305. Youth For Environment Education and Development Foundation (YFEED Foundation)
306. Zimbabwe Climate Change Coalition
307. Zimbabwe Institute for International Affairs

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504. Ajit Zacharias, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College