

**The Big Ideas for Women and Girls Coalition (BIC)**  
**Co-chairs' statement in response to**  
**USAID's 2020 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy**

Advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a vital goal of US foreign assistance. We support USAID continuing its commitment to advancing these goals as a vital part of US foreign assistance and stood ready to work with USAID to update the 2012 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy to reflect the latest evidence and best practice of experts in global development and humanitarian assistance.

In response to the draft *2020 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy* released for public comment in August 2020, our coalition shared several concerns about both the process of developing this new policy and its content. While the final text contains some useful updates, our coalition's major concerns remain unresolved.

We call on the Biden Administration to pause implementation of this new policy as a matter of urgency and revert to the 2012 policy to ensure continued guidance for USAID staff and partners. We further urge the new Administration to launch a consultative process with internal and external experts – including local women- and girl-led organizations, faith-based organizations, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender advocates, and civil society – to update the 2012 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy so that it better advances gender equality and the needs of women and girls, and reflects the expertise of the world's premier development agency.

Covid-19 has both revealed and exacerbated gender inequalities, making these issues more important than ever in achieving USAID's mission. The update of the *USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*, which is both vital and far-reaching, should reflect a review of the latest evidence and best practices as well as consultation with internal stakeholders, civil society, and Congress. The Big Ideas for Women and Girls Coalition stands ready to work hand-in-hand with USAID to ensure the strongest possible policy and support for gender equality and women's empowerment around the globe.

Signed,

Co-Chairs of the Big Ideas for Women and Girls Coalition:

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Vice President for Public Policy and Advocacy, Save the Children

Leslie Archambeault

Director of Global Gender Policy and Advocacy, Save the Children

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*The Big Ideas for Women and Girls Coalition advocates for placing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the center of U.S. foreign policy and assistance, as both the right thing to do, and the smart thing to do. The Coalition brings together over 25 non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and unaffiliated experts who are committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls globally.*