

# The CGIAR Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Panel Pledge

## Guidance Note<sup>1</sup>

February 2021

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<sup>1</sup> This Guidance note is a living document that is updated based on lessons learned. Please ensure you access the latest version online [here](#) to ensure you have the most recent version.

## What is a Panel Pledge?

A panel pledge is an initiative to advance gender equity and foster greater diversity in all its forms on panels, at conferences, in forums and at other events. Participating individuals choose to advocate for greater diversity and gender equality at all events and commit to only taking part in events that feature a diverse group of speakers.

It's recently been found that nearly 70% of all event speakers are male.<sup>2</sup> The long-standing issue of lack of diversity on panels has faced growing attention and criticism over the past decade. For example, a popular blog, "Congrats, you have an all-male panel!" updated almost weekly with examples of men dominating public talks. Similarly, the hashtag #allmalepanels has been tweeted thousands of times since it emerged around 2013. The term 'manel' is also now commonly used to describe all-male panels. In response to the call for greater diversity in speakers at events, numerous organizations have initiated panel pledges.



## Why is a Panel Pledge important for CGIAR?

CGIAR staff, in the course of their duties, regularly contribute to internal and external conferences, join specialist working groups, deliver keynote speeches and participate in expert panels. Where such events lack gender balance and diversity, this limits the quality of conversation, and risks privileging some voices over others, as well as bias in the perspectives heard.

Consciously including individuals of different genders and from different backgrounds can bring diversity of thought, leading to more interesting and informative discussions able to draw conclusions with greater legitimacy. Further, capturing diverse perspectives and experiences is critical to generating the ideas, solutions and innovations we need to tackle the increasingly complex problems CGIAR is working to address. Without the opportunity to contribute to such events, women and individuals from under-represented groups lose out on profile-building opportunities, which is an important contributor to experience and professional recognition. Moreover, the absence of role models from diverse groups perpetuates stereotypes, leading to a lack of diversity in talent pipelines and among scientific and professional leaders.

Committing to the CGIAR GDI<sup>3</sup> Panel Pledge is one way in which CGIAR staff can take action to address inequality and bias, and consciously promote inclusion in how we work in One CGIAR.

<sup>2</sup> A recent study by Bizzabo analyzed the gender diversity of more than 60,000 event speakers over a five-year period (2013-2018). Events spanned 23 countries and thousands of the world's largest professional events. <https://blog.bizzabo.com/event-gender-diversity-study>

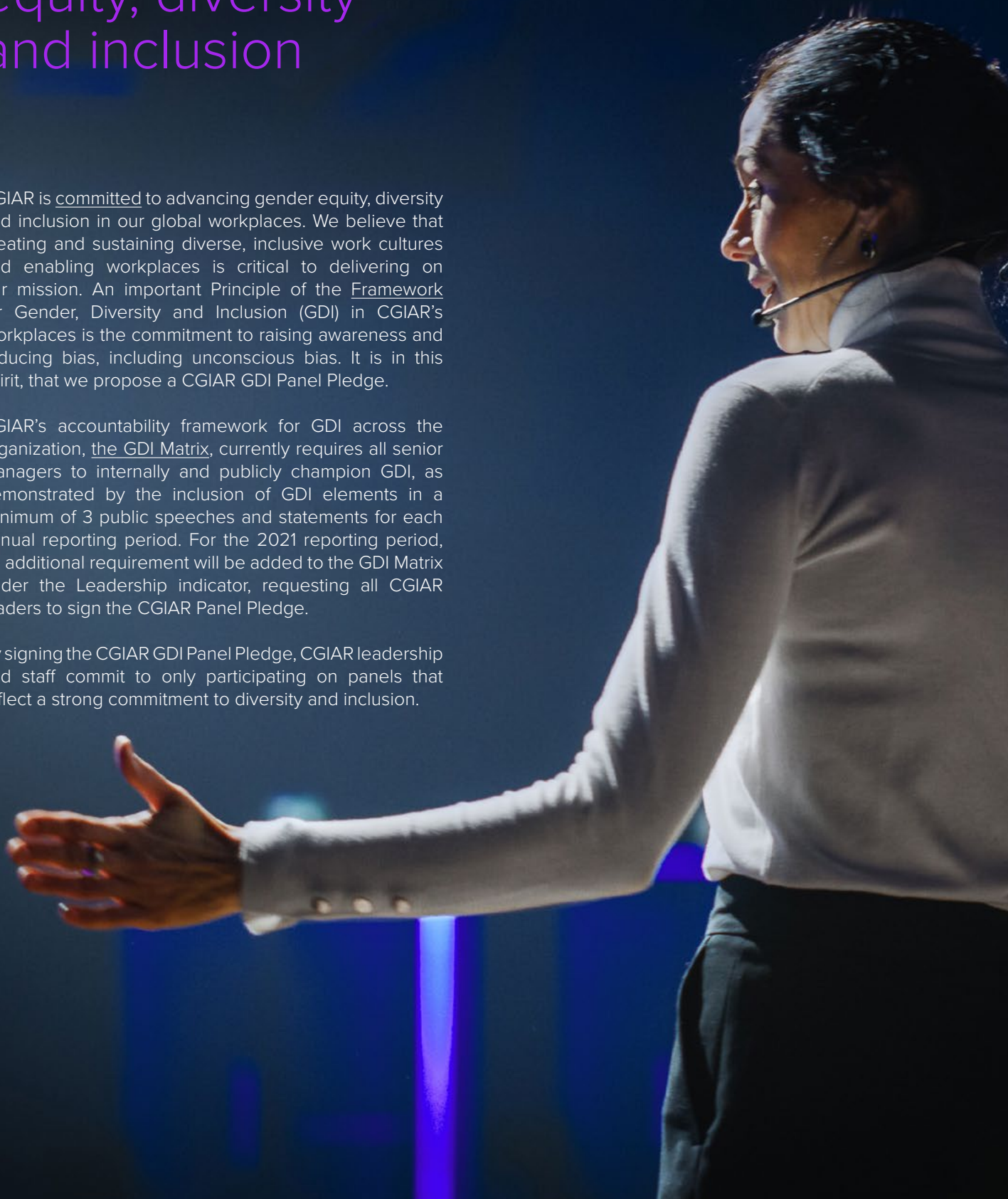
<sup>3</sup> Gender, Diversity and Inclusion (GDI).

## CGIAR's commitment to improving gender equity, diversity and inclusion

CGIAR is committed to advancing gender equity, diversity and inclusion in our global workplaces. We believe that creating and sustaining diverse, inclusive work cultures and enabling workplaces is critical to delivering on our mission. An important Principle of the Framework for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion (GDI) in CGIAR's Workplaces is the commitment to raising awareness and reducing bias, including unconscious bias. It is in this spirit, that we propose a CGIAR GDI Panel Pledge.

CGIAR's accountability framework for GDI across the organization, the GDI Matrix, currently requires all senior managers to internally and publicly champion GDI, as demonstrated by the inclusion of GDI elements in a minimum of 3 public speeches and statements for each annual reporting period. For the 2021 reporting period, an additional requirement will be added to the GDI Matrix under the Leadership indicator, requesting all CGIAR leaders to sign the CGIAR Panel Pledge.

By signing the CGIAR GDI Panel Pledge, CGIAR leadership and staff commit to only participating on panels that reflect a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion.



# What is CGIAR's proposed GDI Pledge?

For the purpose of this initiative, a panel can be defined as any “speaking engagement where an individual is invited as a representative of their organization, as a subject matter expert, or in their personal capacity, whether to deliver welcome remarks; be the keynote speaker; share experiences, practices or knowledge as a panelist; or to facilitate a discussion as the chairperson or moderator.”<sup>4</sup>

All CGIAR staff are welcome to participate in the Pledge. Senior Managers are particularly encouraged to participate.

CGIAR's Panel Pledge is as follows:

**We pledge to ensure that a diverse range of people from a variety of genders, backgrounds, age groups, cultures and abilities are given an opportunity to meaningfully contribute to public discussions and are evaluated fairly for speaking opportunities at conferences and other professional external and internal events.**

Specifically, **when invited to speak at a professional event**, individuals who sign the GDI Panel Pledge will:

- Inform session organizers when you are invited that you are required to withdraw from all-male/ all-female<sup>5</sup> panels.
- Agree not to participate on all-male/ all-female panels of two or more people, not including the Chair or moderator.
- Request confirmation from event organizers that the panel will not be an all-male/ all-female panel, not including the Chair or moderator, before accepting the invitation.
- Request details regarding the efforts that have been made to ensure individuals from a variety of backgrounds, age groups, cultures and abilities have been approached to participate.
- Agree not to participate in panels where no efforts have been made to ensure diverse representation.
- Panels should also include an appropriate and adequate representation of the populations under discussion. For example, if discussing agriculture in Ethiopia the panel should consist of an expert from Ethiopia.

**When organizing an internal professional event**<sup>6</sup>, individuals who sign the pledge will:

- Strive to achieve gender balance among all speakers and panelists and ensure the event does not have all-male/ all-female panels.
- Consider all aspects of diversity for panelists and speakers. Seek opportunities to engage a diverse range of people from a variety of genders, backgrounds, age groups, cultures and abilities.
- Distribute topics so that the voices of women and other under-represented groups are heard on a range of issues across all aspects of the agenda. Actively break the mold by asking men to talk on topics such as gender equality which are typically offered to women, and ask women to speak on topics such as natural sciences, finance, etc. Ask all speakers to address issues of gender and diversity in their presentations as much as possible or relevant.
- Encourage diverse participation when taking questions from the audience.

4 Adapted from: IGC Panel Parity Pledge. <https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/igc-production/files/91NYMStC5PMimB7-ozKlx38w1xiTDk4w.pdf>

5 This pledge acknowledges that not all individuals fall within the categories of male and female, such as people with non-binary identities. In all cases, no individual will be asked to specify their gender identity.

6 Examples of internal professional events include conferences, panels and forums with internal and external speakers.

## How was the GDI Panel Pledge created?

The CGIAR GDI Panel Pledge was developed through a highly consultative process coordinated by the GDI Function from November 2020 to February 2021.

An initial draft of the CGIAR GDI Panel Pledge was developed by the GDI Function in October and November 2020. This draft was sent to colleagues from across CGIAR, including from the Gender Research Platform and the wider research community, the Human Resource Community of Practice and GDI Focal Points for review and input. The first draft was updated based on feedback received and was further strengthened through a second round of cross-CGIAR consultations in February 2021.

Feedback was solicited from colleagues in Africa Rice, the Bioversity-CIAT Alliance, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICRISAT, IFPRI, ILRI, IRRI, IITA, IWMI, World Fish, and the System Organization.

Overall, the feedback from those solicited was overwhelmingly positive, with strong support for the initiative. Below are some key points of feedback that were shared and addressed in the final draft.

Clarifying what constitutes a panel and who the pledge can apply to.

Providing tools and practical guidance for signatories (e.g., email signatures, standard responses to invites to speak at events).

Ensuring the focus goes beyond diversity in gender representation.

Strengthening points of accountability through monitoring and reporting (example, tying the requirements of the pledge to annual reporting against the CGIAR GDI Matrix).

Ensuring we apply the requirements of the pledge when CGIAR is developing our own events.



# How will the GDI Panel Pledge be implemented?



The GDI Function will support the implementation of the Pledge, through CGIAR's Research leaders, Human Resource Community of Practice (HR COP)<sup>7</sup>, the WIRES employee-led resource group, and GDI Focal Points.



A page on the CGIAR website will enable individuals to sign up to the Pledge. The same page will showcase all leaders who have signed the Pledge, clearly role modeling CGIAR's values.



Leaders who sign the Pledge will be:

- encouraged to let their staff know of their commitment to the Pledge and will encourage their teams to also make a similar commitment; and
- provided with optional text regarding their commitment and a link to CGIAR'S GDI panel pledge webpage, to include in their email signature blocks.



When responding to a request to speak at a professional event, individuals who have signed, will make stakeholders aware of the requirements of the Pledge (detailed above).



As part of annual reporting against the CGIAR GDI Matrix under the Leadership Indicator (indicator 6), entities will be asked to note the gender and diversity balance of panels their leaders have participated in when submitting their annual Matrix report through the GDI Matrix online reporting tool. Entities will individually decide which departments and/or individuals will be responsible for tracking panel participation.

<sup>7</sup> And other appropriate structures in the transition to One CGIAR.



# Draft tools and templates

## Template for responding to panel participation requests

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<date>

Dear X,

Thank you for the invitation to XXXXX.

I have recently signed the CGIAR GDI Panel Pledge, to ensure that a diverse range of people from a variety of backgrounds, age groups, cultures and abilities are given an opportunity to meaningfully contribute to public discussions and are evaluated fairly for speaking opportunities at conferences and other professional events.

As a participant of the CGIAR Panel Pledge, I am required to withdraw from all-male/ all-female panels and those that are not appropriately diverse in the broader sense.

Therefore, before I accept this invitation, could you please confirm the following:

- Will the panel be diverse?
- Will all participants be given the opportunity to participate meaningfully?
- What efforts have been made to ensure individuals from a variety of gender, backgrounds, age groups, cultures and abilities can participate?

Please note that CGIAR is recording statistics for each event that participants of CGIAR GDI Panel Pledge partake in, as part of our annual reporting against [CGIAR's GDI Accountability Framework](#).

Thank you again for this opportunity and I welcome any questions or concerns you have on the above.

Warm Regards,

XXX

## Tips on how to respond to event organizers when panels do not appear to be diverse (adapted from the IGC Panel Parity Pledge Quick Guide & Suggested Language)<sup>8</sup>

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### **When Signatories receive an invitation with a speaker list that is not diverse**

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*Proposed text to adapt in correspondence with the organizers:*

We have noticed that the composition of speakers at [name the event or panel] is all-male/ all-female/not diverse in representation.

[Name of Signatory] has taken the CGIAR GDI Panel Pledge. By taking the pledge, [person] has committed to striving towards diverse representation at every event on which [person] is invited to speak. We are also recording statistics for each panel that [Name of Signatory] participates in, captured through our CGIAR GDI Matrix annual reporting.

The purpose of the GDI Pledge is to ensure that a diverse range of people from a variety of gender, backgrounds, age groups, cultures and abilities are given an opportunity to meaningfully contribute to public discussions and are evaluated fairly for speaking opportunities at conferences and other professional events. Only in this way will we be able to capture the diverse perspectives and experiences needed to tackle the increasingly complex challenges impacting food security.

### **When Signatories unexpectedly find themselves about to participate in a non-diverse panel**

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Suggested language:

I have signed the CGIAR GDI Panel Pledge that challenges all of us to take a stand against all-male/all-female/non-diverse panels. The Pledge recognizes that we need to increase the participation and influence of all people to achieve inclusive perspectives, insights and innovation.

Additional strategies if possible and practical:

- Only take audience questions from individuals who fall into under-represented groups
- Recruit an expert you know from the audience
- Add an empty chair
- Leave the room

## Email signature template

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*Please note that I am a signatory of the CGIAR GDI Panel Pledge. As a participant of the Pledge, I will not serve on a panel of two people or more unless it is diverse.*

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<sup>8</sup> From the IGC Panel Parity Pledge [Quick Guide & Suggested Language](#).