Women's Major Group

Creating a Just & Sustainable Future

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2022 High Level Political Forum

Position Paper

Building back better from COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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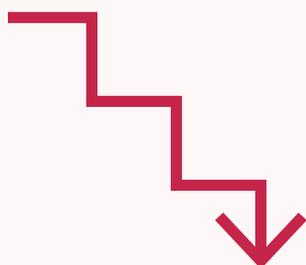
Women's Major Group

2022 High Level Political Forum Position Paper

"Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"

Executive Summary

By the end of this Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals, the Women's Major Group hopes to reflect on this moment as the time when we rebuilt from COVID-19 by abandoning austerity, competition, and extractivist, exploitative, and patriarchal systems, and replaced them with feminist decolonial ethics of care, equality and abundance.

By 2030, we have a vision in which we all celebrate, protect, and honor the full diversity of human life and the planet with a special focus on fulfilling the human rights of women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

We see a world that protects, defends, and funds environmental and women human rights defenders—a landscape of flourishing feminist movements. We envision robust space for civil society to meaningfully engage, decide, participate, and demand justice and accountability in open and democratic processes.

We have a vision of a world that recognizes and guarantees our bodily autonomy, freedom from violence, and sexual and reproductive health as human rights—a world in which our bodies are our own.

We see a world in which girls excel in quality, inclusive, and affordable education and training systems, where they receive comprehensive sexuality, anti-colonial, climate justice and human rights education, and in which educational opportunities are lifelong.

We have a vision of a new global economic paradigm that centers human rights, care, and redistribution over unbridled growth. Where we have fully-funded, universal, gender-transformative health and social protection systems; living wages and decent work for all; quality care, health, education, water, sanitation, and energy as public services; and where women workers—no matter in the formal or informal economy—have their rights to work and at work respected.

We see a world in which we have rejected false solutions to the climate crisis: a world of climate justice with funding for grassroots gender-just climate solutions and loss and damage, and climate reparations for the most affected communities. We see women, girls, gender-diverse people, and Indigenous Peoples with sovereignty over their land, water, bodies, and food systems.

We have a vision of a world where all countries have the fiscal space to guarantee public services instead of servicing excessive debt. We see a world that has eliminated illicit financial flows, enacted progressive tax systems and corporate regulation, and created trade agreements centered on the fulfillment of human rights rather than the exploitation and expropriation of resources and the prioritization of profit for the few.

We see a world at peace—where the resources that used to sustain militarism have been diverted to support the fulfillment and enjoyment of human rights.

We envision a multilateralism centered on global solidarity and cooperation that welcomes the people, especially the most marginalized, into halls of power and decision-making.

We continue to participate in this space because we know a just and inclusive world is possible. We trust our partnerships and cross-movement building and call on multilateral institutions to walk with us in this path because only together can we make this vision a reality.

"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way." — Arundhati Roy

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

In order to usher in this other world, we need swift and immediate action across all of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Though at times the sheer scale of the goals may seem daunting, the interlinked nature of the goals means that our actions in one goal has the potential to catalyze action in other goals—provided that the actions are created from an intersectional perspective.

The following set of cross-cutting recommendations and goal-specific analyses should guide states and other actors as they design and implement policies to achieve the SDGs, as well as COVID-19 recovery plans. These policies should be one and the same: COVID-19 recovery policies that push forward the 2030 Agenda rather than undermine it.

1. **Take a human rights-based and gender transformative approach to the implementation of all aspects of the 2030 Agenda and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its related crises.** Respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights,nincluding sexual and reproductive rights, of all people particularly, women, girls, and gender-diverse people. Center the elimination of inequalities and the unjust distribution of power in all policies and actions.

2. **Protect and expand the space for feminist and social justice movements to participate, mobilize, and demand action.** End the practice of punitive legislation targeting environmental and women human rights defenders, activists, and social leaders, especially Indigenous and Afro-descendant leaders. End impunity for forced disappearances, killings, threats, harassment, intimidation, and violence against environmental and women human rights defenders, activists, and social leaders.

3. **Actively seek out and support the participation of women, girls and gender-diverse people in the creation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs**. Establish and maintain institutionalized spaces within local, national, regional, and global policy spaces where feminist and social justice movements can equally, meaningfully, and effectively participate. We are experts in our own lives and beyond, including sustainable development. Policies and programs that do not include our voices and perspectives will never meet the world's needs and our rights and will continue to leave the majority of people behind.

4. **Dismantle the unjust economic systems that perpetuate and deepen inequalities between and within countries**. Challenge and end the privatization and commodification of public goods and services; exploitation of biodiversity and natural resources; cycles of unsustainable debt; and trade agreements that undermine labor rights, lead to environmental degradation, and perpetuate colonial dynamics, as well as gender disparities. In its place, create a new development paradigm that prioritizes global,

inclusive well-being for people and the planet—a feminist, decolonial Global Green New Deal as called for by the Feminist Action Nexus for Economic and Climate Justice.[1]

5. **Allocate adequate resources, technology transfer, and training to strengthen data and statistical systems and collect and communicate disaggregated data**, including increasing the capacity of national statistics offices. Invest in the collection, analysis, and use of data, including individual-level data about multidimensional poverty and inequality, disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, marital status, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. This data is necessary to further our understanding of the interlinkages between the SDGs with an intersectional lens. Value qualitative data in the same way that quantitative data is valued, as well as data generated by civil society organizations, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples.

6. **Develop and implement system-wide policy coherence and coordination between the High Level Political Forum and other UN human rights and development systems and processes**, including at regional and national levels. Policy coherence furthers the effective implementation, monitoring, learning and accountability of the 2030 Agenda, as well as COVID-19 recovery policies.

7. **Increase funding and support for civil society, particularly for feminist, women- and youth-led organizations and movements,** with priority given to those formed and led by people historically marginalized on the basis of gender identity and expression, class, caste, sexual orientation, indigeneity, race, ethnicity, disability, or religion. Provide multi-year, flexible, core operating support and adopt funding practices that encourage collaboration rather than competition between organizations and movements.

Sustainable Development Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Key Data

- The World Bank estimates that an additional 75 - 95 million people will be living in poverty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and additional crises caused by inflation and the conflict in Ukraine.[2]
- UN Women, UNDP, and the Pardee Center for International Futures estimate that 388 million women and girls will live in poverty in 2022, but the number could be as high as 446 million in a "high damage" scenario.[3]

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[1] https://wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ActionNexus_KeyDemands_EN.pdf.
[2] https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/pandemic-prices-and-poverty. Accessed 20 April 2022.
[3] https://data.unwomen

- According to UN Women, out of 1,700 social protection and labor market measures enacted by governments in response to the crisis, only 13% targeted women's economic security and only 11% provided support for rising unpaid care demands.[4]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions of Poverty

It is not natural or inevitable that people live in poverty. This inequity results from structural factors and the repeated policy choices that entrench them, which dictate the terms of our economies and societies. Measuring the poverty of households rather than individuals, and focusing on aspects of poverty common to men and women, rather than using a gender-sensitive measurement framework, hides the gendered aspects of poverty and makes it more difficult to transform the structural factors.

Patriarchy keeps women in poverty in a variety of ways. Since patriarchal societies do not value women equally to men, they do not value women and girls' work equally, resulting in work that is unpaid—especially in the case of care and domestic work—or undervalued as is the case in professions that women dominate, such as teaching or nursing.

Since patriarchal societies do not value the education of girls, or gender-diverse children, as much as they value the education of boys, their education is often more likely to be curtailed and / or limited to "appropriate'' areas of study, which reproduces patriarchal gender norms and discourages girls from careers in higher paying fields. While enrollment rates for girls and boys are fairly equal globally, disparate graduation rates continue, especially in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence, where girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys are.[5]

Since patriarchal systems aim to undermine women's autonomy and independent access to resources, formal and customary legal systems often deny women and girls equal access to land, property, or inheritance rights, as well as financial services, further trapping them in cycles of poverty. According to the World Bank, nearly 40% of countries limit women's property rights in some way.[6]

Data

Currently, routine household-level measurement of poverty hides differences in the circumstances of individuals within households and prevents accurate disaggregation and insight

.org/features/poverty-deepens-women-and-girls-according-latest-projections. Accessed 20 April 2022.
[4] UN Women. "Beyond COVID-19: A Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice." Page 24.
[5] World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation#1. Accessed 21 May 2022.
[6] World Bank. https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploretopics/wbl_ma. Accessed 21 May 2022.

into the different circumstances of social cohorts, including the impact of intersectional factors.[7] To end poverty in all its forms, everywhere, requires measuring poverty at the individual level in a way that is gender-sensitive and considers the range of dimensions identified by people with lived experience of poverty. Measurement that fails to capture lived realities only makes it harder for policy makers to see the circumstances of people in all their diversity and focus resources where they can make the most impact.

A gender-just recovery from COVID-19 and realizing the SDGs requires a pivot to new data sources that get below the household level and capture the circumstances of individuals in intersectional and multidimensional ways. The United Nations Statistical Commission has called for a 'data revolution' as central to realizing global commitments: "[I]Initiatives to develop new tools and frameworks to integrate new data sources, with the aim of fully harnessing the power of the data revolution and achieving the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda... are especially important in identifying those left furthest behind, since data are increasingly disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics. This type of detailed information is the basis upon which effective policies are shaped."[8]

Social Protection

Countries have a variety of obligations for developing and resourcing adequate social protection programs, including and beyond the 2030 Agenda. Multiple legally binding human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, require states to take action to progressively realize the right to social protection without discrimination or retrogression.

Developing and resourcing comprehensive, gender-transformative social protection systems is key to combating poverty and hunger for women, girls, and gender-diverse people across the life course. These social protection systems must incorporate and benefit all populations, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, citizenship or migratory status, race, ethnicity, income, disability, age, and beyond. In addition, these systems must include those who work in informal sectors, as well as those in unpaid care and domestic work, who are disproportionately women.

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[7] Kanbur, Ravi. 2016. Intra-Household Inequality and Overall Inequality. Cornell Dyson School Working Paper 20166-11 http://publications.dyson.cornell.edu/research/researchpdf/wp/2016/Cornell-Dyson-wp1611.pdf; McInerney, Carol and Fisk, Kylie. 2019b. Household-level measurement masks gender inequality across three dimensions of poverty, UNECE Expert Meeting on Measuring Poverty and Inequality: SDGs 1 and 10, Geneva, 5-6 December 2019, https://equalityinsights.org/resources/unece-working-paper-household-level-measurement-masks-gender-inequality-across-three-dimensions-of-poverty/

[8] UN Statistical Commission (2018), The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, p.16. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2018/TheSustainableDevelopmentGoalsReport2018-EN.pdf

Achieving this requires data that is inclusive, multidimensional, and makes visible the implications of intersectional factors.

In addition to incorporating all populations through conscious policy actions, a comprehensive, gender-transformative social protection system should include access to food, water and sanitation, basic energy, health services, child care, and education, training, and adult learning and education (ALE). Health schemes under social protection systems must include and cover services specific to the needs of women, girls, and gender-diverse people, such as sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services that include modern contraception, maternal health care, sexual and gender-based violence services, and safe abortion care.

This type of broad social protection system can help communities adapt to the negative impact of economic crises, conflict, disasters, humanitarian emergencies, pandemics and other health emergencies, and the climate crisis, which are all interconnected. The COVID-19 pandemic is neither over nor the only crisis that will impact the world before 2030.

Austerity and Financing

Public financing and resources must be guaranteed and allocated for social protection systems. Austerity measures, regardless of how they are rebranded, continue to threaten any gains that can be made in reducing poverty among all people, particularly among women and girls, and present a direct violation of the human rights principle of non-retrogression.

Yet, most governments continue to adopt austerity policies, while international financial institutions (IFIs), such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) continue to require and / or encourage them. According to Oxfam, "13 out of the 15 IMF loan programs negotiated during the second year of the pandemic require new austerity measures such as taxes on food and fuel or spending cuts that could put vital public services at risk."[9]

As women make up a large share of workers in the industries hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis, hold less wealth than men, are usually employed in insecure work with temporary conditions / contracts, and often have more difficulty finding re-employment after layoffs, they are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of austerity measures. Governments and IFIs should learn the lesson of previous waves of austerity measures and guarantee support for public services and social protection, rather than requiring women and girls to pick up the slack. Instead, governments and IFIs must develop and resource COVID-19 response and recovery plans that center care and equality and remake our economic systems to facilitate just transitions to sustainable economies with decent work for all.

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[9] Relief Web. "IMF must abandon demands for austerity as cost-of-living crisis drives up hunger and poverty worldwide." https://reliefweb.int/report/world/imf-must-abandon-demands-austerity-cost-living-crisis-drives-hunger-and-poverty. Accessed 24 April 2022 .

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

Gender-sensitive poverty measurement

- Increase resourcing for, and regular production of, individual-level, gender-sensitive data on poverty that can support disaggregation by income, gender, age, race, marital status, ethnicity, migratory status, and disability.
- Through national statistics offices, recognize new methodologies for individual-level, gender-sensitive measures of poverty, to support expanded availability of data on gendered poverty.

Social protection

- Adequately finance and, where they do not already exist, create comprehensive, gender-transformative social protection systems that are targeted to the most vulnerable and include coverage for services especially needed by women, girls, and gender-diverse people.
- Avoid reductions in spending on non-contributory social protection mechanisms, such as unconditional cash transfers.
- Remove discrimination against gender-diverse, gender non-conforming, and non-binary people in the design and accessibility of social protection programs.

Austerity measures and debt

- End austerity measures, including cuts to social protection programs and public services that disproportionately impact women and girls. Increase investments in economic recovery, comprehensive public services, and social protection, to fulfill human rights and safeguard public goods.
- IFIs and donor countries should cancel, restructure, suspend, and lower rates on existing debt, and any new debt issued should not include austerity conditionalities. Otherwise, countries may be required to spend limited financial resources on debt servicing rather than social protection and other programs to achieve the SDGs. Any new grants should target domestic social welfare and the provision of public goods and services.

Sustainable Development Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Key Data

- In approximately ⅔ of the world, women are more likely to report food insecurity than men.[10]
- COVID-19 has exacerbated the global gender gap in food insecurity, which increased from 6% in 2019 to 10% in 2020. As current armed conflicts increase the cost of food globally, food insecurity, including the gender gap, may only increase.[11]
- Women are responsible for half of the world's food production but own less than 20% of land worldwide.[12]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions of Hunger and Food Insecurity

Access to nutritious food is a basic human right with significant age, gender, race, caste, and class dimensions. Hunger and malnutrition are not natural or inevitable—human systems of inequality drive them. As a group of humanitarian organizations explained in 2021:

> "These people are not starving, they are being starved. These girls and boys, men and women, are being starved by conflict and violence; by inequality; by the impacts of climate change; by the loss of land, jobs or prospects; by a fight against COVID-19 that has left them even further behind. Every day, we see that it is women and girls who suffer the most."[13]

Corporate capture of the food system and global trade agreements interact with and drive the structural factors mentioned above, including climate change, inequality, land degradation and land grabbing, and militarism and conflict, to weaken food sovereignty, access to cultural and traditional crops and farming practices, land rights, and, ultimately, increase hunger and malnutrition.

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[10] World Food Programme. "WFP and Gender." https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000138716/download/?_ga=2.154537019.2060624938.16508 11560-1378699784.1650811560&_gac=1.216271266.1650811574.EAIaIQobChMIlKPuofis9wIVVOXjBx 20FguuEAAYASAAEgKkufD_BwE. Accessed 24 April 2022.

[11] WFP. "WFP and Gender."

[12] WFP. "WFP and Gender."

[13] https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/apr/20/millions-at-risk-of-famine-without-urge nt-help-governments-warned. Accessed 22 April 2021.

Globally, women hold disproportionately fewer land rights than men compared to the amount of land on which they labor. This is a direct result of patriarchal gender norms, laws, and practices, which are in turn exacerbated by climate change, desertification, biodiversity loss, violence and armed conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Women's labor is too often invisible in agriculture because their work is considered as assistance to men and "natural" given women and girls' caregiving roles as opposed to a primary labor contribution in their own right.[14]

Though some gains have been made to formalize women's land and water rights in recent years, enforcement is still lacking. Moreover, women often confront stricter entry barriers into sustainable agriculture, since they are less likely to access advanced farming tools and agriculture technologies due to their limited funds and the gender digital gap.

Governments need to take urgent action to address the broken food and agriculture systems, which have been captured and monopolized by big agro-businesses, at the expense of natural resources, biodiversity, livelihoods, health, and local food sovereignty. Policies, incentives, and support should move away from industrial agricultural models, and towards regenerative local agriculture, agroecology and food sovereignty, creating and returning to food systems that are local, sustainable, and culturally appropriate. Export models should be replaced by local production and consumption.

The 2030 Agenda specifically highlights adolescent girls, as well as pregnant and lactating women, as target groups whose nutritional needs must be addressed. Studies in countries across Asia and Africa have revealed the extent to which many adolescent girls are underweight, and the links between malnutrition and anemia (iron deficiency) once girls have begun menstruating. Anemia increases the risks of maternal mortality and fetal growth restriction.[15]

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and subnational levels:

Nutrition
- Respect, protect, and fulfill the human right to adequate, culturally appropriate, and safe food and nutrition for all, including through addressing the specific needs of women, girls, gender-diverse people, youth, and children.
- Provide nutrition education at all levels, and promote nutritionally balanced and diverse diets, particularly utilizing traditional and local knowledge, practices, and food, along with

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[14] "Without Feminism there is no Agroecology: Towards Health, Sustainable, and Just Food Systems." http://www.csm4cfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CSM-Agroecology-and-Feminism-September-2019_compressed.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2022.
[15] UN. E/CN.9/2021/2. Paragraph 21.

appropriate supplementation, especially for adolescent girls, pregnant, and breastfeeding people.

- Work with communities to monitor child nutrition and support families in learning how to provide children with a nutritious diet. Work with parents and caregivers, as well as communities and primary healthcare providers, to promote adequate infant and young child feeding at the household level and to reduce son bias in feeding practices.
- Promote good practice in breastfeeding and implement the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes taking into consideration and meeting the need for adequate nutrition of breastfeeding people.
- Set a minimum service response package in times of crises and emergencies and ensure that it is adequately funded and developed in partnership with local civil society.

Agricultural and food systems

- Adopt a human rights-based approach to the promotion of food sovereignty and agroecology centering the realization of the human rights of women, girls, and gender-diverse people in hunger, food, and nutrition policies.
- Prioritize the transformation of food and agriculture systems towards food sovereignty by moving political support and all subsidies and incentives away from industrial agriculture models and monoculture production, which degrade the environment and destroy local livelihoods and food security, towards regenerative systems of local, traditional, and biodiverse production and consumption.
- Raise awareness against and regulate genetically modified food, as well as low-quality, ultra-processed, and high-fat / high-sugar food, that perpetuate malnutrition in all its forms.
- Provide secure, safe, regular, and cost-effective transportation for women's agro-businesses and improve urban and rural linkages for farm to market delivery.

Land rights

- Ensure regulation, accountability, and justice in cases of violations of the right to land, including inheritance laws, infringements on Indigenous Peoples' sovereignty, and land and resource grabbing by governments and corporations. Ensure that women have access to affordable legal services, fair and honest land administration, and gender-neutral enforcement and judicial systems to uphold their land rights.
- Establish and uphold grievance mechanisms for small scale farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups whose rights to land have been violated.
- Establish and fund gender and age-responsive policies for agroecology, as well as fishery in the coastal regions, including ensuring biodiversity of seeds and plants, and control and ownership of land, water, and other resources.
- Ensure public investment in small-scale sustainable agriculture by providing tailored support for women farmers, promoting their equal access to agriculture technology.

- Uphold Indigenous Peoples' rights to land, territories, and resources, and the right of free, prior, and informed consent as human rights, as well as critical strategies in ending the climate crisis and reversing environmental degradation.

Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Key Data

- As of April 2022, 3 in 4 people in high-income countries have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, while in low-income countries only 1 in 7 people have received one dose.
- Women make up 70% of the health workforce globally, but hold only 25% of decision-making roles.[16]
- As a result of COVID-19, 48% of women and girls surveyed by UN Women faced difficulty in accessing sanitary and health products, including menstrual products, contraceptives and soap, while 37% had trouble accessing medical care, including obstetric and gynecological services.[17]
- Half of all pregnancies globally are unintended, pointing to "deep gaps in rights and justice, gender equality, human dignity and broader social well-being."[18]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions
In the face of the continued COVID-19 pandemic, the need to safeguard the health of all is especially pressing. We support our allies in the Feminists for a People's Vaccine campaign: "COVID is an emergency, not a business opportunity." The pandemic has made evident the need for greater investment in health system strengthening, including health information systems and data collection, health worker governance, robust primary health care, community health systems, and financial protection through universal health coverage (UHC).

Moreover, the underinvestment in and hollowing out of public health systems is a result of financial measures pushed by neoliberal development, public-private-partnerships (PPPs), illicit

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[16] "Women in Health Care: A Cal for Pandemic Equity."
https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/women-health-care-call-pandemic-equity?utm_medium=social_owned&utm_source=tw_tgh. Accessed 24 April 2021.
[17]UN Women. "Women and Girls Left Behind: Glaring Gaps in Pandemic Responses." Page 10.
https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/glaring-gaps-response-RGA.pdf.
[18] UNFPA. "State of the World Population 2022. Seeing the Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy." Page 10.
https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN_SWP22%20report_0.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2022.

financial flows (IFFs), and debt policies pushed by IFIs, including in high-income countries.[19] A recent study found that a "10% increase in private health expenditure relates to a 4.3% increase in COVID-19 cases and a 4.9% increase in COVID-19 related mortality."[20] In other words, the more privatized a health system, the worse its response to COVID-19. Weak public health systems disproportionately impact women, especially poor women and women in rural areas, given their socially prescribed caregiving roles and their own sexual and reproductive health needs.

The pandemic has also highlighted the existing power structures that reinforce and deepen inequalities, and how they are being used to address a public health crisis, such as the use of existing criminal law related to public health to introduce fines and penalties, and imprisonment. In many countries, police powers have significantly increased in relation to public health, and the police and the military have been put at the forefront of executing or monitoring the implementation of measures adopted for the containment of COVID-19; "implementing fines, court summons, and arresting those who do not comply with them, from mandatory mask wearing to quarantine."[21]

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are integral to the realization of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health-care services must have the interrelated and essential elements of availability, accessibility, acceptability, equity, efficacy, and quality. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are critical for the well-being and human rights for all people, including women, girls, women beyond reproductive years, persons with disabilities, gender-diverse people, and lesbian, bisexual, and trans women and girls.

Abortion
Safe and legal abortion is a necessary element of comprehensive reproductive health services and must be included within all universal health coverage (UHC) packages. The exclusion of abortion from UHC packages and lack of safe abortion services, in general; the shortage of trained healthcare providers; the unwillingness or bias of service providers, including the exercise of so-called "conscience clauses"; and abortion stigma prevent women and girls from accessing safe abortion care services. Moreover, sexual and reproductive health services, especially abortion and post-abortion care, are among the most privatized services for women and adolescent girls.

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[19] Corporate Europe Observatory. "Health care privatisation and austerity left EU-countries ill prepared to deal with pandemic."
https://corporateeurope.org/en/2021/01/health-care-privatisation-and-austerity-left-eu-countries-ill-prepared-deal-pandemic. Accessed 24 April 2022.
[20] Assa, Jacob and Calderon, Maria Cecilia. "Privatization and Pandemic: A Cross-Country Analysis of COVID-19 Rates and Health-Care Financing Structures."
[21] RESURJ and Vecinas Feministas. "The Criminalization of a Pandemic: A Cross-Regional Feminist Analysis" https://resurj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ENG-The-Criminalization-of-a-Pandemic.pdf Accessed 4 May 2021

Factors such as these force women and adolescent girls to resort to unsafe abortion, further explaining why unsafe abortion is a major contributor to maternal mortality.[22]

Adolescent pregnancies

According to UNFPA, 20,000 girls under the age of 18 give birth every day in developing countries.[23] Globally, adolescent pregnancy is a significant problem with long-term impacts on girls, their families, and communities. Adolescent pregnancy poses grave risks including the risk of dying in childbirth, premature labor, complications during delivery, low birthweight, and infant mortality, as well as morbidities, especially vesico-vaginal fistula.

Adolescent pregnancies and parenthood are a direct result of several factors, including lack of comprehensive sexuality education, the inability to exercise the right to bodily autonomy, inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health care services, stigma, and discriminatory laws related to adolescent sexuality.

Early childbearing negatively influences the likelihood of a girl continuing her education, further limiting her opportunities for training and employment, and often confining her to the domestic sphere for a number of years.[24] Early motherhood often forces girls and adolescents to leave school early, and if they are able to join the paid labor force, they often do so in precarious and / or low-paid work, contributing to intergenerational poverty. To prevent this, governments must invest both in prevention of adolescent pregnancies, as well as in adequate support for young parents to continue their education.

Gender-affirming care

In the face of rising backlash to the rights of transgender individuals, the need for gender-affirming care has never been more urgent. We support our allies in the LGBTI Stakeholder Group in their calls for support to community-based and -led groups; the importance of strong, community-responsive, and rights-based UHC systems; and the meaningful involvement of LGBTI communities in policy-making, service delivery, and the protection of human rights.[25]

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[22] ARROW. (2019). Access to Safe Abortion in Asia and the Pacific Region. https://arrow.org.my/publication/access-to-safe-abortion-in-asia-and-the-pacific-region/. Accessed 18 May 2020.

[23] UNFPA. https://www.unfpa.org/adolescent-pregnancy. Accessed 24 April 2021.

[24] ARROW. (2019). The Status of Adolescents' SRHR in Asia and the Pacific Region https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ARROW_5_Adolescents-Brief.pdf. Accessed 5 May 2020.

[25] LGBTI Stakeholder Group. "Ensuring Inclusion of LGBTI People in COVID-19 Response Efforts." https://jimdo-storage.global.ssl.fastly.net/file/fe6dd906-fe04-4cf9-95f2-fc0d2d1658c6/LGBTI%20SG%20Statement%20on%20COVID-19.pdf. Accessed 10 May 2022.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

COVID-19 response

- Treat COVID-19 vaccines and treatments as a global public good. Abandon vaccine nationalism, the stockpiling of vaccines, and support the TRIPS COVID-19 waiver.
- Provide all frontline health workers, caregivers, and essential workers, with quality personal protective equipment including menstrual hygiene products, psycho-social support, and child-care to enable them to provide quality care.
- Ensure that people living in communities affected by armed conflict, refugees, internally displaced people, migrants, or stateless people get speedy access to COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and treatment.

Universal health coverage and health systems

- Deliver UHC through public health systems, ending and reversing the privatization of health systems and public-private-partnerships (PPPs) to deliver health services, recognizing that privatization and PPPs may exacerbate inequalities in access to health services.
- Provide adequate financial and human resources and infrastructure towards achieving UHC, and integrate sexual and reproductive health care services into the provision of primary healthcare and UHC packages.
- Commit to coordinated, sustainable, long-term funding for health systems strengthening that applies a gender lens to disease detection, prevention, and treatment.
- Address the significant barriers that prevent women, girls, and gender-diverse people from accessing health care, including user fees, out-of-pocket payments, physical distance, stigma, legal restrictions, and information sharing between health systems and immigration enforcement.
- Guarantee the labor rights of health workers at all levels, including community health workers, and ensure their safety.
- Cease targeting healthcare facilities in the context of armed conflicts, per the obligations of all states under international human rights and humanitarian law. Cease all activities that prevent people in conflict-affected areas from exercising their right to health.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

- Ensure the availability and provision of sexual and reproductive health-care services, incorporate them as essential services, and prioritize these services within recovery plans as well as contingency planning for future pandemics and emergencies. Critical care includes modern contraceptives, abortion and post-abortion care, antiretroviral therapy, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, pre-and post-exposure prophylaxis, emergency obstetric care, and newborn and maternal care. Do not let

emergency responses be used to divert resources or justify targeted restrictions or regulations that limit access to SRHR.

- Prioritise capacity building and training of health professionals to ensure they are able to provide, within their scope, the full suite of high-quality, evidence-based sexual and reproductive health services.
- Ensure that national sexual and reproductive health strategies are up-to-date, evidence based, and provide women, girls, and gender-diverse people, including those beyond reproductive age and those with disabilities, with access to the full suite of health services.
- Transform harmful gender norms that hinder the fulfilment of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescents, young people, women, and LGBTI+ people.
- Ensure that all survivors of sexual and gender-based violence have access to a comprehensive package of services, including post-exposure prophylaxis, emergency contraception, abortion, and mental health services. Ensure that these services are considered essential services in times of crisis.
- Recognize abortion as a human right and remove all punitive laws and measures, including those for healthcare providers. Ensure the accessibility of abortion services, including through the provision of services, facilities and personnel trained on safe abortion and post-abortion care and self-managed medical abortion. In times of crisis, declare abortion as an essential service and implement telemedicine and other online tools to fulfill the human right to abortion.
- Guarantee access to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in formal and informal settings, and youth-responsive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services to ensure that all adolescents and young people can make informed choices free from discrimination, coercion, or violence. Ensure that CSE and youth-responsive SRH services include and address the health, rights, and needs of all young people, including LGBTI+ young people and young people with disabilities.
- Recognize and work to eliminate period poverty, through removal of taxes from menstrual products, as well as providing these products free of charge to women and adolescent girls who do not have access, such as those living in poverty or detention.
- Provide emergency obstetric services, especially in rural and peri-urban areas, as a human right and in order to prevent obstetric fistula. Guarantee free healthcare services for all women and girls living with obstetric fistula. Conduct outreach campaigns to reach women and girls living with obstetric fistula in order to reduce stigma and connect them with healthcare services.
- Ensure the implementation of the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) at the onset of every humanitarian crisis. Integrate and train young people in the implementation of MISP in crisis situations.
- End impunity for sexual and gender-based violence as international crimes.
- Implement actions and strategies that have a positive impact on the quality of life and the global well-being of women, girls, and gender-diverse people living with HIV.

Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable education, quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Key Data

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational attainment may be particularly acute among older adolescents as a result of limitations on freedom of movement, care responsibilities in the home, and child, early, and forced marriage.[26]
- The gender digital divide significantly constrained girls' ability to learn online while schools were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.[27]
- Fewer than 1 in 3 young people (aged 15-24) from Asia and the Pacific believed that their school taught them sexuality education well.[28]
- Approximately ⅔ of the world's 781 million illiterate adults are women, a proportion that has remained unchanged for twenty years.[29]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

Public education is part of broader public service systems that have been increasingly under attack through a hollowing out of state services. The right to education is vitally linked to all SDGs, especially SDGs 2, 5, 10, and 16. Inclusive, accessible, and affordable quality lifelong education and training for all women and girls and is foundational for economic and social well being and decent work.

The COVID-19 crisis threatens both to roll back gains made on girls' education and to create new barriers for girls to achieve their human rights to education, health, and protection. It is also increasing women and girls' household work burden. The most impacted have been those who are already the most marginalized, including the poorest, girls with disabilities, and those in conflict-affected, rural, or remote areas.[30]

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[26] "What do we know about the effects of COVID-19 on girls return to school?" https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2021/09/22/what-do-we-know-about-the-effects-of-covid-19-on-girls-return-to-school/. Accessed 24 April 2022.
[27] UNESCO. https://en.unesco.org/news/when-schools-shut-new-unesco-study-exposes-failure-factor-gender-covid-19-education-responses. Accessed 24 April 2022.
[28] UNESCO. "The journey towards comprehensive sexuality education: Global status report." http://www.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbysa-en. Accessed 24 April 2022.
[29] OXFAM. "Gender justice and women's rights." https://www.oxfam.org/en/what-we-do/issues/gender-justice-and-womens-rights. Accessed 24 April 2021.
[30] UNESCO. "Building Back Equal." Page 2.

Infrastructure

School infrastructure plays an important role in learning and encouraging retention and enrollment. In many countries, young girls and youth who menstruate often leave school at the start of menstruation due to poor sanitation facilities, including the unavailability of private bathrooms, compounded with fear and stigma.

The dangers faced by girls and adolescents due to unsafe roads, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate services, especially at the secondary school level, often prevent girls and adolescents from attending school. Moreover, even where adequate infrastructure and services exist, harmful gender stereotypes, child, early, and forced marriages, sexual harassment, and the lack of inclusive and quality learning environments, keep girls and young women out of school.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Girls often have less access to STEM training than the boys from an early age through tertiary education. According to the Global Sustainable Development Report, women make up only 35% of students in STEM programs in tertiary education, for example, even though women make up a slightly larger percentage of students in tertiary education overall.[31] This impacts women's future earnings and career opportunities as they enter the labor market with fewer skills and abilities than their male counterparts.

Marginalized Women and Girls

Marginalized women, girls, and gender-diverse people face additional, distinct obstacles to exercising their right to education. For example, discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) results in numerous problems, such as bullying, that prevent people from accessing quality education in schools.

Anti-gender, anti-rights, and anti-LGBTI+ movements are spreading worldwide and limiting equitable education through their impact on school curricula. The resulting impediments to comprehensive sexuality education in schools and portrayals of stereotypical roles in curricula and class settings particularly impact the independent development of women, girls, gender-diverse and LGBTI+ people. This situation and its challenges also negatively impact minorities, ethnic-cultural population diversity, sexual diversity, vulnerable populations, people with disabilities, and LGBTI+ people.

For older women and gender-diverse adults who have not previously accessed literacy education, there are very few opportunities to learn how to read and write, which is necessary for their

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[31] Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, (United Nations, New York, 2019).

involvement in daily life and for the enjoyment of their human rights. Women, girls and gender-diverse people with disabilities face additional barriers to accessing inclusive education, including social isolation, discrimination, and lack of accessible facilities.[32] Those in conflict-affected communities, as well as refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants, often face challenges in accessing quality education due to gaps in documentation, interruptions in their education, targeting of civilian infrastructure, and lack of economic opportunity.

Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, training, and access to lifelong learning requires governments to create and support gender-transformative education and training systems, through redistributing unpaid and devalued domestic and care work; addressing the feminization of the education workforce, including by protecting the labor rights of teachers; and rethinking how institutions such as school, work, and the environment, support or undermine the lives and rights of women and girls.

Recommendations

COVID-19 response
- Prioritize the engagement of women and girls in COVID-19 response and recovery plans, including school reopening plans, as well as continuations of remote learning.
- Develop equitable plans for ensuring girls return to school as schools reopen with targeted actions to reach the poorest and most marginalized girls, including pregnant and parenting adolescents.
- Prioritize pathways to and the provision of technical and vocational education and training to engage girls and women given the impact of COVID-19 and changing labor markets on their access to decent work

Curriculum
- Target and sustain efforts to remove gender bias, stereotypes, and discrimination within and across education systems, from teacher recruitment and training to curriculum and materials development. Integrate gender equality and human rights explicitly into all areas of curriculum, including comprehensive sexuality education.
- Align comprehensive sexuality education within formal and informal settings with best practices and guidance worldwide, specifically the *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*. Ensure that young people who are not engaged in formal education systems do not miss out on this essential education
- Combat gendered norms regarding areas of study and vocation, including by encouraging women and girls to undertake "non-traditional" fields of study and vocations in order to

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[32] UN Women, Making SDGs Count for Women and Girls with Disabilities, 2017, https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/10/Making-SDGs-count-for-women-with-disabilities.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2022.

combat gender segregation within the workforce and by increasing remuneration and respect for traditionally feminine areas of work.

- Support and invest in girls and young women's STEM education programs, support women to study STEM at the university level, and ensure equitable opportunities in the labor market and leadership positions.
- Mainstream climate action into curricula in formal education and life-long learning opportunities, including technical skills, as well as emotional, cognitive skills, such as disruptive thinking and political agency, that will be critical in the transition to more just and sustainable societies.[33]

Teachers

- Guarantee the labor rights of teachers, including, where necessary, improving working conditions and increasing their pay and benefits.
- Integrate gender equality training into initial teacher education and professional development programs and integrate gender-transformative, intercultural pedagogy into curricula.
- Ensure that male teachers are sensitive to the specific challenges and barriers that female students and teachers face.
- Provide additional support and incentives to female teachers, especially in rural areas, who can be powerful role models within their schools and communities.
- Invest in teacher capacity and knowledge, through pre-service and in-service training programs, to ensure evidence-based provision of comprehensive sexuality education

Infrastructure

- Invest in school infrastructures and ensure school and other education and training environments are safe, secure, and free from violence, including violence that occurs in, on the way to, or around schools.
- Address structural factors that create barriers to education, such as poverty, ethnicity, disability, citizenship status, and armed conflict. This includes the need for adequate and safe water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in schools.
- Encourage educational systems to support new learning technologies, including remote learning, and increase equitable access to technology. Recognize advantages for these technologies to increase educational access, particularly in higher education, work-related, vocational education and training, and for those seeking to balance home / class responsibilities.

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[33] Brookings Institution. "A new green learning agenda: Approaches to quality education for climate action." https://www.brookings.edu/research/a-new-green-learning-agenda-approaches-to-quality-education-for-climate-action/. Accessed 19 May 2021.

Violence

- Develop and revitalize institutional policies on preventing and responding to all forms of violence in light of the new challenges posed by COVID-19, ensuring reporting and accountability mechanisms are in place for all providers of education and training at all levels and in all sectors from early childhood care and education through school, higher education and technical vocational education and training, as well as adult learning education.
- Ensure that there are adequate school / institutional monitoring mechanisms for girls at risk of not returning to education. Provide the necessary support for their safe return.
- Promote child-focused spaces for children to share experiences, ensuring these are specifically safe for girls and gender-diverse children. Teachers and education support personnel should receive training to manage confidential discussions with students who have experienced or been affected by violence during lockdown and re-openings. Ensure that students can access child-friendly, gender-responsive reporting mechanisms and services dedicated to providing psychosocial and legal support.

Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Key Data

- Of countries reporting on the protection of women's land rights, 46% do not have legal frameworks that provide adequate protection on women's rights to land, while 25% offer only medium protection.[34]
- Globally, women have ¾ of the rights guaranteed when compared with men in the areas measured by the *Women, Business and Law* report.[35]
- According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, the time required to close the global gender gap has increased from 99.5 years to 135.6 years as a result of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.[36]
- In the informal sector, which is exploitative in terms of wages and job security, workplace safety, social protection, gender-based harassment and violence, women make up the majority of workers. The precarious situation is a key factor in all gender gaps (wage gap, care gap, lifetime earning gap and pension gap).

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[34] Food and Agriculture Organization."Data snapshot using sex-disaggregated data to better understand gender gaps in agriculture." https://www.fao.org/3/cb8934en/cb8934en.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2022.
[35] World Bank. 2022. *Women, Business and the Law 2022*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1817-2. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.
[36] World Economic Forum. "Global Gender Gap Report 2021." https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2022.

- Globally, women do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men while adolescent girls perform significantly more domestic work than boys.[37]
- According to UN Women, opposition to gender equality and to women's rights activism has become "more vocal, global and better organized" in the years following the Beijing Platform for Action.[38]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

Patriarchy shapes societies in ways that put less value on the lives of women, girls, and gender-diverse people, place the responsibility of paid and unpaid care and domestic work on them, and condone violence and other forms of control to maintain their subservient position.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, women and girls completed between 2 and 14 times as much unpaid care work as men and boys—the wide range a reflection of inequalities within and between countries. Closures of childcare and schools, increased care needs of older and ill people, and overwhelmed health systems have increased this inequitable distribution even further during the pandemic. In 27 out of 45 countries surveyed by UN Women, women were more likely than men to report an increase in their unpaid domestic and care work by more than 5 percentage points.[39] The OECD Risks that Matter 2020 survey found that mothers reported picking up most or all the additional unpaid care created by the pandemic.[40]

Women are also overrepresented among paid care workers, including and especially within health systems. These frontline workers must be recognized as essential after the crisis ends, and as we plan for other crises and disasters.

Gender-based violence

One of the great successes of feminist and women's rights movements has been placing gender-based violence (GBV) on the global agenda and demanding that societies no longer treat GBV as a private, normal—even necessary—part of family life. Feminist and women's rights movements continue to challenge the social norms permitting and encouraging GBV, while also adapting to new forms and manifestations of violence, such as online harassment, stalking, intimidation, and violence.

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[37] UN Women. "COVID-19 and the Care Economy: Immediate Action and Structural Transformation for a Gender-Responsive Recovery."

[38] UN Women. "Democratic Backsliding and the Backlash Against Women's Rights: Understanding the current challenges for feminist politics." 2020.

[39] https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/glaring-gaps-response-RGA.pdf. Page 7. Accessed 24 April 2022.

[40] OECD (2021), Caregiving in crisis: Gender inequality in paid and unpaid work during COVID-19, OECD, December. https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/caregiving-in-crisis-gender-inequality-in-paid-and-unpaid-work-during-covid-19-3555d164/

Despite this achievement, violence against women, girls, and gender-diverse people is still endemic, affecting all populations. Globally, within their lifetime nearly one third of women will experience physical or sexual violence at the hand of an intimate partner.[41]

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to exacerbate existing inequalities, women and girls face additional barriers and compounding factors which have worsened during the pandemic, such as increased sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Confinement measures, the disruption of social and protective measures, and decreased access to services have led to an increase in SGBV.

Societies and governments invoke the specter of violence and harassment to keep women, girls, and gender-diverse people in line, especially those that challenge oppressive power systems, such as women human rights defenders, as well as lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women.

GBV occurs in all aspects of the lives of women, girls, and gender-diverse people, including within the workplace. Following years of advocacy by feminist and labor movements, the International Labor Organization adopted Convention 190 concerning violence and harassment in the world of work. When implemented, this will be a powerful tool for movements all over the world to end GBV and harassment in the world of work.

Harmful Practices

Child, early, and forced marriage or unions is a harmful practice, a violation of children's human rights and an extreme form of gender inequality that continues to rob millions of girls around the world of their childhood. While boys are also married as children, child, early, and forced marriage disproportionately affects girls. No region is on track to end child, early, and forced marriage by 2030.

Child, early, and forced marriage or unions result from complex social, cultural, political, and economic drivers. Fundamentally, it is a result of patriarchal social norms that see the proper place of women and girls within the domestic sphere, as well as the desire to control the sexualities of women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

Factors that increase vulnerability to child, early, and forced marriage or unions include poverty and insecurity stemming from climate change, natural disasters, armed conflict, or forced displacement. For example, families living in poverty may view marriage as the best way to secure their daughters' futures and reduce economic pressures on the family.

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[41]https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures. Accessed 24 April 2022.

Given the complex and interlinked causes and consequences of child, early, and forced marriage, the most effective policy and program interventions take a holistic approach, placing girls and their empowerment and transformational societal change at the center.

Female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM / C)—or the excision or cutting of part or all external female genitalia for nonmedical reasons—is a gross human rights violation. This harmful practice is often performed without the consent of the girl, violating her right to bodily autonomy and sexual health.

As the practice has gained more awareness, many countries have opted to medicalize the procedure. This has been thought to address the medical risks associated with FGM / C, but it does not address the fundamental human rights violation. The process may be "safer" under trained medical care, but it is still a violation of the right to bodily autonomy.

At the heart of FGM / C are patriarchal social norms and gender stereotypes regarding women and girls' sexuality, including, for example, a demand for girls' virginity prior to marriage or "protection" of women and girls' chastity. In order to avoid stigmatization and rejection from their communities, girls may even desire to undergo the procedure.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Since the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and the International Conference on Population and Development one year before, the international community has seen significant progress with regards to reproductive rights, such as the groundbreaking referendum on abortion in May 2018 in Ireland and the decriminalization of abortion in Argentina in December 2020 and in Colombia in 2022.

However, we continue to see new threats, including to the gains once considered solid. For example, mandatory waiting periods or so-called "conscientious objection" laws make access to abortion care a right on paper only and not in reality, especially for the most marginalized women, girls, and gender-diverse people. These laws reveal the patronizing and misogynistic thinking of the state that tells women they cannot be trusted to make their own decisions or that their right to bodily autonomy can only be respected only so long as it does not bother anyone else.

Despite the inclusion of reproductive rights in the 2030 Agenda, governments refused to commit to sexual rights. Such an omission not only violates human rights, but also impedes discussions on altering regressive practices and social norms that prevent the full realization of gender equality. There is a need to move beyond the binary understanding of gender and acknowledge the freedom of self-identification of gender for all.

Access to Resources

Women and girl's access to financial services, including credit, is limited by a number of factors, including discrimination, lack of formal credit history, inability to offer collateral, high interest rates (including by microcredit organizations), and policies requiring spousal consent.

Girls and women are less likely to be connected to the internet and own a phone compared to men and boys.[42] With the sudden need to increase the digital aspects of everyday work, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of access to new technologies and digital services are affecting women and girls disproportionately with regard to their education, work, and health and safety.

When they do have access to these technologies, women and girls are disproportionately affected by technology-related gender-based violence that has adverse consequences both online and on the ground. Women in public life, including activists, politicians, and journalists, are frequent targets of this violence which is intended to stifle their free expression.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national level:

Gender-based violence and harmful practices
- Designate GBV prevention and response services and reparations as essential and ensure that women's centers, shelters, domestic violence helplines, legal aid, and other critical services, continue to operate and expand where needed. Partner with and provide direct support to feminist, women, and youth-led networks and organizations providing GBV services.
- Implement the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and its General Recommendation 35 on gender-based violence against women, as well as regional conventions addressing gender-based violence.
- Enact policies designed with holistic understandings of access to justice, including survivor-centered and rights-based approaches. Enact and / or strengthen national laws and policies that reach beyond criminalization to comprehensively address sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic and intimate partner violence, as well as violence and abuse committed online. Ensure that these processes and facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Train all health providers to address GBV and harmful practices to ensure that needed services are available, accessible, acceptable, and of quality for all without stigma or discrimination. Invest in training, information and resources for clinicians that addresses clinical presentations of FGM / C and appropriate responses

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[42] UN Women. Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. (2018). Page 101.

- Take urgent action to end FGM / C, especially in high-prevalence countries, and take a clear and explicit stance against FGM / C and its medicalization, in line with the UN's "zero tolerance" position.
- Recognize, plan for, and protect against the increased risk of GBV and the breakdown of social and governmental frameworks during humanitarian, climate, and other global crises. Ensure that LGBTI+ people are included in disaster planning so that their specific needs are addressed during disasters.
- Ensure that women enter marriage with their free and full consent and that they can leave marriages safely and legally with special consideration paid to custody, property, and distribution of financial resources.
- Train members of the judicial system—including lawyers and judges—in recognizing and responding to GBV. Provide sufficient training to public prosecutors and police on standards of criminal investigations, particularly in relation to working with survivors of gender-based violence.

Sexual and reproductive rights

- Adopt a systemic and sustained human rights and justice approach that addresses the root causes of sexual and reproductive rights violations and challenges the efficacy of punitive policies that further disenfranchise and criminalize marginalized peoples.
- Provide comprehensive sexuality education within and beyond school as a necessary tool for tackling gender inequality, gender stereotypes, empowering women and girls, ending child, early, and forced marriage and FGM / C, as well as eradicating all forms of GBV.
- Recognise reproductive coercion as an element of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Upskill doctors and nurses in best practice ways to sensitively address and respond to family, domestic and sexual violence, including reproductive coercion, within clinical settings

Access to services and resources

- Ensure economic justice for women, including their right to control, own, pass on, and inherit property.
- Recognize the essential role that unpaid care and domestic work plays in sustaining families, communities, and the economy, and that it must be a collective responsibility supported by adequate social protection for all unpaid caregivers, in particular parents.
- Reduce unpaid care and domestic work through the development of accessible and affordable public infrastructure and services (like water and sanitation, energy, healthcare, transportation, care, etc.).
- Promote the redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work between men and women, between families, and the rest of society.

- Create working conditions in the formal and informal economy that guarantee equal pay and social security, workplace safety, and job security. Ratify and implement ILO Fundamental Conventions, as well as ILO Conventions C177, C189, and C190.
- Uphold women and girls' unrestricted access to information and communications technologies, not only as users of technology but also as creators.

Financing for gender equality

- Ensure allocation and tracking of budget for gender equality in every sector to achieve substantive equality in reality. Mainstream gender-transformative budgeting into national budgeting and audit systems.

Countering anti-gender backlash

- Speak strongly in favor of women and girls' human rights, the human rights of LGBTI+ people, and feminist movements. Call out, stop, and defund anti-gender groups.
- Understand and uncover the linkages between anti-gender groups and other anti-rights threats.

Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Key Data

- Fewer than 50 countries have laws or policies that specifically mention women's participation in rural sanitation or water resources management.[43]
- 70% of schools in least developed countries have challenges in providing basic hygiene facilities for students.[44]
- Women and girls are responsible for water collection in 8 out of 10 households with water off premises, severely limiting their ability to pursue education, employment, or leisure, and exposing them to violence.[45]
- Globally, 3 billion people lack access to basic hand-washing facilities in their homes and 1 billion people have limited access to water due to irregular public water supplies and frequent interruptions of service.[46]

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[43] UN Water. Summary Progress update 2021: SDG 6 - water and sanitation for all. March 2021.
[44] UN Women.
https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2020-en.pdf?la=en&vs=127. Accessed 15 May 2021.
[45] UN Water. https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/gender/. Accessed 15 May 2021.
[46] World Resources Institute. "Combating the Coronavirus Without Clean Water."
https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/04/coronavirus-water-scarcity-hand-washing. Accessed 10 May 2020.

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of water puts many populations at greater risk for infection. Public health experts across the world advise people to significantly increase the amount of times people wash their hands every day. This disparity is one of the reasons that poor and marginalized communities are at even greater risk from COVID-19.

In addition, some governments are using the economic crisis caused by COVID-19 as an excuse to push through efforts to privatize water services.[47] Moreover, IFIs and even UN agencies are also using the COVID-19 crisis as cover for pushing private sector financing or public-private-partnerships.[48] If implemented, these privatization efforts at the hand of multinational corporations will have disastrous impacts on women, girls, and people in remote, marginalized, or poor communities whose access to water will reduce while their costs will rise.

Gender and Water and Sanitation

Inadequate access to safe, reliable water and improved sanitation, including for menstrual health and hygiene management, disproportionately impacts women and girls. According to UNICEF / WHO, 771 million people did not have access to basic drinking water services in 2020.[49] In 80% of households that did not have a source of safe drinking water on site, women and girls bore sole responsibility for water collection.[50]

In addition to burdens on women and girls' time and labor, the gendered impacts of inadequate access to water and sanitation include decreased school attendance, productivity, earnings, employment opportunities, violations of the privacy of women, girls and gender-diverse people, diminished safety and health, and heightened risk of violence, including for women with disabilities.

Beyond their household work burdens, women and girls also face specific challenges caused by insufficient water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools and healthcare facilities—disrupting their educations, preventing them from accessing sexual and reproductive health services, and impacting their livelihoods as frontline health workers. The continuing COVID-19 health crisis makes these inequalities in access to WASH even more visible. Three billion people do not have hand washing facilities at home, so women and girls have been taking on increased responsibilities for water collection in constrained and dangerous circumstances. The gendered impacts of

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[47] McDonald, David, and Susan Spronk. "COVID-19 has decimated water systems globally, but privatization is not the answer." https://theconversation.com/covid-19-has-decimated-water-systems-globally-but-privatization-is-not-the-answer-155689. Accessed 24 April 2021.
[48] Ibid.
[49] WHO/UNICEF JMP (2021), Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2020: Five years into the SDGs https://data.unicef.org/topic/water-and-sanitation/drinking-water/.
[50] UN Women, Turning Promises into Action, p. 104.

COVID-19 and insufficient access to WASH are worsened by the climate crisis, which is projected to significantly increase water scarcity and stress.[51]

Water management decisions are not gender neutral. Differences and inequalities between women and men influence how individuals and communities use and make decisions about water use and access and respond to changes in regulation of water use and access.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

Human rights

- Recognize access to water and sanitation as human rights and ratify, domesticate and implement international human rights instruments related to water and sanitation.
- Ensure sufficient, safe, acceptable, accessible, and affordable access to water and sanitation through public, adequate, and community-owned services and reject pressure to privatize or commodify water services.

Public spaces

- Ensure safe, reliable, accessible sanitation facilities at school, workplaces, public spaces and other institutions taking into account the specific needs of women, girls and gender-diverse people.
- Increase safe sanitation services in rural areas as a priority, bearing in mind that access to safe sanitation services is much lower in rural areas than in urban areas.

Policy coherence

- Incorporate a WASH, gender, and age-dimension into cross-cutting sector policies and strategies, including for food security, nutrition, and health, as well as during emergencies and armed conflicts.

Menstrual health and hygiene

- Incorporate menstrual health education into school curricula and ensure the availability of infrastructure and gender-responsive facilities, such as private washrooms. Sensitize and increase knowledge about menstruation as a healthy, natural, and normal part of development and address the stigma surrounding menstruation and menstrual hygiene.
- Take into account the specific needs of women and girls regarding sanitation services, in particular for menstrual hygiene, in the design of facilities.

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[51] Action Aid and WaterAid. Elements of a joint action agenda on women's rights to water and sanitation. (2021). p.2

Participation and Leadership

- Encourage the leadership of women, girls, and gender-diverse people and gender mainstreaming inl agencies involved with the integrated water resources mechanism, with particular focus on transboundary water resources.
- Raise the participation of girls and young women in all aspects of decision-making concerning planning and installations of water and sanitation projects, including strengthening local decision-making participation of women in WASH committees. Foster institutional changes that will decentralize regulation of water use and access and enhance the role of women in community management, building on their expertise.
- Ensure that community-owned water services are adequately resourced, that the people who run them are trained and supported, and that gender equality is promoted throughout.

Sustainable Development Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Key Data

- Close to 4 million people die prematurely each year from illnesses attributable to household air pollution from incomplete combustion of firewood and kerosene, mostly women and children.[52]
- Almost 1 billion people do not have access to electricity.[53] 3 billion people do not have access to clean cooking, relying on solid biomass, coal, or kerosene.[54]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

Nearly 1 billion people do not have access to electricity, while 3 billion people do not have access to clean cooking, relying on solid biomass, coal, or kerosene instead. This is especially devastating for women, girls, and gender-diverse people since patriarchal gender norms put the onus of domestic and care work on them, including cooking, heating, and gathering fuel.

In the context of the pandemic, unpaid care work is increasing. For people living in energy poverty this includes added difficulties and stress surrounding food and fuel procurement, storage, and preparation, and the increased demands around cleanliness and hygiene.

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[52] World Health Organization (2018) https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/household-air-pollution-and-health.
[53] Global Sustainable Development Report. 2019.
[54] Ibid.

Lack of access to electricity, heating, and clean cooking fuel does not just increase unpaid care and domestic work, it is also deadly because it increases exposure to indoor air pollution (IAP), which disproportionately impacts women and girls.

Inadequate and unreliable access to affordable, efficient, and sustainable energy services hinders the social and economic resilience of women. For example, women forced to procure energy individually because they cannot access the national grid often incur high costs of running small-scale businesses, which points to a role for small-scale, locally controlled renewable energy systems. The lack of electricity may also be deadly in areas where hospitals and health clinics do not have reliable energy access.

While women and girls labor to meet these demands and women energy entrepreneurs—an important link to decentralized cleaner, more accessible energy—struggle to survive, fossil fuel companies are using this opportunity to consolidate their power and carve out special protections and benefits for themselves. The industry has lobbied for direct financial support, deregulation, and even criminalization of protests.[55] Many of the interventions these companies seek directly contradict the science-based recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and would violate the human rights of workers and land, environmental, and human rights defenders.[56]

Whereas current financing structures rely on rent-to-own and / or pay-go schemes, women need access to renewable energy that does not reinforce cycles of poverty and create unmanageable debt. While women are the primary cooks and child care workers in resource-constrained settings and they are exposed to toxic and damaging indoor air pollution at higher rates than men, it is often under-reported that there are opportunities for positive change when basic energy access is included in health, safety, empowerment and economic stability projects.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national Levels:

- Prioritize investment in a just transition towards low-carbon, renewable energy infrastructure and technology that is community-owned and democratically controlled, while ensuring compliance with ethical and human rights standards and sourcing.
- Increase access to accessible, affordable, reliable, safe, and modern energy services in rural areas and by using renewable energy sources.
- Uphold energy democracy and energy justice, where energy is owned and governed by communities, not corporations. Reverse top-down, market-based approaches for energy

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[55] Influence Map. "The COVID-19 Crisis and Climate Lobbying." https://influencemap.org/report/The-Coronavirus-Crisis-and-Climate-Lobbying-23249d39450ff19b441090a6a50174eb. Accessed 19 May 2021.
[56] Ibid.

production, distribution, and control so that women, households, and communities can drive energy interventions and make decisions that work for them.

- Take a gender-transformative, human rights-based approach to all aspects of energy planning and policymaking to actively support and advance the human rights of women and girls.
- Invest in research and program evaluations to better understand the links between clean energy interventions and gender-based violence prevention, particularly in humanitarian settings.
- Eliminate all subsidies for the fossil-fuel industry and biomass energy. Redirect these funds to essential public services and social protection programs.
- Ensure that actors at all levels are accountable through developing and implementing their energy and climate plans
- Provide financial, political, and legal support to women's energy enterprises and entrepreneurs.
- Guarantee access to electricity during the pandemic through flexible payment plans, fee waivers, or cash transfers targeted at the poorest and most marginalized communities and women.
- Quickly ensure access to electricity for all healthcare facilities through sustainable sources, such as mini-grids and off-grid systems.

Sustainable Development Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Key Data

- Partnered women living with children were the most likely to lose their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and saw the largest drop in paid work hours.[57]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced that we need a systemic shift to a more sustainable economy that works for both people and the planet. It has become increasingly clear that endless economic growth is neither feasible nor desirable in a world with limited resources, and a severely degraded environment. In practice, when left to a free market economy, driven by corporate interests, economic growth will never be sustainable, inclusive, or provide work and livelihoods for all. Instead, big business will become increasingly wealthy and local livelihoods and jobs lost as they fail to compete.

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[57] UN Women. "Women and Girls Left Behind: Glaring Gaps in Pandemic Responses." https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/glaring-gaps-response-RGA.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2022.

As a source of competitive advantage, neoliberal capitalist economic systems exploit and devalue women's work, including lower pay, casualization, and informalization of women workers. Trade policies, such as investor-state dispute settlement provisions, and unfair tax agreements, as well as systematic, unchecked tax flight, restrict governments' fiscal space and inhibit them from creating pro-poor policies that could benefit their populations, especially women and girls. After the 2008 economic crash, governments failed to take action to reform the systems that failed in the first place. As PSI describes "Instead of expansionary fiscal policies to create more *and decent* jobs, including in the health sector, and universal social protection, governments embarked on a spree of austerity measures."[58]

Debt repayment strategies and conditionalities, in line with the neoliberal economic model, include practices that exacerbate inequalities. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic these strategies, including reduction in social protection coverage, privatization of public services, and labor flexibilization reforms, force women and girls to fill in the gaps in services and decrease their access to decent work.

Public health containment measures force informal workers to stop working or adapt their working methods in ways that lower their incomes or put them at risk of COVID-19 transmission or violence, harassment, or arrest by state authorities. Domestic workers—many of whom are also migrants—are often unprotected by basic labor rights, such as paid sick leave. Some have been required to work more and without proper protection, while others have been told not to work and have not received compensation.

Feminist critiques of current economic models have highlighted the accepted, invisible spheres that capitalism depends upon for its continuation, namely the unpaid care and domestic work performed by women and girls. For example, feminists have criticized the inadequacy of GDP as a measure because it ignores unpaid care and domestic work and measures only the financial value of goods and services produced in a country in a single year ignoring 'externatilities' of nature depletion and destruction and unpaid work.

In addition to subsidizing economies, women bear the brunt of austerity through their unpaid care and domestic work, which limits their time to pursue education, economic, or leisure opportunities, and may be physically arduous. The neoliberal capitalist system treats women and girls as an endless and free resource similar to how it views and treats the natural environment.

Feminists have shown that the current macroeconomic situation undermines women and girls' rights due to: narrow, profit-driven, macroeconomic goals that fail to take human rights into

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[58] PSI. "Public health, once and for all!" https://publicservices.international/resources/news/public-health-br-once-and-for-all-?id=10648&lang=en. Accessed 24 April 2021.

account; gender biases in macroeconomic data collection, analysis, and policy making; insufficient focus on decent work; failure to maximize fiscal space for women's rights and gender equality; and the absence of women's voices in political and economic decision-making, such as the right to unionize and undertake collective bargaining.

Economic systems require radical structural changes that rethink goals of growth and stability and assumptions of gender and political neutrality to support, rather than undermine, a world of equality and justice. This requires systemic changes, including in corporate regulation, fiscal policy, expenditure policy, and labor market policies ensuring decent work, and addressing informal economies and unpaid or underpaid care work.

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, feminists knew that care and domestic workers were essential. From caring for children and the elderly to cooking and cleaning, domestic workers provide the reproductive care that enables economies to function. However, they frequently work without benefits or access to social protection programs. ILO Convention 189 guarantees domestic workers' rights to minimum wage, rest, and to choose their own residence. However, the Convention is insufficiently ratified and incorporated into domestic law to protect domestic workers.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

Legal and policy Frameworks
- Ratify, domesticate, implement and monitor all ILO Conventions, especially the Fundamental Conventions, as well as ILO Conventions C177 on Home Work, 189 on Domestic Workers, and 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. Respect and enhance the rights to collective bargaining and freedom of association.
- Empower workers with protected whistleblowing mechanisms to raise issues, including minimum wage standards.
- Promote supportive environments for all parents and caregivers through remote working possibilities, flexible hours, provision of day care, as well increased flexibility in leave and efforts to ensure supportive transition to the workplace.
- Incorporate care work as formal work, including by expanding social protection coverage to care workers.
- Negotiate and ratify a universally binding treaty on business and human rights, and national and regional due diligence laws to ensure human rights, labor, and environmental standards in all value chains

Children and young people

- Create decent jobs for young people and livelihood opportunities in rural areas, including by enhancing skills / vocational training programs and connecting young people to employment upon completing the program.
- Remove barriers to transition from school and training into decent work and increase access to financial services, as well as financial literacy training for youth, particularly adolescent girls and young women.
- Adopt gender-sensitive measures to address specific forms of child labor, including developing a gender sensitive list of hazardous work, that includes not only the work of boys, but the work of girls as well.

Sustainable Development Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Key Data

- Though 93% of the global population live within reach of a mobile-broadband signal, only 54% of people in the world use the internet. Costs and lack of necessary skills are two of the biggest factors explaining why people do not use the internet.[59]
- While only 58% of men use the internet, the percentage falls to 48% among women.[60]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

Infrastructure reflects patriarchal norms. Governments and societies have designed spaces and infrastructure to meet the needs of men's lives while ignoring the realities of the lives of women and girls in all their diversity. The design of cities is determined by and reproduces the hierarchical relationships found in patriarchal societies where some activities are given greater value than others.

For example, in many cities, the movement of private vehicles has been prioritized over public transport, and roadways are designed to give priority to routes dominated by men who tend to have a linear commute during traditional work "rush hours." Conversely, women incorporate more

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[59] UN Statistics. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/goal-09/. Accessed 24 April 2021.
[60] International Telecommunication Union.
https://www.itu.int/myitu/-/media/Publications/2020-Publications/Measuring-digital-development-2019.pdf . Accessed 20 May 2021.

care work in their journeys, which are shorter, more frequent and diverse, and often made on public transport outside of commuting hours, making travel more costly and time consuming.[61]

In addition, specific attention must be given to the design of housing schemes that respond to various living arrangements and needs such as those of single mothers, survivors of violence and abuse, and the elderly.

Small scale farmers, most of whom are women in rural areas, are not able to access markets due to poor roads and limited access to technology as basic as weather forecasts. As a result, their produce often goes bad and they are unable to sell it. Improved roads connecting rural areas to market centers would increase their income and productivity.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

- Ensure that COVID-19 recovery plans and all new infrastructure projects take an ecosystem-based approach as defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity and are gender-transformative.
- Treat the internet as a public good and expand access through programs specifically targeted to reduce inequalities.
- Reduce the digital gap in rural, isolated areas by using information and communication technologies (ICT) powered by solar energy systems.

Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Key Data

- According to Oxfam: "The world's ten richest men more than doubled their fortunes from US$700 billion to US$1.5 trillion —at a rate of US$15,000 per second or US$1.3 billion a day" during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic.[62]
- According to UNDP, for countries in the Global North there are 55 hospital beds, more than 30 doctors and 81 nurses for every 10,000 people. For countries in the Global South for the same number of people there are 7 beds, 2.5 doctors and 6 nurses.[63]

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[61] Criado Perez, Caroline. "Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men." New York: Abrams Press. 2019.
[62] OXFAM. "Ten richest men double their fortunes in pandemic while incomes of 99 percent of humanity fall." https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/ten-richest-men-double-their-fortunes-pandemic-while-incomes -99-percent-humanity. Accessed 24 April 2021.
[63] UNDP. https://feature.undp.org/coronavirus-vs-inequality/. Accessed 24 April 2022.

- Some estimates indicate that potentially up to US$36 trillion is currently stashed in tax havens.[64] In contrast, recent studies have estimated that completely ending world hunger by 2030 would cost US$330 billion in total – US$33 billion per year.[65]
- Debt service costs in developing countries have risen steadily over the past decade. They now absorb 25% of tax revenue in developing countries overall, and even close to 30% in Small Island Developing States.[66]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

SDG 10 gets to the heart of the systemic barriers preventing us from achieving the 2030 Agenda since the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination they perpetuate create inequalities between and within countries down to the household level. The COVID-19 pandemic and its related crises has made this viscerally clear. As Oxfam explains: "While anyone can catch the virus, the equality ends there."

In order to realize sustainable and inclusive growth and reduce inequalities of outcomes, it is necessary to ensure equal opportunities of education, healthcare, and employment, and to revise discriminatory laws, policies, and practices. And this begins with universal access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments that are treated as global public goods.

In order to reduce poverty in an inclusive way, it is essential to recreate our economic systems to eliminate economic inequality. This involves improving the regulation and monitoring of financial markets and institutions and encouraging development assistance and foreign direct investment to regions where the needs are greatest.

Regarding inequalities between countries, it is necessary to guarantee equal economic opportunities through migration and mobility of people, and adjustment of international financial services, and to redistribute financial resources through official development assistance and foreign direct investment. As for inequalities within a country, progressive taxation and transparent fiscal expenditure can help redistribute income.

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[64] Nicholas Shaxson. 2019. "Tackling Tax Havens." https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2019/09/tackling-global-tax-havens-shaxon.htm. Accessed 24 April 2021.
[65] https://ceres2030.org/shorthand_story/donors-must-double-aid-to-end-hunger-and-spend-it-wisely/. Accessed 14 May 2021.
[66] Ibid.

Recommendations

Inequalities within countries

- Guarantee and allocate public financing and resources for social protection systems and public social infrastructure aimed at eliminating inequalities of outcomes, such as through gender transformative and progressive budgets for gender equality, health, and education programs.
- Regulate and / or reverse privatization of public services and social protection systems to guarantee they remain a public good.
- Refuse trade and investment agreements that restrict countries from delivering social protection for all.
- Take action against inequalities of opportunities caused by income disparity and structural discrimination based on age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, race, ethnicity, citizenship, migratory status, religion, or region, by raising the income of the poor, especially women from marginalized social groups, including: young girls and older women, single mothers, women with disabilities, LGBTI+ communities, Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendants, refugees, and others.
- Overturn discriminatory laws and policies to ensure substantive equality.
- Ensure equitable and just redistribution of resources through taxation, wage, and social protection policies.

Inequalities between countries

- Strengthen regulations and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions, ensure effective financing mechanisms to develop strategies, enable fiscal space at the domestic level for national policy-making to reduce inequalities, and accelerate implementation of poverty reduction policies.
- Enhance the representation of developing countries in decision-making processes in international economic and financial institutions.
- Implement preferential treatment for developing countries in trade and economic prosperity policies to ensure the development of their employment frameworks and reducing poverty levels.
- Dismantle the current investor protection and dispute settlement system, promoting transparency and the public interest rather than the primacy of profits of foreign investors.[67]

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[67] Feminist Action Nexus for Economic and Climate Justice: Concept and Key Demands.

Sustainable Development Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Key Data

- According to the UN, the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 are increasing the number of people living in slums and worsening the quality of life and vulnerabilities for those already living in slums.[68]
- Women are overrepresented in slums in 80% of 59 countries in the Global South in which data are available though women and men are broadly equally likely to live in urban areas in general.[69]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

While cities offer opportunities to women, girls, and gender-diverse people in terms of education and employment opportunities, often their urban experience is also one of insecurity, sexual harassment, and exclusion. Women in many cities face challenges accessing safe and secure housing, as well as services to meet their basic needs, including water, sanitation, and health care.

Women and girls in all their diversity have a right to access public spaces safely and without fear, but the barriers to exercising this right are myriad. For example, fear of violence and sexual assault or harassment, including femicide, limits the mobility of women and girls in all their diversity. When added to other factors of oppression such as citizenship, refugee, or migration status, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability status, exercising this right to full urban citizenship becomes even more restricted.

Ensuring women and girls' participation and safety in cities requires a gender transformative approach. This includes providing women and girls in all their diversity with the information, resources, and space to claim their rights and, together with the relevant stakeholders, actively transform their communities into safer, more inclusive places. A gender transformative approach includes designing future cities that are well-lit, well-planned, well-maintained, using universal design principles where women can claim space to participate as active inhabitants. It requires the active participation of women and girls in the governance of cities and in the design of urban policies and legislation.

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[68] UN. "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Advanced unedited copy." 2021. Paragraph 126.
[69] UN Women. https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/harsh-realities-marginalized-women-in-cities-of-the-developing-world-en.pdf?la=en&vs=747. Accessed 15 May 2021.

It is necessary to address explicitly the underlying structural and political issues that jeopardize the safety of women and girls within cities and other settlements, as well as to transform the pervasive social and cultural norms that allow for unequal power dynamics and gender-based violence.

Feminist development of space demands that persons must be at the center of the design and planning of human settlements giving greater prominence to and revaluing care and reproductive work, acknowledging that we are all interdependent: we are persons who are cared for and the persons who care.

Recommendations

Public spaces and urban planning

- Increase the safety of women and girls, including by recovering public spaces, ensuring better inter-connection between productive and reproductive activities, and fighting all types of gender-based violence in public spaces, including sexual assault and harassment.
- Rethink and redevelop human settlements, including cities, from a feminist perspective. Stop producing spaces from a productivist and mercantilist logic and start thinking about environments that prioritize the persons that use them.
- Integrate obligatory sustainable energy and energy efficiency into public, new, and renovated buildings and streamline requirements for community power projects, ensuring transparency, participatory approaches, and gender parity in decision-making.

Transportation

- Incorporate human rights and gender considerations into the planning processes and policy frameworks. Reflect the diversity of users and their contributions, rights, and needs in all programs and policies.
- Provide services that recognize different mobility patterns, reduce overcrowded and unsafe routes, accommodate the movement of everyone, including older women, women and girls with disabilities, provide service outside of peak hours, and use fare policies that allow for trip-chaining and multi-stop journeys.
- Acknowledge the key role of safe, accessible, and affordable transportation in women's access to increased opportunities in education, economic development, and participation in political and governance policy-setting and decision-making, and resource such transportation.

Sustainable Development Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Key Data

- Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, G20 countries have committed nearly US$330 billion to supporting fossil fuel energy as of April 2022.[70]
- According to the UN, annually an estimated ⅓ of all food produced—equivalent to 1.3 billion tons worth around US$1 trillion—goes to waste in the bins of consumers and retailers or spoils due to poor transportation and harvesting practices.[71]
- In 2020, the mass of all human-made things on Earth eclipsed the mass of all living organisms on Earth.[72]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

Current patterns and levels of consumption and production are clearly unsustainable. Yet international organizations and governments have still not shown the political will and leadership to tackle this issue. Whilst lip service is paid to the problem, there is a decided lack of appetite for positive change—even for the removal of the perverse subsidies supporting unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.

The current dominant framework used to understand sustainable consumption and production gives primacy to efficiency and technological innovations, while the social aspects of development such as promoting people's rights and leaving no one behind have fallen off the table. Moreover, the prevailing bias towards the market under globalization and the even greater power being accumulated by corporations pose formidable challenges to sustainable consumption and production and sustainable development, in general.

While practicing sustainable consumption at the individual level is being promoted, corporations are not held accountable for their unsustainable consumption of resources or the violation of human rights in their production processes. The corporate capture of this agenda has resulted in policies that push the onus of sustainability on individuals while transferring the control of wealth, power, and resources into the hands of corporations and absolving them of responsibility for their actions.

The use of economic growth, as measured by GDP, and neoliberal policies have fueled unsustainable production and trade, with corporations plundering the planet and using valuable

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[70] Energy Policy Tracker. https://www.energypolicytracker.org/region/g20. Accessed 24 April 2022.
[71] UN. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/. Accessed 15 May 2021.
[72] Elhacham et al., 2020. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-3010-5

natural resources, including water, free of charge and with impunity. To change this unsustainable production, we must replace this paradigm with new economies grounded in care, justice, human rights, sustainability, and ecological health.

Scientists are increasingly expressing concern about the way in which our planet is being decimated due to the existential threat of runaway consumption of limited resources. This is a man-made disaster, and a consequence of the current materialistic, consumerist lifestyle. We need action to move us from a throwaway society to one that systematically rethinks, reuses, recycles, recovers, and remakes products, materials, and services, returning to products that are made and bought to last, and replacing or banning polluting and non-biodegradable products, including plastics. We need to develop a culture of sufficiency, ensuring that we consume no more than is sustainable and equitable.

Our broken food systems are a prime example of unsustainable consumption and production, with monocultures destroying biodiversity and causing deforestation and industrial agriculture acting as a major source of climate change, pollution, and environmental degradation. The industrial food model needs to be replaced by local production, using regenerative methods, such as small-scale vegetable gardens for local communities and schools.

In some countries, "sustainable" initiatives such as smart cities and "green" energy projects are being led jointly by governments and corporations through public-private partnerships ostensibly to promote sustainable consumption and production. In reality, however, these initiatives are grabbing lands and other resources from women farmers and Indigenous Peoples, further worsening their poverty, displacing them, and exposing them to other vulnerabilities.

Globally, women drive 70-80% of all consumer purchases through a combination of buying power and influence.[73] Studies have found that women are generally 'greener' and more sustainable than men in their buying patterns.[74] As we push for progress on sustainable consumption at the household level, women and girls will be key actors and their needs and preferences must be respected.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

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[73] Bloomberg. (2018). "Top 10 things everyone should know about women consumers." https://www.bloomberg.com/diversity-inclusion/blog/top-10-things-everyone-know-women-consumers/. Accessed 5 May 2020.
[74] Brough, Aaron R., et al. "Is Eco-Friendly Unmanly? Green-Feminine Stereotype and its Effect on Sustainable Consumption." *Journal of Consumer Research* 43.4 (2016): 567-582.

- Confront exploitative and unsustainable production and consumption patterns, shifting from the privatization and commodification of nature to a degrowth mindset grounded in sustainable, equitable production and resource use.[75]

Financing

- Enact progressive taxes, fees, fines, penalties, incentives, tariffs, and other regulations to promote sustainable consumption and production and emissions reductions.
- Take active steps towards new economies grounded in care, justice, human rights, sustainability, and ecological health.

Human rights

- Ensure a human rights-based approach to sustainable consumption and production paying particular attention to the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity. This includes conducting gender and human rights assessments of trade and investment agreements.
- Enforce measures at every segment of production, distribution, and consumption chains to eliminate exploitation of labor and forced labor.
- Hold to account corporations with unsustainable consumption and production practices and who violate human rights. Promote binding treaties on corporate accountability.
- Ensure the right to a healthy workplace and environment free of hazardous chemicals and waste.

Participation and leadership

- Promote and protect people-led solutions, especially those led by women and marginalized communities, such as agroecology, Indigenous knowledge on resource management, community supported agriculture, farmers' markets, and farmers' / workers' cooperatives.
- Ensure mechanisms that support meaningful public participation, especially from women, farmers, and Indigenous Peoples in the creation and implementation of sustainable consumption and production policies and initiatives.
- Stop the attacks against communities and their leaders who promote people-led sustainable consumption and production initiatives.

Education

- Improve access to transformative green skills for young people, with education on consumption and production patterns in schools.

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[75] Feminist Action Nexus for Economic and Climate Justice: Concept and Key Demands.

Sustainable Development Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Key Data

- While climate-related financing increased to US$681 billion in 2016, this is dwarfed by the US$742 billion investment related to fossil fuels in the energy sector in 2016. Subsidies provided by governments to the fossil fuel sector totaled US$373 billion in 2015.[76]
- 80% of people displaced by climate change are women.[77]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

Though climate change and disasters disproportionately impact women this is not inevitable. Women and girls, including but not limited to Indigenous, internally displaced, from rural and hard to reach areas, with disabilities, in vulnerable situations, living in poverty, with lower rates of educational attainment, with limited access to technology and other resources, and residing in hazard-prone areas, are impacted disproportionately. Patriarchy governs the distribution of power, knowledge, and resources, which societies and legal systems codify and enforce. For example, women have fewer assets than men and rely more heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods.[78] And even though they are more reliant on land and natural resources than men, they have fewer land rights.

Climate disasters amplify the harsh inequalities faced by women and girls in all their diversities given the greater household burden and responsibilities shouldered by them in comparison to their male counterparts, including as caregivers of the household and community, bearing the burden of ensuring food, water, and energy needs of their families, as well as their health and well-being.[79]

In addition, sexual and reproductive health and rights are often not priotized by governments and humanitarian responders during times of crisis leading to their deterioriation and absence from environmental and climate discourses.[80]

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[76] UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance.2018 Biennial Assessment and Overview of Climate Finance Flows Technical Report. 2018. Page 13.
[77] United Nations Development Programme. "Gender and Climate Change: Overview of linkages between gender and climate change." 2016. Page 5.
[78] UNDP. Page 4.
[79] Accelerating Gender-Responsive Climate Action through Empowered CSOs. The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women and UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 2021.
[80] Women's Health and Climate Change. Kuala Lumpur: The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women, 2017.

Countries and institutions continue to treat gender considerations as a programmatic "add-on" rather than fundamental to the achievement of SDG 13. Without embedding an intersectional understanding of gender into a human rights framework, climate action will be less effective and less sustainable and may exacerbate gender inequality. Intersectional feminist climate justice approaches must guide global and regional climate action, centering the realities of those most affected by the climate crisis.

Adopting an intersectional approach in the assessment of the viability of any climate solutions ensures that they will not burden communities, and especially women of the Global South, given their primary role in the care economy. This should be in recognition of the fact that they already face various forms of oppression due to their gender, race, caste, class, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ability, or ethnicity, among others.

Climate Financing

There is a need to increase climate finance for women and Indigenous communities by changing the mode of financing from loans, which add to already unsustainable burdens of debt, to grants. Governments must also tackle exploitative economic systems, such as taxation frameworks that facilitate illicit financial flows, which have left countries in the Global South without the necessary resources to adopt mechanisms that guarantee just and equitable climate transition and build their resilience to the climate crisis.

International financial institutions and other sources of climate funding should finance local solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation, such as non-genetically modified foods, and cyclical and sustainable agro-ecological farming practices. Genetic resources and traditional knowledge are indispensable alternatives to industrialized farming which, according to estimates, costs the environment the equivalent of about US$3 trillion every year owing to the greenhouse gas emissions, air and water pollution, and destruction of wildlife.[81] This is because externalized costs, such as the funds required to purify contaminated drinking water or to treat diseases related to poor nutrition, are also unaccounted for by the industry, meaning that communities and taxpayers may be picking up the tab without even realizing it.

It is also important to acknowledge the legacies of colonialism and how patterns of neoliberal capitalist exploitation have contributed to the climate crisis and how this continues even in the solutions being deliberated. We must reject the current political, economic, and social systems and structures that are steeped in patriarchy, imperialism, and capitalism. Global South countries especially should be allowed the policy space to build solidarity to challenge the neoliberal global system, economic or otherwise, that entrenches many structural inequities in access to power, resources, opportunities, and well-being that determine a just and inclusive climate transition.

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[81] UNEP. "10 things you should know about industrial farming."
https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/10-things-you-should-know-about-industrial-farming.
Accessed 7 May 2022.

In recognition of this history, climate reparations and the alignment of climate finance to the needs of Global South countries are critical to rectify climate injustice by those most responsible for the climate crisis. Climate change is hugely unjust. The world's richest 1% account for twice as much carbon dioxide emissions compared to that of 3.1 billion people who make up the poorest half of humanity and continue to be disproportionately affected by the climate crisis.[82] We need climate reparations because these schemes go much further than simply providing 'pay-back'; they are about addressing and transforming oppressive historical systems of colonialism and exploitation.

This also requires terminating and renegotiating trade and investment agreements that give multinational corporations exclusive rights to operate as they please by giving them power to sue states when they attempt to regulate their operations in the interest of women, Indigenous Peoples, and the planet. This will give governments the policy space to implement key provisions such as in the Paris Agreement and Kyoto Protocol without fear of being sued by investors.

Governments must urgently end fossil fuel expansion and subsidies, and rapidly invest in accelerating a just and equitable transition to renewable energy; prioritize rolling back on privatization of renewable and regenerative energy resources and its supply to ensure enhanced affordability, accessibility, availability and adaptability; decentralize and democratize ownership of renewable and regenerative solutions; and invest in community-owned solar and wind, public green utilities and nationalized renewable energy industries.[83]

"Net Zero" and False Solutions

Moreover, there is a need to urgently rethink and reject the "net zero" concept, which has, in effect, limited countries to focusing only on efforts to offset carbon emissions. As our allies in the Women and Gender Constituency explain:

> "Net Zero protects 'business as usual' rather than protecting the climate, the environment and biodiversity. The concept of Net Zero covers and includes many of these solutions. It has licensed a **"burn now, pay later"** approach that sees carbon emissions continue soaring. It has also hastened the destruction of the natural world by increasing deforestation today, and greatly increases the risk of further devastation in the future."[84]

Such offsetting programs are behind grabbing of large areas of Africa's lands and even displacing small producers for massive tree plantation projects for carbon credits while allowing for the

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[82] Oxfam. "Carbon emissions of richest 1 percent more than double the emissions of the poorest half of humanity."
https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/carbon-emissions-richest-1-percent-more-double-emissions-poorest-half-humanity. Accessed 7 May 2022.
[83] For additional information on the critical elements of a just and equitable transition, see APWLD, "A Feminist Interpretation of Just and Equitable Transitions in the Context of Climate Change."
https://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018_Just_and-Equitable_Transitions_briefer.pdf.
[84] Women and Gender Constituency. "Issue Brief: False Solutions."
https://womengenderclimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/wgc_issuebrief_falsesolutions_en.pdf.
Accessed 7 May 2022.

continued burning of fossil fuels. With regard to tree-planting projects, the Global Forest Coalition explains that these plantations: "lead to land grabbing and displacement of communities, human rights violations, freshwater scarcity, biodiversity loss and many other negative impacts, which are felt disproportionately by women and the most marginalised communities."[85]

The Women and Gender Constituency clearly demands: "in order to be considered as real climate solutions, are gender-just and human-rights based, minimizing risks, putting people over markets, protecting ecological food systems and global ecosystems."[86]

Recommendations

Financing

- Demilitarize and end fossil fuel subsidies. Divestment from these exploitative and extractive industries must be accompanied by investment in climate solutions that center gender justice and economies of care.
- Raise the quantity and quality of climate finance overall to achieve, at minimum, the US$100 billion per year goal, ensuring finance is gender-responsive, and that the proportion of grants-based funding for adaptation is significantly increased, with new, additional funds for loss and damage, as a matter of climate, social and gender justice.
- Support and replenish the multilateral climate funds serving the Paris Agreement—the Adaptation Fund, Green Climate Fund, and Global Environment Facility—and champion democratic, inclusive, and participatory decision-making and transparent operations that center gender equality and human rights, including the imperative of free, prior, and informed consent for Indigenous Peoples.
- In fulfillment of historical obligations, provide climate finance that is predictable, adequate, transparent, accountable, and in the form of grants rather than loans. This must include the provision by developed countries of at least US$100 billion in climate finance per year in grant-based finance, with at least 50% allocated to adaptation, and new and additional funding for adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage, especially for those most affected, such as in small island developing states and least-developed countries.
- Commit to the full implementation of existing global and national climate commitments including effective and full implementation of the Gender Action Plan on climate change.
- Commit to robust and feminist financing for the climate and sexual and reproductive health and rights intersection through holistic and integrated efforts, including:
  - Investments that address underlying systemic causes of vulnerabilities to the climate crisis, including for women, girls, and Indigenous Peoples,
  - Funds that are directed to feminist, women's, and youth-led organizations,

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[85]Global Forest Coalition. "Roll up, roll up! The Net Zero Circus is coming to a forest near you." https://globalforestcoalition.org/net-zero-circus/. Accessed 7 May 2022.
[86] https://womengenderclimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/wgc_issuebrief_falsesolutions_en.pdf. Accessed 7 May 2022.

- ○ Investments in climate-resilient health systems,
- ○ Social protection and public services,
- ○ Universal health coverage, including SRH in essential services, and
- ○ Support and training for community health workers specializing in SRH.

Policy coherence

- Embed gender into national policies, strategies, and planning for climate change and disaster risk reduction.
- Strengthen disaster risk reduction systems and adopt rights-based approaches to disaster risk reduction, especially for women and girls displaced or impacted by disasters.
- Strengthen climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to prepare communities, especially women and girls, for enhanced and efficient natural resources management, particularly contributing to food security and sovereignty, access to safe and clean water, and access to health care services, including sexual and reproductive health.
- Integrate all climate change and health policies, strategies, and plans with, but not limited to, the SDGs. These must include responses to safeguard and provide for the health of women and girls, including their sexual and reproductive health, as well as strategies to end child, early, and forced marriage or unions and gender-based violence.
- Address interlinkages between climate change, disaster risk reduction, and gender equality. National policies and plans need to be inclusive, intersectional, gender-responsive and should not be developed in isolation, as the lack of a gender analysis to inform policy design is likely to be ineffective.
- Mainstream gender and sexual and reproductive health and rights in national policies, programming, and budgets related to climate change and disaster risk reduction, and commit to engaging girls and women, in all their intersecting identities, and youth and women-led organizations, in the design, development, implementation, and monitoring of rights-based climate policies and programs integrating SRHR in line with the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Develop and implement a national monitoring and evaluation framework focused on climate change adaptation to strengthen gender mainstreaming and gender responsive programmatic action.

Education

- Include climate change education in all aspects of formal and non-formal curricula and extracurricular activities and promote school safety to climate-related hazards. Use terms that can be understood by grassroots women when implementing climate change programs.
- Organize and equip women and girls with knowledge, skills, and technologies for addressing the impact of climate change on women's health during disasters and

diversifying options for better adaptation to prevent women's and girls' morbidity and mortality.

Indigenous Peoples

- Protect Indigenous Peoples' and community land rights. Maintaining and restoring Indigenous and community land rights supports rights-based land management that promotes biodiversity, including through forest ecosystem restoration, and safeguards food security and livelihoods all while sequestering carbon, resulting in up to 14.77 gigatons of carbon sequestered or avoided by 2050.[87]

Participation and leadership

- Recognize climate change as the most significant intergenerational injustice issue of our time. Listen to and elevate youth and children's concerns around climate change and recognize that unless urgent action is taken, their future rights, which previous generations have enjoyed, are jeopardized.
- Prioritize the voices of women and girls and ensure that community stakeholders and environmental defenders have the ability to both speak and vote/input in all aspects of decision-making and policy processes around climate change.

Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Key Data

- Many people working in fisheries and aquaculture work informally and do not have access to social protection programs. This is especially true for women who work in the sector.[88]
- The UN projects a 100-150% rise in acidity by the end of this century affecting half of all marine life.[89]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

Our feminist allies in the Women and Gender Constituency summarize the current ocean crisis and its causes clearly:

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[87] Dooley, K et al. (2018) Missing Pathways to 1.5°C: The role of the land sector in ambitious climate action. Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance. Available from: climatelandambitionrightsalliance.org/report
[88] Food and Agriculture Organization. "The role of social protection in the recovery from COVID-19 impacts in fisheries and aquaculture." February 2021. Page 1.
[89] UN Statistics. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/Goal-14/. Accessed 24 April 2021.

"The ocean crisis demonstrates a deeper crisis of the human-nature relationship which is the result of societal divisions of labour and relationships of power and domination in the private and public sphere. The dominant economic system and its paradigm of economic growth are based on inequality, injustice, violence, monetization, commodification and privatization of common goods and a rampant extraction of resources. It encourages overexploitation, destruction and pollution of the ocean, as on land."[90]

In addition, structural conditions shaping the lives of people engaged in fishing and aquaculture at all levels of the pre- and post-harvest fish chain enhanced their vulnerability to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting crises, including: high degrees of informal work, high dependence on natural resources and, therefore, highly impacted by climate crises and isolation.[91] Travel restrictions and other types of lockdowns have also severely impacted migrant workers, many of whom are unable to return home and are at risk of falling into debt.[92]

The predominant industrial agricultural and fisheries models are not sustainable and favor large agribusinesses and distant water fisheries, while pushing out small farmers and artisanal fisherpeople, a majority of whom are women who typically employ more sustainable practices.

Women in fisheries organizing in the Pacific seek recognition for the paid and unpaid labor of women that goes towards sustaining the fisheries and fishing communities, as well as highlighting the right of women to participate in decision making. They call for increased access to financing, capacity building, and technical assistance for women in small-scale fishing communities to participate in, and take responsibility for, integrated management of small-scale and artisanal fisheries based on recognition and protection of access rights to marine resources. This includes increased access to sustainable and fair-trade markets to improve the socio-economic situation of fishers and fish workers within the context of sustainable fisheries management.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

Climate change

- Address and reduce all maritime sources of GHG, end fossil fuel subsidies in maritime transport and fisheries that contribute to overfishing, destructive fishing and IUU fishing,

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[90] Women and Gender Constituency. "A Call to Action for Health and Equity of the Ocean." https://womengenderclimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/PAPER-SERIES-The-Ocean.pdf Accessed 24 April 2021.
[91] Food and Agriculture Organization. "The role of social protection in the recovery from COVID-19 impacts in fisheries and aquaculture." February 2021.
[92] Food and Agriculture Organization. "The effect of COVID-19 on fisheries and aquaculture in Asia." May 2020. Page 1.

end bottom trawling and other activities disturbing carbon and methane stored in the seafloor, no energy and traffic turn in the north at the expense of marine biodiversity and food security in the south: Stop seabed mining![93]

- Exhaust all means available to help fragile marine systems and vulnerable coastal communities to adapt to irreversible climate change.[94]
- Recognize and compensate for loss of coral reefs and marine biodiversity and the foregone goods and services to associated coastal communities.[95]
- Raise ambition to keep the global temperature rise this century well below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, slow down the rate of change, and become carbon negative well before 2050 in order to save coral reefs, promote biodiversity integrity and protect and enhance marine sinks and reservoirs.[96]
- Urgently develop and support actions oriented toward adaptation actions and strategies specifically directed to fisher women and the girls and women whose livelihoods are impacted by climate change and the health of the oceans.
- Highlight the importance of ecosystem adaptation especially focusing on marine and coastal ecosystems and their importance for livelihoods.

Participation and leadership

- Promote sustainable management of coastal and marine resources and women and girls' participation in the blue economy, climate adaptation, and mitigation strategies.
- Promote the recognition of local community inputs in all ocean conservation actions and ensure the full and meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity.
- Recognize the specific risks, knowledge, commitment and rights of women, Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers and associated poor communities from coastal areas, especially in tropical and Arctic regions at the frontline of the ocean- climate-biodiversity emergency.[97]

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[93] Women and Gender Constituency.
https://womengenderclimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/PAPER-SERIES-The-Ocean.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2021.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

Sustainable Development Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Key Data

- According to the Global Forest Coalition, "Work burdens related to producing and collecting food for household consumption, non-timber forest products, water, health care and wellbeing are intensified when local, biodiverse forests are privatised and replaced with monoculture tree plantations."[98]
- According to the UN, ⅕ of the Earth's land area is degraded, which undermines the wellbeing of some 3.2 billion people, driving species to extinction and intensifying climate change.[99]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

Johanna Molina and Jeanette Sequeira of the Global Forest Coalition succinctly explain that the "anthropocentric, patriarchal and colonialist worldview leads us to view the planet as if it had no limits, to put nature and common goods exclusively at our service, and to assign some people more value than others, justifying policies of natural resource extraction and dispossession that have various impacts on territories, peoples and communities, and particularly on women."[100]

Effective policies to tackle the climate emergency and restore forests are urgently needed. However, when these policies are born of existing colonial and patriarchal mindsets, they only perpetuate the root causes of the crisis they are supposed to tackle. In doing so, they fail to deal with the uneven distribution of access to and control over resources experienced by frontline communities on the basis of gender, class, race, caste, age and ability, and other forms of discrimination.[101]

Policies also need to deal with even distribution of access to and control over resources experienced by frontline communities on the basis of gender, class, race, caste, age and ability, and other forms of discrimination. Initiatives promoting self-governance by women and communities have proven successful in sustainably managing forests and halting forest degradation. Since

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[98] Global Forest Coalition. *The impacts of tree plantations on women and women-led resistance to monocultures.* September 2020. Page 24.
[99] UN Statistics. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/Goal-15/. Accessed 24 April 2021.
[100] Global Forest Coalition. *The impacts of tree plantations on women and women-led resistance to monocultures.* September 2020. Page 4.
[101] https://globalforestcoalition.org/forest-cover-65/. Accessed 7 May 2022.

women are especially dependent on forest products for their livelihoods, approaches granting them participation in decision-making process about forest resources ensure both the protection of the forest and the strengthening of women's livelihoods. Particular attention should also be paid to strengthening and officializing their land tenure rights.

International trade and investment agreements that determine seed "ownership" and "use" through the granting of patents and or that impede climate action must be terminated and / or renegotiated. In addition, the practice of commercially exploiting naturally occurring genetic material preserved for centuries by Indigenous People and communities while failing to pay fair compensation to communities from which it originates and obtaining patents to restrict its future use must be prohibited.

Women and girls are also disproportionately affected by deforestation and degradation of ecosystems. Gender roles in many contexts dictate that women interact with and depend on these ecosystems on a daily basis, thus ecological degradation poses significant challenges for them to fulfill their differentiated role in agricultural and food production, land use, conservation, land rehabilitation and restoration, water and energy access, household and care responsibilities, and livestock-based livelihoods.

Despite playing a major role in biodiversity conservation and forest management and restoration—such as through intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge, keeping seeds, energy generation, collection of traditional food and medicine, and sustainable livelihoods—women and Indigenous Peoples are often excluded from participation in local, national, and global natural resources governance, especially managerial positions and decision-making bodies, as well as from accessing, owning, and controlling land and resources. We must pay attention to the need for the protection, conservation, and revitalization of natural and Indigenous forest resources and robust biodiversity, and the respect of women, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples as indispensable stewards.

The success of forest and biodiversity conservation depends on immediately halting all deforestation, and respecting the leadership of women, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, their local use rights, and traditional ecological knowledge.

According to Global Witness, a total of 227 people were killed in 2020 while trying to protect forests, rivers and other ecosystems that their livelihoods depended on.[102] Most of these instances of violence were perpetrated by mercenaries on the instruction of multinational corporations against the backdrop of state apathy. Environmental and women human rights defenders must be protected while those who have been harmed must have access to justice.

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[102] Global Witness.
https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/last-line-defence/. Accessed 7 May 2022.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

Leadership

- Implement gender-transformative and women and community-led resource management and governance processes.
- Enact programs and policies that promote women's equal rights and access to land, water, and natural resources, and that ensure engagement and leadership of women and women's organizations in related decision making and governance processes. Invest in dialogues around concepts of gender and how inequalities are created within communities and institutions to enhance and support women's leadership.
- Ensure women and girls' leadership in negotiations, policies, and programs, including the land tenure, territorial, and governance rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Human rights, including free, prior, and informed consent

- Adopt and implement the requirements put forth by the newly-adopted human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, at all levels.
- Respect the human rights, including free, prior, and informed consent, of Indigenous Peoples. Respect Indigeneous Peoples' customary systems of self-governance and ensure respect for territorial and cultural rights.
- Respect Indigenous women's rights to their community forests, as well as their rights to lead in protecting their people's traditional knowledge and livelihoods.
- Update and harmonize land and natural resources law in line with international human rights obligations.
- Respect and strengthen Indigenous women's rights to their community forests, as well as their rights to lead in protecting their people's traditional knowledge and livelihoods.

Trade and subsidies and corporate capture

- Eliminate or redirect perverse incentives for unsustainable agriculture, livestock production, and monoculture tree plantations, and revise trade policies of the corporate free trade model that benefit the few and are skewed in favor of large agribusinesses and export-oriented food production, as opposed to women's small-scale farming practices, which benefit the many.
- Strengthen governance institutions at all levels against corporate capture.
- Phase out and redirect financial policies and incentives that promote plantations and instead support community-based approaches to forest conservation.

Policy Coherence

- Implement existing international environmental agreements and ensure policy coherence between the three Rio Conventions (Convention to Combat Desertification, Convention on Biodiversity, and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change).
- Eliminate or redirect perverse incentives for unsustainable agriculture, livestock production, and monoculture tree plantations, and revise trade policies of the corporate free trade model that benefit the few and are skewed in favor of large agribusinesses and export-oriented food production, as opposed to women's small-scale farming practices, which benefit the many.
- Strengthen governance institutions at all levels against corporate capture.
- Phase out and redirect financial policies and incentives that promote plantations and instead support community-based approaches to forest conservation.

Data

- Close the gender and age gap in evidence-based responses by collecting sex- and age-disaggregated evidence of actual and perceived tenure security in conjunction with gender-sensitive disaggregation gathering on proportion of land that is degraded as per definition of indicators 1.4.2 and 15.3.1 against the baseline data to better inform policies and programs, their implementation and performance/progress.

Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Key Data

- In 2021, in the second year of a global pandemic, total military expenditure reached an all-time high of US$2.1 trillion.[103]
- No ceasefire agreement reached between 2018 and 2020 included gender provisions, despite significant evidence of the links between gender equality and sustainable peace.[104]

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[103] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2022/world-military-expenditure-passes-2-trillion-first-time. Accessed 7 May 2022.
[104] Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General. S/2021/827. Paragraphs 5(d) and 3.

- In 2022, 274 million people will require humanitarian assistance, an almost 40 million increase from the previous year, which was already the highest figure in decades, according to UN OCHA.[105]

Structural Barriers to Progress and Gendered Dimensions

Today, the world is spending money on violence and war rather than gender justice and peace. Bilateral aid to women's rights organizations in fragile and conflict-affected countries has remained stagnant since 2010 and is significantly below 1%.[106] "In countries that spend relatively more on the military as a share of government spending, pandemic-related measures to support the particular needs of women and girls during this crisis were significantly fewer."[107]

High military spending takes away resources from social infrastructure, a fact which is increasingly being recognized, including by the UN. According to the UN, "conflict-affected countries spend two to three times more on defense than on health care."[108] However, military spending is not only harmful because of where else this funding could be spent. These investments also directly fuel violence and armed conflict and increase the risk of renewed violence in post-conflict settings; they undermine post-conflict recovery; and are directly correlated with gender inequality. Arms proliferation and possession increases the prevalence and lethality of gender-based violence, including sexual violence in conflict, as well as other forms of violence and human rights violations.

Transparency and accountability of state institutions, rule of law, and access to justice have been hampered by rising anti-rights movements and regimes globally. Human rights, especially of women, girls, and gender-diverse people, are frequently the first targets of these regimes. In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in threats and violence against environmental and women human rights defenders and peacebuilders. At least 358 human rights and environmental defenders were killed worldwide in 2021.[109] This climate of repression, in combination with other restrictive measures targeting NGOs, has contributed to shrinking space for civil society to operate and freely advocate for human rights. Reaching a sustainable, equitable, and just world by 2030 necessitates an end to this democratic backsliding and increased transparency, accountability, rule of law, and access to justice.

Realizing SDG16 on peaceful, just, and inclusive societies requires a power shift that re-centers work on prevention, equality, development, and peace, and human rights, especially of women and girls in all their diversity and the most marginalized. This requires not just technical fixes, but structural transformation that dismantles war governance and authoritarianism and institutionalizes peace governance for the benefit of people and the planet.

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[105] https://gho.unocha.org. Accessed 24 April 2022.
[106] S/2021/827. Paragraph 5(j).
[107] S/2021/827. Paragraph 5(e).
[108] S/2021/827. Paragraph 8.
[109] Frontline Defenders. (2022). "Frontline Defenders Global Analysis 2021."

Peace

Current militarized approaches to peace and security consistently exclude women's participation, violate human rights, and systematically undermine the prospect of building sustainable peace.[110] Within the context of patriarchal and militarized conflict resolution processes, women are still excluded from participating at the peace table in substantive and meaningful ways, and often face reprisals for their leadership. The common refrain is that women require capacity building to negotiate in peace processes, while men who represent the armed parties only need to have held a gun.

Between 1992 and 2019, women made up on average 13% of negotiators, 6% of mediators, and 6% of signatories in major peace processes worldwide.[111] When they are present in peace negotiations, women and members of civil society are often relegated to advisory or consultative roles, limiting their ability to impact the structure or outcomes of negotiations.

This lack of inclusion in the process is reflected in the outcomes, which too frequently maintain an unequal status quo and reward perpetrators of violence with power. Most peace agreements do not include provisions on women's rights or gender equality, even though gender equality is a key factor in building peaceful societies that are based on human rights. According to the Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security from 2019: Between 1990 and the end of 2018, only 353 of 1,789 agreements related to more than 150 peace processes included provisions addressing women, girls, or gender.

Women are not necessarily safe even when the guns are silent, as they often experience heightened levels of insecurity, such as domestic violence and sexual assault, in their own homes and neighborhoods during post-conflict periods. This is because, as identified by feminist activists, violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and human rights violations, operates on a peacetime-wartime continuum.[112] Furthermore, the implementation of peace agreements and the provisions contained within can have a significant impact on women's livelihoods and human rights after conflict; if peace processes do not address the underlying root causes of conflict, and if peace agreements are not sufficiently funded and implemented, instability can continue.

During armed conflict, women and girls experience violence, deprivation, and insecurity in multiple ways. They experience increased rates of gender-based violence, exacerbated by the presence and proliferation of weapons[113], greater inequalities, child, early, and forced marriages,

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[110] Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), *UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years: Perspectives from Feminist Peace Activists and Civil Society*, October 2020, page 10. https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WILPF_UNSCR-1325-at-20-Years_Web.pdf

[111] UN. "Women, peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General." S/2020/946. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2020_946.pdf.

[112] WILPF, UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years, page 15.

[113] WILPF, *UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years, page 11.*

and are vulnerable to additional violence on their bodies and on their families through the use of sexual violence, sexual slavery, and kidnapping, among other violations. Women often take on roles traditionally preserved for men, such as head of household and breadwinner, taking care of the financial needs of the family, or as soldiers or militia members.

Recommendations

We recommend that Governments at the national and sub-national levels:

Peace and conflict

- Promote disarmament and discontinue funding for militaries and weapons. Shift from the erroneous notion of military security to human security. Invest in care services, infrastructure, and universal social protection for crisis response to enable just, equitable, and nonviolent governance.
- Take immediate steps towards full disarmament to prevent future violence, including by ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- Take immediate action to end existing conflicts through inclusive peace processes that address the root causes of conflicts, with the full, equal, effective, and meaningful participation of civil society and women in all their diversity at all stages and levels of the process.
- Institutionalize leadership for peace (i.e., ministries of reincorporation, decolonization, peace, women) and support feminist peace movement building and leadership.
- Accelerate commitments, including national and regional action plans on Women, Peace and Security, as a key priority for achieving SDG16, and allocate funding for their implementation.
- Stop the trade in arms and ammunition, particularly in situations where weapons will directly contribute to armed conflict, violations of human rights, and gender-based violence.
- Ensure extraterritorial accountability, including on flows of small arms and light weapons, to strengthen prevention of gender-based as well as all forms of violence, including by strengthening implementation of national action plans on small arms and light weapons in line with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Environmental and women human rights defenders

- Take immediate steps to protect environmental and women human rights defenders and peacebuilders against all violence and reprisals, including by both state and non-state actors.
- Stop the criminalization of the work of environmental and women human rights defenders and ensure enabling environments for their work.

- Rescind, at the earliest possible moment, any emergency measures enacted during the COVID-19 crisis that restrict the activities of human rights defenders.

Civil registration

- Ensure that all children, including and especially girls, are registered at birth, and that women and girls are allowed to register their own children without the need for permission from male partners or legal guardians.

Sustainable Development Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Key Data

- Excluding COVID-19 vaccine assistance, official development assistance (ODA) increased 0.6% from 2021 to 2020, though this is only equivalent to 0.33% of donors' combined gross national income (GNI) and still below the UN target of 0.7% ODA to GNI.[114]
- According to UNICEF, in many countries governments spend more on debt payments than they do on social expenditures, such as health, education, social protection, or water, sanitation, and hygiene.[115]

Financing for the 2030 Agenda

If we look deeply into the key financing strategies to achieve the 2030 Agenda that have been prioritized and promoted, we realize that not only are they fundamentally in contradiction with the commitment to achieve all the SDGs, but that they risk jeopardizing any progress feminist and women's rights movements have been able to achieve.

The key financing strategies that countries and the global political and economic systems prioritize for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda include trade and investment liberalization, a significant influential role for the private sector through public-private partnerships (PPPs), and international private finance. These strategies all undermine mobilization of domestic resources, particularly in developing countries, despite the considerable emphasis put on the role of domestic resource mobilization as a source of financing for development.

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[114] OECD. "Official Development Assistance (ODA) 2021."
https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/official-development-assistance.htm. Accessed 24 April 2022.
[115] UNICEF. "COVID-19 and the Looming Debt Crisis." April 2021.

Governments, and international actors have increasingly given the private sector a significant role in policymaking and programming, abdicating their central responsibility to provide services to their populations. Lack of accountability structures and institutions for the violations of human rights and environmental protections by the private sector remains an existential threat to the fulfillment of Agenda 2030. This outsourcing of government responsibility to fulfill human rights and the SDGs, also undermines civil society organizations, including women and girls' rights organizations, and other development actors. This trend goes against the SDGs' objectives of reducing inequality, poverty, leaving no one behind, and promoting peace and justice.

Public-Private Partnerships

Rather than closing corporate tax loopholes and ensuring tax justice to generate sufficient domestic resources for SDG fulfillment, private-public partnerships (PPPs) are being touted as a key solution for the means of implementation. By its nature, privatization puts profits over social goals, and that very fact is fundamentally in contradiction with governments' human rights obligations.

PPPs offer deals which are abusive: private partners are profiting even higher from deals with the public sector than they would in the regular market. In these partnerships, governments bear the risk, while companies make profits even in the case of a failure. It is time for countries to regain their regulatory power over corporations that violate human rights with the understanding that countries are first and foremost duty bearers.

Combined with a sovereign debt crisis and austerity / structural adjustment programs enforced by international financial institutions, privatization, or cuts in public spending as a means of SDGs implementation put the rights of women, girls and gender-diverse people and the achievement of gender equality at greater risk.

Trade

While trade agreements under the World Trade Organization are being considered tools to achieve the SDGs, none of these, including bilateral and multilateral trade and investment agreements, have been assessed for compatibility with human rights obligations and the SDGs. Moreover, the private sector uses investor state dispute settlement mechanisms (ISDS) present in these treaties to challenge legislation related to investments and environmental protection, workers' rights, and human rights. ISDS can pose threats to women and girls' human rights where investors have taken control over public services, such as health, water, education, or transportation, and have grabbed resources such as land, forests, and marine resources.

Official Development Assistance

Official development assistance (ODA) is a key financing strategy to achieve the 2030 Agenda and yet countries still have not met the 0.7 percent commitment in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.[116]

While developed countries have not yet met their ODA commitments, current trends in the allocation of ODA are seen to deepen the "militarization of aid" and its diversion to countries and purposes linked to the strategic security interests of major provider countries. These resources can be used to suppress movements calling for protection of human rights.

Policy Coherence

Although the 2030 Agenda is universal and requires policy coherence across the goals, action on the SDGs is "aligning" but not "integrating." Rather than creating holistic cross-sectoral priorities and strategies that evaluate impacts on people and planet, traditional siloed approaches that promote profit over people and violence over justice are continuing.

The 2030 Agenda was not crafted in a policy vacuum. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be stronger when governments design policies to fulfill other existing obligations, including for women and girls' human rights.

Recommendations

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

Official development assistance

- Fulfill all ODA commitments. Redouble efforts and establish time-bound targets to deliver on long-standing ODA commitments, that do not center neocolonial and neoliberal interests, but instead ensure a sustainable funding stream that supports global justice.
- Reverse the trend of militarization of aid. Use ODA to address the root causes of conflict and end its misuse for security, military, and corporate interests, and focus on addressing the root causes of conflict to push for conflict resolution and prevention.
- Stop diverting ODA to promote private blended finance, which includes public-private partnerships, or private sector investments, especially those directed through international financial institutions with the aim to leverage private sector funding.
- Ensure all ODA includes a significant focus on gender equality, including at least 20% of ODA with gender equality as the principal objective.
- Provide consistent, sustainable, and sufficient funding to feminist, women, and youth-led organizations, as the most effective agents of change on gender equality issues.

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[116] OECD. https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/official-development-assistance.htm. Accessed 24 April 2022.

- Commit to the adoption and effective implementation of feminist foreign policies, placing gender equality as a central goal across all foreign policy areas including diplomacy, trade, defense, and development.

Debt

- Unconditionally cancel public external debt payments by all lenders—bilateral, multilateral and private lenders—for all countries in need for at least the next four years as an immediate step and a clear program towards the unconditional cancellation of outstanding debt.
- Under the auspices of the UN, create a fair, transparent, binding, and multilateral framework for debt crisis resolution that would comprehensively address unsustainable and illegitimate debt.
- Implement debt relief to bring developing country debts down to sustainable levels and which considers countries' long-term financing needs to pursue the SDGs, climate goals, and human rights and gender equality commitments.

Trade

- Ensure the compatibility of trade and investment agreements against human rights and SDGs. The provisions of trade and investment agreements that are found to be inconsistent with the human rights obligations of governments should be revised or terminated.
- Remove ISDS provisions in trade and investment agreements. Rescind unequal trade and investment deals.
- Conduct ex-ante, periodic, and ex-post gender-responsive human rights and environmental impact assessments for all trade and investment agreements.

Tax Justice

- Establish transparent, accountable, and progressive tax systems.
- Support the creation of a global tax body within the UN to facilitate the creation and coordination of a just global tax system.

Budgeting

- Ensure gender-transformative budgeting systems in public, private, and donor agencies.

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