



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
27 December 2024

Original: English

*Advance Unedited Version*

---

## Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-ninth session

10–21 March 2025

Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

## **Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report, as mandated in Economic and Social Council resolution [2022/5](#), serves as a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

---

\* [E/CN.6/2025/1](#).

## Contents

*Page*

I.	The continued relevance of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	
A.	Introduction	
B.	The review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action	
C.	Progress in implementing the 12 critical areas of concern in the context of the 2030 Agenda	
II.	Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work	
A.	Introduction	
B.	Global and regional trends	
C.	Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action	
D.	Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation	
III.	Poverty eradication, social protection and social services	
A.	Introduction	
B.	Global and regional trends	
C.	Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action	
D.	Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation	
IV.	Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes	
A.	Introduction	
B.	Global and regional trends	
C.	Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action	
D.	Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation	
V.	Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions	
A.	Introduction	
B.	Global and regional trends	
C.	Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action	
D.	Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation	
VI.	Peaceful and inclusive societies	
A.	Introduction	
B.	Global and regional trends	
C.	Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action	
D.	Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation	
VII.	Environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building	
A.	Introduction	
B.	Global and regional trends	
C.	Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action	
D.	Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation	
VIII.	Lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations	
Annex.	National reports and survey responses by region	

## I. The continued relevance of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

### A. Introduction

*The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as the most comprehensive and visionary agenda for gender equality and women and girls' human rights, holds the key to unlock progress on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals*

1. In 1995, 189 governments unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (“the Platform for Action”) as a groundbreaking and far-reaching framework for the achievement of gender equality and the realization of the human rights of women and girls, as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. With 17,000 participants in attendance, Governments reached historic agreements and arrived at political consensus on the systemic change needed to realize women’s and girls’ human rights and gender equality across social, economic, political and environmental domains. The Platform for Action represents an unprecedented consensus on the actions needed to advance gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realization of all their human rights.

2. The Platform for Action articulates a vision for a world based on the redistribution of power, where gender equality is recognized as foundational to achieving peace, security and development for all. The commitments made in the Platform for Action were forward thinking for its time, and many of the critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action remain pertinent for responding to the complex challenges of today.

3. With its focus on systemic change, the Platform for Action also holds the key to unlock the bottlenecks and accelerate much needed progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the countdown to 2030. The Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations reaffirmed the aspirations of the Platform for Action and opened pathways to new possibilities and opportunities for gender equality. Respect for human rights, cultural diversity and gender equality are woven into all three agreements. In the face of a surge in misogyny and a rollback of women’s human rights, governments have explicitly committed to removing the legal, social and economic barriers that prevent women and girls from fulfilling their potential in every sphere. Further, the Pact for the Future recognizes that “sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development can only be realized when all women, adolescent girls and girls have their full human rights respected, protected and fulfilled” (A/RES/79/1).

4. Thirty years after its adoption, the Platform for Action continues to mobilize governments at all levels, the United Nations, feminist and women’s movements, civil society organizations, youth movements, private sector and philanthropy. In this 30-year review of its implementation, over 150 States reported on their actions taken alongside several global and regional forums, providing a clear testament to the continued relevance and power of the Platform for Action.

5. The Platform for Action was adopted at a time of hope: democratic and human rights institutions were being strengthened; social movements were strong, supported and resourced; and trust in global institutions, multilateralism and the United Nations was high. Yet its thirtieth anniversary takes place in a year where Member States will be called upon to continue to address the most pressing global challenges, including the climate crisis, armed conflict and humanitarian crises – all against the backdrop of economic uncertainty and a turbulent geopolitical climate.

*States have continued to take action to advance gender equality in the last five years*

6. Since the 2020 review of implementation of the Platform for Action, based on the survey responses and national reports received (see annex), States have increasingly adopted new laws, policies and programmes to advance gender equality. Globally, the top three priorities for action in the last five years reported by countries were in the areas of: eliminating violence against women and girls (88 per cent); ensuring equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice (48 per cent); and quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls (44 per cent). The areas least likely to be prioritized by States were gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and resilience building; basic services and infrastructure; and strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability.

7. Progress and key new policy directions have emerged across all the critical areas of concern over the last five years:

- To address women's structural exclusion from the economy, 80 per cent reported passing laws and implementing policies that specifically prohibit gender-based discrimination in employment. More countries are taking steps to develop and strengthen integrated care systems that address the rights and needs women as caregivers and care recipients. For example, the proportion of States that reported strengthening care services for older persons has increased from 46 per cent in 2019 to 66 per cent in 2024. Over the same period, the proportion of States reporting measures to promote decent work for paid care workers rose from 25 to 32 per cent.
- To reduce women's poverty, 79 per cent of States reported efforts to strengthen social protection systems, up from 70 per cent in 2019. An innovation in recent years has been new gender-responsive social protection policies and programmes in response to COVID-19 and subsequent shocks and crises.
- To realize the rights of the girl-child, 77 per cent of States focussed action on violence against girls, up from 62 per cent in 2019. Seventy per cent of States focussed action on girls' access to education, up from 61 per cent in 2019.
- On eliminating violence against women and girls, 90 per cent reported the introduction or strengthening of laws, their implementation and enforcement, up from 83 per cent in 2019. Seventy-nine per cent of States reported that they have introduced, updated or expanded national action plans, up from 68 per cent in 2019. An area of innovation in recent years has been legal reform to address new forms of violence that occur through or are amplified by the use of technology, with 70 per cent of States reporting action in this area.
- On supporting women's participation in politics and public life, 38 per cent of States reported measures to prevent and investigate cases of violence against women in public life, end impunity, and prosecute and punish perpetrators – more than double the percentage reported in the last review period.
- Responding to the impacts of successive crises, forty-three per cent reported adopting gender-responsive approaches to humanitarian action and crisis response, up from 40 per cent in 2019. A key innovation in recent years has been the growth of humanitarian response plans that integrate actions across women's economic empowerment, violence against women and girls, and sexual and reproductive health.
- The proportion of States reporting actions to advance gender equality and women's rights as part of their environmental sustainability, climate action

and resilience strategies has increased significantly. For example, 48 per cent reported taking action to increase women's access to land, water, energy and other natural resources, an increase of 10 percentage points compared to 2019.

8. These efforts have led to important progress. Education is the area where the situation of girls and women has improved the most since 1995. Gender gaps have closed at all levels of education globally. Today, 122.4 million girls are out of school, down from 124.7 million in 2015.<sup>1</sup> Maternal mortality declined from 339 to 223 deaths per 100,000 live births between 2000 and 2020. Since 1995, the proportion of women in parliaments has more than doubled from 11 per cent to 27 per cent.<sup>2</sup> Countries have also steadily continued to remove discriminatory laws. Between 2019 and 2023, 56 positive legal reforms took place across the four areas measured by SDG indicator 5.1.1 (overarching legal frameworks and public life; violence against women; employment and economic benefits; and marriage and family).<sup>3</sup>

*Despite these efforts, there has been limited progress on gender equality outcomes, with stagnation in most areas, putting the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as well as the vision of the Platform for Action out of reach*

9. Some 9.8 per cent of women and girls live in extreme poverty. While this is a slight improvement since the pandemic, at the current rate of progress it will take a further 137 years to eradicate extreme poverty for women and girls.<sup>4</sup> The gender gap in labour force participation, around 30 per cent, has remained stagnant for 20 years, with 63 per cent of women in the labour force in 2022 and 92 per cent of men, compared to 64 per cent for women and 94 per cent for men in 2002. While maternal mortality has decreased over the last two decades, in recent years (2016–2020) the global annual reduction in maternal mortality was effectively zero. At the current rate of progress, gender parity in national parliaments will not be achieved before 2063. Across their lifetime, 1 in 3 women, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner.<sup>5</sup>

10. Progress for women and girls is slowest in conflict and crisis-affected countries. Women and girls in extremely fragile contexts are 7.7 times more likely to live in households below the \$2.15 poverty line than those in non-fragile contexts.<sup>6</sup> The average incidence of child marriage in conflict-affected countries is 14.4 percentage points higher than in non-conflict settings.<sup>7</sup> The latest data shows that over one third of maternal deaths occurred in 48 fragile and conflict-affected countries.<sup>8</sup>

11. The realization of gender equality and human rights for girls remains a challenge. Gender disparities in upper-secondary education remain in three of

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and United Nations, *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024* (New York, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> IPU Parline, *Global Data on National Parliaments*. Available at <https://data.ipu.org/> (accessed in December 2024).

<sup>3</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), *Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018: Global, Regional and National Prevalence Estimates for Intimate Partner Violence Against Women and Global and Regional Prevalence Estimates for Non-Partner Sexual Violence Against Women. Executive Summary* (Geneva, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023* (New York, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>8</sup> UN-Women calculations based on WHO, *Maternal Mortality: Levels and Trends 2000 to 2020, Trend in MMR*. Available at <https://mmr2020.srhr.org/data> (accessed in November 2024).

eight regions. In sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania (exc. Australia and New Zealand), upper-secondary out-of-school rates were 48 per cent and 27 per cent for girls compared to 44 per cent and 22 per cent for boys. Girls from the poorest households are most disadvantaged in all regions. Among adolescents aged 10–19 years globally, 71 per cent of new HIV infections occur in girls.<sup>9</sup> Child marriage has declined from 24.1 per cent to 18.7 per cent since 2003, but at this rate, girls will continue to be married as children until 2092.<sup>10</sup> One study of 14,000 girls in 31 countries found that more than half of girls surveyed had been harassed and abused online.<sup>11</sup>

12. Discriminatory legal frameworks prevail in many parts of the world, particularly in the area of the family, and remain a major impediment to the realization of gender equality, empowerment of women and girls and the realization of their human rights.<sup>12</sup> In 18 per cent of countries, women do not have equal rights to confer citizenship to their spouses and their children.<sup>13</sup> Over half (54 per cent) of countries do not have laws that base the legal definition of rape on the lack of freely given consent. Legal reform to ensure equality and non-discrimination is an urgent priority as data shows that where comprehensive laws exist, they make a difference. Countries with domestic violence legislation have lower rates of intimate partner violence than those without legislation, with 9.5 per cent of women aged 15–19 experiencing intimate partner violence in the last 12 months in countries with domestic violence legislation compared to 16.1 per cent in countries without legislation.<sup>14</sup>

13. Women and girls experiencing multiple forms of discrimination, including based on age, class, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity or migration status have made the least progress. Globally, 84 per cent of multidimensionally poor people live in rural areas.<sup>15</sup> Exclusion from education and employment can be especially pronounced for young women with disabilities, who are significantly more likely to be out of employment, education or training than both young men with disabilities and young women without disabilities.<sup>16</sup> Indigenous and rural women and girls disproportionately suffer the effects of biodiversity loss.<sup>17</sup> Marginalized women, including Indigenous women, women with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ women are at heightened risks of violence and harassment (A/HRC/50/26).<sup>18</sup>

14. While there has been growing attention to the need to transform discriminatory social norms, they persist as an impediment to gender equality across the world. Discriminatory social norms remain deeply embedded across all social institutions – the State, market, religion, community and family –

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *2023 Global Snapshot on HIV and AIDS: Progress and Priorities for Children, Adolescents and Pregnant Women* (New York, 2023).

<sup>10</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>11</sup> Plan International, *State of the World's Girls 2020: Free to be Online? Executive Summary* (Surrey, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> Report of the Expert Group, *Beijing +30: Progress, Gaps and Challenges* (New York, UN-Women, 2024).

<sup>13</sup> UN-Women, *The Crucial Role of Legal Frameworks in Achieving Gender Equality* (New York, 2024).

<sup>14</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023: Unstacking Global Poverty* (New York, 2023).

<sup>16</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO), "New ILO database highlights labour market challenges of persons with disabilities", 13 June 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Sandra Díaz and others, *Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (Bonn, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services [IPBES], 2019).

<sup>18</sup> Sophie West-Browne, *LGBTIQ+ Equality and Rights: Internal Resource Guide* (New York, UN-Women, 2022); Mónica Miriam García-Cuéllar and others, "The prevalence of intimate partner violence against women with disabilities: a systematic review of the literature", *Disability and Rehabilitation*, vol. 45, No. 1 (2022).

determining the unequal place between women and men across all these areas.<sup>19</sup> Social norms reinforce men as the appropriate holders of power in political institutions, women as primarily responsible for unpaid care work and men as the heads of households. Narratives justifying gender discrimination on account of nature and merit, discriminatory restrictions in law, and in accessing opportunities and services, as well as powerful and organized opposition to gender-equal norms and gender equality, continue to hold back progress.

*In part, the lack of progress is due to the strong headwinds that governments have faced over the past five years: from the COVID-19 pandemic, to food, fuel and financial crises, from the escalating climate emergency to eruptions of conflict*

15. In recent years, repeated shocks have rocked the world, from the COVID-19 pandemic to growing conflict and food, fuel and financial crises. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in devastating social and economic consequences for women, including an uptick in domestic and public violence against them.<sup>20</sup> Climate-related disasters and environmental crises continue to escalate, taking a disproportionate toll on the poorest countries and the most marginalized women and girls, even as they have contributed least to the problem. In the worst-case climate scenario, an additional 158.3 million women and girls could be pushed into poverty by 2050.<sup>21</sup> Destabilizing long-term economic trends continue to exacerbate inequalities within and between countries, with prevailing development models failing to create decent jobs and livelihoods for many people, while concentrating wealth and power among a few. An ongoing cycle of economic crises, mounting debt and austerity prevents much-needed investment in social protection and public services. In 2023, more than 170 armed conflicts were recorded, and approximately 612 million women and girls lived within 50 kilometres of these conflicts, more than double the level in the 1990s. In 2023, as the number of civilians killed in conflict rose by 72 per cent in just one year, the proportion of women killed doubled (S/2024/385). While these crises can open up some new opportunities for women and girls, for example income generation or community leadership, crises largely have a disproportionate and negative impact on women and girls.

16. Against this background of successive crises, nearly all States (97 per cent) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the implementation of the Platform for Action. Over half of States reported that the climate crisis (54 per cent) has affected the implementation of the Platform for Action, while more than a quarter of States (27 per cent) noted food and fuel crises as a challenge. Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) pointed to backlash on gender equality as a factor undermining implementation.

*There has been a widening accountability gap for gender equality, with democratic erosions and threats to women's human rights defenders on the rise*

17. Cascading crises and persistent shocks, continuing economic instability, and growing inequalities between and within countries, have given rise to the growing erosion of trust in mainstream political parties, democratic processes and institutions, resulting in the global erosion of democracy or “democratic backsliding”.<sup>22</sup> The level of democracy enjoyed by the average person in the

<sup>19</sup> UN-Women, *Ideologies, Institutions and Power: Addressing Social Norms Implicated in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. A Framework for UN-Women* (forthcoming).

<sup>20</sup> Ramya Emandi and others, *Measuring the Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women during COVID-19* (New York, UN-Women, 2021).

<sup>21</sup> Audrey Pirzadeh and others, *Gendered Analysis of the Impact of Climate Change on Poverty, Productivity and Food Insecurity* (New York, UN-Women and Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures, 2023).

<sup>22</sup> Murat Somer, Jennifer L. McCoy and Russell E. Luke, “Pernicious polarization, autocratization and opposition strategies”, *Democratization*, vol. 28, No. 5 (2021).

world in 2023 continued to decline. Over the past five years, more countries have seen decreases in democratic performance than improvements. In 2023 specifically 82 out of 173 countries (47 per cent) recorded a decline in their democratic performance compared to their 2018 levels, while less than a third (52) made progress.<sup>23</sup> The last five years have seen States affected by democratic backsliding increasingly employing misogyny and gender inequality as a governing strategy, promoting legal and policy reform with narrow definitions of traditional families, limiting the use of the concept of gender in policy documents, legislation and academic research; curtailing reproductive rights, the rights of sexual minorities, and legal protections against domestic violence (A/HRC/56/51). Growing attacks against minority communities have also been a feature of democratic backsliding (A/HRC/46/57).

18. At the same time, space for civic activism through which women and girls can hold their elected leaders to account has been shrinking rapidly, with restrictions on civic action and actors criminalized in some countries (A/76/258). Increased attacks on human rights defenders are a concern. Between May 2022 and April 2023, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documented 140 incidents of reprisals and intimidation for cooperation with the United Nations, affecting at least 108 women and girls (UNW/2024/2). In 2022, the OHCHR verified 34 cases of killings of women human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists in conflict-affected countries, a number that is likely an underestimate (S/2023/725). As of January 2022, almost a quarter of at least 3,545 socio-environmental conflicts worldwide visibly involved women environmental defenders, who routinely face deadly violence.<sup>24</sup>

19. Without addressing these broader democratic deficits, accountability gaps and bottlenecks, the vision of the Platform for Action will remain out of reach. Accountability compels those in power to listen to and answer the claims of all rights holders, particularly those of historically marginalized people. When it functions effectively, accountability enables women not only to see their claims and rights reflected in policy solutions, but also to monitor the performance of governments, offer feedback, and demand explanations or redress from those in power when necessary.<sup>25</sup>

*Growing backlash has been reinforced by the hollowing out of policy mechanisms, institutions and processes that the Platform for Action tasked with advancing gender equality*

20. Growing opposition to gender equality can feed into “policy backsliding” on gender equality at international, national and sub-national levels.<sup>26</sup> In recent years, backsliding on gender equality policies has been explicit, where normative commitments have been removed. However, more often it has been implicit, where a subtle erosion of commitments takes place, “hollowing out” policies without changing legislation or policy. This can include discrediting gender equality as a legitimate goal; reframing existing policies, such as on education or health in ways that restrict women’s rights; undermining institutional mechanisms including national gender equality machineries; and limiting accountability and inclusion mechanisms for women’s rights organizations. Whether explicit or

<sup>23</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), *The Global State of Democracy 2024: Strengthening the Legitimacy of Elections in a Time of Radical Uncertainty* (Stockholm, 2024).

<sup>24</sup> Dalena Tran and Ksenija Hanaček, “A global analysis of violence against women defenders in environmental conflicts”, *Nature Sustainability*, vol. 6 (2023).

<sup>25</sup> UN-Women, *Progress of the World’s Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women?* (New York, 2008); Laura Turquet and others, *Feminist Climate Justice: A Framework for Action* (New York, UN-Women, 2023).

<sup>26</sup> Conny Roggeband and Andrea Krizsán, “Democratic backsliding and the backlash against women’s rights: understanding the current challenges for feminist politics.” UN-Women Discussion Paper No. 35 (New York, 2020).



implicit, such rollbacks violate human rights commitments and the principle of non-retrogression.

21. Institutional mechanisms for gender equality, such as national gender equality machineries (also referred to as national women's machineries), are crucial drivers of policy advancements for gender equality and important for democracy broadly. Data for 70 countries from 1975 to 2005 show a significant positive association between the presence of a national women's machinery and level of democracy.<sup>27</sup> In the last five years, national gender equality machineries have been the target of efforts to defund, undermine, rename, and redirect them (see sect. V). In this review of implementation of the Platform for Action, only half (52 per cent) of States reported that their gender machineries are provided with adequate financial resources and staff capacity to fulfil their mandates. Institutional mechanisms for gender equality continue to play a key role by setting the overall direction of gender policy and coordinating across sectors, but they need authority, capacity and resources to drive accelerated progress, as envisioned by the Platform for Action.

*Progress has also been held back by inadequate investment in gender equality and effective solutions, exacerbated by the debt crisis*

22. Progress on gender equality has also been stymied by a lack of investment and decades of economic policies that resulted in shrinking resources for public services and infrastructure, particularly for developing countries in the context of successive crises. Data from 48 developing economies shows achieving gender equality, as represented by eight sex-disaggregated SDG indicators, is projected to cost \$6.4 trillion annually from 2023 to 2030, equal to 20.5 per cent of their collective GDP. This represents a funding gap of \$360 billion a year.<sup>28</sup> In 2023, a record 54 developing countries, equivalent to 38 per cent of the total, allocated 10 per cent or more of government revenues to interest payments, crowding out the public investments needed to advance gender equality.<sup>29</sup>

23. Shortcomings in the global financial architecture, including an inadequate financial safety net, are hindering developing countries from protecting the fundamental rights of women and girls during times of crisis, even though they are disproportionately affected by such crises. International tax cooperation remains insufficient to curb corporate tax evasion, avoidance and abuse, all of which reduce the fiscal space for gender-responsive policies. Approximately 36 per cent of multinational profits are shifted to tax havens globally. If these shifted profits were reallocated to their countries of origin, domestic profits in developing nations would increase by 5 per cent,<sup>30</sup> which could create fiscal space for necessary gender-responsive policies.

24. In 2021–2022, 42 per cent of bilateral allocable official development assistance (ODA) by members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) had gender equality as a policy objective (\$60.4 billion out of \$143 billion screened against the marker). Although the volume increased slightly from \$57 billion in 2019–2020, the share decreased from 45 per cent. Further, only 4 per cent of total bilateral allocable aid was dedicated to programmes with gender equality as the principal objective, a similar share from the previous period. The lowest shares of aid with gender equality as an objective were in the humanitarian and energy sectors, which is a concern given the successive crises in recent years. ODA to

<sup>27</sup> S. Laurel Weldon, "State feminism, global feminist waves and democratic backsliding: global and cross-regional perspectives", *French Politics*, vol. 22, No. 3 (2024).

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), "The costs of achieving the SDGs: Gender equality. Key findings", available at <https://unctad.org/sdg-costing/gender-equality>.

<sup>29</sup> UNCTAD, *A World of Debt: A Growing Burden to Global Prosperity* (Geneva, 2024).

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Tørsløv, Ludvig Wier and Gabriel Zucman, "The missing profits of nations", *The Review of Economic Studies*, vol. 90, No. 3 (May 2023).

support women's rights organisations and movements, and government institutions dropped to \$596 million on average per year in 2021–2022, from \$867 million in 2019–2020, a decline of one third.<sup>31</sup>

25. Against this background, the SDG Stimulus is a global call to action to offset the challenging market conditions faced by developing countries and accelerate progress towards the SDGs, including gender equality commitments. It calls for urgent action to tackle the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress, scale up affordable long-term financing for development and expand contingency financing to countries in need.<sup>32</sup>

*Technological advances hold enormous promise for gender equality, but they are not currently geared towards achieving this goal, while the new risks they create go largely unchecked*

26. Rapid technological change has been a key feature of the last five years, particularly the recent growth of generative artificial intelligence. As the Global Digital Compact recognized, there is a significant opportunity to harness technological developments to advance gender equality, for example by speeding up delivery of health, social protection and public services to women and girls during crises and for the prevention and response to violence against women and girls. There are some emerging examples of such approaches. However, the full potential of technology to advance gender equality has not been realized, while new risks for the physical safety and wellbeing of all women and girls remain inadequately managed. Further, persistent gender digital gaps mean that many remain excluded from its benefits, and these gaps risk being exacerbated with the growth of AI and other emerging technologies especially for the most marginalized groups.

27. Without specific interventions, new technological trends risk further entrenching existing inequalities and gendered power dynamics, threatening individual rights and enabling new forms of surveillance by governments and corporations.<sup>33</sup> Such technological advances are also facilitating new forms of violence and abuse, as well as enabling anti-feminist actors to spread mis- and disinformation and abuse, allowing misogynistic and hate-based rhetoric to spread largely unchecked.<sup>34</sup> Young women and girls also experience greater risk to their safety online. Further, artificial intelligence can replicate and amplify gender biases that entrench gender inequalities, for example in workplace hiring and promotion procedures.<sup>35</sup>

*Demographic shifts across the world are also presenting challenges for gender equality*

28. Major demographic trends also have significant implications for gender equality. In most of sub-Saharan Africa, and in parts of Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, the share of the working age population (25–64 years) is high and will continue to increase more rapidly than the total population in years to come, providing an opportunity to accelerate sustainable development.<sup>36</sup> However, reaping this demographic dividend requires much stronger job creation, along with substantial investments in education, health care and infrastructure. In many contexts, significant cohorts of highly educated young people are facing labour market challenges, particularly in the absence of decent work opportunities, with

<sup>31</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Development Finance for Gender Equality 2024* (Paris, 2024).

<sup>32</sup> See <https://www.un.org/en/sdg-stimulus>.

<sup>33</sup> Virginia Eubanks, *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 2018)

<sup>34</sup> Amnesty International, "Crowdsourced Twitter study reveals shocking scale of online abuse against women", 18 December 2018.

<sup>35</sup> UN-Women, "Artificial intelligence and gender equality", 22 May 2024.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations, *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results* (New York, 2024).

young women particularly affected by unemployment. Such demographic trends also mean that there is an increasing demand for public services, affordable housing and need for family planning and sexual and reproductive health services that are already stretched in most contexts.

29. Rapid population ageing in many parts of the world, in turn, is putting additional strain on already fragile labour markets, social protection, health and long-term care systems. As the majority of the world's older persons, women are most impacted by these trends, particularly as they have carried a disproportionate responsibility for caring over their life course, with potentially adverse implications for their income security in old age.<sup>37</sup> In old age, women continue to provide unpaid care for ageing spouses as well as grandchildren, enabling their parents to engage in paid work or taking their place as primary caregivers when children are orphaned or left behind due to migration. Older women are also more likely to report chronic illness and disabilities than men because they tend to live longer.<sup>38</sup>

*Accelerating the achievement of the SDGs requires “all hands on deck” and a recommitment to the Platform for Action*

30. With a world in trouble with conflict, climate chaos, inequalities and economic uncertainty, and the SDGs in peril, recommitting to the Platform for Action and accelerating implementation is critical. With just five years to go until 2030, progress on gender equality will have an outsized, catalytic and multiplier effect across all the SDGs. Gender equality also underpins the integrated approaches needed across the six transitions proposed by the United Nations Secretary-General to accelerate progress on the SDGs on (i) food systems; (ii) energy access and affordability; (iii) digital connectivity; (iv) education; (v) jobs and social protection; and (vi) climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution (E/2024/52)

31. As outlined in the sections of this report, women are a driving force of food system transformation (see sects. II and VII); they have a powerful role to play in extending access to sustainable energy (see sect. VII); closing the gender digital divide can unlock the benefits of digital connectivity and transformation (see sect. II), while at the same time the regulation of technology is key to women's and girls' safety (see sect. IV); reaping the full benefits of women's and girls' education holds the key to all dimensions of sustainable development (see sect. III); ensuring women's access to decent work and social protection is at the heart of poverty eradication and economic prosperity (see sects. II and III); and women's participation is central in decision-making to effectively address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution as well as achieving lasting and sustainable peace (see sects. V, VI and VII).

32. Achieving global commitments depends on all actors playing their part. Supporting feminist movements and women's rights organizations that are diverse and inclusive of all women and girls is central. These groups often play critical roles as essential service providers, advocates, and watchdogs, and step up support at great personal costs in the context of crises. Girls and young women have a critical role to play as the next generation of change-makers, and indeed are increasingly at the forefront of social, economic and environmental change. By harnessing the collective power of women's organizations, engaging new generations, embedding intersectionality and cross-movement solidarity, feminist movements can continue to drive forward the vision of the Platform for Action and demand accountability for action. Yet, women's rights organizations remain severely under-funded, along with the under-resourcing of policies and actions to

<sup>37</sup> Silke Staab, Georgina Veitch and Ramya Emandi, “Caring for carers: Recognizing the rights and contributions of older women”, 27 October 2023.

<sup>38</sup> United Nations, “Towards living longer, healthier lives”, in *World Social Report 2023: Leaving No One Behind in an Ageing World* (New York, 2023).

advance gender equality by Governments (E/CN.6/2024/3). Supporting women's organizations and feminist movements also requires strengthening participatory processes and institutional mechanisms to advance gender equality and expanding space for civil society to meaningfully inform policy and hold decision-makers to account.

33. Men and boys also play a key role in supporting feminist movements and transforming patriarchal social norms. Men in leadership positions across public and private sectors, and in cultural and religious leadership roles, have a role to play in challenging discrimination, unequal power between women and men, and discriminatory narratives that promote male dominance, and advocating for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realization of their rights. In this respect, recent years have seen more pro-feminist men's organizations stand together with women's rights movements and organisations seeking to transform patriarchal masculinities.<sup>39</sup>

34. Governments, as primary duty bearers, remain responsible for the implementation of global norms and commitments. They also have a role to ensure that all actors are accountable for protecting, respecting and fulfilling the human rights of women and girls, including the private sector. Achieving the vision of the Platform for Action requires all actors – governments, civil society, private sector and the United Nations – to work collaboratively across sectors and regions.

35. The United Nations system must play its part in advancing gender equality as outlined in the Platform for Action 30 years ago. In this respect, the Secretary-General's Gender Equality Acceleration Plan calls for system-wide action to transform power dynamics within the United Nations, change leadership approaches, reshape strategies and structures and enhance accountability to ensure the United Nations system delivers on gender equality and women's and girls' human rights.

36. Central to progress is also a strong multilateral system that can bring Member States together to reignite the spirit of the Platform for Action as a consensus agenda, one that works to advance gender equality and the empowerment and rights of all women and girls for the benefit of all. As recognized in the Pact for the Future, this requires a new beginning in multilateralism and a commitment to gender equality across the areas of sustainable development and financing; peace and security; technology; youth; and governance. This includes the revitalization of the Commission on the Status of Women to promote the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action. The year 2025 provides a momentous opportunity to place gender equality at the centre of global deliberations and discussions with the convergence of the thirtieth anniversary of the Platform for Action, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325, the thirtieth Climate Change Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, the United Nations Food System Summit +4 stocktaking moment and the Second World Summit for Social Development.

37. In the current global context of uncertainty, a recommitment to fully implementing the Platform for Action and enhancing accountability at all levels is urgent and overdue. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has invited all States, the United Nations system, civil society and other stakeholders to work collaboratively toward transformative and lasting improvements in the lives of all women and girls, proposing a focus on six high-impact measures that would deliver tangible results

---

<sup>39</sup> Comotion and LDH Consulting, *MenEngage Alliance Evaluation: July 2024* (n.p., MenEngage Alliance, 2024).

for all women and girls and drive large-scale progress to accelerate the SDGs. These are:

- Drive accountability for the women, peace and security agenda and gender-responsive humanitarian action by adopting fully financed national plans and funding local women's organizations leading responses to crises and conflicts.
- Centre women's and girls' rights, including from rural and indigenous communities, as economies and societies transition to environmental sustainability, including by prioritizing them in developing new skills and gaining green jobs and ensuring that women's access to productive assets, land rights are secured.
- Accelerate the achievement women's full and equal decision-making power in private and public domains, and at all levels of government, including by applying temporary special measures and enabling meaningful participation of young women and girls at all levels.
- Bridge the digital gender gap by providing women with equal access to technology and its benefits, including mobile phones and the Internet as articulated in the Global Digital Compact.
- Transform the care economy to recognise and redistribute care work, and to support women's economic and social empowerment by increasing national budgets for equitable, quality public care services
- Strengthen and implement legislation to end violence against women and girls, through the adoption and funding of legislation and national action plans, and support and coordination with community-led mechanisms to extend the reach of services.

38. Prioritizing young people, particularly women and girls, at the heart of these efforts through investment in their education, health and shift in discriminatory social norms is essential to accelerate gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the realization of their rights, and to break the cycle of exclusion and deepen sustainability and leadership for the next generation.

## **B. The review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action**

39. In 2000, the General Assembly conducted a five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action at its twenty-third special session, where governments recommitted to implementing the Platform for Action and agreed on further actions and initiatives to advance the achievement of gender equality.

40. At its forty-ninth session in 2005, its fifty-fourth session in 2010, fifty-ninth session in 2015 and sixty-fourth session in 2020, the Commission on the Status of Women carried out the 10-year, 15-year, 20-year and 25-year reviews and appraisals of implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. In these four reviews, governments noted the limited progress made and committed to full and accelerated implementation.

41. In resolution [2022/5](#), the Economic and Social Council decided that the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. This review assesses the current challenges affecting the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality, and the rights and empowerment of all women and girls, and their contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda with a gender perspective.

42. The resolution called upon all States to undertake comprehensive national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and encouraged the regional commissions to undertake reviews so that the outcomes of intergovernmental processes at the regional level can feed into the global review.

43. The present report provides a review of national level implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. It utilizes the responses to a guidance note and online survey provided by UN-Women and the United Nations regional commissions to all Member States and observer States in their respective regions.<sup>40</sup> By 25 November 2024, 156 Member States had responded to the guidance note with a national report and 145 had completed the online survey. An overview of responses received, by region, is available in the annex to the present report.

44. At the end of December 2024, all five regional review processes had been completed.<sup>41</sup> Findings from the regional reviews, where available, have been reflected in this report:

- The Economic Commission for Africa held the African Regional Review of thirty years of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action from 30 October to 2 November 2024 in Addis Ababa, under the auspices of the African Union fourth Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. A Common Position document was adopted.
- The Economic Commission for Europe held the Beijing+30 Regional Review Meeting on 21 and 22 October 2024 in Geneva. The outcome of the meeting was presented in a co-chairs' summary.
- The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific held the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review from 19 to 21 November 2024 in Bangkok. The outcome of the meeting was presented in a chairs' summary.
- The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia held the High-Level Meeting on Progress in Implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after Thirty Years on 9 December in Oman. Priorities for future action were set forth in an outcome document.
- The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean held a regional consultation its 66<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago de Chile from 4–5 December 2024. Priorities for future action are expected to be set forth in an outcome document.

45. There has also been significant mobilization of diverse civil society organizations around the 30-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action across the world. To monitor and assess State actions in implementing the Platform for Action, civil society organizations have gathered in regional consultations, forums, expert group meetings and prepared reports, outcome documents and calls for action reflecting priorities and recommendations for action. An expert group meeting was held to inform the global review of

<sup>40</sup> This report provides a review of global trends in implementation of the Platform for Action, rather than an assessment of specific national policies, laws and programmes. The national review reports which have informed this global review report can be found here along with the guidance note: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/csw69-2025/preparations>.

<sup>41</sup> Reports for the regional reviews and the outcome documents of intergovernmental meetings at the regional level will be made available to the Commission on the Status of Women, see <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/csw69-2025/preparations>.

implementation on “Emerging issues and future directions for gender equality and women’s rights”.<sup>42</sup> Some States reported that they have consulted with civil society organizations in national reviews, and in some cases civil society organizations have prepared parallel reports.

46. The United Nations system also continues to play a key role in implementing the Platform for Action (see box I). Further, the United Nations Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality is preparing a compendium of promising practices on gender mainstreaming in the context of the Platform for Action’s 12 critical areas of concern. A key outcome from the 25-year review of the Platform for Action was the formation of “Generation Equality”, which has been a key multi-stakeholder process implementing the Platform for Action over the last five years (see box II).

#### Box I

#### **Strengthening the United Nations System for gender equality, women’s rights and the empowerment of all women and girls**

The Platform for Action recognized that, alongside States and civil society, the United Nations system has an important role to play.<sup>a</sup>

Since 1995, there have been extensive normative advances on gender equality, women’s rights and the empowerment of women and girls, spearheaded by the United Nations Human Rights system. The Commission on the Status of Women has continued to build consensus and promote good practices on gender equality and women’s empowerment on an annual basis through its Agreed Conclusions.

The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women was established in 1996, just after the adoption of the Platform for Action. It has disbursed \$225 million in grants to 670 initiatives in 140 countries and territories to date. Administered by UN-Women, it stands as a model of inter-agency collaboration across the United Nations system.

The creation of UN-Women in 2010 was a triumph of both multilateralism and the power of women’s movements to demand greater accountability, bringing together existing entities within the United Nations system to create a new entity to drive gender equality. In 2012, spearheaded by UN-Women, as part of its tripartite mandate, the United Nations agreed on the landmark United Nations system-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to coordinate and galvanize the System. The Gender Equality Marker (GEM), introduced in 2022, is a critical tool to track finances and increase accountability. At the country level, the United Nations Country Team Gender Equality Scorecard was established to support more gender-responsive programming, and the United Nations Country Team Gender Equality Marker (UNCT-GEM) captures how they are allocating resources collectively towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

To ensure that it fully benefits from women’s leadership, the System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity was launched in 2017<sup>b</sup> and parity in senior leadership was achieved in 2020. The number of United Nations entities that have reached parity increased from only five in 2017 to 28 in 2024. Today, women make up 48.8 per cent of the overall workforce, 50.3 per cent of international professionals<sup>c</sup> and 51.3 per cent of those serving in headquarter locations.<sup>d</sup>

Notwithstanding this progress, there is more work to do. Women’s rights and gender equality units in United Nations agencies are important for effective mainstreaming, but according to UN-SWAP data reported by 74 United Nations entities in 2023, while 40 entities had gender units, 25 of them reported the expansion

<sup>42</sup> See <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/csw69-2025/preparations/expert-group-meeting>.

of their remits to address other cross-cutting issues; in almost half of these cases, this was without an increase of financial and human resources.

In March 2024, as part of Our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General launched the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan to spur progress on gender equality across the United Nations system. Alongside plans to revitalize the Commission on the Status of Women outlined in the Pact for the Future, the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan promises to redouble efforts to ensure the United Nations system lives up to the expectations outlined in the Platform for Action 30 years ago.

<sup>a</sup> United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome* (New York, UN-Women, 2014).

<sup>b</sup> United Nations, *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity* (New York, 2017).

<sup>c</sup> UN-Women and UNDP, UN Secretariat Gender Parity Dashboard (accessed in December 2024).

<sup>d</sup> See [www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/status-of-women-in-the-un-system-2023-infographic-en.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/status-of-women-in-the-un-system-2023-infographic-en.pdf).

## Box II

### **Generation Equality to accelerate implementation of the Platform for Action**

Generation Equality emerged from the 25-year review of the Platform for Action as a dynamic multistakeholder partnership that revitalized efforts towards accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals. Convened by UN-Women, with the Governments of France, Mexico and civil society, the six thematic Action Coalitions and the Women, Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action Compact bring together governments, the United Nations system, civil society, young people, the private sector and philanthropists to unlock political will, increase investment and implementation of gender equality commitments through collective action.

Evidence from the 2023 and 2024 Generation Equality Accountability Reports<sup>a</sup> showcase Generation Equality's model of intergenerational and multistakeholder partnerships and solidarity, and the creation of global platforms like the Alliance of Feminist Movements and the Global Alliance for Care. Supported by UN-Women, Generation Equality stakeholders partnered with national stakeholders to uphold progressive gender equality laws, mainstreamed gender equality in the development of the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact, and the Declaration on Future Generations, strengthened accountability for commitments (71 per cent of all commitments were reported on in 2024), and empowered youth and adolescents to lead efforts to advance gender equality in intergovernmental spaces. The 2024 Accountability Report highlights that almost all commitment makers support scaling up Generation Equality beyond 2026 as an accelerator for the 2030 Agenda.

Driven by shared priorities and working together, Generation Equality stakeholders are delivering high-quality results at a large scale with \$50 billion pledged, \$40 billion secured and with close to 2,000 policies, 4,500 programmes and 5,700 advocacy initiatives implemented. Compact signatories reached at least 24.8 million women and girls and spent close to \$1.5 billion in 2023. These actions are improving the lives of millions of women and girls globally and substantially contributing to achieving the Platform for Action. Future efforts will focus on meaningful youth engagement.

<sup>a</sup> Papa Seck and others, *Generation Equality Accountability Report 2023* (New York, UN-Women, 2023); Papa Seck and others, *Generation Equality Accountability Report 2024* (New York, UN-Women, 2024).



## C. Progress in implementing the 12 critical areas of concern in the context of the 2030 Agenda

47. The 30th anniversary review of implementation of the Platform for Action is the second review taking place since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015. Recognizing the linkages between the Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs to accelerate progress on gender equality and the realization of women's and girls' human rights, the 25th anniversary review in 2020 clustered the 12 critical areas of concern into six overarching dimensions that highlight the alignment of the two frameworks (table I). In this report, for the second time, the analysis of progress in implementation, gaps, challenges and future priorities is based on these clusters.

Table I  
**Alignment of the Platform for Action critical areas of concern with the SDGs**

<i>Report cluster</i>	<i>Critical areas of concern</i>	<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>	<i>Cross-cutting critical areas of concern and themes from the 2030 Agenda</i>
A. Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work	F. Women and the Economy	SDG 5	I. Human rights of women
		SDG 8 SDG 10	
B. Poverty eradication, social protection and social services	A. Women and poverty	SDG 1	L. The girl-child
		SDG 3	Human rights
		SDG 4 SDG 5	Leaving no one behind Universality
C. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes	B. Education and training of women	SDG 5	
		SDG 5	
		SDG 11 SDG 16	
D. Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions	C. Women and health	SDG 5	
		SDG 5	
		SDG 11 SDG 16	
E. Peaceful and inclusive societies	D. Violence against women	SDG 5	
		SDG 16	
		SDG 17	
F. Environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building	E. Women and armed conflict	SDG 5	
		SDG 16	
		SDG 2	
	J. Women and the media	SDG 12	
		SDG 12	
		SDG 13	

48. In addition to the six thematic clusters, there are three cross-cutting themes that are integrated into the assessment of progress. The human rights of women (critical area of concern I) cut across all sections, so that States' implementation is guided by their obligations and responsibilities under human rights law to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW enshrines a broad understanding of gender equality that goes beyond formal equality to achieving substantive equality, so that women and girls can exercise and enjoy their rights equally in practice. The second cross-cutting theme that is integrated across all six clusters is "leave no one behind", a feature of the 2030 Agenda which focusses on multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality, and the need to meet all goals and targets for all countries, all peoples and all segments of society. The universal application of the Platform for Action and 2030 Agenda to all people in all countries calls on States to ensure that all women and girls, regardless of their location, situation and circumstances, enjoy their human rights. The indivisibility and interdependence of human rights is also a key principle, where one set of human rights cannot be enjoyed without another. Each chapter includes a box with examples that show not only how marginalised groups of women and girls have raised their voices, but also how those with power and resources have been held accountable for action.

49. The girl-child (critical area of concern L) is also integrated across the report, reflecting the priority placed on the next generation in the Platform for Action. As the Platform for Action says, "the girl child of today is the woman of tomorrow" and progress depends on safeguarding their futures and harnessing their skills and energy in their families, communities, countries and at the global level. Meeting the Platform for Action's commitments to the girl child, including the unique needs of adolescent girls, means investing in girls' education and transition to decent work (see sect. III); ensuring that girls are not subjected to violence and harmful practices (see sect. IV); amplifying their voices in civil society organisations (see sect. V) and peace building (see sect. VI); and recognising their leadership across all spheres, including most visibly in the powerful movements for environmental sustainability and climate justice (see sect. VII).

50. Over the last five years a range of intergovernmental bodies have built on the Platform for Action to advance the normative framework on gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights of women and girls, in particular the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, as well as the Security Council and the Human Rights Council and its special procedures. Since 2020, the Commission on the Status of Women considered the following priority themes and adopted agreed conclusions on: Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (sixty/fifth session); Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes (sixty-sixth session); Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (sixty-seventh session); and Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective (sixty-eighth session). The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has also continued to advance the normative framework on women's and girls' human rights (see box III)

**Box III****The Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

The Platform for Action calls for the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). All areas of the Platform for Action are addressed by the work of the CEDAW Committee, and there is correspondence between the Platform for Action's critical areas of concern, and the CEDAW's articles and general recommendations. The two instruments are mutually reinforcing in achieving gender equality and the enjoyment by all women and girls of their human rights. Since 2016, the CEDAW Committee has increasingly linked obligations of countries under the Convention to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including calling for the realization of substantive gender equality throughout the SDGs implementation. To guide States with the implementation of their human rights commitments, the CEDAW Committee has continued to interpret the normative content and scope of the CEDAW through its general recommendations. Between 2020 and 2024, the CEDAW Committee adopted three new general recommendations:

- General recommendation No. 38 (2020) on Trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration
- General recommendation No. 39 (2022) on Indigenous women and girls
- General recommendation No. 40 (2024) on Equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems.

51. Against this background, the following sections review the implementation of the Platform for Action. Each section starts with an overview of the relevant elements from the Platform for Action, as well as significant normative advances, particularly since the last global review in 2020. The sections continue with an assessment of global trends using global quantitative data, where available, followed by an assessment of actions taken by States to implement the Platform for Action. The assessment of actions draws on the inputs provided by States in their national reviews and survey. While efforts have been made to identify promising practices and trends, information on the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes was limited in the national reports. The sections conclude with an overview of remaining challenges and actions needed to accelerate implementation.

## **II. Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work**

**Key messages**

- The global economy is in a fragile state, with low- and middle-income countries facing very limited fiscal space and unsustainable debt burdens, placing enormous constraints on their capacity to implement gender-responsive policies
- The succession of crises associated with the COVID-19 pandemic widened gender gaps in the labour market, with women losing jobs at a faster pace and regaining them more slowly than men. Today, they are largely unchanged compared to 20 years ago.
- Women continue to be over-represented in informal and precarious employment, with 38.7 per cent of employed women in low-income countries working as unremunerated contributing workers, often on family farms, compared to 14.2 per cent of men.

- Women carry out a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, limiting their economic opportunities and participation in public life as well as their right to rest, leisure and self-care.
- States have progressed actions in several areas in the last five years, but gaps remain:
  - (i) Eighty per cent reported passing laws and implementing policies that specifically prohibit gender-based discrimination in employment. Sixty-eight per cent reported passing legislation and implementing policies to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, up from 55 per cent in 2019.
  - (ii) Twenty-seven per cent of countries reported implementing measures to secure women's land rights and tenure, with the strongest focus in sub-Saharan Africa (56 per cent).
  - (iii) Closing the gender digital divide and increasing women's representation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) sectors has been a priority, particularly through digital literacy and skills programmes for women and girls (73 per cent) and gender-responsive STEM education (70 per cent). However, significant challenges remain in women's attraction to and retention in technology and related sectors.
  - (iv) Nearly three quarters reported actions to expand and improve parental leave, and other forms of leave to support carers. 32 per cent of States reported implementing measures to promote decent work for paid care workers, up from 25 per cent in 2019. A key innovation across several countries is the advance towards integrated national care systems that encompass comprehensive leave policies, universal care services and invest in better wages and conditions for paid caregivers.
  - (v) Thirty-four per cent reported implementing measures to support the transition from informal to formal work, and 61 per cent reported implementing measures to promote women's financial inclusion and access to credit. However, exclusion from labour rights, social protection and access to credit remains common among informal women workers.
  - (vi) Only 6 per cent reported undertaking an assessment of the impact of austerity and fiscal consolidation measures prior to their planning, design, and implementation, despite the unequal impacts of austerity measures.

## A. Introduction

52. Gender equality in access to economic resources, opportunities and power (critical area of concern F) is fundamental to the full realization of human rights for women. The Platform for Action recognizes that when gender equality is not well integrated into economic policies, governance and decision-making, this has a direct impact on women's equal access to economic opportunities, productive assets such as land, and the distribution of paid and unpaid work. It recognises that women's and girls' persistent poverty is directly related to these economic inequalities (see sect. III). The commitments in the Platform for Action were reflected in the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, SDG8 to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and SDG10 to reduce inequality within and between countries. Accelerating progress towards achieving these goals, requires an urgent transition to break the vicious cycle of informal employment, low pay and limited access to social protection which affect women disproportionately (E/2024/52).

53. Over the last five years, the succession of crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic to food, fuel and financial crises, have had a devastating impact on

women's economic security across the world. Women's labour market participation, which was already stagnant before the pandemic, went into reverse. Despite evidence of the disproportionate economic impact on women, national fiscal and monetary stimulus packages during the pandemic largely failed to take gender equality into account.<sup>43</sup> A similar pattern was observed in social protection and labour market responses that often failed to address gender-specific risks and needs (see sect. III). Escalating climate change and biodiversity loss have intense impacts on women and girls, especially those in poor households or rural communities with greater dependence on natural resources for food, water and fuel. While the shift to low-carbon economies is expected to create new jobs, women rarely benefit from these opportunities as they remain under-represented in green sectors.<sup>44</sup>

54. In the last five years, the normative framework has expanded commitments on women's economic rights and autonomy. The 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women elaborated on the linkages between addressing women's poverty, strengthening institutions and financing for gender equality. The agreed conclusions called on States to close gender gaps in labour force participation and address structural barriers to women's economic empowerment. The same year saw a new resolution on decent work and the care economy adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILO), urging Member States to invest in high-quality, affordable, and accessible care services, including childcare, health care and long-term care.<sup>45</sup>

55. The agreed conclusions of the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women also recognized the growing finance divide between and within countries, and that no meaningful progress on commitments to human rights, gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls can be achieved without adequate financing, including the full implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (A/CONF.198/11), the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development (A/RES/63/239) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (A/RES/69/313) and its follow-up processes.

## B. Global and regional trends

*The global economy is in a fragile state, with low- and middle-income countries facing very limited fiscal space and unsustainable debt burdens, placing enormous constraints on their capacity to implement gender-responsive policies*

56. The succession of crises affecting the world continues to impact the global economy. Global GDP growth is projected to hold steady in 2024 at 2.6 per cent. An expected improvement in 2025 will still linger below the pre-pandemic trend of 3.1 per cent.<sup>46</sup> While the world economy avoided a recession in 2023, growth prospects for many developing countries, especially vulnerable and low-income countries, remain weak. Looking further ahead, in a worst-case climate scenario, global GDP could be reduced by 12.1 per cent (\$23.9 trillion) by 2050, with sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean suffering the highest economic losses due to climate change.<sup>47</sup>

57. Some aspects of gender equality, such as girls' education and women's employment, can have catalytic effects on economic growth (A/69/156). However, the reverse does not always hold true. In fact, some patterns of economic growth are premised on maintaining gender inequalities, exploiting

<sup>43</sup> UN-Women and ILO, *Consolidated Report: National Fiscal Stimulus Packages from a Gender Equality Perspective* (New York and Geneva, 2023).

<sup>44</sup> ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with Jobs* (Geneva, 2018).

<sup>45</sup> ILO, Resolution concerning decent work and the care economy, 14 June 2024 (ILC.112/Resolution V).

<sup>46</sup> World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects: June 2024* (Washington, D.C., 2024).

<sup>47</sup> Audrey Pirzadeh and others, *Gendered Analysis of the Impact of Climate Change*.

women's low wages to bolster competitiveness in global markets and entrenching gender discriminatory norms and institutions. While it is within the remit of macroeconomic policies to promote growth and economic development that are sustainable, inclusive and geared towards the realization of women's economic and social rights, progress on this front has remained wanting.

58. Global economic policies and the structure and practices of the international financial system have eroded state capacities to sustainably and progressively raise resources. The growing and aggressive use of low or no-tax jurisdictions reduces the taxes corporations pay.<sup>48</sup> In 2023, multinational corporations shifted an estimated \$1.15 trillion of profits into tax havens, cutting direct tax revenue by \$311 billion a year. An additional \$169 billion was lost through wealthy individuals using tax havens.<sup>49</sup> The scale of this problem has galvanized Member States to take action on international tax cooperation over recent years. In an historic move, in December 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proposed by the African Group on the promotion of inclusive and effective tax cooperation at the United Nations ([A/RES/77/244](#)). Negotiations on the new convention will begin in February 2025.

59. In the meantime, with domestic resource mobilization falling short, many low- and middle-income countries have increasingly taken on external debt. In 2023, global public debt – comprising general government domestic and external debt – reached a record \$97 trillion, a \$5.6 trillion increase from 2022.<sup>50</sup> Today, 55 per cent of least developed and other low-income countries are either in debt distress or are highly at risk.<sup>51</sup> Interest payments on debts crowd out spending on development priorities, including investments in gender equality, essential social protection and public services.

*The succession of crises associated with the COVID-19 pandemic widened gender gaps in the labour market with women losing jobs at a faster pace, and regaining them more slowly than men. Today, these gaps are largely unchanged compared to 20 years ago*

60. Even before the pandemic, progress in closing the global gender gap in labour force participation rates had stalled, occupational segregation and gender wage gaps remained pervasive, and the majority of the world's working women were stuck in informal and precarious jobs with few rights and protections ([E/CN.6/2020/3](#)). The pandemic and its associated crises exacerbated these trends, taking a disproportionate toll on women's jobs and livelihoods.<sup>52</sup> By 2022, women's employment rates had barely recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Globally, 63.2 per cent of women aged 25 to 54 were in the labour force in 2022 compared to 91.9 per cent of men of the same age. Gender gaps in labour force participation were particularly pronounced in Northern Africa and Western Asia as well as Central and Southern Asia. While Latin America and the Caribbean experienced significant gains in women's participation between 2002 and 2022, women in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) fared the worst, with participation declining by nearly 14 percentage points (see figure I).

Figure I

<sup>48</sup> United Nations, *Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2024: Financing for Development at a Crossroads* (New York, 2024).

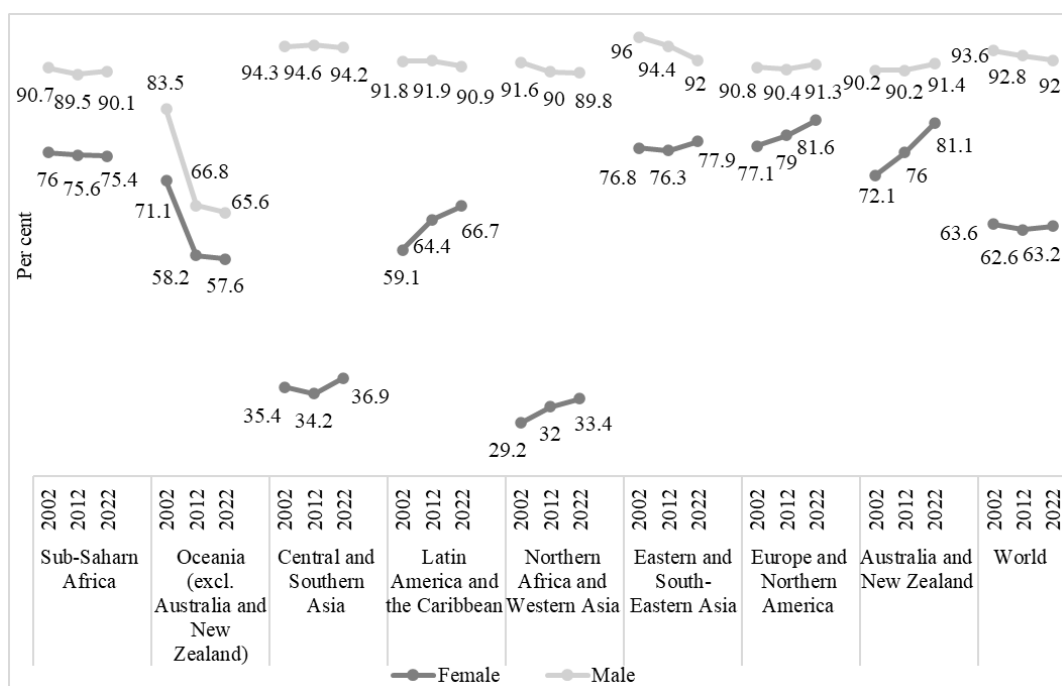
<sup>49</sup> Tax Justice Network, *State of Tax Justice 2023* (n.p., 2023).

<sup>50</sup> UNCTAD, *A World of Debt*.

<sup>51</sup> United Nations, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2024*.

<sup>52</sup> UN-Women and UNDP, *Government Responses to COVID-19: Lessons on Gender Equality for a World in Turmoil* (New York, UN-Women, 2022).

### Labour force participation rate among individuals aged 25–54, by sex and region (2002–2022)



Source: UN-Women calculations based on ILOSTAT, “Statistics on the Population and Labour force”, and United Nations, Data Portal (accessed in October 2024).

61. Unemployment levels remain persistently higher for women than men almost everywhere in 2023, except in Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia. Women fared worst in Western Asia and Northern Africa (15 per cent for women versus 8 per cent for men), Latin America and the Caribbean (8 per cent for women versus 5 per cent for men), and sub-Saharan Africa (7 per cent for women versus 5 per cent for men).<sup>53</sup> Young people have fared even worse than the adult population. Globally, in 2023, the youth unemployment rate, 13.3 per cent, significantly exceeded that of adults at 3.9 per cent.<sup>54</sup> Particularly worrying are the persistently high rates of young people, particularly young women, who are not in education, employment, and training (see sect. III).

*The quality and conditions of women’s work remains a concern across the world, with significant implications for women’s economic independence and security*

62. Women are disproportionately represented in informal employment and occupations characterized by the low wages, lack of rights and poor working conditions.<sup>55</sup> According to the latest available data, the highest prevalence of informality are observed in sub-Saharan Africa, where nearly 90 per cent of women are in informal employment compared to 84 per cent for men; followed by Central and Southern Asia with 88 per cent of women versus 85 per cent for men, and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) where 74 per cent of women and in informal employment compared to 70 per cent for men.<sup>56</sup>

63. Some forms of informal work are especially precarious. Globally, 16.4 per cent of employed women are contributing workers, often on family farms or businesses, employment which is unremunerated. This share rises to 38.7 per cent

<sup>53</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>54</sup> ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024* (Geneva, 2024).

<sup>55</sup> ILO, “World employment and social outlook: May 2024 update”, ILO brief (Geneva, 2024).

<sup>56</sup> United Nations, “Statistics”, SDG Indicators Database. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal> (accessed in December 2024).

in low-income countries (down from 48.7 per cent in 1991).<sup>57</sup> Domestic workers are another highly vulnerable category. Globally, 76.2 per cent of domestic workers are women, many of them migrants or ethnic/racial minorities, who work in other people's homes providing care services.<sup>58</sup> More than 80 per cent of them are informally employed, and in some cases domestic work is explicitly excluded from national labour laws (see box IV).

64. Globally, 36 per cent of women are employed in agrifood systems, often working as small-scale farmers, contributing family workers or agricultural wage workers on larger farms. Women's farms are 24 per cent less productive than men's, because women often lack secure land tenure, and access to the credit and productive resources they need. Men have greater ownership or secure tenure rights over agricultural land than do women in 40 of 46 countries with data.<sup>59</sup> Women's rights to inherit their husbands' property continue to be denied in more than 100 countries.<sup>60</sup> In the context of climate change, secure land rights, access to resources and agricultural extension services enable them to adopt more sustainable agricultural practices and is a critical foundation for women's resilience (see sect. VII).

65. Where women are employed, they are consistently paid less than men. The global gender pay gap stands at 20 per cent, a level that has not changed over time.<sup>61</sup> It is estimated that between 2015 and 2020, women earned just over one third (34.7 per cent) of labour income across the world, a marginal increase from 30.6 per cent in 1990.<sup>62</sup> A major driver of gender pay and income gaps is pervasive occupational segregation, which exists across all countries and regions. Horizontal segregation means that women are clustered into sectors or occupations that are characterized by lower pay (e.g. social and care services) compared to those where men predominate (e.g. construction). Vertical segregation, in turn, means that women are concentrated in lower-status, lower-paid positions within the same sector or occupation, with fewer opportunities for promotion or progression. Occupational segregation is driven by the persistence of discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes that remain embedded across all institutions, and which influence the unequal division of paid and unpaid work, as well as expectations of public and private sector employers, government, community and family about the roles and sectors that women and men are most suited to.<sup>63</sup>

66. Recent trends in the digitization of the economy and adoption of artificial intelligence are disrupting the very nature of work, threatening jobs in female-dominated sectors of the economy and rapidly transforming many others. At the same time, women are not necessarily equally benefitting from the growth of jobs in technology-based sectors. Women remain under-represented in occupations and leadership roles in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).<sup>64</sup> The ILO predicts that the shift to low-carbon and circular economies could create

<sup>57</sup> ILO, "Defining informality for contributing family workers", Room document to support the discussions at the Meeting of Experts on Labour Statistics in Preparation for the 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Geneva, 2022).

<sup>58</sup> ILO, "Who are domestic workers", n.d.

<sup>59</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems* (Rome, 2023).

<sup>60</sup> United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, *Study on the Differentiated Impacts of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought on Women and Men* (Bonn, 2022).

<sup>61</sup> ILO, *Global Wage Report 2022-2023: The Impact of Inflation and COVID-19 on Wages and Purchasing Power* (Geneva, 2022).

<sup>62</sup> Lucas Chancel and others, *World Inequality Report 2022* (n.p., World Inequality Lab, 2021).

<sup>63</sup> ILO, *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality: For a Better Future of Work for All* (Geneva, 2019).

<sup>64</sup> ILO, "Where women work: female-dominated occupations and sectors", 7 November 2023.



100 million new jobs by 2030, but to date, these jobs are primarily in male-dominated occupations.<sup>65</sup>

*Women carry out a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, limiting their economic opportunities and participation in public life as well as their right to rest, leisure and self-care*

67. The COVID-19 pandemic brought into sharp relief the need to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work, and ensure better representation and reward of paid care work, including through social dialogue, and collective bargaining.<sup>66</sup> Unpaid care and domestic work is essential work that undergirds families, communities and economies, contributing to individual and collective wellbeing as well as economic prosperity. That this work is provided for free does not mean that it comes without costs. In light of limited public support, women bear the bulk of these costs in the form of lower employment rates, wage penalties and time poverty with ripple effects for their health and wellbeing and participation in public life. When care is commodified, it often remains profoundly devalued, with wage penalties and poor working conditions disproportionately affecting migrant and racialized women.

68. Before the pandemic, women were already spending on average 2.8 times as many hours on unpaid care and domestic work as men.<sup>67</sup> Widespread and often prolonged school and daycare closures during COVID-19, increased the demand for unpaid care and domestic work.<sup>68</sup> While the time spent on such work increased for both men and women, women continued to shoulder the lion's share. Based on the current trajectory, the gender gap on time spent on unpaid care and domestic work will narrow slightly, but by 2050, women globally will still be spending 2.3 times more hours per day on unpaid care work than men.<sup>69</sup>

69. Time spent on unpaid care and domestic work varies significantly across regions.<sup>70</sup> Australia and New Zealand, and Europe and Northern America register the lowest gender gaps, with women performing on average 1.7 times and 1.8 times more hours of unpaid care and domestic work than men, respectively. The highest gender gaps are observed in Northern Africa and Western Asia with women performing 4.7 times more hours than men, followed by Central and Southern Asia, at 3.6 times, Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) at 3.0 times, and sub-Saharan Africa at 2.8 times (see figure II).

Figure II

<sup>65</sup> ILO, *Gender Equality and inclusion for a Just Transition in Climate Action: A Policy Guide* (Geneva, 2023).

<sup>66</sup> UN-Women, *A Toolkit on Paid and Unpaid Care Work: From 3Rs to 5Rs* (New York, 2022).

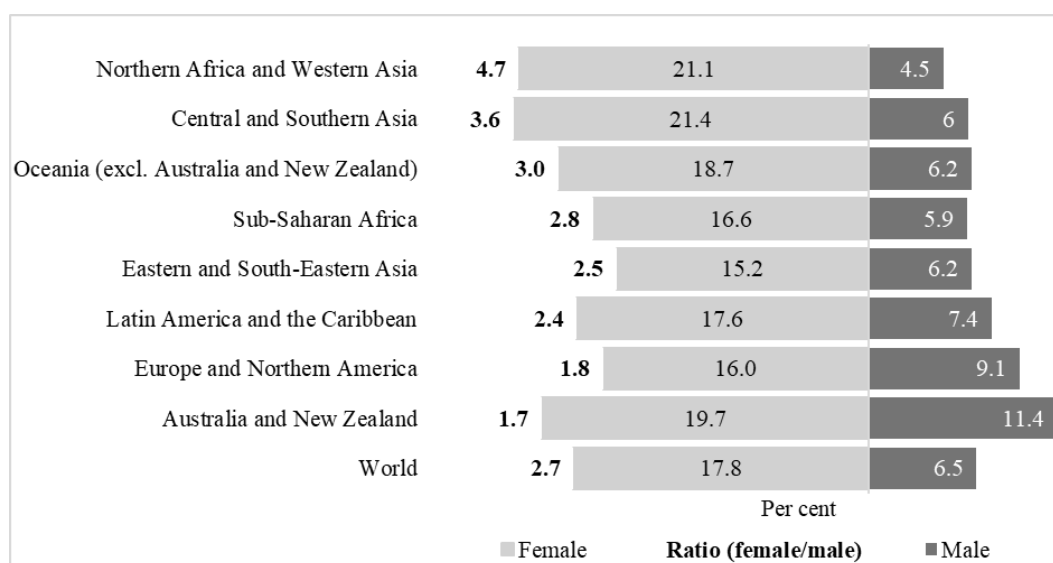
<sup>67</sup> Taylor Hanna and others, *Forecasting Time Spent in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Technical Brief* (New York, UN-Women and Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures, 2023).

<sup>68</sup> UN-Women, *Beyond COVID-19: A Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice* (New York, 2021).

<sup>69</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2023*.

<sup>70</sup> Taylor Hanna and others, *Forecasting Time Spent in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work*.

**Average per cent of time spent on unpaid care and domestic work, percent of a 24-hour day by region and sex, 2023**



Source: Taylor Hanna and others, *Forecasting Time Spent in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Technical Brief* (New York, UN-Women and Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures, 2023).

70. The unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work exacerbates women's labour market disadvantages. Globally, for example, the presence of young children (under age 6) in the household has a dampening effect on women's labour force participation, associated with a 5.9 percentage points decrease. The opposite effect is observed for men whose participation increases by 3.4 percentage points with the presence of children under six. Mothers also bear a significant penalty in terms of wages, while for most men, fatherhood results in a wage "bonus".<sup>71</sup> This underscores the urgent need to incorporate care provisions into broader social and economic policies.

### C. Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action

71. Based on the national reports, policy and programmatic trends in implementation emerged in three areas: (a) strengthening laws and policies to address discrimination, reduce occupational segregation and promote women's access to decent work and economic resources; (b) supporting workers with care responsibilities and expanding the rights of paid and unpaid caregivers; (c) improving the quality of women's employment, especially in informal and rural economies. In the area of macroeconomic policies (d), national reports point to the negative impacts that global economic trends have had for their ability to sustain and strengthen investments in gender-responsive policies needed to support women's economic rights.

(a) *Strengthening laws and policies to address discrimination, reduce occupational segregation and promote women's access to decent work and economic resources*

72. Laws and policies play a crucial role in dismantling discrimination and fostering gender equality in the workplace, enabling women's access to decent work and economic resources. To do so, they must explicitly prohibit direct and indirect forms of discrimination based on sex and other characteristics, ensuring equal opportunities and outcomes in hiring and promotion, and equal pay for work

<sup>71</sup> UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2019–2020: Families in a Changing World* (New York, 2019).

of equal value. This also means tackling systemic barriers that impede women's progress.

73. Globally, 80 per cent of States reported passing laws and implementing policies that specifically prohibit gender-based discrimination in employment. Examples of laws and policies include legislative and regulatory frameworks promoting equal pay for work of equal value as well as measures for pay transparency; and law reform prohibiting discrimination based on sex, disability, and pregnancy in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, training, promotion, retention, and termination. States also reported introducing, strengthening and enforcing minimum wage legislation which are important for boosting the earnings of women workers at the lower end of the pay scale and have shown to contribute to reducing overall wage disparity as well as gender pay gaps.<sup>72</sup>

74. Since its adoption in 2019, 45 States have ratified ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (No. 190). Some 68 per cent of countries reported passing national legislation and implementing policies to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, including by creating a supportive environment where victims feel safe to report workplace abuses, up from 55 per cent in 2019. This includes confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms, thorough investigation procedures, and protection for those who report incidents, and expanding counselling and support services. The most comprehensive laws require employers to put in place accountability measures and zero-tolerance policies and provide comprehensive training for all employees to address discriminatory workplace cultures.

75. Globally, 27 per cent of countries reported implementing measures to secure women's land rights and tenure. The strongest focus on women's land rights was in sub-Saharan Africa, at 56 per cent, and Latin America and the Caribbean, at 36 per cent. Most countries reported implementing measures to reform property and land rights to prohibit discrimination based on sex, including inheritance rights. Some countries passed legislation to facilitate the acquisition of longer-term leases to boost tenure security. Several countries in sub-Saharan Africa passed legislation to ensure women can inherit land, free from discrimination and irrespective of their marital status.

76. Many States noted that the increased focus on green and digital economies created new opportunities as well as challenges for addressing deep-seated gender inequalities in the world of work, including occupational segregation. Digital innovation and the eruption of generative artificial intelligence were a hallmark of the past five years. However, the widespread adoption of these technologies, particularly in developing countries, has been hindered by gaps in infrastructure and skills as well as barriers to entry which can be particularly high among women, older workers and workers in lower-skill occupations.<sup>73</sup> While the gendered impacts of emerging technologies in the workplace are still unclear, given their over-representation in clerical roles, these developments may have a disproportionate impact on women's jobs.<sup>74</sup>

77. In this context, closing the gender digital divide and increasing women's representation in STEM sectors has remained a clear priority for States, including through digital literacy and skills programmes for women and girls (73 per cent), gender-responsive STEM education (70 per cent) and gender mainstreaming in national digital policies (53 per cent). Specific actions undertaken by States include providing scholarships for training in digital skills; creating networks to

<sup>72</sup> ILO, *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality*.

<sup>73</sup> OECD, *OECD Employment Outlook 2023: Artificial Intelligence and the Labour Market* (Paris, 2023); ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024*.

<sup>74</sup> Paweł Gmyrek, Janine Berg and David Bescond, "Generative AI and jobs: A global analysis of potential effects on job quantity and quality", ILO Working Paper, No. 96 (Geneva, 2023).

support women in STEM; providing digital literacy programmes; and establishing partnerships with the technology sector, women's organizations, and international organizations to implement programmes that target women's access to technology and digital skills training.

78. While there is a growing focus on STEM education (see sect. III), there remain significant challenges in women's attraction and retention to technology and related sectors, including the male-dominated culture of these sectors and the absence of women in leadership roles.<sup>75</sup> As well as increasing women's representation in male-dominated fields, work in female-dominated sectors reducing occupational segregation requires men to take up jobs in female-dominated sectors such as care. Very few States reported actions in this area, indicating that greater focus is needed.

(b) *Supporting workers with care responsibilities and expanding the rights of paid and unpaid caregivers*

79. Achieving gender equality in the economic domain will require concerted efforts to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and ensure greater protection of the rights of paid and unpaid caregivers, which includes rewarding them with better pay and fostering greater representation. This requires providing affordable, quality and accessible childcare, elder care and disability care, extending paid parental leave and other care leaves, and stepping up efforts to redistribute care between men and women, boys, and girls, and between households and the state. Large-scale investments in inclusive care policies and services could generate close to 300 million decent jobs globally by 2035.<sup>76</sup> Investments in collecting time use data, particularly through dedicated surveys, are essential for informing the development and implementation of care policies.

80. Nearly three quarters of countries (73 per cent) reported prioritizing actions to expand and improve parental leave, and other forms of leave, for example to care for a sick or disabled family member. Shared parental leave, especially if a non-transferable portion of it is reserved for the father can contribute to their greater involvement in child-rearing and a more equal distribution of caring responsibilities. Several countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, reported passing legislation to expand parental leave to fathers, and/or increase the length of paternity leave to encourage more fathers to take up parental leave.

81. Even for workers with access to maternity, paternity and parental leave, the lack of affordable, quality childcare services continues to compromise the return to paid work. In 2021, only 23 countries provided statutory childcare services for children aged 2 and younger that were free and universal, mostly in Europe and Central Asia; 64 offered such services for children aged 3 and older.<sup>77</sup> This amounts to an average 4.2-year global gap between the end of statutory childcare-related leaves and the starting age of free universal early childhood education. To address this gap, 68 per cent of countries reported prioritizing the expansion of childcare services or policies to make existing services more affordable. Over 80 per cent of countries in Central and Southern Asia, Europe and Northern America, and Northern Africa and Western Asia reported action on childcare services. In sub-Saharan Africa, 47 per cent of the countries reported prioritizing the issue.

<sup>75</sup> Judy Wajcman, Erin Young and Anna Fitzmaurice, "The digital revolution: Implications for gender equality and women's rights 25 years after Beijing", UN-Women Discussion Paper, No. 36 (New York, 2020).

<sup>76</sup> Jerome De Henau, "Costs and benefits of investing in transformative care policy packages: A macrosimulation study in 82 countries", ILO Working Paper, No. 55 (Geneva, 2022).

<sup>77</sup> ILO, "The benefits of investing in transformative childcare policy packages towards gender equality and social justice", ILO brief (Geneva, 2023).

82. Eldercare is an increasingly urgent gender equality issue in rapidly ageing societies. Women, who tend to live longer, provide the bulk of unpaid care for ageing spouses, and depend more on elder care systems since they spend more of their lives in ill health or with a disability.<sup>78</sup> Globally, 66 per cent of countries reported prioritizing the expansion of support for eldercare, long-term care, and disability care – a significant increase compared to 2019, when 46 per cent reported this as a priority. Several countries introduced measures to increase the availability of centre-based care for older persons, including at the community level. As well as new family leave policies, promising examples include the provision of cash-for-care payments to compensate family members with care responsibilities.

83. Some 32 per cent of States reported implementing measures to promote decent work for paid care workers, up from 25 per cent in 2019. Specific measures include passing legislation to recognise the rights of care workers, including domestic and migrant workers, to collective bargaining, minimum wage, weekly and annual leave, and a safe working environment free of violence and harassment. By September 2024, a total of 38 countries had ratified the ILO Domestic Workers Convention No. 189 (2011). Several countries enacted legislation to ensure overtime pay, night shift differential, labour inspections, and pay transparency.

84. The pandemic also strengthened calls for putting care at the centre of new development models that prioritize the wellbeing of people and planet. In 2022, Member States from across Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the Buenos Aires Commitment<sup>79</sup> which outlines an ambitious roadmap to build caring societies, in which care is recognised as a universal right and a public good, with gender equality at the centre. In parallel, countries have spearheaded the development of national care systems or strategies, which prioritise both the rights of care-dependent populations and of paid and unpaid care-givers (see box IV).

#### Box IV

##### **Advancing towards integrated national care systems**

At least 10 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are making strides on implementation of integrated national care systems. Uruguay's Integrated National Care System (Sistema Nacional Integrado de Cuidados) is the most advanced in the region. Created in 2015, following an extensive process of social dialogue, the system enshrines care as a universal right and gender equality as a cross-cutting principle. Among the most significant achievements are the universalization of care services for children aged 3 and above, the development of care services for older and disabled people, the professionalization of caregivers through training, the regulation of working conditions and the formalization of caregivers.

Interest in other regions has also been growing. In sub-Saharan Africa, Cabo Verde launched its National Care System in 2017, comprising childcare and long-term care. It includes professional training for caregivers of people living in poverty, the creation of a national care service network and policies to encourage the redistribution of unpaid care work. Kenya established its national care policy in 2023 to strengthen efforts to redistribute and reduce care work through gender-responsive public services and to reward care and domestic work through decent jobs and social protection.

In Asia, Singapore has spearheaded a strategy for expanding access to child and elder care while promoting interaction between seniors and children in a rapidly ageing society. They have co-located senior care and childcare facilities in new housing developments; expanded active ageing centres to promote healthy ageing and social connectedness; provided subsidized mobility devices and home retrofitting to

<sup>78</sup> Peter Lloyd-Sherlock, "Long-term care for older people: A New Global Gender Priority", UN-Women Policy Brief, No. 9 (New York, 2017).

<sup>79</sup> United Nations, *Compromiso de Buenos Aires (LC/CRM.15/6/Rev.1)* (Santiago, 2023).

enable older people to remain in their homes as long as they wish; and improved urban infrastructure that combine physical accessibility with urban greening.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> UN-Women, *The World Survey of the World of Women in Development 2024: Harnessing Social Protection for Gender Equality, Resilience and Transformation* (New York, 2024).

(c) *Improving the quality of women's employment, especially in informal and rural economies*

85. Thirty-four per cent of countries reported implementing measures to support the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures for women in informal employment. Specific measures included the extension of labour rights and social protection benefits to previously ineligible informal workers (see box V). Other measures focused on incentives for informal entrepreneurs to register their businesses, which opens opportunities for formal financing through private banking or public lending facilities, as well as the extension of social protection to workers.

Box V

**Advancing decent work for domestic workers and migrant workers**

The exclusion from labour rights and social protection is common among domestic workers – one of the most feminized categories among the informally employed. In 2020, just under half of the world's domestic workers (49.9 per cent) were legally entitled to at least one social protection benefit and only 6 per cent were comprehensively covered for the nine contingencies laid out in Convention 102 of the International Labour Organization, a proportion much below the global average for all women and men of working age (27 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively).<sup>a</sup> In many contexts, domestic workers are also migrants which can further limit their access to legal rights and social protection.

The Government of Burundi implemented several measures to promote the rights of women working in the informal sector. Law No. 1/11 of 24 November 2020 revised the Labour Code of Burundi to apply to the informal sector, including the integration of domestic workers, apprentices and trainees, as well the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, health and safety at work, and the prohibition of child labour. Furthermore, the government passed legislation to extend pension, health care, and social protection access to informal workers, including domestic workers. Recognizing the importance of extending protection to the increasing number of Burundian migrant workers in Gulf States, the government negotiated and signed agreements aimed at the protecting Burundian women migrant workers to ensure that workers' rights are protected in destination countries and prevent human trafficking.

In Mexico, federal laws were amended to include domestic workers under mandatory social protection coverage in 2019. The new provisions entered into force in October 2022, facilitating the inclusion of domestic workers with multiple employers and clearly stipulating the exclusive responsibility of employers for registration and payment of contributions. Between 2020 and 2024, the pilot programme provided 62,831 domestic workers, including 42,506 women, with access to health insurance, maternity protection, childcare services, disability, pension and unemployment benefits. Even so, there is still a long way to go to ensure that all 2.4 million domestic workers in Mexico enjoy full access to social security.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> UN-Women, *The World Survey 2024*.

86. Recognizing the need to improve access to credit for women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses, 61 per cent of countries reported implementing

measures to promote women's financial inclusion and access to credit. The greatest focus on improving financial inclusion was in Central and Southern Asia, where over 90 per cent of countries reported taking action, followed by sub-Saharan Africa at a little over 80 per cent, and Latin America and the Caribbean at more than 70 per cent. Specific State actions include: introducing measures to facilitate access to benefits and loans for self-employed women, and those in the broader informal sector; digital financial literacy programmes for self-employed women and women-owned businesses; expanding financial inclusion for rural women by empowering and providing resources to community-based initiatives; and introducing alternative identification documents, including the use of mobile phone numbers as digital IDs to undertake and track financial transactions. Despite these efforts, barriers to women's financial inclusion remain. In 2021, women in developing economies were 8 per cent less likely than men to have an account at a formal financial institution. However, the growth of mobile money accounts has created new opportunities to better serve those traditionally excluded: in some countries, women are more likely than men to have a mobile money account which might be an indicator for a narrowing gender gap.<sup>80</sup>

(d) *Limited action on gender-responsive macroeconomic policies*

87. The fragility of the global economy and the dysfunctional global financial architecture<sup>81</sup> have hampered the ability of States, especially low and middle-income countries, to mobilize adequate resources to implement policies to protect people from the fall out of the multiple crises the world currently faces. The crisis of unsustainable debt means that 3.3 billion people live in countries that spend more on interest payments on debt than on either education or health, and more than half of developing countries allocate at least 8 per cent of government revenues to interest payments, a figure that has doubled over the past decade.<sup>82</sup> Rising interest rates across the globe are increasing debt burden on low-income countries, making it harder for countries to meet their human rights and gender equality commitments.

88. In the context of ongoing economic uncertainty, 15 per cent of countries reported that the debt crisis had hampered their ability to implement the Platform for Action. Furthermore, 55 per cent of countries reported introducing austerity and other fiscal consolidated measures, to address public deficits, revitalize the economy and gain financial market confidence. There is scant evidence of the effectiveness of such measures to achieve their stated goals and growing evidence that such measures can further exacerbate inequalities, including gender inequalities.<sup>83</sup> Specific measures implemented by countries include contractionary fiscal policies, cuts in public expenditure, selective tax hikes, wage cuts, pension reforms and reductions in labour protection. Several countries reported reverting to contractionary monetary policies, after the expansion of the early years of the pandemic.

89. Austerity measures disproportionately affect the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, and undermine the realization of economic and social rights. Women, children, minorities, migrants, persons with disabilities, older persons, youth, and the poor face diminished job opportunities and lack of access to social welfare programmes due to these measures.<sup>84</sup> Yet only 6 per cent of countries

<sup>80</sup> Asli Demirgüç-Kunt and others, *The Global Findex Database 2021: Financial Inclusion, Digital Payments and Resilience in the Age of COVID-19* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2022).

<sup>81</sup> United Nations, "Global financial architecture has failed mission to provide developing countries with safety net, Secretary-General tells summit, calling for urgent reforms", 22 June 2023.

<sup>82</sup> UNCTAD, *A World of Debt*.

<sup>83</sup> UN-Women, *The World Survey of the World of Women in Development 2024: Harnessing Social Protection for Gender Equality, Resilience and Transformation* (New York, 2024).

<sup>84</sup> UN-Women and ILO, *How to Assess Fiscal Stimulus Packages from a Gender Equality Perspective* (New York and Geneva, 2021).

reported undertaking an assessment of the impact of austerity and fiscal consolidation measures prior to their planning, design, and implementation, highlighting that implementing gender-responsive macro-economic policies remains an area for urgent attention.

#### **D. Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation**

90. The successive economic crises have had a gender differentiated impact on both employment and economic rights and wellbeing. Growth prospects in many developing countries have also deteriorated amid rising external borrowing costs which continue to limit resources for policies that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Looking ahead, efforts need to be made to ensure that an analysis of the gendered impact of fiscal stimulus and economic recovery efforts are incorporated in their planning, design, and implementation. Three priorities for urgent action emerge from the review of implementation efforts.

*Ensure a focus on gender equality, care and decent work for women in the transition to a low carbon economy and in the context of technological change, particularly the growth of artificial intelligence*

91. The “just transition” to a low-carbon economy provides an opportunity to advance women’s economic justice and equality.<sup>85</sup> Much needed transformation in food in energy systems, for example, could be harnessed to address longstanding gender gaps in jobs and livelihoods, while improving women’s working conditions. Gender-responsive active labour market policies along with enhanced access to economic resources and climate-smart technologies are needed to ensure women can take advantage of new job opportunities in green, blue and care economies. In addition, investments in the care economy could drive the creation of green decent jobs as well as the formalization of existing ones by promoting labour rights and social protection for domestic workers as well as community health, childcare and long-term care providers.

92. As articulated in the Global Digital Compact, addressing the impact of technological change on women’s work will require bold actions from the global community. This should include policies that promote gender equality in STEM, including in education (see sect. III), ensure equal access to digital public infrastructure, support women entrepreneurs in the tech sector, enhance digital literacy and artificial intelligence-specific skills among women, particularly those from marginalized groups. These actions are integral to the key transition of digital connectivity to drive progress across all SDGs (E/2024/52). Measures to prevent the informalization of formal jobs as a result of austerity and technological change are also necessary.

*Prioritize public investments to develop and expand integrated care systems, including care leave policies, the provision of universal care services across the life course and the proper recognition and reward of paid care givers*

93. An urgent priority is the need to step up investments in integrated care systems, including the provision of quality, affordable, and accessible care services and implementing policies that recognize, reduce, and redistribute women’s and girls’ unpaid care and domestic work, and represent and reward paid care workers, remains essential to women’s economic equality. Such investments have important economic multiplier effects by contributing to job creation and raising aggregated demand.<sup>86</sup>

94. The key obstacle to expanding access to care services is the lack of fiscal space, necessitating a rethink of monetary and fiscal policies. Progressive taxation

<sup>85</sup> Laura Turquet and others, *Feminist Climate Justice*.

<sup>86</sup> UN-Women and ILO, *A Guide to Public Investments in the Care Economy: Estimating Care Deficits, Investment Costs and Economic Returns* (New York and Geneva, 2024).



also plays a role in increasing government revenue, promoting equality, and creating the fiscal space needed to fund care services, gender equality initiatives and alleviate women's poverty.

*Lift the quality and conditions of women's work, through labour rights and entitlements for informal workers and efforts to reduce labour market segregation and close the gender pay gap*

95. Ensuring basic labour rights and access to social protection for the world's 771 million women in informal employment who make significant contributions to families, communities and economies remains a top priority. Efforts to support transitions from the informal to the formal economy should combine legal recognition, registration and taxation with access to infrastructure, social protection and be developed in close consultation with organizations to ensure that responsiveness to the diverse needs of women workers, including those in paid domestic work, home-based work, street and market trading, and small-scale farming.

96. Promoting women's access to and control over key resources such as land, water, technology, services and finance, and opportunities for education, extension and training, group participation and networks is particularly critical to strengthen rural livelihoods and close the gender gap in agricultural productivity.<sup>87</sup>

97. Reducing occupational segregation and achieving equal pay for work of equal value requires overcoming entrenched social norms and market mechanisms that consistently devalue work that is done disproportionately by women.<sup>88</sup> In addition, pay transparency, along with efforts to ensure minimum wage setting mechanisms and collective pay attention to gender equality are needed to accelerate progress on stubbornly persistent gender pay gaps.

98. The promotion of full employment, decent jobs and adequate wages for both women and men should be an explicit goal of monetary and fiscal policies.

### III. Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

#### Key messages

- In the last five years, multiple crises have stalled progress on eradicating extreme poverty, with a disproportionate impact on women and girls. To meet the goal of eradicating poverty by 2030, progress would have to be 26 times faster.
- Education is the area in which the situation of women and girls has improved the most since 1995. Today, 122.4 million girls are out of school, down from 124.7 million in 2015. However, girls' educational attainment continues to lag in conflict-affected countries.
- Progress on women's and girls' health has stagnated. Maternal mortality declined from 339 to 223 deaths per 100,000 live births between 2000 and 2020, but in recent years, the global annual reduction in maternal mortality was effectively zero. Among adolescents aged 10–19 years globally, 75 per cent of new HIV infections occur in girls.
- States have progressed actions in several areas in the last five years, but gaps remain:
  - (i) Seventy-nine per cent reported efforts to strengthen routine social protection systems, up from 70 per cent in 2019. An innovation in recent years has been new gender-responsive social protection policies and programmes in response to COVID-19 and subsequent shocks and crises. However,

<sup>87</sup> FAO, *The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems*.

<sup>88</sup> ILO, *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality*.

significant gender gaps in access to social protection persist globally with coverage for women and girls in low-income countries lagging behind.

- (ii) Seventy per cent reported efforts to increase women's and girls' access to STEM skills and training and digital skills, up from 59 per cent in 2019. However, pockets of extreme exclusion and significant barriers to translating educational gains into successful school-work transitions persist.
- (iii) Seventy-six per cent<sup>1</sup> reported action to promote access to health services for women and girls through the expansion of universal health coverage and public health services, up from 67 per cent in 2019. However, many women continue to struggle to access the health services they need due to financial and geographical barriers as well as stigma and stereotypes, particularly against women and girls from marginalized groups.

## A. Introduction

99. For women and girls, poverty and vulnerability are inseparable from the inequalities that shape their everyday lives. Persistent inequalities in access to decent work and economic resources, restricted expressions of agency and decision-making power, disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work and the pervasiveness of violence against women and girls intensify poverty risks across the life course and in the face of shocks. Rising inequalities within and among countries heighten vulnerability and diminish the capacities of countries, communities, households, and individuals to act collectively in the face of and crises, with the most devastating effects being borne by those who are already furthest behind. For women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, deficits in access to income, education, health care, housing and other public services often cluster and compound one another. Conversely, investing in girls' and women's education and gender-responsive social protection are key transitions for catalysing progress across multiple SDGs (E/2024/52).

100. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the importance of robust social protection, health and education systems in mitigating the adverse consequences of shocks. Countries with more comprehensive and more gender-responsive public services and social protection systems were generally better able to respond to women's multidimensional needs and prevent increases in poverty.<sup>89</sup>

101. Conflict, displacement, and the climate emergency are creating new risks for women and girls and are putting additional strain on already fragile health, education and social protection systems. Push back against sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as girls' education, in some contexts, challenges long-standing global agreements as well as well-established knowledge on what works safeguard their health and wellbeing (A/HRC/56/51). The rapid advance of digitalization in education, health and social protection systems creates new opportunities for women and girls, including access to information about their sexual and reproductive health rights in a safe and confidential way.<sup>90</sup> However, a sizeable gender digital divide prevents women and girls from taking full advantage of these opportunities and new gender-specific risks must be carefully managed.

102. Building on the Platform for Action, recent years have seen further normative advances in these areas on poverty eradication, social protection and social services. In 2022, at its sixty-sixth session, the Commission on the Status of Women recognized equal access to social protection as a lever for strengthening

<sup>89</sup> UN-Women and UNDP, *Government Responses to COVID-19*.

<sup>90</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Global Education Monitoring Report 2024, Gender Report: Technology on Her Terms* (Paris, 2024).

the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental degradation and disaster risk reduction (E/CN.6/2022/L.7). The potential of digital technologies for promoting access to social protection and public services was highlighted at the sixty-seventh session in 2023, alongside concerns that women's and girls' limited access to education, digital literacy and skills might exacerbate gender gaps in social protection coverage (E/CN.6/2023/L.3). Most recently, at its sixty-eighth session in 2024, the Commission called on Member States to expand fiscal space and strengthen institutions to end women's poverty, including through investments in inclusive, comprehensive and universal social protection systems and public services (E/CN.6/2024/L.3).

103. CEDAW general recommendation No. 39 (2022) urges Member States to ensure equal access of Indigenous women and girls to culturally appropriate and acceptable health services and education at all levels, while the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls has examined poverty and socioeconomic inequality as outcomes of systemic failures that violate multiple human rights of women and girls, as well as threats and risks posed to the sexual and reproductive health and autonomy of women and girls during and after crises, urging Member States in response and recovery (A/HRC/47/38).

## B. Global and regional trends

*In the last five years, multiple crises have stalled progress on eradicating extreme poverty, with a disproportionate impact on women and girls. To meet the goal of eradicating poverty by 2030, progress would have to be 26 times faster.*

104. Before COVID-19, extreme poverty – defined as the proportion of people living on less than \$2.15 per person per day<sup>91</sup> – had declined significantly, even if the pace of reduction was slowing. Extreme poverty decreased from 10.9 per cent of households globally in 2015 to 9.6 per cent in 2019. For women and girls, the rate fell from 11.4 per cent to 10.1 per cent.<sup>92</sup> The global pandemic derailed this progress, with extreme poverty rising to 10.7 per cent in 2020 for all households and to 11.1 per cent for women and girls. Extreme poverty has reduced since the pandemic, however the slow and uneven recovery is evident in the fact that 9.4 per cent of the world's population remained in extreme poverty in 2024.

105. Persistent gender gaps in poverty remain, with 9.8 per cent of women and girls living in households in extreme poverty, compared to just 9.1 per cent of men and boys (see figure III). This translates into 24.3 million more poor females than males.<sup>93</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa (37.6 per cent), Oceania (19.8 per cent), and Central and Southern Asia (10.5 per cent) are the regions with the highest proportions of women and girls in poverty. Using higher international poverty lines of \$3.65 and \$6.85 per person per day raises the proportions to 25.4 per cent and 47.5 per cent, respectively, for women, and 24.7 per cent and 46.8 per cent, respectively, for men.<sup>94</sup> While poverty rates at the \$2.15 line are low in Europe, Northern America and Australia and New Zealand, countries in these regions often use relative income poverty thresholds to measure poverty. For the European

<sup>91</sup> World Bank, "Poverty and inequality" (accessed in 2024). Many analysts see this line as far too low to enable an adequate standard of living, see the *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights* (A/HRC/44/40).

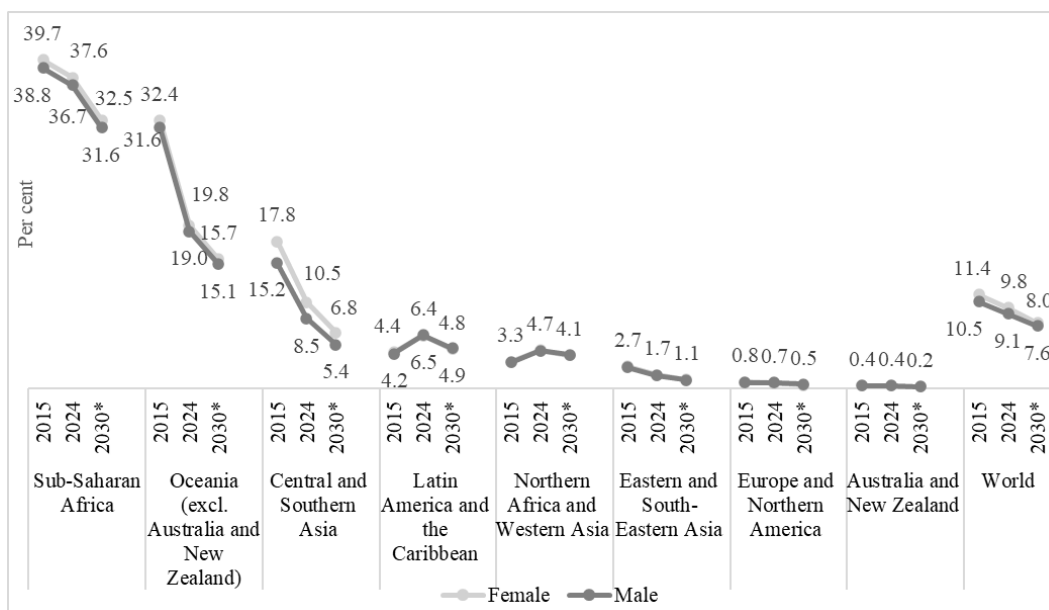
<sup>92</sup> UN-Women calculations based on UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2023*.

<sup>93</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>94</sup> UN-Women and Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures, *Gendered Analysis of the Impact of Climate Change on Poverty, Productivity, and Food Insecurity: A Technical Report* (New York, 2023).

Union such data show that the poverty risk is particularly high among women, young adults, people with limited education and unemployed persons.<sup>95</sup>

Figure III  
**Female and male extreme poverty rates based on the \$2.15 international poverty line, 2015–2030 projections**



Source: UN-Women and Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures calculations based on the latter’s International Futures Platform 2023.

Note: \* Indicates estimates are projections.

106. Gender gaps in poverty are evident at all stages of life but are highest for those aged 25 to 34, when gender disparities in paid work and care responsibilities for small children heighten women’s poverty risks. Women of this age group are 24 per cent more likely to live in poor households than men.<sup>96</sup>

107. If current trends persist, it is projected that globally by 2030, 340 million women and girls will still live in extreme poverty. However, conflict and the rapidly advancing climate crisis may worsen these projections. Currently, women and girls in extremely fragile contexts are 7.7 times more likely to live in households below the \$2.15 poverty line than those in non-fragile contexts. Under a worst-case climate scenario, up to 158.3 million additional women and girls could be pushed into poverty by 2050 as a direct result of climate change, surpassing the number of men and boys by 16 million. The number of food-insecure women and girls could rise by as much as 236 million, compared to an additional 131 million men and boys.<sup>97</sup>

*Education is the area in which the situation of women and girls has improved the most since 1995. However, pockets of extreme exclusion and significant barriers to translating educational gains into successful school-work transitions persist*

108. Today, 122.4 million girls are out of school, down from 124.7 million in 2015.<sup>98</sup> Gender gaps in enrolment have closed at all levels of education globally, although pockets of extreme exclusion for girls persist in some countries. While upper-secondary disparities persist in some regions, reverse gender gaps appear

<sup>95</sup> Eurostat, “Living conditions in Europe: Poverty and social exclusion” (accessed in July 2024).

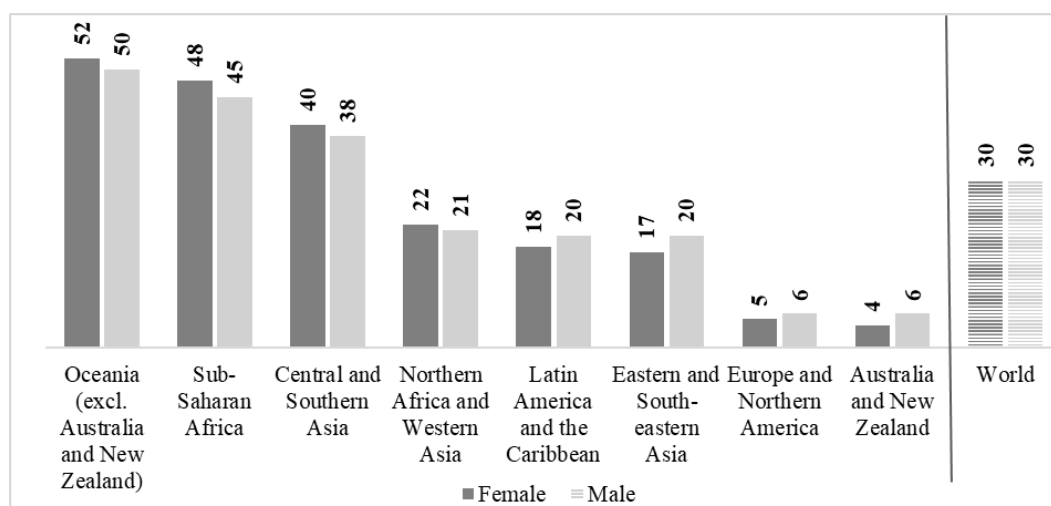
<sup>96</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2023*.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

in others, such as in Latin America and the Caribbean or Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (see figure IV). Girls from the poorest households are most disadvantaged in all regions.<sup>99</sup> Social norms on unpaid care and domestic work and child, early and forced marriage limit the chances that girls will reach and stay in school, particularly upper-secondary education.<sup>100</sup>

Figure IV

**Upper-secondary out-of-school rates, by sex, 2023 (percentage)**

Source: UN-Women calculations based on UNESCO, “Out-of-school rate”, Education Estimates Database (accessed in November 2024).

109. There has also been progress in equalizing learning outcomes among girls and boys, particularly when it comes to minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, girls outperform boys when it comes to reading proficiency at the end of lower secondary education globally. Gender gaps in adult literacy rates are also closing, with women accounting for 56 per cent of illiterate youth compared to 63 per cent of illiterate adults in 2020. In science and mathematics, there is near parity at average levels of learning achievement, but boys continue to have a significant advantage over girls at the higher levels of achievement. While it is too early to assess the lasting impact of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic on learning outcomes, emerging evidence suggests a decline in learning progress, with greater losses among students that faced relatively longer closures as well as among migrant children and other groups that already faced educational disadvantages prior to the pandemic.<sup>102</sup>

110. Huge disparities prevail in the prevalence of digital skills between youth in high-income countries (with 57 per cent of youth possessing such skills), compared to upper-middle (33 per cent), lower-middle (14 per cent), and low-income countries (1 per cent). While gender gaps in programming skills are smaller among young women and men than among adults, the disparity remains large, including in high-income countries. Research finds that girls’ confidence in science, technology, and mathematics subjects is harmed early, feeding diverging educational trajectories and subject choices that drive occupational segregation (see sect. II). Globally, only about 15 per cent of young women choose STEM

<sup>99</sup> UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2024, Gender Report*.

<sup>100</sup> Quentin Wodon and others, *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2018).

<sup>101</sup> UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2024, Gender Report*.

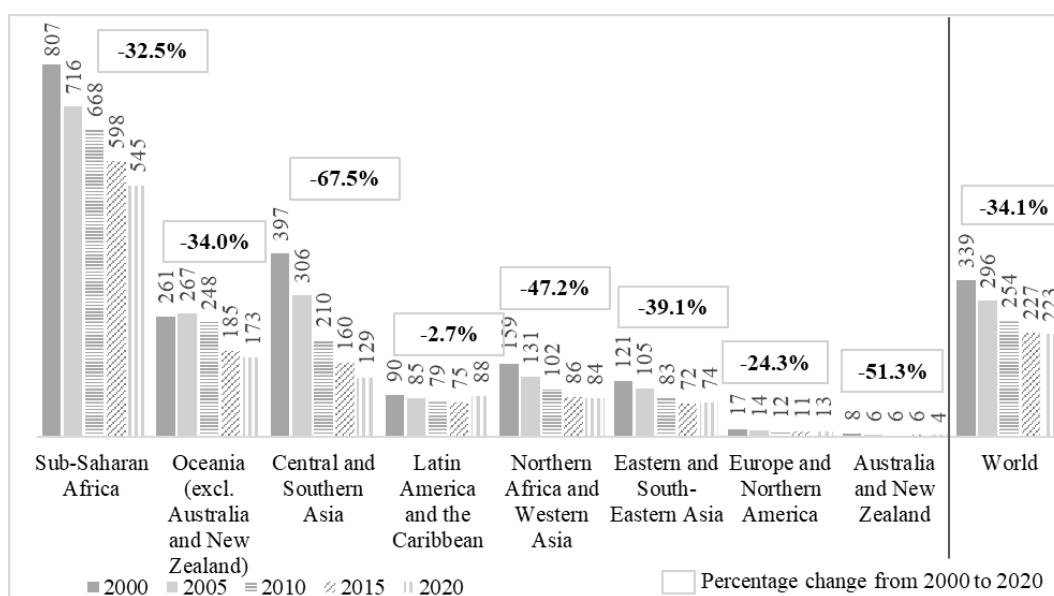
<sup>102</sup> Maciej Jakubowski, Tomasz Gajderowicz and Harry Anthony, “COVID-19, school closures, and student learning outcomes: new global evidence from PISA”, IZA Discussion Paper No. 16731 (Bonn, Iza Institute of Labor Economics, 2024).

over other courses compared to 35 per cent of men; and just over a third of STEM graduates are women.<sup>103</sup>

*Despite overall positive global trends in poverty reduction, education and health since 1995, progress has slowed or reversed in recent years against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and other cascading crises*

111. Over the past thirty years, there has been important progress on key health outcomes for women and girls. Globally, life expectancy has continuously increased, with women outliving men in all regions. There have been improvements on several indicators of women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, although stark gaps remain. Maternal mortality declined from 339 to 223 deaths per 100,000 live births between 2000 and 2020, alongside improved access to services.<sup>104</sup> In 2023, 86 per cent of births were attended by a skilled birth attendant, compared to 75 per cent in 2010 and 61 per cent in 2000.<sup>105</sup> Central and Southern Asia achieved the greatest overall reduction in maternal mortality, followed by Northern Africa and Western Asia (see figure V). In recent years, however, the global annual reduction in maternal mortality was effectively zero, and reversals have been noted in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Europe and Northern America, and Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>106</sup>

Figure V  
**Maternal mortality ratio, 2000–2020 (deaths per 100,000 live births)**



Source: UN-Women calculation based on WHO, *Maternal Mortality: Levels and Trends 2000 to 2020, Trend in MMR* (accessed in November 2024).

112. The global trend to lower fertility and later childbearing has continued, reflecting greater reproductive choice ([E/CN.9/2024/2](#)). In 2023, the global fertility rate was 2.3 births per woman, down from 2.9 in the mid-1990s.<sup>107</sup> Births among adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years have declined by about a third, from

<sup>103</sup> UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2024, Gender Report*.

<sup>104</sup> WHO, *Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2020: estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division* (Geneva, 2023).

<sup>105</sup> UNICEF, “Delivery care”, November 2024.

<sup>106</sup> United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *State of World Population 2023: 8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities* (New York, 2023).

<sup>107</sup> UNFPA, Population Data Portal. Available at <https://pdp.unfpa.org/> (accessed in December 2024).

64 births per 1,000 adolescent girls in 2000 to 41 in 2024.<sup>108</sup> In 2024, 77 per cent of women aged 15–49 years had their family planning needs met with modern methods, up from 71 per cent in 1995, with the most significant increases registered in sub-Saharan Africa, where coverage doubled.<sup>109</sup> At the same time, significant gaps remain between desired and realized fertility. In high-fertility contexts, women often report a preference for smaller family sizes than they achieve, reflecting significant unmet need for family planning. In low-fertility contexts, in turn, women often state a preference for larger family sizes than they actually achieve, and more women remain involuntarily childless, with widespread economic uncertainty, rigid gender norms regarding paid employment and unpaid care, and inadequate family-friendly policies playing a role.<sup>110</sup>

113. In 2023, fewer people acquired HIV than at any point since the mid-1990s, with the greatest decline registered in sub-Saharan Africa. With more people than ever receiving life-saving anti-retroviral treatment, AIDS-related deaths are at their lowest level since the peak in 2004. However, during the past ten years new infections among women and girls (aged 15 years and older) have increased in the Middle East and Northern Africa and remained largely unchanged in Latin America.<sup>111</sup> At particular risk of HIV are adolescents and young people who make up an increasing proportion of people living with HIV worldwide.<sup>112</sup> Among adolescents aged 10–19 years globally, 75 per cent of new HIV infections occur in girls.<sup>113</sup> Across 22 sub-Saharan African countries, HIV incidence among adolescent girls and young women is three times that among adolescent boys and young men. However, only 25 per cent of adolescent girls aged 15–19 in Eastern and Southern Africa – the epicentre of the HIV epidemic – have tested for HIV in the past year.<sup>114</sup>

*Marginalized women and girls are disproportionately affected by poverty and exclusion from social protection and public services*

114. Women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination face heightened risks of poverty and violence, and yet are often the most excluded from access to social protection and public services. Data on multi-dimensional poverty (incorporating health, education and standard of living) shows striking disparities by gender, race and ethnicity. For example, ethnic minorities in Eastern Asia and the Pacific show higher levels of multidimensional poverty, while Indigenous people are among the most multidimensionally deprived across most Latin American countries.<sup>115</sup> Globally, 84 per cent of multidimensionally poor people live in rural areas,<sup>116</sup> where access to services can be especially constrained, and two-thirds of multidimensionally poor people live in households where no woman or girl has completed at least six years of schooling.<sup>117</sup> Exclusion from education and employment can be

<sup>108</sup> UN-Women calculations based on World Bank, World Development Indicators. Available at <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators> (accessed in December 2024).

<sup>109</sup> United Nations, “Unmet need for family planning: any modern method (number)”, Data Portal. Available at <https://population.un.org/dataportal/data/indicators/12/locations/900/start/2023/end/2023/metadadata/metadadataindicators?df=13d7bcc6-5da9-4f85-aff0-a114bfe1c4b6v> (accessed in December 2024).

<sup>110</sup> UNFPA, *State of World Population 2023*.

<sup>111</sup> Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), *The Urgency of Now: AIDS at a Crossroads* (Geneva, 2024).

<sup>112</sup> UNICEF, “Adolescent HIV prevention” (accessed in October 2024).

<sup>113</sup> UNICEF, Adolescent Data Portal. Available at <https://data.unicef.org/adp/> (accessed in September 2024).

<sup>114</sup> UNICEF, “Adolescent HIV prevention” (accessed in October 2024).

<sup>115</sup> UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021: Unmasking Disparities by Ethnicity, Caste and Gender* (New York, 2021).

<sup>116</sup> UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023*.

<sup>117</sup> UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021*.

especially pronounced for young women with disabilities, who are significantly more likely to be not in employment, education or training than both young men with disabilities and young women without disabilities.<sup>118</sup> The escalation of armed conflict around the world will further entrench disparities.

115. Significant inequalities in sexual and reproductive health and rights also persist based on race and ethnicity, refugee and migration status, education, socioeconomic status, rural versus urban location and other markers.<sup>119</sup> For example, due to discrimination and exclusion across countries, Indigenous women are less likely to benefit from antenatal care, less likely to give birth under the care of a skilled birth attendant, more likely to give birth as an adolescent, and significantly more likely to die of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.<sup>120</sup> Likelihood of acquiring HIV is also heightened among groups that face stigma and criminalization – with sex workers and transgender women facing nine and twenty-times higher risk of contracting HIV than the wider adult population globally, while also having lower antiretroviral therapy coverage and worse treatment outcomes.<sup>121</sup>

*Lack of adequate financing remains a major barrier to accelerating progress on poverty eradication, health and education for women and girls in all their diversity.*

116. After a temporary expansion in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, most governments scaled back public spending in 2021. Stifling debt burdens severely constrain the ability of low- and middle-income countries to invest in more and better social protection and public services for women and girls. The need to service debt has deepened fiscal austerity measures, including as part of debt restructuring and as a condition for new loans from the international financial institutions. A review of International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to 39 countries between 2020 and 2023 found that the majority were conditional on the reduction of public wage bills or increases in regressive taxes. When public spending is stretched thin, women lose their jobs first, eat last and last, and act as shock absorbers by taking on additional unpaid care work to sustain their families and communities.<sup>122</sup>

### **C. Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action**

117. Based on the national reports, policy and programmatic trends in implementation have emerged in three areas: (a) strengthening women's access to gender- and age-responsive social protection systems to end women's poverty and realize their rights; (b) ensuring quality education and lifelong learning for women and girls; and (c) ensuring women's access to affordable, good quality health services.

#### *(a) Strengthening women's access to gender- and age-responsive social protection systems to end women's poverty and realize their rights*

118. The COVID-19 pandemic underlined the importance of social protection for alleviating and preventing poverty and hardship<sup>123</sup> with many countries, even those with limited social protection coverage, making significant efforts to reach

<sup>118</sup> ILO, "New ILO database highlights labour market challenges of persons with disabilities", 13 June 2022.

<sup>119</sup> UNFPA, *State of World Population 2024: Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope* (New York, 2024).

<sup>120</sup> UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women, *Indigenous Women's Maternal Health and Maternal Mortality* (New York, UNFPA, 2018).

<sup>121</sup> UNAIDS, *The Urgency of Now*.

<sup>122</sup> UN-Women, *The Global Economic Crisis and Gender Equality* (New York, 2014).

<sup>123</sup> Clare O'Brien and others, *Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis Report* (Oxford, Oxford Policy Management, 2018).



excluded populations. About two thirds of Member States reported adopting gender-responsive innovations in their social protection COVID-19 response. A review of efforts in this area points to five key lessons on integrating gender into large-scale shock responses (see box VI). Member States also reported on the increasing use of digital tools to promote women’s financial inclusion and access to social protection. Overall, however, the attention paid to gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities remained inadequate. Of over 3,000 social protection and labour market measures adopted by 226 countries and territories in response to the pandemic, only 12 per cent targeted women’s economic security and only 7 per cent provided support for rising unpaid care demands.<sup>124</sup> An analysis of social protection measures adopted in response to the 2022–2023 cost-of-living crisis revealed similarly sobering results.<sup>125</sup>

#### Box VI

#### **Lessons from gender-innovations present in the COVID-19 social protection response**

Gender innovations during the pandemic show that gender design features can be integrated into shock-responsive social protection, which is critical given the rise in conflict and climate disasters. Five key lessons emerge from this experience:

- **Horizontal expansion that is inclusive of women:** When extending coverage (horizontal expansion), it is crucial to include demographic and/or occupational groups where women are overrepresented. During the pandemic, informal workers, including domestic workers, street vendors and market vendors, many of whom are women, were hit hardest by job and income losses. In response, at least 15 low- and middle-income countries – including Argentina, Bangladesh, Liberia and Mozambique – extended emergency social protection to informal workers with special provisions for women.
- **Gender-responsive benefit top-ups:** Benefit top-ups (vertical expansion) can be designed to reduce gender disparities. When selecting programmes for top-ups, the gender composition of beneficiaries should be assessed to ensure that women benefit equally. Additionally, giving extra benefits to women can address pre-existing gender inequalities. For instance, Brazil’s Auxílio Emergencial for informal workers provided extra benefits to single mothers given their double role as income providers and caregivers.
- **Linking cash to services:** Coordinating social protection with services can better support women’s needs during emergencies. The risks women and girls face during shocks are multifaceted, including income insecurity, increased violence against women and girls and rising unpaid care demands. During the COVID-19 crisis, 15 countries integrated social protection with services to prevent and respond to violence against women, including through cash transfers, rental assistance, in-kind support and a combination of employment or entrepreneurship programmes targeting survivors of violence.
- **Relaxing eligibility and conditionalities:** Broader targeting criteria (geographical, categorical or targeting-out) and relaxed conditionalities during the pandemic benefited women and other marginalized groups. During emergencies, these approaches which allow self-selection and/or suspend educational or work conditionalities can improve inclusivity, diminish administrative costs and improve timeliness.
- **Harnessing digital technologies to facilitate registration and speed up benefit disbursement and receipt:** For digital tools to work for women they must be accompanied by investments in digital public infrastructure and improved connectivity and literacy, with particular attention to the needs of marginalized

<sup>124</sup> UN-Women and UNDP, *Government Responses to COVID-19*.

<sup>125</sup> UN-Women, *The World Survey 2024*.

groups. Strengthening women's access, knowledge and use of digital technology is an important part of this process.

*Source:* Based on UN-Women and UNDP, *Government Responses to COVID-19: Lessons on Gender Equality for a World in Turmoil* (New York, UN-Women, 2022).

119. In addition to the immediate shock response, over the last five years 78 per cent of Member States reported efforts to strengthen routine social protection systems, including floors, up from seventy per cent in 2019. Recent data confirm that significant progress has been made in this area. For the first time in 2023, more than half of the global population (52.4 per cent) was covered by at least one social protection benefit (SDG indicator 1.3.1), marking an increase of nearly 10 percentage points since 2015.<sup>126</sup> However, women's coverage (50.1 per cent) continues to lag behind men's (54.6 per cent). This translates into 2 billion women and 1.8 billion men without access to any form of social protection.<sup>127</sup> While high-income countries have edged closer to universal coverage and middle-income countries have made important strides in closing gaps, coverage in low-income countries was below 10 per cent, with little progress since 2015. Coverage is lowest in sub-Saharan Africa, while gender gaps are widest in Central and Southern Asia and narrowest in Australia and New Zealand, and Europe and Northern America.

120. Even where women have access to social protection, benefits are often inadequate, and fail to meet gender-specific rights and needs. By 2024, only 27 per cent of women and 35 per cent of men were comprehensively covered by law for all major life course contingencies,<sup>128</sup> and many national social protection systems neglect gender-specific risks like women's and girls' disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work and their heightened exposure to violence.<sup>129</sup> To remedy these shortcomings, States reported actions across both contributory and non-contributory schemes, including child and family benefits, maternity, paternity and parental leave policies, unemployment support, sickness benefits, pensions, disability and survivors' benefits as well as access to affordable medical care, all of which are critical to ensuring that women and girls are covered for the risks and vulnerabilities they face across the life course.

121. Eighty per cent of countries reported strengthening non-contributory cash transfer programmes for families with children, including child benefits or allowances and conditional or unconditional cash transfers that prioritize mothers or other caregivers as recipients. The longer-term expansion of child-related cash transfers has contributed to an increase in social protection coverage for women and girls.<sup>130</sup> In addition, some countries reported measures to increase child alimony provided by separated parents to the primary caregiver, usually mothers, who reside with the children, including subsidies for primary caregivers in cases of non-payment as well as tighter controls and better enforcement procedures to fulfil alimony obligations.

122. Forty-six per cent of States reported strengthening social protection for working-age women, including in the form of unemployment, sickness, employment injury, and maternity, paternity and parental leave reforms. The

<sup>126</sup> ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2024–26: Universal Social Protection for Climate Action and a Just Transition* (Geneva, 2024).

<sup>127</sup> UN-Women calculations based on ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2024–26*.

<sup>128</sup> Comprehensive legal coverage refers to the proportion of the population covered by law in respect of one of the eight areas specified in the ILO Social Security Convention, 1952 (No. 102); ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2024–26*.

<sup>129</sup> Tara Patricia Cookson and others, "Do governments account for gender when designing their social protection systems? Findings from an analysis of national social protection strategies" *Social Policy & Administration*, vol. 58, No. 1 (June 2023).

<sup>130</sup> ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2024–26*.

extension of social protection to women in informal employment remains a key priority (see sect. II). Globally, 33 per cent of countries reported measures to strengthen social protection for working-age women, with particularly high shares in Eastern and Southern Asia (64 per cent), Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) (55 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (44 per cent). Some countries have revised legal frameworks to allow informal self-employed workers to join tax-funded, non-contributory schemes (e.g., income support, maternity leave), or established community-based schemes (e.g., savings, pensions, and health insurance); while other reported putting in place full or partial subsidies to cover informal worker contributions. Despite these efforts, exclusion remains common.<sup>131</sup> Forty-eight per cent of countries reported implementing measures to improve social protection access for marginalized populations, including migrant and refugee women and girls.

123. Efforts to improve women's access to old-age pensions were reported by forty-eight per cent of countries. Some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, and Oceania have implemented new or expanded existing non-contributory social pension schemes. Because they are not tied to employment histories or contributory capacity, social pensions play a key role in closing the gender pension gap. However, in many countries the benefit level of non-contributory pensions is too low to lift older women out of poverty. Despite significant increases in the cost-of-living over the reporting period, few countries reported adjusting pension benefits for inflation. Reducing gender bias in contributory pensions schemes and strengthening the links between contributory and non-contributory benefits therefore remains important. Countries in Europe and Northern America, in particular, reported measures in this area, including the introduction of pension credits for caregivers. The latest data available shows that 109 countries consider childcare periods in their pension schemes in 2023,<sup>132</sup> improving pension entitlements for parents, mainly mothers who are more likely to interrupt employment to care for children.

124. A positive trend is the growing recognition use of social protection policies and programmes to address the underlying drivers of women's poverty and economic insecurity. For instance, several countries report extending financial assistance and social protection support to survivors of violence against women and girls through cash transfers, unemployment benefits and rental subsidies, as well as the establishment of interdisciplinary teams equipped to provide the comprehensive assistance needed to overcome the violence suffered. Such measures can enable women to leave violent relationships and rebuild their lives.<sup>133</sup>

(b) *Ensuring quality education and lifelong learning for women and girls*

125. Recognizing the multiplier effects of investing in girls' education, 70 per cent of States focussing action on girls' access to education, up from 61 per cent in 2019. Specifically, more than three-quarters (76 per cent) of States report taking measures to close gaps in enrolment and completion of technical and vocational training (TVET), and skills development programmes. The risk of being left behind is particularly high for girls in conflict and post-conflict settings.<sup>134</sup> At least 18 conflict-affected countries reported taking steps to increase girls' and women's enrolments at all levels, increase retention and improve

<sup>131</sup> Shea McClanahan and others, *Inclusive Social Insurance: Exploring Real Solutions to Reach the Self-Employed* (Women in Informal Employment: Organizing and Globalizing and ILO, forthcoming).

<sup>132</sup> World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law 2024* (Washington, D.C., 2024).

<sup>133</sup> Tara Patricia Cookson, Lorena Fuentes and Jennifer Bitterly, "Addressing violence against women through social protection: A review of the evidence", UN-Women Policy Brief, No. 26 (New York, 2023).

<sup>134</sup> Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), *Mind the Gap: The State of Girls' Education in Crisis and Conflict* (New York, 2021).

learning outcomes for conflict and crisis-affected girls. Gender-specific and intersectional barriers were also a focus, with countries reporting actions to ensure access for girls with disabilities; support adolescent mothers; and introduce school-based health or nutrition programmes such as free school meals. Actions also focused on improving educational infrastructure and protecting and supporting teachers. Finally, many countries reported steps to address learning setbacks from prolonged school closures during COVID-19, including through continued remote learning for children in remote areas and reintegration programmes for those who dropped out of school during the pandemic. However, concerns remain about setbacks on girls' educational outcomes due to gender stereotypes and digital divides.

126. Almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of States reported actions to prevent and address harassment, bullying and all forms of violence in educational settings. Specific actions included: adopting, enforcing and effectively communicating strategies, laws, and policies that protect women and girls from all forms of violence and harassment in and around schools; establishing confidential mechanisms for reporting and addressing incidents; creating gender-responsive educational environments with attention to physical safety and access to clean water and sanitation and menstrual hygiene management; and awareness raising and capacity building of teachers, school psychologists or social workers, staff, and students to support safety at school, including the involvement of parents, and civil society. Promising practices explicitly aim to foster healthy and consensual relationships, as well as a broader positive culture of respect for diversity and non-discrimination in schools, which can prevent violence and discrimination from occurring in the first place.

127. Globally, 59 per cent of countries reported taking action to eliminate gender bias in educational curricula and 53 per cent implemented measures to improve gender equality and human rights training for teachers and educators. This marks an increase from 2019, when 55 per cent and 51 per cent of countries, respectively, reported actions in these areas (E/CN.6/2020/3). Such a positive trend is set at the backdrop of an ongoing opposition to gender equality in many contexts which has often explicitly criticized education systems for promoting "gender ideology" in school curricula, with progress on comprehensive sexuality education being challenged in numerous cases.<sup>135</sup> Alongside efforts to remove gender stereotypes in curricula and learning materials that limit the potential of girls and boys, significant progress in gender equality teacher training was observed in Central and Southern Asia (73 per cent), sub-Saharan Africa (59 per cent), and Northern Africa and Western Asia (52 per cent), particularly at secondary and tertiary levels. Importantly, some countries are expanding age-appropriate sexuality education to younger students in primary schools, while broadening the CSE curricula to cover relationships, emotions, positive roles, and self-esteem beyond a narrower focus on HIV prevention and sexually transmitted diseases. Latest data shows that at least 83 countries require provision of comprehensive sexuality education in primary schools.<sup>136</sup>

128. Seventy-six per cent of States reported actions to improve access of women and girls to technical and vocational education and training which can offer a critical pathway towards successful school-work transitions. While just about half of countries in Europe and Northern America flagged this as a priority, over 90 per cent of countries in Central and Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa did so. In the context of a rapidly changing world of work, technical and vocational education and training programmes increasingly centre on skills development and

<sup>135</sup> Sophia M. D'Angelo and others, *Whose Hands on Our Education? Identifying and Countering Gender-Restrictive Backlash* (London, ODI/ALIGN, 2024).

<sup>136</sup> UNAIDS, "Education policies on life skills-based HIV and sexuality education - primary school, Global, Most recent data. Percentage of reporting countries", Laws and Policies Analytics. Available at <https://lawsandpolicies.unaids.org/topicresult?i=313&lan=en> (accessed in December 2024).

employability in sectors that experience labour shortages or for which demand is expected to increase in the future, including in digital and green economies. Recognizing the gender gap in access to vocational training,<sup>137</sup> efforts by States have focused on addressing supply-side constraints, including through scholarships or bursaries, childcare support to enable the participation of adolescent mothers, campaigns to promote non-stereotypical vocational training choices, and building skills for occupations that are currently dominated by men. Some countries also reported demand-side measures, such as working with employers to increase technical and vocational education and training opportunities for young women, including by offering hiring incentives, and to create work environments free of harassment and discrimination that enable the retention and career progression of women in male-dominated fields.

129. In an effort to close the digital divide, the proportion of States reporting measures to increase women's and girls' access to STEM skills and training and digital skills, has increased significantly from 59 per cent in 2019 to 70 per cent in 2024. While European and Northern American countries remain more likely to report measures in this area, other regions have caught up significantly. Several countries reported early-action on this front with efforts to raise girls' interests and aspirations towards STEM fields as early as kindergarten, including through greater inclusion of female role models in STEM educational materials and a range of STEM educational programs. Given the persistent underrepresentation of women students in STEM-related fields

130. Globally, much attention has also focused on closing gender gaps in tertiary education, for example through scholarships and mentoring programs. Several countries noted the need to move beyond access and adopt measures to promote the retention of female talent in STEM-related fields of study and employment.

(c) *Ensuring women's access to affordable, good quality health services*

131. Access to affordable good quality health services, including for sexual and reproductive health, is critical for women's empowerment, health and well-being, and for the eradication of poverty. More than three-quarters (76 per cent) of States reported having taken action to promote access to health services for women and girls through the expansion of universal health coverage and public health services, a significant increase from 2019, when two-thirds of States reported actions in this area. Universal health coverage reforms are aimed at reducing or eliminating the need for out-of-pocket payments which tend to affect women more than men.<sup>138</sup> Between 2011 and 2021, lack of money for treatment was the most important reason for women across 58 low- and middle-income countries to forgo health care. Women in rural areas were much more likely than those in urban areas to report accessibility issues. Common measures reported by States to address such barriers included the extension of social or community-based health insurance as well as the free or subsidized provision of specific services, such as maternity care, HIV testing, human papillomavirus vaccines and screening for breast and cervical cancer. Despite these efforts, about half the world's population – 4.5 billion people – remained uncovered in 2021.<sup>139</sup>

132. Forty-one per cent of States reported taking specific measures to address access barriers among marginalized groups of women and girls, recognizing that gender inequalities in access to health care intersect with other dimensions of discrimination. Several countries reported on specific measures that address the health rights and needs of women with disabilities (see box VII).

<sup>137</sup> UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2024, Gender Report*.

<sup>138</sup> UN-Women, *The World Survey 2024*.

<sup>139</sup> WHO and World Bank. *Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2023 Global Monitoring Report* (Geneva, 2023).

## Box VII

**Gender-responsive and disability-inclusive healthcare measures**

Over the past decade, the number of people with disabilities has increased globally, due to people living longer with chronic and non-communicable health conditions, as well as due to health emergencies such as pandemics, and the mental and physical impacts of conflict and natural disasters. Globally, 18 per cent of women have a disability compared to 14 per cent of men, and prevalence is highest among those who are over 60.<sup>a</sup>

Many countries report actions to reduce barriers in accessing health care services for women, girls and gender-diverse people with disabilities. In some cases, including Austria and Mongolia, this has meant measures to increase the accessibility of health care services, such as through providing information on sexual and reproductive health services in simplified language, sign language and braille, implementing requirements for healthcare facilities to provide medical equipment for people with limited mobility, or introducing tele-health programs with voice, image, sign- or text-based communication options.

In other cases, including Canada, Fiji and Vanuatu, countries have worked collaboratively with people with disabilities to deliver health outreach services to women and girls with disabilities, or to develop research initiatives to strengthen knowledge of the health needs of women who experience multiple forms of oppression including ableism and racism. Other countries including Nepal, New Zealand and Samoa, have published or adopted national needs assessments, service guidelines or strategies on the intersection of health, gender and disability. At least three countries (Republic of Korea, Latvia and Tuvalu) reported measures to promote comprehensive sexuality education among youth with disabilities, including through educational classes for young people with disabilities.

Few countries report specific measures to address the needs of older people with disabilities, such as through the provision of long-term care services, or treatment of gendered health conditions linked to older age, such as osteoporosis or dementia. Further, few countries report cross-sectoral actions to address the social and environmental determinants of health inequities, including to combat structural discrimination against women, girls and gender-diverse people with disabilities in health care systems.

<sup>a</sup> WHO, *Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities* (Geneva, 2022).

133. Eighty-four per cent of States reported expanding specific health services for women and girls, with a focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights. For girls and adolescents, 48 per cent of States reported strengthening comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes, including for groups that are often marginalised in educational settings, including out-of-school youth and people with disabilities. To meet the needs of women of reproductive age, many States report efforts to reduce maternal mortality including in rural areas, and expanding access to reproductive choice through contraception and fertility treatments. However, significant gaps remain with regards to women's sexual and reproductive health. For example, very few countries reported efforts to combat stigma and address health concerns associated with menopause.

134. Thirty-nine per cent of countries reported specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, including through awareness campaigns, integrating HIV in comprehensive sexuality education; links to mental health services, efforts to reach at risk groups, and addressing violence and stigma against women and girls living with HIV, including through training and counselling. In sub-Saharan Africa some countries reported measures to address the disproportionate rate of new infections among

adolescent girls and young women, including through HIV and violence prevention education and measures to support in their informed choice to use pre-exposure prophylaxis. In addition, thirty-six per cent took action specifically tailored to address violence against women and girls living with HIV. Countries also reported efforts to increase the availability of HIV testing and treatment through integration with other health services and by expanding to different all levels of health facilities. Recently expanded prevention options, particularly woman-controlled pre-exposure prophylaxis, provide women and girls with better tools to protect themselves against HIV infection.

135. About one third (34 per cent) of States reported on abortion. Legal reforms decriminalizing abortion or expanding the grounds on which abortion is legal were reported by 6 per cent of States across Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Oceania and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. An additional 13 per cent of countries reported reducing restrictions and barriers that hinder access to and timely provision of safe abortion where it is legal, including by improving access to information and counselling, relaxing the need for spousal or parental consent, raising gestational limits, reducing mandatory waiting periods, limiting refusal to provide care, expanding the range of providers and facilities authorized to provide abortion services, and supporting travel to facilities. Three countries in Europe and Western Asia reported measures to prevent sex-selective abortions, a reflection of son preference. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2023, abortion was available at the woman's request with no requirement for justification in 51 countries, while others offered it on various grounds, including threats to the mother's life (112 countries), physical (66 countries) or mental (45 countries) health, foetal impairment (76 countries), rape (68 countries), incest (46 countries) and economic or social reasons (22 countries).<sup>140</sup>

136. Forty per cent of States report the adoption of gender-responsive approaches to the prevention and treatment of chronic and non-communicable diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases, which have been the leading cause of death for women for decades. Gender-sensitive cancer prevention, including rollout of free or low-cost HPV vaccines and breast and cervical cancers screening, was among the most common actions. Yet, longstanding gender bias in medical research and clinical practice continue to compromise the quality of health information available to women as well as the health care they receive.<sup>141</sup> A few States reported measures to address these biases, including through research into women's health and intersectional health inequalities, incorporating questions on women's health into the national census, and developing gender-sensitive approaches to the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

137. Mental health has become a pressing concern in the context of multiple and cascading crises. Women have long been more likely to report poor mental health than men, and this disparity increased during the pandemic. In 2021, 15.1 per cent of women suffered from mental health disorders, compared to 13.6 per cent of men.<sup>142</sup> Mental health conditions are a leading burden of disease for adolescents. Yet, data on the prevalence of adolescent mental health conditions remain sparse, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Exposure to gender stereotypes and unrealistic body images, the sharing of sexually explicit images, as well as

<sup>140</sup> WHO, Global Abortion Policies Database. Available at <https://abortion-policies.srhr.org/> (accessed in December 2024).

<sup>141</sup> Abdullah Al Hamid and others, "Gender bias in diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of cardiovascular diseases: a systematic review", *Cureus*, vol. 16, No. 2 (2024).

<sup>142</sup> UN-Women calculations based on Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), GBD Compare. Available at <http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare> (accessed in December 2024).

cyberbullying and online violence pose new challenges to the mental health of adolescent girls, with potential ripple effects on academic performance.<sup>143</sup>

138. Forty-five per cent of countries reported actions to strengthen women and girls' mental health, including through expanding public health insurance coverage to include psychosocial support, providing specialist women's mental health care and rolling out mental health services in schools. Women and girls in conflict and displacement settings are particularly affected (S/2023/725) – yet only 9 out of 26 conflict-affected countries reported any action in this area. Some host countries report expanding mental health care coverage for refugees and survivors of conflict, including through creating specialist programs or including refugees under public health insurance.

139. The realization of the right to quality dignified care for women and girls requires the availability of adequate resources, including physical and human infrastructure. While women health workers bore the brunt of poor pay and difficult working conditions during the pandemic, their underrepresentation in health leadership and decision-making roles continue to constrain their ability to influence health policies and strategies in gender-responsive ways. Globally, women hold around 70 per cent of health worker jobs, but only 25 per cent of senior leadership roles in the sector.<sup>144</sup> Forty-eight per cent of States reported training and capacity building for health sector workers to increase the gender-responsiveness of service provision. With a projected global shortage of 10 million workers in the health sector, primarily affecting low- and middle-income countries,<sup>145</sup> greater efforts are needed to ensure the recruitment and retention of staff.<sup>146</sup> Several States reported actions to improve working conditions, including through providing overtime pay, introducing minimum wages, or running trainings to support the mental health of healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Others reported efforts to expand community health worker programmes, increase recruitment of women healthcare workers in rural areas, or promote immigration pathways for nurses, midwives and mental health professionals.

#### **D. Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation**

140. Efforts to strengthen access to social protection and public services have resulted, among others, in reduced poverty risk, more equal access to education and improved health outcomes for many women and girls. However, gender gaps and biases in social protection, education and health systems remain widespread. Three priorities for urgent action emerge from the review of implementation efforts.

*Shock proof social protection, education and health systems with a focus on universal provision to better respond to the needs of women and girls in crises*

141. Urgent action is needed to ensure that social protection, education and health systems are shock-proofed and respond better to the specific challenges faced by women and girls during emergencies. To do so, shock responses need to be based on robust, real-time gender data – both quantitative and qualitative – that captures gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities. Investments are particularly needed to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems which are critical for registering vital events such as births, deaths, marriages and divorces, and for

<sup>143</sup> UNICEF, “Measuring mental health for adolescents and young people at the population level”, March 2023.

<sup>144</sup> Women in Global Health (WGH), “The state of women and leadership in global health”, Policy report, March 2023 (n.p., 2023).

<sup>145</sup> Mathieu Boniol and others. “The global health workforce stock and distribution in 2020 and 2030: a threat to equity and ‘universal’ health coverage?” *BMJ Global Health*, vol. 7, No. 6 (2022).

<sup>146</sup> UN-Women, *The World Survey 2024*; WGH, “The great resignation: why women health workers are leaving”, Policy report, October 2023 (n.p., 2023).



administering many government services. Countries should continue to work towards universally accessible systems, including through universal health coverage reforms, and maintain a strong focus on access to and quality of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

*Harness digitalization for poverty eradication and gender equality, including women's access to social protection, public services, with a focus on bridging the digital divide*

142. Digitalization can be better harnessed for poverty eradication and gender equality, including women's access to social protection, public services as well as essential information about their human rights. For digital tools to work for women, they should be devised based on consultation with users, comprising target groups as well as front-line workers and the testing of digital interfaces with accessibility experts, including women and girls with disabilities. They should also be accompanied by investments in digital public infrastructure and improved connectivity and literacy, with particular attention to the needs of marginalized groups and reducing inequalities between countries. These actions are integral to the key transition of digital connectivity to drive progress across all SDGs (E/2024/52).

*Close the financing gap for social protection and public services, and invest in better conditions and wages for front line workers*

143. The promise of social protection, education and health systems for gender equality stands and falls with the availability of adequate resources for investments in both the physical and the human infrastructure required to ensure access for all. Financing gaps are large, but not impossible to close. Furthermore, spending in social protection and public services should be seen as an investment with multiplier rather than an expense. The positive impacts on GDP of each dollar spent on social protection surpasses those of total government expenditure<sup>147</sup> and every dollar spent in closing the childcare policy gap is tied to an ensuing \$3.76 boost in GDP.<sup>148</sup> Investments in a reformed care sector with better wages and working conditions for frontline workers would also create much-needed jobs, including for women, while improving service delivery for social protection recipients, students and patients.

#### IV. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

##### Key messages

- Violence against women and girls persists at alarming rates across the world, and has been intensified as a result of successive crises. Across their lifetime, 1 in 3 women, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner.
- Harmful practices continue to undermine the well-being of women and girls. Globally, child, early and forced marriage has decreased from 25 per cent in 1997 to 18.7 per cent in 2022. Despite this progress, at the current rate of change child marriage will not be eradicated until 2092.
- Changes in the technology and media landscape continue to create platforms where violence against women and girls has proliferated, while women continue to be under-represented in the media.
- States have progressed actions in several areas in the last five years, but gaps remain:

<sup>147</sup> Dante Cardoso and others, "The Multiplier effects of government expenditures on social protection: a multi-country analysis", Working Paper, No. 18 (São Paulo, University of São Paulo Department of Economics, 2023).

<sup>148</sup> ILO, "The benefits of investing in transformative childcare policy packages".

- (i) Seventy-nine per cent reported that they have introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls, up from 68 per cent in 2019. Responding to the vulnerability of girls to violence, 77 per cent of States focussed action on violence against girls, up from 62 per cent in 2019.
- (ii) Ninety per cent reported the introduction or strengthening of laws, their implementation and enforcement, up from 83 per cent in 2019. Despite this focus, there remain significant gaps in legal protection against violence against women.
- (iii) Eighty-eight per cent reported introducing or strengthening services for survivors of violence, similar to 2019. Seventy-five per cent reported that they introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls, up from to 67 per cent in 2019. However, investments in prevention and responses are not commensurate with the scale of the problem and technology and innovation have not been adequately leveraged to accelerate progress.
- (iv) An area of innovation in recent years has been legal reform to address new forms of the focus on violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology. Sixty-six per cent of countries prioritized action to address violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology in the last five years, particularly through awareness raising and strengthened legislation and regulation.

## A. Introduction

144. Violence against women and girls (critical area of concern D) remains an issue of pandemic proportions across the world with significant impacts on the lives and well-being of individuals, communities and broader society. Women and girls continue to be subject to multiple forms of violence and abuse, largely perpetrated by men, across a range of contexts – in times of peace or conflict, or in the wake of conflict – and in all spheres of life: the family, the community, in public spaces and at work. Even as momentum to end violence against women continues to build, deeply entrenched gender inequality and discriminatory norms perpetuate a continuum of violence, abuse and harm against women and girls, from rigid gender stereotyping and sexual harassment to lethal forms of violence such as femicide. As recognized in the Platform for Action, violence against women and girls further entrenches gender inequality across all spheres of life. It can be prevented, yet investments in prevention and responses are not yet commensurate with the scale of the problem.

145. Ensuring women and girls are free from violence, discrimination, stigma and stereotypes is also crucial to the achievement of several of the SDGs, particularly poverty eradication (SDG1), health (SDG3), education (SDG4), decent work (SDG8), inequalities (SDG10) and sustainable cities and communities (SDG11). Tackling violence against women and girls also contributes to creating more peaceful and non-violent communities for all (SDG16), given that violence against women is often a precursor to the eruption of conflict in a country.<sup>149</sup> At least 14 of the 17 SDGs will not be achieved without the global eradication of violence against women and girls.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>149</sup> UN-Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (New York, 2015).

<sup>150</sup> Sarah Homan and Emma Fulu, *Sustainable Development Goals and Violence Against Women and Girls* (Melbourne, The Equality Institute, 2021).

146. The media plays an important role in advancing gender equality, with the potential to reach billions as a platform to advance gender-equal social norms, address gender stereotypes and promote positive role models. However, discriminatory representations of women in the media (critical area of concern J) – both traditional, social media and new forms of communication technologies – continue to entrench gender stereotypes.<sup>151</sup> Digital media in particular is increasingly playing a role in the intensification of backlash against the advancement of women and girls.

147. Over the last five years, several broader trends have affected the way violence against women and girls is experienced and responses. Interlocking crises – including COVID-19, economic strain, climate change, conflicts and humanitarian disasters – have continued to exacerbate violence against women and girls in a number of ways (A/77/302). Rapid technological developments over the last five years, such as generative artificial intelligence, have also created new environments for violence against women and girls, and new spaces for popularizing discriminatory stereotypes.<sup>152</sup> This is enabling an upsurge in regressive social norms and attitudes, with harmful masculinities being amplified through online communities collectively known as “the manosphere” (A/79/500). Offline, too, anti-feminist actors and groups are contributing to the misogynistic backlash which perpetuates violence against women and girls.

148. Since the last review of the implementation of the Platform for Action the normative framework has continued to expand. For instance, CEDAW general recommendation No. 38 (2020) guides States parties to combat all forms of trafficking, emphasizing that States also have obligations to discourage the demand that fosters exploitation and leads to trafficking, and that the obligations of States parties do not cease in emergencies resulting from conflict, political events, health crises or natural disasters. CEDAW general recommendation 39 (2022) on Indigenous women and girls addresses the disproportionate rates of violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls. Additionally, over the last five years, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences has produced several reports advancing norms to eliminate violence against women and girls.

149. The General Assembly has also strengthened the normative framework through its resolutions on the intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, which in 2020 focussed on measures to address violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19 (A/RES/75/161) and in 2022 focussed on actions needed to address gender stereotypes and negative social norms (A/RES/77/193). The agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women have also recognized the importance of actions to address violence against women and girls that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology (E.CN.6/2023/L.3), and in the context of climate change (E.CN.6/2022/L.7). The Pact for the Future recognised that new technologies can advance gender equality, but also raised concerns over the serious risks they can pose to women and girls and the need to address the gender digital divide.

## B. Global and regional trends

*Violence against women and girls persists at alarming rates across the world, and has intensified as a result of successive crises*

150. Globally 1 in every 8 women and girls aged 15–49 was subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner in the previous year (12.5 per

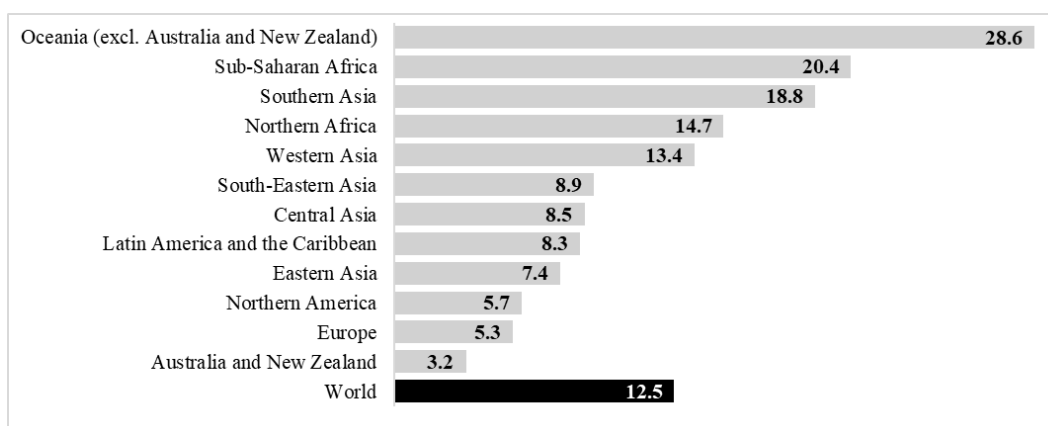
<sup>151</sup> UN-Women, *Accelerating Efforts to Tackle Online and Technology Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls* (New York, 2022).

<sup>152</sup> Julie Posetti and others, “The Chilling: global trends in online violence against women journalists”, Research Discussion Paper (Paris, UNESCO, 2021).

cent), a ratio reaching almost 1 in every 3 women and girls in Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand, and about 1 in 5 in sub-Saharan Africa (see figure VI). Across their lifetime, 1 in 3 women, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner.<sup>153</sup>

Figure VI

**Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15–49) subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months**



Source: United Nations, “Statistics”, SDG Indicators Database (accessed in December 2024).

151. Global data availability on femicide or gender-related killings is gradually increasing, indicating greater efforts to record and report these crimes. Despite most homicides worldwide being committed against men and boys, women and girls are disproportionately affected by homicidal violence, also referred to as femicide, in the home. Globally, approximately 51,100 women and girls were killed by their intimate partners or other family members during 2023.<sup>154</sup> This means that 60 per cent of the almost 85,000 women and girls killed intentionally during the year were murdered by their intimate partners or other family members. On average, 140 women and girls worldwide lost their lives every day at the hands of their partner or a close relative.

152. Sexual harassment and violence in the world of work remains a reality for many women. A 2022 global survey found that 8.2 per cent of women experienced sexual violence and harassment in their working life, compared to 5 per cent of men.<sup>155</sup> The survey found that young women were twice as likely as young men to have experienced sexual violence and harassment, and migrant women were almost twice as likely as non-migrant women to report sexual violence and harassment. Another study found that 15–99 per cent of women in low-income and middle-income countries report sexual harassment experiences.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>153</sup> WHO, *Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018*.

<sup>154</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN-Women, *Femicides in 2023: Global Estimates of Intimate Partner/Family Member Femicides* (New York, United Nations, 2024).

<sup>155</sup> ILO and and Lloyd’s Register Foundation. *Experiences of Violence and Harassment at Work: A Global First Survey* (Geneva, 2022).

<sup>156</sup> Meghna Ranganathan and others, “Measurement and prevalence of sexual harassment in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis”, *BMJ Open*, vol. 11, No. 6 (2021).

153. Intersectional inequalities exacerbate the risk of violence for women and girls, such as those with physical or mental disabilities<sup>157</sup> and older women.<sup>158</sup> Among women refugees, up to 70 per cent are estimated to experience sexual and other forms of gendered violence.<sup>159</sup> Research across regions indicates that LGBTIQ+ people experience high rates of violence.<sup>160</sup>

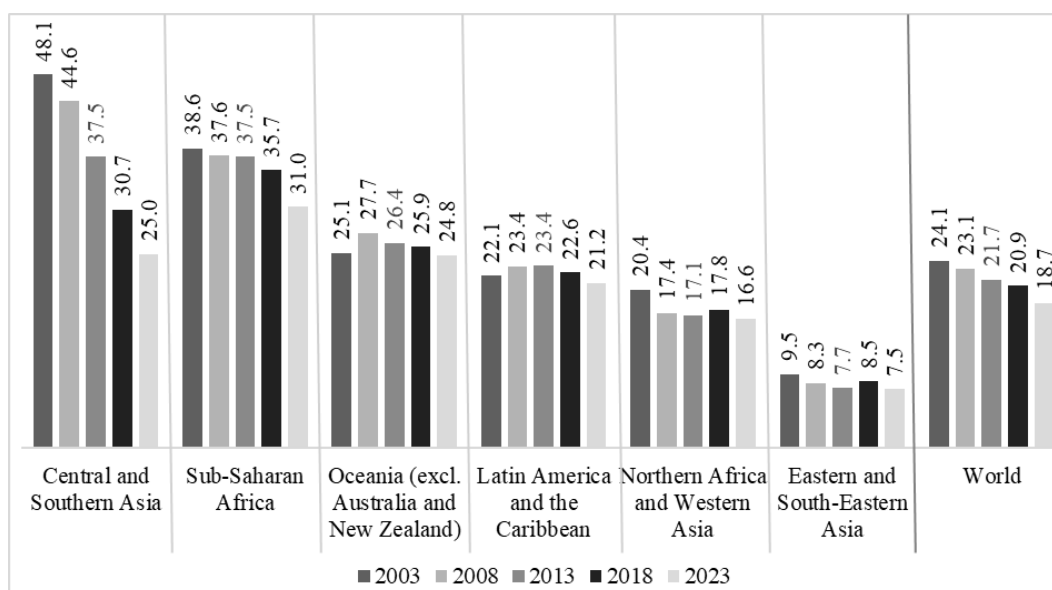
154. Multiple and interlinked crises around the world are intensifying the factors that make women and girls more vulnerable to all forms of violence, particularly due to increasing poverty and economic insecurity, displacement, violence committed against them and discrimination (A/77/292). Overall, COVID-19 was associated with an increase in violence against women. Data collected by UN-Women indicates that 7 in 10 women believed physical and verbal abuse by partners had become more common during the pandemic, and more than half of respondents judged that sexual harassment in public had worsened.<sup>161</sup>

#### *Harmful practices continue to undermine the well-being of women and girls*

155. Harmful practices continue to undermine the well-being of women and girls, although there has been progress over the last three decades. Globally, child, early and forced marriage, measured by the proportion of women aged 20–24 who were married or in union before age 18, has decreased from 24.1 per cent in 2003 to 18.7 per cent in 2023. The most significant decrease can be observed in Central and Southern Asia from 48.1 per cent in 2003 to 25.0 per cent in 2023. A significant decrease is also evident in sub-Saharan Africa (see figure VII). Despite this progress, at the current rate of change, child marriage will not be eradicated until 2092.<sup>162</sup>

Figure VII

#### **Proportion of women aged 20–24 who were married or in union before age 18**



<sup>157</sup> UN-Women and WHO, *Measuring Violence Against Women with Disability: Data Availability, Methodological Issues and Recommendations for Good Practice* (Geneva, WHO, 2024).

<sup>158</sup> UN-Women and WHO, *Violence Against Women 60 Years and Older: Data Availability, Methodological Issues and Recommendations for Good Practice* (Geneva, WHO, 2024).

<sup>159</sup> Sandra Pertek and others, “*Nobody Helped Me*”: *Forced Migration and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: Findings from the SEREDA Project* (Birmingham, University of Birmingham, 2022).

<sup>160</sup> Veronica Ahlenback, “Ending violence against LGBTIQ+ people: global evidence and emerging insights into what works”, Policy Brief (London, Ending Violence Helpdesk, 2022).

<sup>161</sup> Ramya Emandi and others, *Measuring the Shadow Pandemic*.

<sup>162</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

Source: UNICEF, “Executive summary dataset”, The Child Marriage Data Portal (accessed in December 2024).

156. Although rates of child marriage continue to decline worldwide, the average incidence of child marriage in conflict-affected countries is 14.4 percentage points higher than in non-conflict settings.<sup>163</sup> Successive and interconnected crises are also increasing the risks of child marriages. The flow-on effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, war, and the economic impacts resulting from climate change all increase the risk to girls of becoming child brides.<sup>164</sup> It is estimated that an additional 10 million girls will become child brides by 2030 because of pandemic impacts.<sup>165</sup>

157. Globally, over 230 million girls and women worldwide have undergone female genital mutilation, including 21.7 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and 73.6 per cent in Northern Africa. This represents a 15 per cent increase, or 30 million more girls and women over the last 8 years.<sup>166</sup>

*Changes in the technology and media landscape continue to create new spaces for violence against women and girls*

158. Violence against women and girls increasingly takes place along the online-offline continuum, with perpetrators using a range of digital tools and platforms to inflict gender-based harm, abuse, control, harassment and violence. The absence of agreed definitions and methodologies for measuring violence against women and girls in digital contexts, coupled with widespread under-reporting, has hampered efforts to understand the true extent of the issue. Violence in online spaces may transition offline in various ways including coercive control, surveillance, stalking, physical violence, or even femicide.<sup>167</sup>

159. Despite a lack of recent global data to understand the nature and extent of the issue, available data show that prevalence of violence against women and girls in digital contexts ranges from 16 to 58 per cent.<sup>168</sup> Younger women report experiencing violence at higher rates<sup>169</sup> – most report their first such experience between 14 and 16 years of age.<sup>170</sup>

160. The forms and patterns of violence against women and girls in digital contexts continue to evolve as technology advances.<sup>171</sup> Globally, misinformation and defamation are the most prevalent forms of online violence affecting women, with 67 per cent of women and girls who have experienced online violence encountering this tactic.<sup>172</sup> Cyber-harassment (66 per cent), hate speech (65 per cent), and impersonation (63 per cent) are among the other more common forms.

161. Girls are uniquely vulnerable to abuse in online environments. One study of 14,000 girls in 31 countries found that more than half of girls surveyed had been

<sup>163</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>164</sup> UN-Women, *Gendered Impacts of Climate Change: Empirical Evidence from Asia* (New York, 2023).

<sup>165</sup> UNICEF, *Is an End to Child Marriage within Reach? Latest Trends and Future Prospects. 2023 Update*, (New York, 2023).

<sup>166</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>167</sup> Bridget Harris and Laura Vitis, “Digital intrusions: technology, spatiality and violence against women”, *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*, vol. 4, No.3 (2020).

<sup>168</sup> Jacqueline Hicks, *Global Evidence on the Prevalence and Impact of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV)* (Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, 2021).

<sup>169</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit, “Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women”, 1 March 2021.

<sup>170</sup> Plan International, *State of the World’s Girls 2020*.

<sup>171</sup> Alex Berryhill and Lorena Fuentes, *Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women: Taking Stock of Evidence and Data Collection* (New York and Geneva, UN-Women and WHO, 2023).

<sup>172</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit, “Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women”, 1 March 2021.

harassed and abused online.<sup>173</sup> Another recent global study found that over 300 million children under the age of 18 have been affected by online child sexual exploitation and abuse in the last 12 months. Further, one in eight children globally have been subjected to online solicitation in the last 12 months, including unwanted sexual talk, which can include non-consensual sexting, unwanted sexual questions and unwanted sexual act requests by adults or other young people.<sup>174</sup>

162. The growth of artificial intelligence is creating avenues to perpetrate violence against women and girls and reinforce the normalization of discriminatory social norms. One particularly alarming development is the ascendancy of deepfakes, digital manipulation to replace one person's likeness with that of another, and increasingly being used for image-based abuse and harassment. Pornographic deepfakes have attracted the most attention recently. It is estimated that 90 to 95 per cent of all online deepfakes are non-consensual pornographic images with around 90 per cent of these depicting women.<sup>175</sup>

163. Women with high levels of public visibility, such as journalists, politicians and activists continue to be at significant risk of violence, including in online environments. A 2021 report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found that 73 per cent of the 901 women journalists interviewed reported experiencing online violence, with reporting on elections and politics leading to an intensification of violence.<sup>176</sup> Several country studies conducted by UN-Women on the experiences of women in politics show high levels of online violence and abuse, particularly through social media around election cycles and parliamentary activity.<sup>177</sup>

164. Violence in digital contexts is also often directed towards women who challenge gender norms and patriarchal structures. A majority of human rights defenders say they or their organization have been threatened or harassed, and one quarter have received death threats.<sup>178</sup> Threats and harassment are most severe for women human rights defenders in locations where there is conflict and instability.<sup>179</sup>

#### *Women continue to be under-represented in the media*

165. As reported in the last review, in 2015 women made up only 24 per cent of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news (E/CN.6/2020/3). By 2020, there was a small increase to 25 per cent in the proportion of subjects and sources who are women.<sup>180</sup> Data collected across five continents in 2024 revealed that only 24 per cent of top editors are women.<sup>181</sup> Women's representation in the media industry is impeded by their experiences of gender-based discrimination and a heightened risk of violence.

166. Stories on violence against women and girls remain relatively absent from or misrepresented in major daily news outlets, including during the COVID-19

<sup>173</sup> Plan International, *State of the World's Girls 2020*.

<sup>174</sup> Global Child Safety Institute (Childlight), *Into the Light Index on Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Globally: 2024 Report* (Edinburgh, 2024).

<sup>175</sup> Karen Hao, "A horrifying new AI app swaps women into porn videos with a click", *MIT Technology Review*, 13 September 2021.

<sup>176</sup> Julie Posetti and others, "The Chilling".

<sup>177</sup> Ingrid Beck, Florencia Alcaraz and Paula Rodríguez, *Violencia de Género en Línea hacia Mujeres con Voz Pública. Impacto en la Libertad de Expresión* (Panama, Alianza Regional por la Libre Expresión e Información and UN-Women, 2022).

<sup>178</sup> Charlotte Pruth and Eva Zillén, *Hope and Resistance Go Together: The State of Women Human Rights Defenders 2023* (n.p., Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2023).

<sup>179</sup> DanChurchAid, *Online Harassment and Censorship of Women Human Rights Defenders* (Copenhagen, 2023).

<sup>180</sup> Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), *Who Makes the News?* (n.p., 2020).

<sup>181</sup> Reuters Institute, "Women and leadership in the news media 2024: evidence from 12 markets", 8 March 2024.

pandemic.<sup>182</sup> Negligible progress has been made with the regard to the likelihood of news to challenge gender stereotypes with coverage of sexual harassment, rape, other forms of gender violence and specific gender inequality issues often reinforcing gender stereotypes. This further entrenches and normalizes the injustices in such reportage.

### C. Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action

167. Based on the national reports, policy and programmatic trends in implementation emerged in five areas: (a) strengthening and enforcing of laws and policies that address violence against women and ensuring women's access to justice; (b) increasing women's access to high quality, context-responsive support services; (c) preventing violence against women and girls; (d) responding to the impact of technology on violence against women and (e) addressing gender stereotypes in the media.

#### (a) *Strengthening and enforcing laws, policies and national action plans that address violence against women and ensuring women's access to justice*

168. Ending violence against women and girls requires change at every level – from State systems and laws through to organizations such as schools, workplaces and support services, local and cultural communities, as well as to individual relationships and behaviours. A whole-of-system or whole-of-government approach encourages co-ordination between all relevant government agencies and sectors to work together to provide better support, keeping survivors at the centre of responses to ensure their healing and recovery as well as providing entry points for prevention. Creating enabling conditions for diverse civil society and women's rights organizations to influence policies as key experts is also essential. This includes ensuring they are resourced adequately.

169. National action plans that reflect multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches to enable coordination between agencies and the participation of civil society are critical for a comprehensive, long-term and coordinated strategy to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.<sup>183</sup> In the 2024 national reviews, 79 per cent of countries reported that they have introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls, reflecting an increase from 68 per cent in 2019.

170. Launched in 2017 with seed funding from the European Union, the United Nations Spotlight Initiative has made important contributions to the implementation of the Platform for Action. Some 548 laws and policies to end violence against women and girls have been signed or strengthened with the Initiative's support, and 50 countries have strengthened their National Action Plans.<sup>184</sup> The Initiative has also contributed to nearly a 13-fold increase in the amount budgeted across 13 countries' national budgets to address violence against women and girls.

171. The global and regional normative framework calls for comprehensive laws that address all forms of violence against women and girls as a systematic violation of women's human rights and a form of discrimination, providing for the prosecution of perpetrators and setting out State obligations to prevent violence and protect, empower and support survivors. Laws to address violence against women should be embedded in a broader legal framework based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination. Evidence is mounting to show that

<sup>182</sup> GMMP, *Who Makes the News?*

<sup>183</sup> The Equality Institute and UN-Women, *Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls* (New York, UN-Women, 2023).

<sup>184</sup> Spotlight Initiative, *Global Final Narrative Progress Report 2017-2023* (New York, United Nations, 2024).



where such laws are in place, they play a role in reducing rates of gender-based violence. Countries with domestic violence legislation have lower rates of intimate partner violence than those without legislation, with 9.5 per cent of women aged 15–49 experiencing intimate partner violence in the last 12 months in countries with domestic violence legislation compared to 16.1 per cent in countries without.<sup>185</sup>

172. In the 2024 national reviews, the introduction or strengthening of laws, their implementation and enforcement was a priority for States, with 90 per cent of countries reporting action in this area in the last five years, representing an increase from 83 per cent in 2019. Actions have included: expanding definitions of domestic violence to include psychological violence; increasing penalties for perpetrators; expanding the range of people protected by legislation, for example including domestic workers; criminalizing different or additional forms of violence; strengthening protection orders; reforming family law to be responsive to domestic violence; introducing positive obligations to eliminate sexual harassment and introducing new standards of consent with respect to rape.

173. A new focus for legal reform in recent years has been the criminalization of coercive control which recognizes the patterns of power and control in intimate partner violence and the impacts of psychological and financial abuse. Coercive control and psychological violence is now criminalised as a form of domestic violence and intimate-partner violence in several European Union Member States.<sup>186</sup> Further, building on the work of the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women which stated that the “[a]bsence of consent must become the global standard for definition of rape”,<sup>187</sup> there has been a growing focus on affirmative consent laws and definitions since the previous Review. A growing number of States have recently changed their definition of rape and explicitly included lack of consent as its constitutive element ([A/HRC/47/26](#)).

174. Despite this focus, there remain significant gaps in legal protection against violence against women. While at least 151 countries have taken measures to prevent sexual harassment in employment, there are gaps in protection. Only 75 countries include protection for sexual harassment in education, 39 for sexual harassment in public spaces, and 75 countries for sexual harassment online.<sup>188</sup> In some 86 countries domestic violence law does not sufficiently ensure protection from all forms of violence, such as marital rape, or does not adequately impose criminal penalties or protection orders. Only 29 countries – mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean – explicitly criminalize femicide. A further challenge for ensuring comprehensive laws to address violence against women and girls is the growth of anti-feminist movements and attacks on women’s and girls’ equal rights which are increasingly influencing decision makers and resulting in proposals for regressive laws and policies that reinforce inequality, misogyny and norms that excuse or justify violence against women and girls ([A/HRC/56/51](#)).

175. While comprehensive laws are an important starting point, their ability to keep women safe from violence hinges on effective implementation and enforcement. The lack of adequate resources and institutional barriers, patriarchal systems and gender stereotypes that are prevalent within security, law enforcement and justice institutions, and other services, remain significant challenges. Very low reporting rates indicate that women continue to experience significant barriers and lack confidence in the formal justice system. Attrition rates are most elevated in contexts where there is impunity for perpetrators, when

<sup>185</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>186</sup> Petra Jeney and others, *Violence Against Women: Psychological Violence and Coercive Control* (Brussels, European Parliament, 2020).

<sup>187</sup> United Nations, “Absence of consent must become the global standard for definition of rape, say experts”, 25 November 2019.

<sup>188</sup> World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law 2024*.

“rape myths” or other harmful stereotypes predominate, and when survivors do not receive trauma-informed support.<sup>189</sup> For women in rural and remote areas there is the additional barrier of physical distance to courts and law enforcement personnel, and in low-income contexts, courts and law enforcement often lack capacity to respond effectively and appropriately.<sup>190</sup>

176. Actions to improve access to justice were a priority for 77 per cent of States in the last five years. This focus on has been strongest in Central and Southern Asia (91 per cent) and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (86 per cent). The availability of protection orders remains one of the most common actions taken by States to enforce the law. Other common actions taken in the last five years include establishment of specialized courts or procedures, including mobile courts, for gender-based violence; free legal assistance for victim/survivors; training on violence against women and girls for investigators, prosecutors, the judiciary and law enforcement officers; guidelines or protocols for responding to violence against women for justice agencies; and strategies to improve the efficiency of court processes, such as the implementation of electronic monitoring systems. There has been an increasing focus on survivor centred and trauma-informed approaches, for example allowing victims and survivors to give evidence without having to face perpetrators. A promising development is the introduction of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches in which government agencies and specialist services work together to ensure the immediate safety of victim/survivors and ensure their access to justice.

(b) *Increasing women’s access to high quality, context-responsive support services*

177. Specialist services for women and girls who have experienced violence are key to their healing. Services should be comprehensive, well-coordinated, interdisciplinary, accessible, of good quality, sustained and multisectoral. They should also be survivor-centred, focused on women’s human rights, safety and empowerment, and designed to avoid secondary victimization (A/HRC/35/30).

178. Introducing or strengthening services for survivors of violence was a priority action for governments in responding to violence against women, with 88 per cent of States reporting action in this area in the last five years (compared to 87 per cent in 2019). States have prioritized the ongoing operation or expansion of shelters, housing options and service centres to provide access to support for women who have experienced violence; enhancing psychological and mental health support for victims/survivors; strengthening online and telephone-based support and referral services; delivering training on violence against women and girls for health and justice sectors; support for women’s economic empowerment; and the expansion of perpetrator behaviour change programs. Some States also reported on the introduction of coordination, oversight and monitoring bodies to increase coverage, consistency and responsiveness of services.

179. There has also been a focus on the provision of services in crisis contexts. Some 30 per cent of countries reported that they have focused actions on addressing violence against women and girls in humanitarian settings, with 43 per cent of States taking action to address violence experienced by refugee and displaced women. Amid the compounding crises of climate change and protracted conflicts, services must be responsive and demonstrate adaptability across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. In recent years, mobile service hubs – sometimes called one-stop centres – have enabled more expedient access to services for women who have experienced violence in such settings. These hubs house multidisciplinary teams in agile units, allowing for a rapid response in demanding circumstances. Evidence shows that these services make a difference

<sup>189</sup> UNODC, *Handbook for the Judiciary on Effective Criminal Justice Responses to Gender-based Violence against Women and Girls* (Vienna, 2019).

<sup>190</sup> Lori Mann, *Impact of COVID-19 on Women’s Access to Justice* (Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2023).

in the communities where they are located.<sup>191</sup> However, mobile service hubs should not replace more permanent, comprehensive safe spaces for women and girls.<sup>192</sup>

180. Ongoing challenges for women's access to services include a chronic lack of availability, accessibility and funding of services for victims/survivors of violence against women and girls, and the absence of an integrated approach between the provision of services and measures such as protection orders. This lack of integration between services increases women's risk of violence and the likelihood of them falling through the gaps, as well as being inefficient (A/HRC/35/30). Measures to monitor the quality of services for victims/survivors of violence against women require improvement.

181. A key challenge for service provision remains the need to be responsive to intersectionality and diversity among women and girls. Some 77 per cent of States focussed action on violence against girls, up from 62 per cent in 2019. While some 76 per cent of countries reported focusing on services for women with disabilities and 60 per cent on women in rural and remote areas, only 25 per cent reported focussing on Indigenous women, and 11 per cent on religious minority women. Examples of actions include efforts to increase access to legal support services for marginalized groups, improved training for service providers to effectively respond to marginalized groups such as women with disabilities and financial and housing support programs for at-risk women. States also increasingly recognized the need to address discrimination and stigma as part of preventing violence against LGBTIQ+ people.

(c) *Preventing violence against women and girls*

182. Preventing violence against women and girls requires addressing its root causes and risk factors. The widely accepted model of practice for prevention focusses on multi-pronged interventions at different levels – individual/relationship, community and societal – to transform unequal gendered power relations and address gender inequality as well as intersectional discrimination.<sup>193</sup>

183. Since 2019, the RESPECT women framework to prevent violence against women and girls has recommended action-oriented steps to design, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate interventions and programmes.<sup>194</sup> This is in line with other evidence-based frameworks and the international literature, which recognize that no single intervention will end violence against women and that combined and long-term strategies are more likely to be successful.<sup>195</sup> For example, a strategy to challenge harmful gender roles and stereotypes in the family will be more successful in a context where women enjoy equal property rights or public services exist to support the equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work. In this respect, there is also evidence for strategies such as women's economic empowerment and social protection measures to prevent violence against women and girls (see sect. III).

184. Globally, 75 per cent of countries reported that they introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls, compared to 67 per cent in 2019. There was significant regional variation in the attention given

<sup>191</sup> NORC at the University of Chicago, *Select Gender-Based Violence Literature Reviews: The Effectiveness of One-Stop GBV Resource Centers* (Washington, D.C., United States Agency for International Development, 2020)

<sup>192</sup> Social Development Direct, *Understanding the Core Functions and Differences between Women and Girls Safe Spaces and One Stop Centers* (London, 2022).

<sup>193</sup> UN-Women and others, *A Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent Violence Against Women* (New York, UN-Women, 2015).

<sup>194</sup> WHO and others, *RESPECT Women: Preventing Violence Against Women* (Geneva, WHO, 2019).

<sup>195</sup> The Equality Institute and UN-Women, *Together for Prevention*.

to prevention, with the greatest focus in Central and Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania (all at 91 per cent) and the least focus in Northern Africa and Western Asia.

185. Public awareness campaigns to change attitudes and behaviours was the most common action taken (81 per cent of countries reporting), followed by empowering women and girls to promote their economic independence and access to resources, and promote equitable relations within households, communities and society (75 per cent), creating safe environments including schools, workplaces, and public spaces (66 per cent), promoting positive gender-equitable attitudes, beliefs, values and norms, especially among men and boys (62 per cent). There has been a limited, but growing focus on social norm change in an effort to prevent violence (see box VIII). Very few States reported on long term and comprehensive strategies to prevent violence against women and girls.

#### Box VIII

##### **Approaches to changing discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes**

Discriminatory social norms are a powerful driver of pervasive violence against women and girls. While there has been much focus on work to change the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, there is growing evidence that to bring about sustainable and transformative social norm change, engagement is needed at the level of social institutions, notably in families and communities, and in the market and the state.<sup>a</sup> Three linked approaches are needed:

- Transforming discriminatory narratives through participatory and whole of society approaches to build consensus around egalitarian values.
- Making tangible changes in the lived realities of women and girls through legal reform, creating opportunities, and ensuring access to services.
- Strengthening feminist movements and building coalitions with other social movements and stakeholders.

Examples of countries that have brought these three approaches together, to shift discriminatory social norms include the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the provision of comprehensive psychosocial care services combined with whole of community healing from conflict-related trauma<sup>b</sup> and support for income generation for survivors and their families has changed norms governing spousal relationships, including on consensual sex, and women's role in decision-making on household resources. In India, community organising over 30 years has sought to shift discriminatory norms on girls' education and early marriage, through engaging the whole of the community to create egalitarian narratives about girls' rights, engaging with local government officials and religious leaders to ensure school attendance, and empowering adolescent girls to understand and advocate for their own rights.<sup>c</sup> In Egypt, feminist scholars and activists mobilised a diverse coalition of activists, lawyers, government officials, civic leaders, legislators, and scholars and worked with high-ranking religious leaders and officials, to promote gender equality in family laws, including the right to divorce.<sup>d</sup> Legal reform has also been crucial in Mexico, where criminalisation of intimate partner violence, accompanied by activism and media coverage of the legal reforms led to a decline in the share of women experiencing intimate partner abuse and shifting attitudes condoning violence.<sup>e</sup>

Women's sports and the arts are also important arenas to challenge discriminatory social norms and prevent violence. From the national reports, in Samoa, the "My Village, My Pride" performing arts awareness programme seeks to promote positive social norms to help eliminate gender-based violence. In Zimbabwe, traditional leaders are being empowered to address rigid gendered social norms and the adverse effects of patriarchy for boys and men, as well as for girls and women.

These are promising developments; however, further progress is needed to promote egalitarian social norms. Effective methods for evaluating long-term

interventions and methods to measure change are important to guide governments and civil society. While community-based approaches show promise, larger-scale interventions are needed to shift discriminatory social norms, and to enable women and girls to live free from violence and to enjoy the full range of their human rights.

<sup>a</sup> UN-Women, *Ideologies, Institutions and Power: Addressing Social Norms Implicated in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. A Framework for UN-Women* (forthcoming).

<sup>b</sup> Aziza Aziz-Suleyman and Simon Gasibirege, "How Change Happens: Learning from Knowledge and Practices to Address Social Norms in the Pursuit of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls in the Global South", paper commissioned by UN-Women (forthcoming).

<sup>c</sup> Rekha Wazir and Shantha Sinha, "Recasting Social Norms to Universalize Education for Adolescent Girls: The Mamidipudi Venkataramaiah Foundation Experience", UN-Women Discussion Paper, No. 44 (New York, 2024).

<sup>d</sup> Marwa Sharafeldin, "How Does Change Happen? Social Norms, Religion and Family Laws in the Middle East and North Africa Region", UN-Women Discussion Paper (forthcoming).

<sup>e</sup> Mala Htun and Francesca R. Jensenius, "Expressive power of anti-violence legislation changes in social norms on violence against women in Mexico", *World Politics*, vol. 74, No. 1 (2022).

(d) *Responding to the impact of technology on violence against women*

186. Addressing the issue of violence against women and girls that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology requires a comprehensive approach including consistent laws, regulatory frameworks and effective implementation; a focus on prevention and response from technology intermediaries; investments in better data through internationally agreed standards and measurement frameworks, as well as actions to improve transparency; and partnerships between governments, technology providers and women's rights organizations.

187. Responding to the growth of violence against women and girls that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology, 66 per cent of countries prioritized action to address technology facilitated gender-based violence in the last five years. The greatest focus has been in Central and Southern Asia and Europe and Northern America. Specifically, 76 per cent of countries have implemented awareness raising initiatives targeting the general public and education settings to sensitize young people, caregivers and educators to ethical and responsible online behaviour; 70 per cent of countries have introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions; and 49 per cent of countries have strengthened the capacity of government actors for the development of policy and legislation, and their enforcement and implementation. Less than one third of countries (29 per cent) have worked with technology providers to introduce or strengthen human rights-based design, development and deployment approaches to address technology-facilitated gender-based violence, indicating that greater efforts are needed in this area.

188. Despite these efforts, laws which address violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology continue to lack clear and consistent definitions and have not kept pace with technological developments. While there have been progress developing a standardized approach through a new statistical framework requested by the United Nations Statistical Commission, a key challenge remains the lack of globally comparable prevalence data on violence against women and girls that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology (E/2024/24-E/CN.3/2024/36). While more countries have introduced laws and strategies to criminalize violence against women and girls that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology, tensions at the intersections of the rights of digital users and the right to live a life free from violence remain a challenge. As well as enacting laws that reflect international standards, governments can also play a key role in establishing oversight and regulatory bodies to raise public awareness, ensure redress for victims, and hold content generators and content distributors accountable. Collaboration with and

investments in the expertise of women's organisations and violence against women and girls specialist services is critical to inform technology-based tools.

(e) *Addressing gender stereotypes in the media*

189. The pervasiveness of gender stereotypes and discrimination in the media remains one of the major overall challenges to preventing violence against women and girls and gender equality more broadly. This has been exacerbated through the expansion of digital spaces that mobilize anti-feminist actors and through generative artificial intelligence technologies.

190. To address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media: 57 per cent of countries have provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media, including social media; 55 per cent of countries have promoted the participation and leadership of women in the media; and 50 per cent of countries have enacted, strengthened, and enforced legal reforms to combat discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media. Less than a third of countries have supported the media industry to develop voluntary codes of conduct; introduced binding regulation for the media, including for advertising; or established or strengthened consumer protection services to receive and review complaints about media content or gender-based discrimination/bias in the media, indicating greater focus is needed in these areas.

#### **D. Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation**

191. Reflecting the persistent advocacy of global movements to end violence against women, 88 per cent of countries globally have identified eliminating violence against women and girls as one of their top five priorities for the next five years – making ending violence against women and girls the most common priority area among States. Yet rates of such violence remain alarmingly high. Deeply ingrained narratives that excuse, minimize and normalize violence persist, and rapid technological change is expanding platforms where violence against women and girl has proliferated. Three priorities for urgent action emerge from the review of implementation efforts.

*Adopt and fund national action plans to end violence against women and girls*

192. States have prioritized the introduction, implementation and enforcement of national action plans and laws on violence against women and the establishment of support services for survivors, however greater efforts are needed to ensure comprehensive and sustained implementation. Funding for implementation remains woefully inadequate, too often leaving women's organizations and civil society to fill the gaps. Civil society and women's rights organizations play a critical role yet remain underfunded. In the context of growing backlash, there is an urgent need to strengthen access to long-term, core and flexible funding to deliver services, to work on prevention and undertake advocacy.

*Ensure victims and survivors of violence against women and girls have prompt access to support and justice to end impunity, including addressing gaps in legal protection*

193. States should ensure that survivors have prompt access to support and justice, which requires the introduction of comprehensive laws addressing gaps legal protection and ending impunity, especially in addressing new forms of violence against women and girls in digital contexts. This includes legal reforms to ensure equality and non-discrimination before the law, including family law, and ensuring all institutions, including the justice system, deliver accountability for women victims and survivors of violence. States should also uphold due diligence principles to address the impact of media and technology that perpetuate

discriminatory and stereotypical portrayals of women and girls and facilitate violence.

194. Given the intensification of violence against women and girls in crises contexts, States should also continue to prioritize coordinated, conflict- and crisis-responsive services across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus for women and girls, with specific attention to the integration of health, education and social protection.

*Invest in whole-of-government and whole-of-society, evidence-based and long-term approach to prevention strategies*

195. Although more attention is being paid to prevention, overall efforts remain fragmented without enough focus on evidence-based whole-of-society approaches to changing social norms and stereotypes. States should prioritize implementing and resourcing a multi-pronged, evidence-based and long-term approach to prevention is needed to transform social norms, the unequal place of women in all public and private spheres and the unequal power relations between women and men. A focus on young men's attitudes is critical in the context of recent political polarization on the rights of women and girls. Preventing violence against women and girls requires challenging entrenched norms of male dominance in families, communities, and economic and public life, and making justice systems work for women to end impunity, and fostering norms of respect, non-discrimination and equality.

196. Developing evidence-based approaches requires addressing data gaps, including on non-partner sexual violence, violence against older women, violence against children and against women and girls with disabilities. Key priorities include investing in regular dedicated violence against women and girls surveys, improving administrative data such as police, judicial and health records, and increasing the use of non-official data sources such as citizen data and big data. Recent efforts to develop comparable measures of violence against women and girls that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology in data collection also need to be backed by adequate technical and financial resources.

## V. Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

### Key messages

- Women's representation in executive and legislative decision-making bodies has steadily increased. Since 1995, the proportion of women in parliament has more than doubled globally, rising from 11 per cent to 27 per cent today. At the current pace of change gender parity will take decades to achieve.
- Men continue to dominate decision-making across all sectors, including private and public sectors, the judiciary, peace and security, humanitarian and environmental decision-making.
- Institutional mechanisms for gender equality remain limited. Gender machineries serve as critical channels for translating women's demands into policies that promote gender equality. However, they continue to lack the authority, capacity, and resources needed to do so effectively, and growing attacks on gender machineries also undermine their role.
- Despite progress in implementing gender-responsive budgeting, public finance management for gender equality is still limited in scale and impact.
- The production and use of gender statistics has improved significantly, with 56 per cent of the 52 gender-specific SDGs indicators available in 2024, compared to 26 per cent in 2016. However, significant data gaps remain, largely due to a lack of funding.
- States have progressed actions in several areas in the last five years, but gaps

remain:

- (i) Fifty-two per cent reported introducing temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level. However, the absence of robust compliance mechanisms undermines the attainment of equal representation.
- (ii) Thirty-eight per cent reported measures to prevent and investigate cases of violence against women in public life, end impunity, and prosecute and punish perpetrators – more than double the percentage reported in the last review period. However, there remain gaps in protection and access to justice.
- (iii) Only half (52 per cent) reported that their gender machineries are provided with adequate financial resources and staff capacity to fulfil their mandates.
- (iv) Fifty-four per cent of States reported tracking the proportion of the national budget invested in gender equality, but only 26 per cent fully meet the criteria for systematically tracking under SDG indicator 5.c.1.
- (v) Only 27 per cent reported measures to protect civic space and human rights defenders, despite increasing civic restrictions and weakening accountability.

## A. Introduction

197. Equal participation, leadership, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions are essential to inclusive governance, robust functioning of democracies, and the safeguarding of women and girls' human rights. As such, women's participation in political and public life is not only a matter of justice and equality but also a key driver in leadership achieving better outcomes on health, education, childcare, infrastructure, and ending of violence against women and girls. Civil society, regional and international human rights bodies and mechanisms play a critical role by holding governments accountable to gender equality commitments and ensuring that public institutions advance the rights of women and girls in all spheres of public life. Timely gender statistics and sex disaggregated data are also critical accountability tools for informing policies and monitoring progress.

198. Despite some progress over the last 30 years, men still dominate decision-making and parity between women and men in public life remains elusive. At the same time, civic and political freedoms have deteriorated in many countries in recent years. An increasingly hostile environment for women, girls and civil society prevents them from express their views, assemble freely, create associations and participate in decision-making. This is often a prelude to a general deterioration in political situations and human rights violations.<sup>196</sup> There are increasing attacks on women in public life including women in politics, women journalists and women human rights defenders. Trends of de-democratization across the globe have continued along with an increasing opposition to gender equality, hollowing out of institutions that are important for gender equality and regression on previous gender equality policy achievements (see sect. I). In the context of the successive crises over the last five years, women have been systematically sidelined from decision-making systems and processes tasked with addressing urgent national and global challenges, including pandemics, as evidenced during the COVID-19 response.<sup>197</sup>

<sup>196</sup> United Nations, "Protection and promotion of civic space", Guidance Note (New York, 2020).

<sup>197</sup> Sabine Freizer, "COVID-19 and women's leadership: From an effective response to building back better", UN-Women Policy Brief, No. 18 (New York, 2020).



199. Normative frameworks continue to highlight the importance of women’s equal participation in decision-making at all levels of government, zero tolerance for violence against women in public life, and gender-responsive institutions as key drivers to achieving gender equality. The General Assembly, in its resolution 73/148, called on national legislative authorities and political parties to adopt codes of conduct and reporting mechanisms, or revise existing ones, stating zero tolerance for sexual harassment, intimidation or any form of violence against women in politics. The commitment to parity between women and men was reaffirmed in the agreed conclusions of the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2021 (E/CN.6/2021/L.3), urging governments to “encourage the implementation of measures and mechanisms, including appropriate mechanisms to track progress, to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender balance at all levels of elected positions.” In 2024, the CEDAW Committee adopted general recommendation No. 40 guiding States parties on reaching equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making in the public and private sectors, emphasizing parity as a core principle and a leading force for transformative change in governance. That same year, Member States recommitted to ensuring “women’s full, equal and meaningful participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in all spheres of society in the Declaration on Future Generations”.

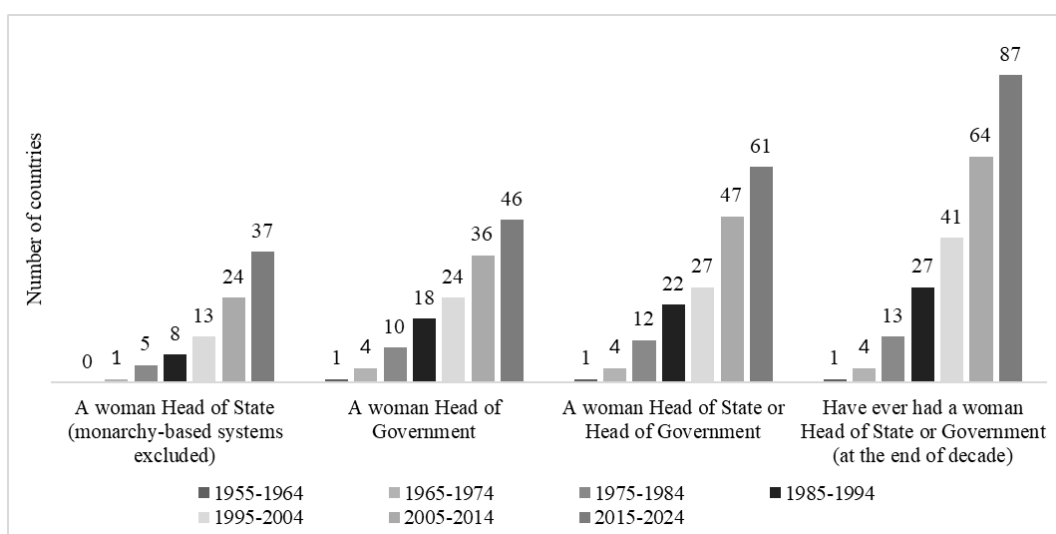
## B. Global and regional trends

*Despite some progress, women remain severely under-represented at the highest levels of political power*

200. As of 1 November 2024, women served as Heads of State or Government in only 28 countries (11 with women Heads of State, 10 with women Heads of Government and 7 with women holding both positions), compared to 8 countries in September 1995. The number of countries that have ever had a woman leader increased steadily from 27 between 1995 and 2004 to 87 between 2015 and 2024, with the largest gains observed in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa. However, the overall rate of progress remains slow (see figure VIII). Women’s under-representation at national level is reflected in global spaces too: at the opening of the General Assembly in September 2024, fewer than 10 per cent of speakers in the general debate were women.

Figure VIII

### Number of countries with a woman leader by type of position and by decade



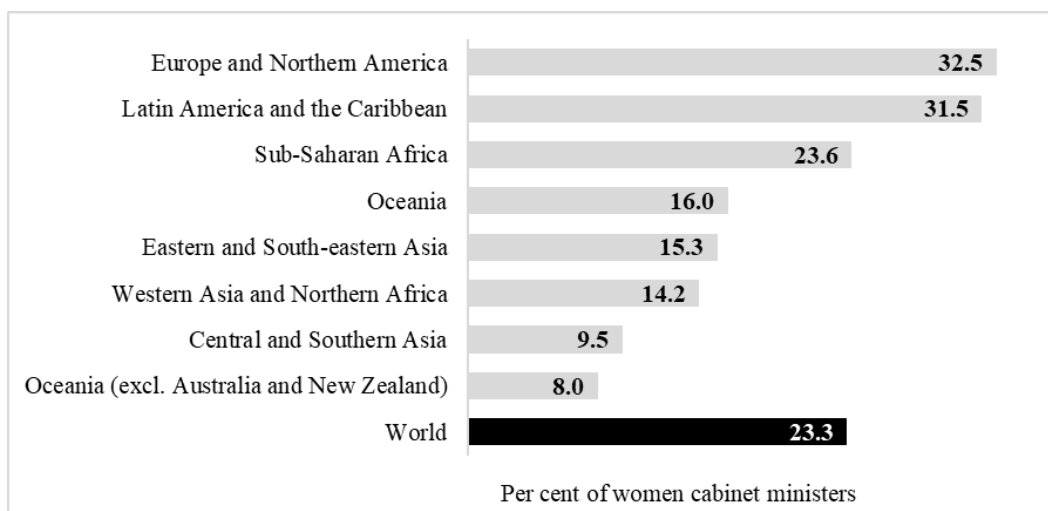
Source: UN-Women calculations based on UN-Women’s Database on Women Heads of State and Women Heads of Government as of 1 November 2024.

*Note:* In some countries, women may hold both positions of Head of State and Head of Government.

201. Globally, 23.3 per cent of cabinet members heading ministries were women as of 1 January 2024, compared to just 15 per cent in 2000. At this rate of progress, parity in cabinets will not be reached before 2077 (E/CN.6/2021/3). The share of women is higher in Europe and Northern America (32.5 per cent) and lowest in Central and Southern Asia (9.5 per cent) and in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) (8 per cent) (see figure IX). Only 15 countries had gender-parity cabinets in 2024, including 10 in Europe, three in Latin America and the Caribbean and two in sub-Saharan Africa. Cabinets in an additional 12 countries had 40 to 49.9 per cent women. At the opposite end, 31 countries (mostly from Central and Southern Asia, Oceania, and Western Africa and Northern Africa) had under 10 per cent women. Seven countries, with three in Oceania, had no women cabinet ministers.<sup>198</sup>

Figure IX

**Women's representation among cabinet members heads of ministries,  
1 January 2024**



*Source:* UN-Women's poster "Women political leaders 2024", available at [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/06/poster-women-political-leaders-2024](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/06/poster-women-political-leaders-2024), except for Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), which is based on UN-Women's Database on Women Cabinet Members as of 1 November 2024.

202. As heads of Ministries, women continue to be mostly responsible for policy agendas on gender equality, family and children affairs, and social inclusion and development, and are largely missing as heads of ministries in the areas of finance, defence, justice and home affairs, and economic policymaking areas. Gendered patterns in the allocation of ministerial portfolios are particularly prevalent in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Northern Asia and Northern Africa, and Central and Southern Asia.<sup>199</sup>

*Women's representation in national and local elected deliberative bodies has increased, but progress remains slow and uneven*

203. Since 1995, the proportion of women in parliament has more than doubled globally, rising from 11 per cent to 27 per cent today, as monitored by SDG target 5.5. However, at the current rate of progress (less than one percentage point

<sup>198</sup> See UN-Women's poster "Women political leaders 2024", available at [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/06/poster-women-political-leaders-2024](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/06/poster-women-political-leaders-2024).

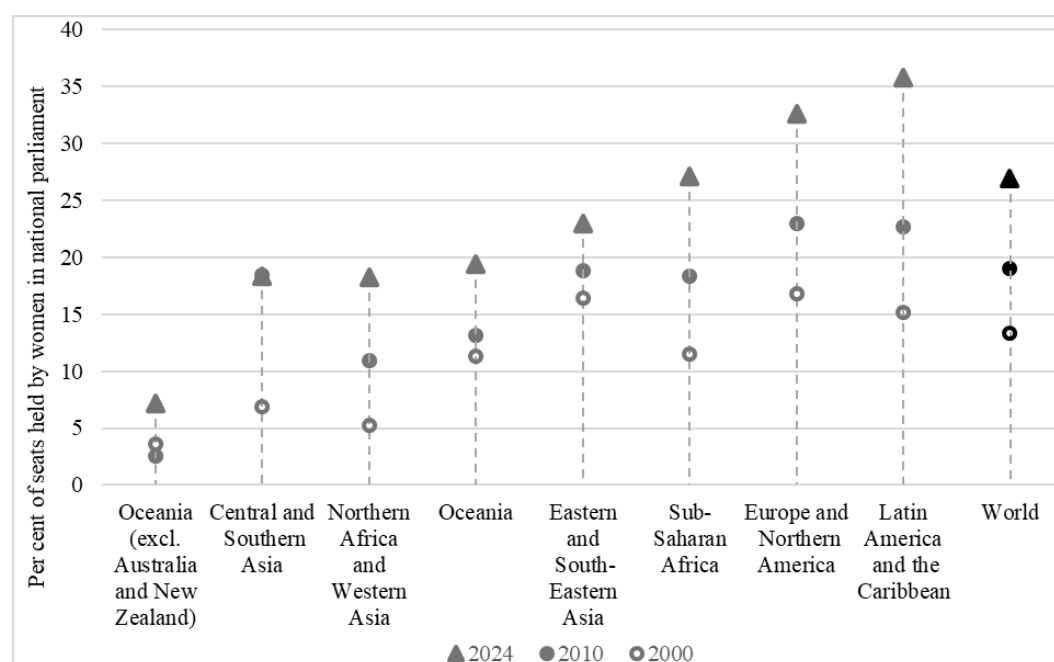
<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

increase per year), gender parity in national legislative bodies is not expected to be achieved before 2063 (E/CN.6/2021/3). In 1995, no parliament had reached parity between women and men, but by 2024, six countries had achieved this milestone. Similarly, 10 countries had no women in their single or lower houses of parliament; compared to 3 countries as of 1 October 2024.<sup>200</sup> The share of women serving as presiding officers of parliament has also tripled, increasing from 10.5 per cent in 1995 to 33 per cent today.<sup>201</sup>

204. Latin America and the Caribbean has seen the fastest progress, reaching 36 per cent women legislators in 2024, having more than doubled since 2000. On the other hand, the slowest progress in women's parliamentary representation was in the Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) and in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, where it increased modestly from 4 to 7 per cent, and 16 to 23 per cent respectively (see figure X).

Figure X

**Percentage of seats held by women in national parliaments between 2000 and 2024, by region**



Source: United Nations, Global SDG Indicators Database (accessed in November 2024).

205. Women's representation in local legislatures is higher than in national ones. As monitored by SDG target 5.5, in 2024, women held 35.5 per cent of seats in elected local deliberative bodies across 145 countries, a small increase compared to 33.9 per cent in 2020. At this rate of progress, parity will not be achieved before 2055. In 2024, only two countries reached gender parity in local governments, while 12 countries had severe underrepresentation of women, at less than 10 per cent.<sup>202</sup>

206. Regional variations are also noted for women's representation in local councils. As of January 2024, Central and Southern Asia led with 41 per cent, followed by Europe and Northern America at 37 per cent; Oceania and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia both at 31 per cent; Latin America and the Caribbean at

<sup>200</sup> See <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking/> for countries with data available.

<sup>201</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliament: 1995–2020* (Geneva, 2020); see also <https://data.ipu.org/women-speakers/>.

<sup>202</sup> UN-Women, "Global data on women's political participation", Women in Local Government. Available at <https://localgov.unwomen.org/data> (accessed in December 2024).

29 per cent; sub-Saharan Africa at 26 per cent, and Western Asia and Northern Africa at 20 per cent.<sup>203</sup>

*Men continue to dominate decision-making across all sectors*

207. Women's participation in decision-making and leadership outside of politics has not grown significantly in the last five years. In 2022, women held 27.5 per cent of managerial positions globally, despite accounting for 40.1 per cent of total employment.<sup>204</sup> In 2020, globally women made up 46 per cent of public administrators but occupy only 31 per cent of top leadership roles and just 30 per cent of senior managerial positions.<sup>205</sup> In 2021, 43 per cent of professional judges or magistrates in criminal justice institutions were women, an increase from 34 per cent in 2010 (S/2023/725). As discussed in sections VI and VII, there has been growing attention to women's participation across all areas, including peace and security, humanitarian and environmental decision-making. Decision-making in response to COVID-19 brought into sharp relief the importance of prioritising women's participation. Of the 262 COVID-19 task forces with membership data, women made up only 24 per cent of members and only led 18 per cent of 414 task forces across 186 countries. In total, just 7 per cent of task forces achieved gender parity, while 83 per cent were male-dominated.<sup>206</sup> Evidence shows that countries with strong feminist movements, stronger democracies and higher women's representation in parliaments adopted a higher number of gender-sensitive economic and social pandemic response measures than those with limited feminist movements, weaker democracies and lower women's representation. This finding holds independent of national income. Countries led by women also often implemented containment strategies more rapidly, such as testing programmes, and issued stay-at-home orders faster than male leaders, possibly resulting in lower mortality rates.<sup>207</sup>

208. In the past five years, women's civil society organisations have not only supported grassroots communities, they have also been at the forefront of movements on climate change, racial and economic justice, peace, LGBTIQ+ rights and ending violence against women.<sup>208</sup> This participation has proven essential in holding decision-makers accountable for advancing women's and girls' human rights and in monitoring the implementation of policies.<sup>209</sup> The latest global data available on feminist mobilization dates back to 2015 and signals that a quarter (32) of the 126 countries studied enjoyed the presence of the strongest, most autonomous feminist movements at the time.<sup>210</sup> However, lack of updated global, comparable data on women's and feminist mobilization since then makes it difficult to assess its current impact, recent progress and remaining gaps in this vital area of women's full and effective participation. At the same time, women's rights activists and human rights defenders continue to face increasing attacks, as well as women in public and political life.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>205</sup> UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, *Gender Equality in Public Administration* (New York, 2021).

<sup>206</sup> UN-Women and UNDP, *Government Responses to COVID-19*.

<sup>207</sup> Jennifer M. Piscopo and Malliga Och, "Effective, decisive, and inclusive: Women's leadership in COVID-19 response and recovery", UN-Women Working Paper (New York, UN-Women, 2021).

<sup>208</sup> Kaitlin Kelly-Thompson and others, "Dimensions of transnational feminism: autonomous organizing, multilateralism and agenda-setting in global civil society", *Perspectives on Politics*, 2024; Sonia E. Alvarez and others, "13 theses on feminist protest: a manifesto", *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 50, No. 1 (2024).

<sup>209</sup> Mala Htun and Laurel Weldon, *Logics of Gender Justice: State Action on Women's Rights around the World* (London, Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>210</sup> Summer Forester and others, "New dimensions of global feminist influence: tracking feminist mobilization worldwide, 1975–2015", *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 66, No. 1 (2022).

*National gender equality mechanisms continue to lack adequate mandate, authority and resources to fulfil their role*

209. The Platform for Action outlined three components to advance the critical area of concern that refers to gender-responsive institutions: the creation or strengthening of national machineries and other governmental bodies; the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into legislation, policies, programmes and projects; and the generation and dissemination of gender data for planning and evaluation. Currently, most countries have one or more dedicated gender equality mechanisms or focal points in place.<sup>211</sup> Widely diverse in institutional form, aims and structure, these are usually central coordinating units within national governments meant to promote the integration of gender equality measures across national plans, policies and programmes, and coordinate gender mainstreaming across sectoral portfolios. Gender-responsive budgeting is one component of gender mainstreaming. Institutional mechanisms for gender equality are an important conduit for enhancing democracy and are key drivers of policy advancements in key policy areas for gender equality – such as violence against women – while also championing women’s access to decision-making and gender quotas.<sup>212</sup>

210. Data for 70 countries from 1975 to 2005 suggest a statistically significant positive association between the presence of a national women’s machinery and levels of democracy.<sup>213</sup> Attacks on these mechanisms, including efforts to defund, undermine, rename, and redirect them observed in recent years attest to their relevance not only in promoting gender equality but also safeguarding rollbacks on women’s rights and democratic backsliding.

211. Despite their relevance for gender equality policymaking, no global data exists to properly monitor their authority, professional or financial capacity, and effectiveness. Regional studies however provide valuable insights suggesting that progress has been slow since the last review, and wide country variations remain a stark reality as many national gender equality mechanisms continue to lack the mandate, resources, and decision-making power to effectively implement the vision of the Platform for Action.

212. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, while 70 per cent of Latin American gender equality machineries operate at ministerial level or equivalent, as few as 11 per cent hold the same level of authority in the Caribbean.<sup>214</sup> Likewise, a 2023 comparative study of 42 countries in Europe, Central Asia and Northern America highlights sharp differences in the institutional capacities of national mechanisms across countries, as measured by the presence of full-time staff, ranging from 104 in Sweden to 4 in Ukraine.<sup>215</sup> Evidence from 11 Central African countries also points to weaknesses in their budgetary allocations, which in most cases amounted to less than 1 per cent of the national budget in 2023.<sup>216</sup> The degree to which gender equality mechanisms consult civil society partners is indicative of their efforts to empower previously excluded groups in policy making, monitor outcomes and hold policymakers to account. An emerging trend of concern in this regard has

<sup>211</sup> UN-Women, *Directory of National Mechanisms for Gender Equality May 2022* (New York, 2022).

<sup>212</sup> Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon, *Logics of Gender Justice*.

<sup>213</sup> S. Laurel Weldon, “State feminism, global feminist waves and democratic backsliding”.

<sup>214</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “Nivel jerárquico de los mecanismos para el Adelanto de la mujer (MAM)”, Observatorio de Igualdad de Género de América Latina y el Caribe. Available at <https://oig.cepal.org/es/indicadores/nivel-jerarquico-mecanismos-adelanto-la-mujer-mam> (accessed in December 2024).

<sup>215</sup> Amy G. Mazur, *Institutional Mechanisms as Critical Actors for Gender Equality: A Review from the OSCE Region* (Warsaw, OSCE/ODIHR, 2023).

<sup>216</sup> Nadège Chouapi Kouam, Hamidou Koné and Franklin Bouba Djourdebbé, *Les ministères du genre en Afrique Centrale : De l’ombre à la lumière* (Senegal, UN-Women, 2023).

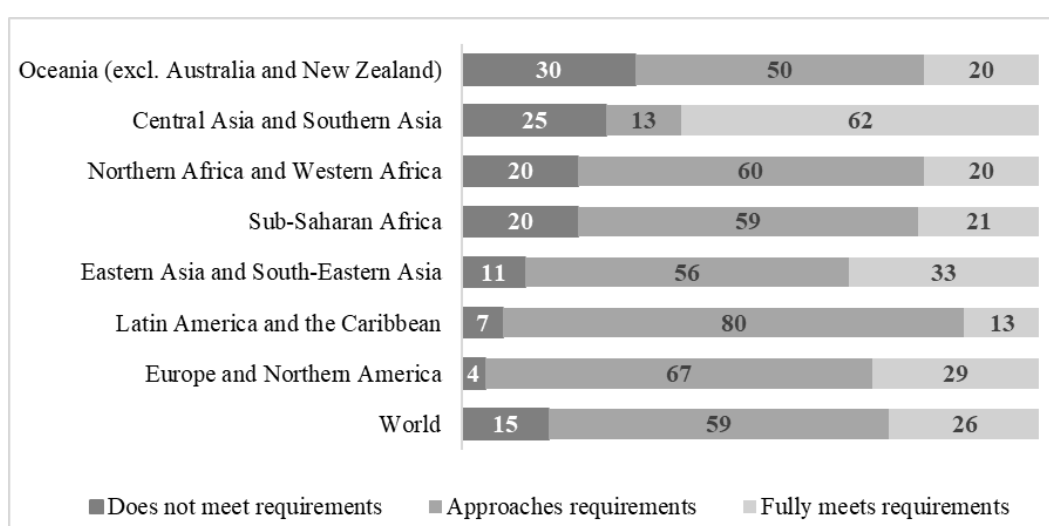
been observed in a few countries in which the space for women's rights organizations participation in state-led consultations has been restricted while new spaces have opened for regressive actors that oppose women's human rights.<sup>217</sup>

*Despite progress in implementing gender-responsive budgeting, public finance management for gender equality is still limited in scale and impact*

213. Under the SDGs framework, States are measuring progress in systematically tracking budget allocations for gender equality based on three criteria: (i) the government's intent to address gender equality by identifying whether policies, programs, and resources are in place; (ii) the presence of mechanisms to track resource allocations towards these policy goals; and (iii) the presence of mechanisms to make resource allocations publicly available for increased accountability to women and girls. As of 2021, progress has been made on all criteria, but data from 105 countries and areas shows that only 27 countries (26 per cent) fully meet the three criteria and that 62 countries (59 per cent) meet at least one (see figure XI).

Figure XI

**Proportion of countries with gender equality budget allocation tracking systems (2021, percentage)**



Source: United Nations, "Sustainable Development Goals indicator 5.c.1", Global SDG Indicators Database (accessed in November 2024).

Note: Data are derived from an assessment of country systems based on reporting on three criteria; the proportion represents the percentage of reporting countries that fully meet the three criteria.

*The production and use of gender statistics has improved significantly, along with global standards and methodologies, but critical gaps remain*

214. The use of robust data, including for SDGs monitoring, is imperative to accelerate progress towards gender-responsive, policies, laws and institutions. The production and use of gender statistics has improved significantly, with 56 per cent of the 52 gender-specific SDGs indicators available in 2024, compared to 26 per cent in 2016.<sup>218</sup> Yet, on average, countries are only halfway to achieving full capacity in planning, coordinating, producing and making gender data available, with significant variations across regions and income groups. Countries

<sup>217</sup> Conny Roggeband and Andrea Krizsán, "The selective closure of civic space", *Global Policy*, vol. 12, No. S5 (2021).

<sup>218</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*, UN-Women, "It will take 22 years to close SDG gender data gaps", 6 September 2022.

perform better in gender data production than in planning, coordinating and making gender data accessible to enable greater usage.

215. Data gaps remain a huge challenge, meaning that the realities of women and girls on various dimensions of the 2030 Agenda remain invisible. Four of the 18 indicators and sub-indicators of SDG5 cannot be fully assessed at the global level. Data, although improving, are also sparse for targets 5.a.1 (proportion of women with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land) and 5.a.2 (extent to which national legal frameworks guarantee women’s equal land rights according to law, including customary law) – less than a quarter of the Member States have data on 5.a.1 since 2000 (23.8 per cent) and just over a third on 5.a.2 (34.7 per cent), respectively. Relatively low data coverage remains also an issue for indicators 5.4.1 on unpaid care (47.2 per cent), 5.6.1 on sexual and reproductive health (35.2 per cent) and 5.b.1 on mobile phone ownership (43.5 per cent). Lack of data also persists in important areas such as on the nexus between gender equality and the environment. The limited availability of intersectional data represents a critical challenge in accurately gauging progress toward ensuring no woman or girl is left behind. For instance, only 15.0 per cent of Member States of the United Nations have data available on 5.4.1 for rural women aged 65 and older since 2000.<sup>219</sup>

216. Limited funding for gender statistics remains a key obstacle. A review of 74 countries found that, while two thirds included gender statistics in their national strategies, less than a third allocated a budget for them.<sup>220</sup> In addition, after a steady increase during the past decade, OECD-DAC funding for gender data has declined to approximately \$120 million in 2021–2022 from a peak of \$135 million in 2019–2020.<sup>221</sup> Half of all data projects supported by ODA allocate either zero or negligible amounts (less than 0.05 per cent) to gender-related activities.<sup>222</sup>

### C. Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action

217. Based on the national reports, the following policy and programmatic trends in implementation have emerged: (a) increasing women’s participation through temporary special measures and other measures; (b) strengthening commitments to tackle violence against women in politics and public life; (c) strengthening gender-responsive institutions; and (d) enhancing accountability for meeting gender equality commitments.

#### (a) *Increasing women’s participation through temporary special measures and other measures*

218. Electoral reforms and temporary special measures, including legislated gender quotas, are pivotal for increasing women’s political representation at all levels of government. Based on a 2024 UN-Women review of national legal frameworks for 193 countries, 103 countries used legislated gender quotas to promote women’s representation in elected positions in national or local legislatures,<sup>223</sup> compared to 64 countries a decade ago (E/CN.6/2015/3). Women’s political representation is higher in countries with quotas compared to

<sup>219</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2024*.

<sup>220</sup> Clearinghouse, “Making the case to domestically finance gender data: three ways the NSDS can help”, 9 November 2022.

<sup>221</sup> Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), *The PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics 2024: Ensuring Resilient Data Systems in a Changing Funding Environment* (Paris, 2024).

<sup>222</sup> PARIS21 and UN-Women, *Gender Data Outlook 2024: Unlocking Capacity, Driving Change* (New York, UN-Women, 2024).

<sup>223</sup> UN-Women calculations based on the United Nations Gender Data Portal for national legislatures (<https://genderquota.org/>) and the Women in Local Government database for local legislatures (<https://localgov.unwomen.org/>) (accessed in December 2024).

countries without quotas, by 6 percentage points in single or lower houses of parliaments and in local deliberative bodies.<sup>224</sup>

219. In the last five years, 52 per cent of States reported introducing temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level. The strongest focus on temporary special measures was in Central and Southern Asia (73 per cent), followed by sub-Saharan Africa (62 per cent), with countries in Oceania least likely to have introduced such measures (27 per cent). To ensure women's representation at the highest levels of decision-making, 23 per cent of States introduced whole-of-government or ministerial cabinet gender parity laws or policies mandating that around half of decision-making positions be occupied by women, with the strongest focus in Latin America and the Caribbean (36 per cent).

220. The types of quotas, targets set and implementing mechanisms that make a difference vary widely across countries, leading to mixed results. As of 1 January 2024, 80 countries had candidate quotas and 18 reserved seats for parliamentary elections (4 countries used both types of quotas, bringing the total of countries with quota for parliamentary elections to 94). Only 18 countries aimed for parity, setting the quota target at 50 per cent women. In 22 countries the target for women is 40 per cent and in 35 it ranges from 30 to 36 per cent. The targets are typically more ambitious for candidate quotas compared to reserved seats: all but two countries targeting 40 per cent or over women's representation do so through candidate quotas.<sup>225</sup> Similar legislated quota set ups are observed for local elections.

221. The enforcement of candidate quotas is critical to achieve the targets set in law, because without robust compliance mechanisms equal representation remains unachieved. Half of countries with candidate quotas for parliaments (41) have alternate placement rules that distribute women in equally winnable positions throughout the candidate lists. Among these, 32 use sanctions for political parties that fail to include the minimum share of women required or follow the placement rules, including 27 that mandate electoral management bodies to reject the non-compliant party lists.<sup>226</sup> In this respect, over the last five years only 19 per cent of States strengthened the implementation of existing temporary special measures by boosting compliance mechanisms, including sanctions on political parties for non-compliance. Additional measures, such as dedicated funding, capacity-building, and awareness-raising, also contribute to increased political participation. Seventy-two per cent of States reported initiatives to enhance women's opportunities for mentorship and training for leadership and political campaigning.

222. Recognizing the need to ensure the diversity of the population is reflected in decision-making, 60 per cent of States encouraged the equal political participation of all women, including young women and underrepresented groups like Indigenous women, through capacity building, skills development, sensitization and mentorship programmes (see box IX).

#### Box IX

#### **Supporting political participation for under-represented women**

Intersecting inequalities mean that overall progress on women's political participation has not necessarily lifted all women equally. While there is an absence

<sup>224</sup> UN-Women calculations based on unweighted averages of data retrieved from the United Nations Gender Quota Portal. Available at <https://genderquota.org/> (accessed in November 2024).

<sup>225</sup> UN-Women, United Nations Gender Quota Portal. Available at <https://genderquota.org/> (accessed in November 2024).

<sup>226</sup> UN-Women calculations based on United Nations Gender Quota Portal, available at <https://genderquota.org/> (accessed in December 2024).



of globally comparable data, studies show marginalized women (on the basis of ethnicity, indigeneity, rural status, income, for example) remain under-represented in political institutions.<sup>a</sup> Lifting political participation of marginalized women is critical to ensure their rights and needs are not overlooked.

A promising development in recent decades has been the evolution of quotas that support the political representation of marginalized women, for example based on ethnicity and gender.<sup>b</sup> Evidence from 37 countries shows that combining gender quotas with ethnic seats boosts the election of women from marginalized groups across different electoral systems.<sup>c</sup> While gender and ethnic minority quotas often function separately limiting their impact, some countries like Burundi and Nepal have advanced combined or “nested” quotas that specifically regulate the political inclusion of women from these groups.<sup>b</sup> As well as quotas supporting women’s political participation, in the last five years several countries reported on specific measures designed to support political participation for marginalized groups of women, including their engagement in public decision-making.

With growing representation of women from marginalised groups in elected seats,<sup>c</sup> Canada has introduced further measures to increase the representation and engagement of Indigenous women in public-decision making, including through the developments of specific agreements and accords with different Indigenous women’s groups on political engagement developed in consultation with Indigenous women. In Argentina, workshops and political training programs have been developed to empower women, including those from minority groups. In Ghana and Senegal, specific awareness programs have been introduced to enhance the representation and political participation of women living in rural areas and low-income women. In Albania, women parliamentarians engage in public hearings with marginalized groups of women, such as Roma women, to identify and address specific gender discrimination issues affecting those communities.

<sup>a</sup> Melanie M. Hughes, “Crossin intersections: Overcoming the challenges of cross-national research on the legislative representative of women from marginalized groups”, in *Political Inequality in an Age of Democracy: Cross-national Perspectives*, Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow, ed. (New York, Routledge, 2015).

<sup>b</sup> Melanie M. Hughes, “The combination of gender and ethnic quotas in electoral politics”, in *Gender Parity and Multicultural Feminism: Towards a New Synthesis*, Ruth Rubio-Marín and Will Kymlicka, eds. (Oxford, Oxford Academic, 2018).

<sup>c</sup> Stephanie Holmsten, Melanie M. Hughes and Robert Moser, “Invisibility or inclusion? Ethnic parties, ethnic seats, and gender quotas and the representation of minoritized women”, *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, vol. 45, No.2 (2023).

223. Temporary special measures play a crucial role in increasing women’s participation. By establishing higher targets and enforcing stricter regulations and oversight, the representation of women in decision-making positions can be improved. To increase the involvement of women from indigenous and minority groups, it is essential that measures are taken to enhance the political representation of these underrepresented communities in all elected and appointed offices.

(b) *Strengthening commitments to tackle violence against women in politics and public life*

224. As more women have entered public and political life, they have increasingly faced unique forms of gender-based harassment and discrimination aimed at deterring their participation and silencing their voices (see sect. IV). Acts or threats of gender-based violence not only hinder women from participating in public life but have severe consequences as they weaken public institutions, policy outcomes, and overall peace and development.<sup>227</sup> A survey of office-

<sup>227</sup> Julie Ballington, Gabrielle Bardall and Gabriella Borosvsky, *Preventing Violence against Women in Elections: A Programming Guide* (New York, UN-Women and UNDP, 2017).

holders in five countries found that one to two thirds of women elected in local governments experienced violence because of their gender and position. Women reported experiencing harassment and violence most frequently within the institutions they serve: they are deliberately excluded from official meetings and events, are prevented from accessing resources to which they are entitled to perform their duties, and are often on the receiving end of offensive, aggressive, or sexual comments and remarks. Alarming, only 9 to 20 per cent of women who experienced violence have filed formal complaints.<sup>228</sup>

225. To address violence against women in politics and public life, 38 per cent of States reported measures to prevent and investigate cases of violence against women in public life, end impunity, and prosecute and punish perpetrators – more than double the percentage reported in the last review period. The strongest response was in Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa. Specific actions included prohibiting defamatory or derogatory attacks and any acts that incite violence, hatred or intimidation against political parties and candidates, often specifically mentioning women; working with national law enforcement institutions to develop priority interventions for the prevention of gender-based violence during elections; providing incentives and support for political parties to commit resources toward ending gender-based violence before, during and after general elections; and developing policies and guidance for election administration and management bodies to address sexual and other forms of harassment. Other actions to address violence against women in politics and public life focused on the media.

226. While the focus in this area is encouraging, sustained action is needed to develop long-term and integrated institutional solutions to fully address the scale of the issue. This is particularly urgent considering newer forms of violence against women that occur through or are amplified by the use of technology in public life and politics (see sect. IV).

(c) *Strengthening gender-responsive institutions*

227. Gender machineries are essential for the strategic, coherent development, implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies, as well as the mainstreaming of gender in all national and local policies. Half of States (50 per cent) reported that the mandate of their national gender equality machineries is focused on the vision of ensuring gender equality for all and 12 per cent focused on promoting women's rights. Some 23 per cent of States included gender equality as part of the mandate of protecting families and children, suggesting that there is a growing trend of diluting the focus on gender equality. The absence of data on the features of gender machineries, and other aspects of gender mainstreaming such as budget allocation, is a barrier to monitoring and accountability on the state of gender-responsive institutions.

228. Similarly to the previous review, States also reported establishing gender directorates, commissions, and focal points at the regional and municipal levels, to improve inter-sectoral coordination, as well as the design and implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies and action plans at the subnational level. These mechanisms typically focus on the systematic and coordinated implementation of gender policies, ensure women's representation and support their continuous participation in elected bodies.

229. Successive reviews of the implementation of the Platform for Action have highlighted resources and capacity of national gender equality machineries as a key impediment to their effectiveness. Only 52 per cent of States reported that their gender machineries are provided with adequate financial resources and staff capacity to fulfil their mandates and that their budget, as a proportion of the overall government budget, increased in the reporting period (50 per cent).

<sup>228</sup> UN-Women, *Global Project on Violence Against Women in Politics Data* (forthcoming).

However, further analysis of the narrative reports reveals gaps in fully reporting gender budgets and significant regional disparities in funding for gender machineries as a share of national budgets. Budgets allocated to national gender machineries are less than 1 per cent of national budgets in some countries in sub-Saharan Africa and are around 10 per cent in some countries in Europe. Improving transparency of budgets allocated to gender machineries and their expenditure can provide valuable insights on the volume of funding for gender equality, priority activities and interventions and gaps in funding.

230. Ninety per cent of States reported integrating gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a key priority in their sustainable development national plans, acknowledging their mutually reinforcing role. Additionally, 89 per cent of States reported having a national action plan for gender equality, with 53 per cent indicating that the plans have been costed and provided with sufficient resources in the current budget – an increase of 16 percentage points compared to the previous reporting period. Some States reported promising approaches such as aligning national plans with global commitments, including CEDAW and the SDGs, coordinating with national human rights institutions in the drafting process and taking steps to ensure the active participation of civil society and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of these plans.

231. Across regions, national action plans have primarily focused on mainstreaming gender through state policies and activities, prioritizing the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls and gender-based discrimination. Other common commitments include increasing women's employment, improving their access to social services, and promoting their economic empowerment; achieving parity and equality in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural spheres; as well as reviewing and reforming discriminatory laws and policies. Reports also indicate that States are increasingly taking steps to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls. The integration of gender equality and women's rights in foreign policies have been a growing focus for States over the last five years (see box X).

#### Box X

##### **Integrating gender equality in foreign policies**

In the last decade, a growing number of States have adopted gender-responsive foreign policies, including feminist foreign policies. While the areas of focus vary depending on national and regional contexts, the main focus is the mainstreaming of gender equality and the human rights of women and girls within ministries of foreign affairs, and through regional, bilateral and multilateral engagements. Policy commitments typically include the increased allocation of resources towards gender equality objectives including through official development assistance; support for women's leadership; and the integration of gender considerations in international development, and climate action; the promotion of women's equal and meaningful representation in decision-making; and gender-responsive institutional reforms within ministries of foreign affairs. Several countries also prioritize the women, peace, and security agenda as part of their foreign policy objectives (see sect. VI). Mexico, for instance, reports rolling out in 2021 a national action plan to follow up on resolution 1325 on women, peace and security by promoting the substantive participation of women in conflict prevention.

States also report the integration of gender equality into their trade policies, including through the introduction of dedicated gender clauses in free trade agreements, to ensure that the benefits of inclusive trade and economic development contribute to women's economic empowerment and broader gender equality goals. Chile's feminist foreign policy prioritizes the inclusion of gender chapters in free trade agreements and internationalization programs for women's businesses. Canada's

feminist foreign policy applies to all areas of international engagement, including trade and economic relations and is being implemented through a set of complementary international policies, programs, and initiatives. A strategic priority of Iceland's foreign policy is to make provisions for gender mainstreaming in international agreements on trade.

Developed countries are also articulating priorities in foreign policies, often through specific targets, to use financial investments, including bilateral aid and allocations to civil society organizations and multilateral institutions, to advance gender equality and broader inclusive development efforts. Several States also recognize the pivotal role of local organizations in promoting women's rights and gender equality through initiatives such as enhancing access to essential services in humanitarian and conflict-affected settings, advocating for climate issues and supporting gender equality partnerships. While these efforts have important potential to promote gender equality, more effort is needed to bridge gaps between aspiration and implementation and ensure accountability for action (see section VI). To further advance gender-responsive foreign policies, including feminist foreign policies, there is a need for quality data, gender mainstreaming across all areas of foreign policy, strong institutional mechanisms and improved collaboration among various stakeholders including feminist movements and civil society groups at both regional and global levels.

232. A small increase from the last review, 54 per cent of States reported that they track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting). However, according to the indicator tracked for the SDGs, as noted in figure XI, only 26 per cent of countries fully meet the criteria for systematically tracking the proportion of their budget allocated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This suggests that while the focus on gender-responsive budgeting is increasing, efforts are needed to embed a comprehensive approach.

233. States are using a variety of approaches to track their expenditures on gender equality commitments, including through incorporating gender considerations in accounting systems, developing relevant guidelines, and training budget officers in line ministries. Some countries have adopted legislation mandating gender-responsive budget management in all phases of the financial management cycle, including at the local level. Others have anchored gender budgeting in their constitution and list gender equality among the fundamental principles that must guide public finance management. Other initiatives include developing or incorporating gender-sensitive markers, classifying actions according to their degree of gender sensitivity and tracking their respective budgets. However, fewer States conduct outcome-oriented impact assessments and implementation audits or gender-responsive budgeting analyses of line ministries. Capacity constraints in gender analysis, a lack of connection between strategic planning and budgeting processes and gaps in the production and use of sex-disaggregated statistics and gender data remain key challenges. Accelerated efforts to develop and refine such systems are urgently needed for increased transparency and accountability on funding commitments and allocations for gender equality. Exploring capacity-building partnerships can accelerate progress in this regard.

234. To inform the formulation and monitoring of gender equality policies and programmes, States continue to prioritize the collection of data disaggregated by sex. Specifically, 44 per cent of States have reported that they have prioritized new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability), and 43 per cent have used more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and 35 per cent have established an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics. Where the least action was reported

was in efforts to improve administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps (16 per cent).

235. There have been important advances at the international level to support States in the production and use of gender statistics. UN-Women's Women Count programme has supported States by financing critical data collection, integrating gender statistics in national plans and strategies, fostering collaboration and coordination for gender statistics at all levels of government, improving accessibility of gender statistics and regularly monitoring the gender-related SDGs and national policies. Since its inception, the programme has supported over 90 surveys and other data collection initiatives. The data has been used in over 40 countries, including to influence 18 policies, spanning care work, violence against women, gender and the environment and constitutional amendments. The global gender data ecosystem has also expanded into new areas such as citizen data, which is created or collected by individuals or civil society organizations and has the potential to empower marginalised groups to monitor challenges and advocate for change.<sup>229</sup>

236. Despite these promising developments, the availability of gender data is not sufficient to inform all areas of gender equality policies. Examples remain concentrated in recognised areas such as those relating to violence against women and girls and unpaid care and domestic work policies and programmes, and less in areas such as research, national monitoring and evaluation and to inform budget allocation decisions.<sup>230</sup>

(d) *Enhancing accountability for meeting gender equality commitments*

237. In addition to formal institutions, the inclusive, meaningful and transparent participation of civil society is paramount for increased accountability for meeting gender equality commitments. Reflecting an increase from the previous review, 86 per cent of States reported that civil society organizations participate formally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Platform for Action and almost 79 per cent also indicated that women's rights organizations formally participate in the implementation of the Platform. However, as noted earlier, the broader context of resistance and backlash, including the dismantling of participatory spaces for civil society, undermines the effective monitoring and implementation of gender equality policies (A/HRC/56/51).

238. Despite the growing recognition of the critical role women human rights defenders play, advocating for accountability, claiming and reclaiming civic space, civil and political rights, and democracy around the world, efforts to protect them remain limited. Only 30 per cent of countries globally report measures to protect civic space and human rights defenders, despite increasing civic restrictions and weakening accountability. Some promising policy tools and mechanisms that have been reported in this review period by States on strategies to protect women human rights defenders and their organizations, including the adoption of early warning systems that identify risks and threats to their safety. Other States have targeted programmes that are developed, implemented and monitored by multi-sectoral mechanisms and guarantee the prevention of threats and risks, the protection of women human rights defenders, and their access to justice and redress. Overall, however, there was limited information on States efforts to protect women human rights defenders, signalling greater attention needed in this area.

<sup>229</sup> See, for example, the Collaborative on Citizen Data (<https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/citizen-data/>), led by the United Nations Statistics Division and UN-Women, and The Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data ([https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session\\_55/documents/BG-4c-CGD\\_Framework-E.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_55/documents/BG-4c-CGD_Framework-E.pdf)).

<sup>230</sup> PARIS21 and UN-Women, *Gender Data Outlook 2024*.

239. National human rights institutions, which have been established in 123 States, are playing a growing role in monitoring and responding to violations of women's rights. They can monitor States' compliance with gender equality commitments, collect individual complaints of discrimination, develop thematic reports and, in some cases, conduct investigations into individual complaints. Reflecting an increase from the previous review, 62 per cent of States reported that these institutions have a mandate to focus on gender equality or gender-based discrimination. To meet international human rights obligations, 70 per cent of States reported having a plan in place to follow up on recommendations of the CEDAW Committee and the universal periodic review, with a clear outline of assigned tasks, entities involved, a concrete timeline, and appropriate indicators to monitor progress. However, very few States reported on whether and how national legislation and policies are aligned with the recommendations of the review processes.

240. When women's rights claims are not addressed at the national level, global human rights mechanisms play a key role in providing an avenue for accountability. States accountable for the realization of women's human rights in all areas. From January 2020 to October 2024, the CEDAW Committee received 90 State party reports, issued 92 concluding observations, and received 68 State party follow-up reports. Under the follow up procedure (between November 2019 and October 2022), the Committee considered that: 7 per cent of the recommendations identified as follow-up items had been implemented; 10 per cent had been substantially implemented; 54 per cent had been partially implemented; 22 per cent had not been implemented. Under the individual communications procedure and confidential inquiry procedures of the Optional Protocol to the Convention (between January 2020 and October 2024), the Committee found violations under the Convention in 23 cases covering a wide range of issues and conducted 2 inquiries.<sup>231</sup>

#### **D. Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation**

241. While there have been important improvements in women's participation in decision-making bodies, particularly in political institutions, the pace of change remains unacceptably slow especially at the highest levels of executive and legislative power. This is particularly the case for women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. At the same time, national women's machineries play a fundamental role in the strategic, coherent development, implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies, as well as the mainstreaming of gender in policies and strategies, but they remain under-funded and without the mandate to fulfil their role. Despite important advances in gender-responsive budgeting, comprehensive approaches do not exist across the board. In addition to these gaps, the broader context of democratic erosions and increasing attacks on women's human rights defenders points to a widening accountability gap for gender equality. Five priorities for urgent action emerge from the review of implementation efforts.

*Accelerate gender parity in national and local government by applying temporary special measures*

242. Legislative and policy measures are needed to accelerate improvements in women's representation. Wider use of well-designed quotas aiming for 50-50 gender parity and robust implementation mechanisms, as well as support for under-represented women to engage in politics is crucial. Consistent legislative and policy measures that address violence against women in politics and public life as infringement of women's human rights, hold perpetrators accountable, and

<sup>231</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)/CEDAW Secretariat, OHCHR/Petitions Team, "CEDAW statistics update after 89th session", email to authors, 11 November 2024.

enable women's access to justice and services are also urgently needed. Institutional changes are also required, including internal policies, procedures, and practices, so that public institutions and political parties uphold standards of safe conduct and gender-inclusive principles, and deliver policies and outcomes in accordance with international and regional commitments to gender equality and prevention of violence against women.

*Ensure strong national gender equality machineries with a clear gender equality and women's human rights mandate*

243. States should ensure national machineries have a clear mandate, status and authority, as well as sufficient human and financial resources, to lead gender equality laws and policies, and gender equality mainstreaming across all areas, along with open, inclusive and participatory processes so that women's rights organizations can influence and monitor gender-responsive laws and policies. Efforts to establish globally comparable, robust data on the role, focus and budgets of national gender equality machineries is required, as well as research into their effectiveness.

*Implement a comprehensive approach to gender-responsive budgeting across all sectors*

244. States should ensure linkages between strategic planning and budgeting processes and prioritize the production and use of gender data to inform gender-responsive budgeting. Accelerated efforts to develop comprehensive approaches to gender-responsive public finance management are urgently needed for increased transparency and accountability on funding commitments and allocations for gender equality.

*Increase the production and use of gender statistics to inform actions and monitor progress on gender equality*

245. Collective action and engagement of key actors in the gender data ecosystem are needed to ensure that gender statistics play their full part in achieving gender equality and the empowerment and rights of all women and girls. Persistent data gaps, broken links between gender data production, access and use, irregular funding, and underdeveloped mechanisms for collaboration need to be tackled for transformative, impactful gender data systems. States should prioritize and significantly increase their investments in gender statistics to fill data gaps. In addition, communities around national gender data systems need to be fostered to build accountability and spur progress across dimensions of gender data capacity, and to increase the use of gender data, more systematic engagement across sectors and stakeholders is needed to activate gender data users and unlock the plurality of gender data use and impact.

*Create safe and enabling environments for women's rights organizations, and significantly increase flexible funding for such organizations, to hold decision-makers to account*

246. Strengthening accountability for gender equality requires safe and enabling environments for women's rights organizations to hold decision-makers to account with robust laws and policies safeguarding women human rights defenders. This also requires increasing long-term, core and flexible funding to women's rights organizations.

## VI. Peaceful and inclusive societies

### Key messages

- Over the last five years, violent conflicts and humanitarian crises have intensified to unprecedented levels, affecting more people than ever before. In 2023, more than 170 armed conflicts were recorded, and approximately 612 million women

and girls lived within 50 kilometres of these conflicts, more than 50 per cent higher than just a decade ago.

- Conflict and crisis significantly hinder progress for women and girls, in addition to impacting the essential services crucial for their wellbeing. The latest data shows that over one third of maternal deaths occur in 48 fragile and conflict-affected countries. The prevalence of child, early and forced marriage in fragile States is twice the global average.
- Human rights violations and violence against women in contexts of conflict and crisis remain widespread. Despite growing needs, prevention efforts, services and justice for survivors remain inadequate. Political violence against women in conflict settings is also on the rise.
- Despite strong evidence that women's participation in peace processes strengthens outcomes, women's exclusion remains the norm.
- Implementation of global women, peace and security commitments has been undermined by a lack of accountability, inadequate funding, as well as increasing military spending, contributing to a culture of militarism. Global military expenditure has continued to increase reaching an all-time high of \$2.44 trillion per year, double of the military spending in 1995.
- States have progressed actions in several areas in the last five years, but gaps remain:
  - (i) One hundred and eleven countries and territories have adopted national action plans on women, peace and security. However, based on the responses to the survey, only 28 per cent of States reported increasing their budgetary allocations to this area of work.
  - (ii) Forty-three per cent reported adopting gender-responsive approaches to humanitarian action and crisis response, a slight increase from 40 per cent in 2019. A key innovation in recent years has been the growth of humanitarian response plans that integrate actions across three cross-cutting areas of gender equality: women's economic empowerment, gender-based violence, and sexual and reproductive health.
  - (iii) Only three per cent reported taking steps to reduce excessive military expenditures or control the availability of armaments, and only one per cent have reallocated funds from military spending to social and economic spending, including for gender equality and the empowerment of women, a decline from five per cent in both areas in 2019.
  - (iv) Similar to 2019, 59 per cent reported promoting and supporting women's meaningful participation in peace processes. However, these actions are largely limited to peripheral meetings rather than actual decision-making processes.

## A. Introduction

247. Over the last five years, violent conflicts and humanitarian crises have intensified to unprecedented levels, affecting more people than ever before. The pushback against human rights, particularly women's human rights, is a common thread in the spread of conflict, violent extremism and authoritarianism (S/2024/671). Misogyny, defined as hostile sexist attitudes and support for violence against women, is strongly correlated with support for violent extremism.<sup>232</sup> The broader context of backlash against women's and girls' rights and the weaponization of misogyny by armed actors, including after

<sup>232</sup> Elin Bjarnegård, Erik Melander and Jacqui True, *Women, Peace and Security: The Sexism and Violence Nexus* (Stockholm, Folke Bernadotte Academy, PRIO and UN-Women, 2020).



unconstitutional changes of government and coups has also undermined progress on women, peace and security commitments.

248. Structural gender inequalities are at the foundation of norms that justify violence as a legitimate way to resolve conflict, fuelling cultures of militarisation around the world.<sup>233</sup> Pre-existing gender inequalities are exacerbated in times of conflict and crisis, with devastating impacts for women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights, including high levels of violence against women. As such, overall progress on gender equality is significantly slower in conflict and crisis affected countries. Women's equal leadership and participation in all aspects of peace processes is critical for improving and strengthening peace processes and outcomes, and improving the effectiveness and outcomes of humanitarian action. The Platform for Action recognized that creating peaceful and inclusive societies requires addressing the structural drivers of conflict, in particular inequality, discrimination, militarism and the arms trade.

249. Building on the policy guidance provided in the Platform for Action, the normative framework on women, peace and security, humanitarian action and the rights of refugees has continued to expand. Between 2015 and 2023, more than 65 per cent of Security Council decisions explicitly included gender-related issues, compared to 32 per cent in the previous fifteen years. However, the average has been trending down in the last two years and reached 58 per cent in 2023, the lowest in seven years. Overall, there has been growing attention to women, peace and security and innovations in the working methods of the Security Council, including more women from civil society briefing the Security Council. Since 2016, the Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security<sup>234</sup> has provided a space for regular consultations between Council experts and the United Nations on urgent concerns in country-specific situations. Despite these advances, the Security Council has struggled to cope with the challenging peace and security environment and to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter, including on situations such as the wars in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sudan and Ukraine.

250. The Human Rights Council and the CEDAW Committee are increasingly paying attention to the links between gender equality, women's human rights and peace. CEDAW's general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post conflict situations (2013) has provided an additional channel for Member States to report on their progress. In September 2024, during the General Assembly high-level week, several governments announced that they invoked the dispute settlement clause in article 29(1) of CEDAW in the face of the extreme repressions of the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan.<sup>235</sup> The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls has called for the codification of gender apartheid as a new crime in international law, including in negotiations on the draft convention on crimes against humanity ([A/HRC/56/51](#)).

251. In 2023, in an effort to advance gender parity in peace decision-making, the United Nations supported an initial minimum target for mediation and peace processes for women to be one-third of participants to be achieved through the adoption of special measures, targets, and incentives ([S/2023/725](#)). The 2024 Pact for the Future recognizes that the full, equal, safe and meaningful participation of women in decision-making at all levels of peace and security, including conflict prevention and resolution, is essential to achieve sustainable peace.

<sup>233</sup> Soumita Basu and Catia C. Confortini, "Weakest "P" in the 1325 Pod? Realizing conflict prevention through Security Council resolution 1325", *International Studies Perspective*, vol. 18, No. 1 (2017).

<sup>234</sup> Established by Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015).

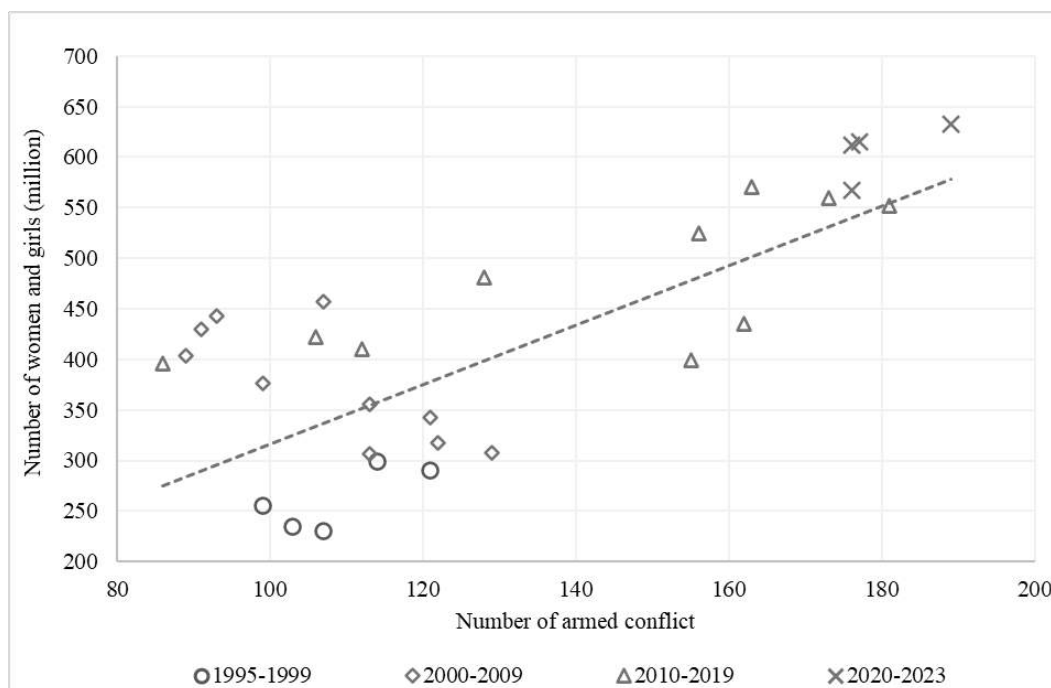
<sup>235</sup> Rangita de Silva de Alwis, "Groundbreaking efforts to protect Afghan women's rights under CEDAW", 26 September 2024.

## B. Global and regional trends

*Conflicts and crises have intensified in recent years, with more women and girls affected*

252. According to the 2024 Global Peace Index (GPI), the average level of global peacefulness deteriorated for the fifth consecutive year.<sup>236</sup> In 2023, more than 170 armed conflicts were recorded, and approximately 612 million women and girls lived within 50 kilometres of these conflicts, an increase of 54 per cent compared to 2010 (see figure XII). Civilian deaths in armed conflicts surged by a staggering 72 per cent in 2023 compared to 2022, and the proportion of women killed doubled during the same period (S/2024/385). At the end of 2023, an estimated 117.5 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict and violence, representing a 73 per cent increase over the past five years (S/2024/671). Half of the forcibly displaced population are women and girls, and two in five are children. Women also account for a larger share of the adult stateless population (53 per cent).<sup>237</sup>

Figure XII  
**Number of armed conflicts and number of women and girls living within 50 kilometres of those armed conflicts, 1995–2023**



Source: Peace Research Institute Oslo's calculations based on Uppsala Conflict Data Program's Dataset Download Center (accessed in June 2024).

253. The growing climate crisis is also exacerbating existing tensions and economic, political, social and environmental risks (see sect. VII), with gendered impacts, potentially resulting in livelihood losses, resource competition, displacement, migration, and volatile food prices and availability. These risks can

<sup>236</sup> Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Peace Index 2024: Measuring Peace in a Complex World*, (Sydney, 2024).

<sup>237</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Global Trends in Forced Displacement in 2023* (New York, 2024). Population for which demographic data (sex and age) is available accounts for 70 per cent of the world's forcibly displaced people estimated by UNHCR.

undermine social cohesion, peace and security, while also reversing progress in sustainable development.<sup>238</sup>

*Conflict and crisis significantly hold back progress for women and girls, and there are growing attacks on essential services*

254. Conflict and crisis hold back progress for women and girls on a range of economic and social indicators, such as their access to food, education and health, particularly in contexts involving societal and economic collapse, loss of infrastructure, and restrictions on movement. Conflict and crises, as well as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, have contributed to the higher prevalence of violence against women, ranging from intimate partner violence, violence against women who are active in the public sphere, and sexual violence perpetrated by combatants as a tactic of war (see sect. IV).

255. In countries affected by conflict and humanitarian crises, progress for women and girls is held back due to the breakdown of basic infrastructure and public services. A concerning recent trend has been the increase in attacks on civilian infrastructure, education and health. Between 2022 and 2023, over 3,300 attacks on health facilities were reported in 19 countries with humanitarian emergencies, resulting in at least 2,700 deaths and injuries.<sup>239</sup> Such attacks deprive people of essential health care for traumatic injuries, chronic and infectious diseases, and malnutrition, as well as rendering maternal and paediatric healthcare inadequate or non-existent.<sup>240</sup> Between 2022 and 2023, approximately 6,000 attacks were reported on schools, universities, students, and educators, including instances of conflict parties using educational facilities for military purposes. These attacks on education surged by nearly 20 per cent in 2022–2023, as compared to the two years prior.<sup>241</sup>

256. In humanitarian crises, women and girls face the worst impacts of the breakdown of essential services, as their basic needs are often compromised first. In the Syrian Arab Republic, half of the 63 active emergency obstetric and newborn care centres face closure, severely impacting 1.3 million women. In South Sudan, maternal mortality rates are highest in the world, and yet cuts to midwifery training programmes pose grave consequences for those giving birth without trained workers. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 4 out of 5 girls went without essential support to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.<sup>242</sup>

257. The latest data shows that over one-third of maternal deaths worldwide occurred in 48 fragile and conflict-affected countries. Between 2015 and 2020, the maternal mortality ratio (maternal deaths per 100,000 live births) in conflict-affected countries reduced from 424 to 370, a decline of 14 per cent. This compares to a global decline of 227 to 223 globally, representing a 1.8 per cent decrease.<sup>243</sup> The rate of decline in conflict countries is faster than in non-conflict countries, but starting from a much higher baseline.

258. Women and girls in conflict settings face heightened mental and physical health risks. A May 2024 survey in Rafah, Gaza, revealed that over 80 per cent of

<sup>238</sup> United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and others, *Gender, Climate and Security: Sustaining Inclusive Peace on the Frontlines of Climate Change* (New York, 2020).

<sup>239</sup> UN-Women calculations based on WHO, Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care. Available at <https://extranet.who.int/ssa/Index.aspx> (accessed in November 2024).

<sup>240</sup> Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition and Insecurity Insight, *Critical Condition: Violence against Health Care in Conflict 2023* (Baltimore, 2024).

<sup>241</sup> Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, *Education Under Attack 2024* (n.p., 2024).

<sup>242</sup> United Nations, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2025. Abridged Report* (New York, 2024)".

<sup>243</sup> UN-Women calculations based on WHO, Maternal Mortality: Levels and Trends 2000 to 2020, Trend in MMR (<https://mmr2020.srhr.org/data>).

women and girls reported feelings of depression, 66 per cent were not able to sleep, and over 70 per cent had heightened anxiety and nightmares.<sup>244</sup> Similarly, a 2023 survey of Ukrainian refugee mothers in Poland showed that over 60 per cent experienced high or severe levels of distress.<sup>245</sup> Women and girls in conflict settings are also particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases due to displacement, loss of infrastructure, disruptions in healthcare systems, disease control programmes, and the supply chain of safe water, food, and medication.<sup>246</sup>

259. Progress in girls' education is hampered in crisis and conflict-affected countries (see sect. III). Today, an estimated 122.4 million of school-age girls and adolescent girls are not in school and more than a quarter of these are in conflict- or crisis-affected countries. In 2015 the upper secondary out-of-school rate for girls was 52 per cent for conflict-affected countries, compared to 32 per cent globally. In 2023, this has only closed marginally to 48 per cent for conflict-affected countries, compared to 30 per cent globally.<sup>247</sup> Lower rates of girls' education (particularly at secondary level) are correlated with rises in child, early and forced marriage. During conflict and crises, when rates of sexual violence escalate, this risk increases (see sect. IV). The prevalence of child, early and forced marriage in fragile States is twice the global average.<sup>248</sup>

*Violence against women in contexts of conflict and crisis remains widespread, and political violence towards women is on the rise*

260. Recent data indicates that sexual violence remains widespread. The number of United Nations verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence in 2023 surged to 3,688 cases, higher by 50 per cent than the year before, and among them, the cases in which women and girls were victims increased by 53 per cent.<sup>249</sup> While data remain scarce, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), noted that where reporting on weapons is available, 70 to 90 per cent of incidents of conflict-related sexual violence involve a weapon, in particular firearms.<sup>250</sup>

261. Political violence and hate speech targeting women is a concern in conflict and crisis-affected countries, including high levels of violence and harassment against women leaders, peacebuilders, human rights defenders, and voters and candidates in elections. Between May 2022 and April 2023, OHCHR documented 140 incidents of reprisals and intimidation for cooperation with the United Nations, affecting at least 108 women and girls (UNW/2024/2). Data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project show that in 2023, women and girls were the main targets in more than 3,000 political violence events worldwide, and nearly half took place in 32 conflict-affected countries with data (see figure XIII). The growth of such events targeting women in conflict-affected countries has increased faster than the rest of the world.

Figure XIII

### **Number of incidents of violence targeting women, 2020–2023**

<sup>244</sup> UN-Women. "Intensified military operations will bring increased death and despair for Rafah's 700,000 women and girls", 6 May 2024.

<sup>245</sup> United Nations, "Survey reveals war's 'immense' mental health toll on Ukrainian refugee mothers in Poland", 19 May 2023.

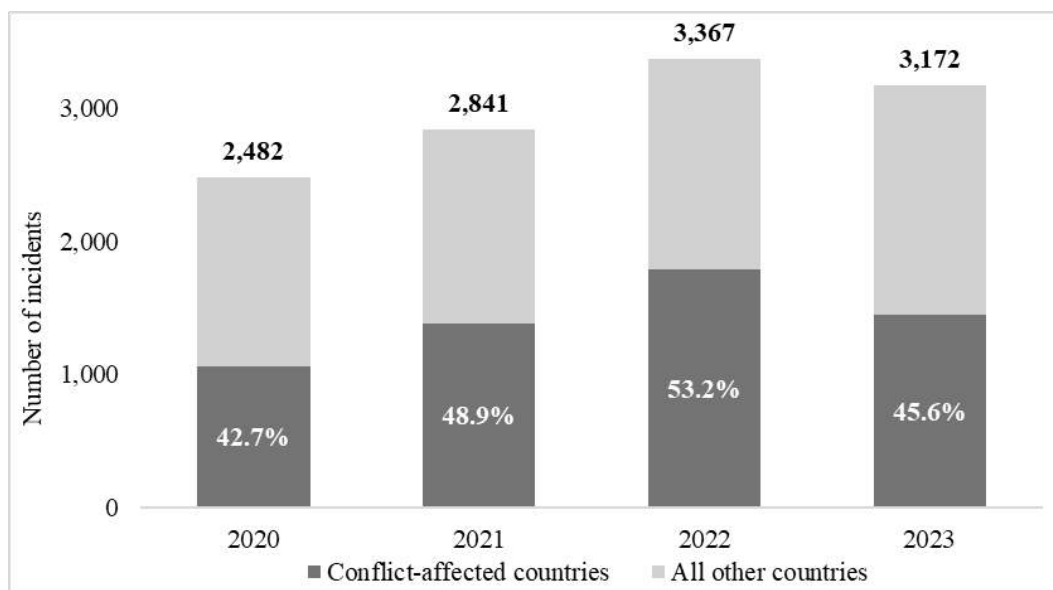
<sup>246</sup> Valia Marou and others, "The impact of conflict on infectious disease: a systematic literature review", *Conflict and health*, vol. 18, No. 27 (2024).

<sup>247</sup> UN-Women calculations based on UNESCO, Education Estimates Database. Available at <https://education-estimates.org/out-of-school/data/> (accessed in December 2024).

<sup>248</sup> UNICEF, "Global polycrisis creating uphill battle to end child marriage", 2 May 2023.

<sup>249</sup> United Nations, "Factsheet: 2023 Report of the Secretary-General on CRSV", 21 April 2024; United Nations, "Factsheet: 2022 Report of the Secretary-General on CRSV", 10 July 2023.

<sup>250</sup> Hana Salama, *Addressing Weapons in Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: The Arms control and Disarmament Toolbox* (Geneva, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research [UNIDIR], 2023).



Source: ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (accessed in September 2024).

#### *Women's exclusion from peace processes remains the norm*

262. Despite evidence of the contribution that women make at various stages and levels to resolve conflict and negotiate peace,<sup>251</sup> exclusion rather than inclusion has remained the norm in formal peace processes. Preliminary data from over 50 peace processes, indicate that in 2023 women on average made up only 9.6 per cent of negotiators, 13.7 per cent of mediators and 26.6 per cent of signatories to peace agreements and ceasefire agreements. The proportion of women signatories drops to 1.5 per cent if Colombia's agreements are excluded (S/2024/671). This marks little progress since the last decade and in a number of processes women were locked out of formal talks all together.

263. In addition, the rise in the number of conflicts worldwide has not been followed by a similar rise in the number of peace agreements. The multiple active conflicts in 2023 that were not resolved have contributed to the devastating harms experienced by women, girls and civilians at large. Out of 31 agreements reached in 2023, only 8 (26 per cent) included explicit references to women, girls, gender or sexual violence, a drop from 28 per cent in 2022.<sup>252</sup>

#### *Global commitments are being undermined by increasing military spending, contributing to a culture of militarism*

264. The Platform for Action acknowledged the inextricable relationship between achieving gender equality, peace and reducing military expenditures, controlling the availability of armaments, and promoting non-violent forms of conflict resolution. Yet, the implementation of global commitments on disarmament have been stymied with increasing military spending, continued spread of small arms and light weapons, development of new weapons, use of technology-based and chemical weapons with impunity and growing tensions between nuclear armed rivals (S/2019/800). Military spending deprives public budgets for social spending which is critical to achieving gender equality. Global military expenditure increased in 2023 for the ninth consecutive year, reaching an all-time high of \$2.44 trillion. This represented an increase of 6.8 per cent in real

<sup>251</sup> UN-Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*.

<sup>252</sup> Laura Wise, *Gender References in Peace Agreements in 2023* (Edinburgh, The Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform, 2024). This excludes local agreements, classified as intrastate/local in PA-X Gender Peace Agreements Database (<https://peaceagreements.org/wsearch>).

terms from 2022, approximately double the level in 1995, when the Platform for Action called for a reduction in military spending.<sup>253</sup>

*Funding for women, peace and security and humanitarian action fails to match the scale of the challenge*

265. There remains a significant gap to close on financing for women, peace and security commitments. The share of bilateral allocable ODA provided by the OECD-DAC with gender equality objectives dropped from 45 to 42 per cent after a decade on the rise. A similar share is observed in bilateral allocable ODA to contexts experiencing fragility. In 2021–2022, it stood at \$47.7 billion on average per year. Of that amount, \$20.5 billion (44 per cent) included gender equality objectives. However, only \$2.5 billion (5 per cent) was dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective.<sup>254</sup>

266. The recognition of the vital role women’s organizations and movements play in conflict and crisis-affected contexts is not matched by increased access to direct, flexible and sustainable funding. Bilateral allocable ODA supporting feminist, women-led and women’s rights organizations and movements in conflict-affected countries remained at a low level of \$142 million (less than 1 per cent of bilateral aid to conflict-affected contexts) on average per year in 2021–2022, a decrease from \$191 million in 2019–2020.<sup>255</sup>

267. Between 2021 and 2023, a rise in gender-based violence-related needs has prompted the United Nations to increase its funding requests to Member States for this issue by approximately 40 per cent. But, in 2023, only 26 per cent of total requirements of gender-based violence protection were met, making up only one per cent of humanitarian aid spending.<sup>256</sup> As crises worsen, many humanitarian organizations are facing unprecedented funding shortfalls. As of November 2024, the gap between humanitarian funding requirements and available resources stands at \$29.8 billion.<sup>257</sup>

### C. Action taken by States to implement the Platform for Action

268. Based on the review of the national reports, trends in implementation emerge in three areas: (a) ensuring gender-responsive conflict and crisis policies to promote gender equality and inclusive societies (b) supporting women’s leadership and decision-making in conflict resolution and humanitarian action; and (c) protecting women’s human rights in conflict and crisis. These areas are strongly interlinked as women’s participation, for example, depends on them being free from violence; relief, recovery and prevention of conflict requires both women’s participation and protection.

(a) *Ensuring gender-responsive conflict and crisis policies to promote gender equality and inclusive societies*

269. National action plans (NAPs) on women, peace and security have been a key vehicle through which women’s participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery has been facilitated. NAPs have helped to generate important progress in several contexts, including facilitating recruitment of women into the security sector; promoting women in key decision-making positions in

<sup>253</sup> SIPRI, “Trends in world military expenditure”, SIPRI Fact Sheet April 2024 (Stockholm, 2024).

<sup>254</sup> OECD, *Development Finance for Gender Equality 2024*.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), “Global Sector Overview 2023”, Financial Tracking Service. Available at <https://fts.unocha.org/global-sectors/summary/2023> (accessed in November 2024).

<sup>257</sup> OCHA, “Global Sector Overview 2024”, Financial Tracking Service. Available at <https://fts.unocha.org/global-sectors/summary/2024> (accessed in November 2024).

peacebuilding and conflict resolution; providing information to women about how to protect their rights and security; and the passage of new laws on sexual violence.<sup>258</sup>

270. As of December 2024, 112 countries and territories had adopted NAPs on women, peace and security. Some 70 per cent of States integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning, and monitoring frameworks. However, only 28 per cent of States reported increasing their budgetary allocations to this area. Most NAPs contain little or no information on financing mechanisms, and few allocate funds specifically for monitoring and evaluation of progress.

271. There is growing recognition of the urgent need to integrate gender equality and women's rights into humanitarian responses. At global level, UN-Women joined the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the highest-level humanitarian coordination forum in the United Nations system in 2022, affirming a strengthening of the United Nations system's commitment to incorporating a gender lens in humanitarian coordination.<sup>259</sup> Some 43 per cent of States reported adopting gender-responsive approaches to humanitarian action and crisis response. Specific actions included: supporting women's participation in decision-making; providing economic, income and housing support targeted to women; supporting women's and girls' access to health services and providing services responding to gender-based violence.

272. In the past five years, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of humanitarian response plans that integrate actions across three cross-cutting areas of gender equality priorities: women's economic empowerment, gender-based violence, and sexual and reproductive health. In 2020, this averaged 54 per cent of humanitarian response plans analysed, rising to 83 per cent in 2022.<sup>260</sup> There have also been improvements in the percentage of humanitarian country teams with deployed capacity on gender equality; in the inclusion of women-led local organizations in humanitarian plans; and the timely publication of gender analyses in crisis-affected settings. Despite these efforts there remain gaps and challenges (see box XI).

#### Box XI

##### **Addressing the needs and priorities of refugee and displaced women and girls in humanitarian action**

Existing gender inequality and discrimination exacerbate vulnerabilities of affected women and girls when a displacement happens. Displacement often causes loss in property, assets and livelihoods, reduced access to health care, education and other basic services, and significantly erodes their protection. This heightened vulnerability raises risks of violence, trafficking and sexual abuse. Even though local women's organizations play key roles in humanitarian efforts in hosting communities, they are often left on the sidelines of humanitarian decision-making with limited access to funding.

In order to address the needs and priorities of displaced women and girls, the following approaches are crucial:

- Strengthening gender data and analysis: Disaggregated data (by sex, age, nationality and other characteristics) and analysis are critical to formulate evidence-based refugee policies, frameworks, and response plans that

<sup>258</sup> Caitlin Hamilton, Nyibeny Naam, and Laura J. Shepherd, *Twenty Years of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans: Analysis and Lessons Learned* (Sydney, The University of Sydney, 2020).

<sup>259</sup> UN-Women, *IASC Gender Accountability Framework Report 2022* (New York, Inter-Agency Standing Committee [IASC] and UN-Women, 2023).

<sup>260</sup> UN-Women, *Gender Accountability Framework Report 2020* (New York, IASC and UN-Women, 2021); UN-Women, *IASC Gender Accountability Framework Report 2022*.

effectively address the needs of refugee women and girls and at-risk population groups.

- Capacity building of refugee women, women in host communities, and local organizations led by women: Refugee women are underrepresented in the decision-making processes of response planning and implementation mechanisms. Local women's organizations should be supported to meaningfully participate in humanitarian decision-making, conflict prevention, peace building and social cohesion, including by building their leadership and advocacy skills.
- Social and economic inclusion and empowerment of refugee women: Interventions such as livelihood assistance, second chance learning, skills development opportunities, vocational training, and job placement are indispensable for refugee women to graduate from short-term livelihood assistance and build sustainable livelihoods to promote their socio-economic integration and social cohesion.
- Addressing statelessness of women and children: Women and girls are often targets of discrimination in legal frameworks and excluded from formal registration and documentation processes, such as by being excluded from passing their nationality to spouses and children or registered as the dependent of a male family member rather than an autonomous individual. Reforms are needed to ensure nationality rights which are central to women's status as equal citizens, equality in the family, and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Source: UN-Women, *UN-Women Humanitarian Strategy (2022-2025). In Brief* (New York, 2023).

273. Among States, one of the main areas of innovation in the past five years is the adoption of feminist foreign policies (see sect. V). These have important potential to promote gender equality. To be effective, more effort is needed to bridge gaps between aspiration and implementation, to integrate diverse geographical perspectives informing feminist foreign policies, to improve coherence across all areas of foreign policy and to drive transformative change, including a reduction in military spending as envisioned by the Platform for Action.<sup>261</sup>

274. Similar to the last review, few States reported on efforts to integrate women's economic empowerment into conflict and crisis recovery plans and policies and the economic needs and contributions of conflict-affected women are still absent from many peace agreements and immediate and long-term recovery and reconstruction plans. Women's economic security and access to public services is critical for the realization of women's human rights and wellbeing, for the recovery and resilience of families, communities and societies, and for the creation of peaceful and inclusive societies. In a survey of almost 13,000 women in 15 conflict-affected countries, livelihood assistance was identified as the most urgent need.<sup>262</sup>

275. The prevention of conflict is a founding principle of the United Nations. One indicator of efforts by States to challenge militarism would be reductions in military spending to ensure compliance with international norms and frameworks. Only three per cent of States reported taking steps to reduce excessive military expenditures or control the availability of armaments, and only 1 per cent have reallocated funds from military spending to social and economic spending, including for gender equality and the empowerment of women, down from 5 and

<sup>261</sup> UN-Women, *Gender Responsive Approaches to Foreign Policy and the 2030 Agenda: Feminist Foreign Policies 2023* (New York, 2023).

<sup>262</sup> Emily Janoch and others, *Women in War: Leaders, Responders and Potential* (n.p., Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, 2024).



3 per cent, respectively in 2020. As countries took extraordinary fiscal measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, military spending still outpaced pandemic-related spending in much of the world, particularly in conflict-affected countries.<sup>263</sup>

276. Just over one third of countries reported integrating a gender perspective into the prevention and resolution of armed conflict, a similar level to the previous review. Examples of specific actions include mediating and resolving community, interpersonal or tribal disputes before they escalate into conflict; negotiating between armed actors at the local level to halt the escalation of intercommunal tensions to broker ceasefires or create civilian safe zones; coordinating humanitarian and relief initiatives; monitoring post-conflict elections; and implementing peace education programmes. A challenge remains that these efforts are often local, inadequately funded and often disconnected from conflict-resolution efforts at national and regional levels where women are still marginalized and under-represented.

277. Recognizing, supporting and funding women's local prevention and peacebuilding efforts also strengthens conflict analysis and early warning systems. This has been the aim of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which has supported more than 1,300 local women's organizations in crisis-affected countries since 2016.<sup>264</sup>

*(b) Supporting women's leadership and decision-making in conflict resolution and humanitarian action*

278. Women's meaningful and substantive participation has the potential to improve and strengthen peace and humanitarian processes and outcomes. In cases where women are signatories to peace agreements (which is an indicator of their substantive participation in the negotiations), on average the agreements last longer than in cases where they were not. Further, women signatories are often linked to women's civil society groups, which are critical for bringing gender equality issues into the process and ensuring their implementation.<sup>265</sup>

279. Women's participation in transitional justice processes and international justice mechanisms remains key to addressing gender inequality, building and sustaining peace and promoting long-term recovery and healing. For instance, including women's voices in providing an official record of the past, acknowledging harms and often deeply gendered forms of human rights violations, and providing them with access to justice, has the potential to build a shared pathway toward reconciliation.<sup>266</sup>

280. Fifty-nine per cent of States reported promoting and supporting women's meaningful participation in peace processes, similar to the previous review. This figure increases to 69 per cent for conflict and crisis affected countries. Specific actions to support women's participation include: convening spaces for women's mobilization around peace talks, setting up funding mechanisms to support women's inclusion, appointing women to mediation and facilitation teams, capacity building, developing guidance tools and providing opportunities for networking to ensure that women are ready and able to participate in peace

<sup>263</sup> UN-Women, *Comparing Military and Human Security Spending: Key Findings and Methodological Notes* (New York, 2022).

<sup>264</sup> Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, "The Invest-In-Women Global Campaign", n.d.; United Nations, "Women, Peace and Security", Climate Security Mechanism. Available at <https://www.un.org/climatesecuritymechanism/en/essentials/women-peace-and-security#:~:text=Women's%20Peace%20and%20Humanitarian%20Fund&text=Since%202016%2C%20it%20has%20supported,across%2044%20conflict%2Daffected%20countries>, n.d.

<sup>265</sup> Jana Krause, Werner Krause and Pila Bränfors, "Women's participation in peace negotiations and the durability of peace", *International Interactions*, vol. 44, No. 6 (2018).

<sup>266</sup> Pilar Domingo, "Transitional justice and the women, peace and security agenda", ODI Thematic Note (London, ODI, 2022).

negotiations. Some States have also advocated with conflict parties to improve the gender balance of their delegations.

281. Since the last review, there has been an increase in States reporting action to support women's participation and leadership in humanitarian action. Sixty per cent of States reported promoting and supporting women's meaningful participation in humanitarian crisis and response activities, compared to 43 per cent five years ago. This figure is at 62 per cent for conflict and crisis affected countries. Data from annual IASC Gender Accountability Framework Reports point to improvement in consulting with women's organizations in humanitarian contexts, while gaps remain. In 2023, 85 per cent of humanitarian contexts reported held at least one consultation with local women's organizations a part of the annual humanitarian planning process, marking a steady improvement from previous years (starting from 56 per cent in 2018).

282. While a significant number of States report supporting women's participation, these actions are largely focused on meetings on the margins of decision-making processes at global, regional, and sub-regional levels. At the national and community-level, networks of women mediators do report impact in addressing local conflicts and community tensions, including brokering local ceasefires, humanitarian access, or the release of prisoners. Some countries report supporting the United Nations' efforts to promote women's participation, whether through independent delegations, reserved seats, minimum targets, and other conditions and incentives for the structure of peace negotiations, as well as funding for women's organizations or the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. A promising approach in the African Union is the development of a framework to set a minimum quota of women's representation in these processes, aligned to the United Nations' commitment globally.

283. The structural barriers to meaningful participation of women and women's organizations need to be addressed. As well as removing economic, social and practical barriers to women's participation and creating safe spaces, States and relevant parties also need to design peace processes that provide opportunities for other actors to participate or influence and that have enabling conditions and incentives to support women's participation. This could include setting quantifiable, time-sensitive commitments to ensure women's direct and meaningful participation, application of temporary-special measures, and provision of logistical support and earmarked funding, such as the recommended minimum 15 per cent of mediation support, towards inclusive and gender-responsive processes ([S/2023/725](#)).

(c) *Protecting women's human rights in conflict and crisis*

284. A comprehensive approach to responding to violations of women's human rights in conflict includes implementing a survivor-centred approach to preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence that seeks to empower survivors and considers intersecting inequalities; ensuring that survivors have access to justice and a range of services and support including HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive care and services, access to emergency contraception and timely abortion care and legal services; and a gender-responsive security sector and effective oversight and accountability mechanisms, including specialized units to address sexual violence ([S/2024/292](#)).

285. Attacks and reprisals against women human rights defenders have become more common. In the last five years, 30 per cent of States reported actions to protect civil society and women's human rights defenders. Specific actions included expediting applications for asylum, temporary relocation or protected status, making rapid and flexible funding available for the protection of women peacebuilders and human rights defenders at imminent risk, providing political support to activists and peacebuilders and publicly condemning attacks against them. One common way States have stepped up their efforts in this area has been

by increasing funding to specific programmes to support them, including with protection, enhancements to digital and physical security, and relocation. In the last two years, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund has supported 582 women human rights defenders and their 1,647 dependents across 24-crisis-affected countries, with more than half of them supported with livelihood and relocation costs (S/2024/671). However, many women human rights defenders still report that their most reliable source of direct support is other human rights defenders and women-led civil society organizations, which is not a sustainable solution.

286. Fifty-four per cent of countries (69 per cent of conflict and crisis-affected countries) reported strengthening the capacity of security sector institutions on human rights and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse. Actions include undertaking barrier assessments identifying obstacles to women's participation in national security sectors, implementing and adjusting recruitment targets and policies, including changes in eligibility, accommodations, equipment, child-care, and outreach strategies. Other efforts have focused on preventing sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and conflict-related sexual violence, promoting awareness of gender equality and human rights issues among security actors, or strengthening oversight and vetting mechanisms. These efforts have resulted in a modest increase in women's representation in the security sector, and in deployments to peacekeeping operations. In the first-ever United Nations report on the status of women in defence sector, the proportion of women in the armed forces rose from 11 per cent in 2016 to 14 per cent in 2022 among the countries that responded to the survey.<sup>267</sup>

287. Over a third of countries (37 per cent) reported strengthening the institutional capacities of the justice system, including transitional justice mechanisms, as part of conflict and crisis response. In many cases, this is a continuation of longstanding initiatives to increase women's participation in the justice sector, enhance the awareness and guidance of professionals across the justice chain, or strengthen and expand the availability of mechanisms dedicated to these crimes, including the deployment of mobile courts in countries with little judicial infrastructure outside main cities. These efforts have also yielded important innovations in recent years, resulting in growing attention to a broad range of gender-based harms, including gender-based persecution, reproductive violence, crimes on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as the use of universal jurisdiction to bring a measure of justice to victims of atrocities (see box XII). While some countries report providing reparations for victims of gender-based crimes, particularly conflict-related sexual violence, this tool of redress continues to be under-utilized.

#### Box XII

##### **Addressing reproductive violence and obstetric harm in war**

There is growing attention on the lack of investigation and accountability for reproductive violence, including forced pregnancy, sterilization, abortion, or contraceptive use, restricting access to reproductive care and services, and destroying essential reproductive healthcare infrastructure. Despite clear prohibitions in international criminal law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law, these distinct harms affecting women and girls, often in brutal and fatal ways, almost always elude accountability, and are often omitted from documentation and investigation efforts.<sup>a</sup> At the same time, comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare and services are not always viewed as life-saving and essential by all actors or included in the initial phase of humanitarian responses.

<sup>267</sup> United Nations, *Towards Equal Opportunity for Women in the Defence Sector* (New York, 2024).

The destruction of reproductive health care infrastructure in conflict contexts, for example, has brought into sharp relief this gap in international justice, and its threat to the lives of hundreds of thousands of women. In Gaza, an estimated 180 labour deliveries take place every day amid bombings and displacement, most of them without access to anaesthetics for caesarean sections, water or postpartum care.<sup>b</sup> In Sudan, most victims of rape were unable to access the post-exposure prophylaxis or emergency contraception within the first 72 hours, and some victims were denied an abortion because it was outside of the timeline allowed for by law.<sup>c</sup> In Ukraine, prior to 24 February 2022, 20 medical service points and maternity hospitals were providing assistance to gender-based violence survivors, and less than two months later only nine such facilities were operational due to the damage from hostilities and staffing shortages.<sup>d</sup> In the Syrian Arab Republic, only a minority of pregnant women in displacement camps are able to access obstetric and prenatal care. Girls as young as 12 have become pregnant and given birth after being forced to marry.<sup>e</sup> In Yemen, women have limited or no access to reproductive health and postnatal care as a result of years of conflict and restrictions on women's mobility imposed by armed groups. Consequently, every two hours, a woman dies in childbirth from preventable causes.<sup>f</sup>

There are some signs of increased attention at the international and national level. In 2021, the International Criminal Court issued its first conviction for forced pregnancy, and in 2023 the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in Colombia opened a "macro case" to investigate reproductive violence, among others. Another promising development is the conviction, a world first, for the crime of forced pregnancy in a national court in the Democratic Republic of Congo as part of the charges of crimes against humanity against an armed group leader.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Global Justice Center and UN-Women, *Documenting Reproductive Violence: Unveiling Opportunities, Challenges, and Legal Pathways for UN Investigative Mechanisms* (New York, UN-Women, 2024).

<sup>b</sup> WHO, "Women and newborns bearing the brunt of the conflict in Gaza, UN agencies warn", 3 November 2023.

<sup>c</sup> S/2024/671, para. 42.

<sup>d</sup> S/2022/740, para. 43.

<sup>e</sup> Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, *Gendered Impact of the Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on Women and Girls* (n.p., 2023).

<sup>f</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Yemen* (New York, 2024); United Nations, "Motherhood on the brink in Yemen", 26 March 2021.

<sup>g</sup> S/2024/671, para. 70.

288. Alongside access to justice, comprehensive services for survivors of violence, including safe spaces, healthcare, and psychosocial support are essential to meet immediate needs, and enable recovery and long-term well-being. Forty-four per cent of countries reported increasing access of conflict-affected, refugee or displaced women to violence prevention and protection services, including establishment of safe spaces in refugee camps and specialized centres to coordinate the provision of physical, sexual and mental healthcare services, peer support and case management, with language interpretation provided in some contexts. There has been a growing focus on victim identification and services for trafficked women and girls (see sect. IV).

#### D. Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation

289. In a world that has become markedly less peaceful over the past five years, the persistent under-representation of women in decision-making arenas where war and peace are decided is an ongoing threat to peaceful and inclusive societies. At the same time, women remain at the frontlines of crises demanding parties to conflict to silence the guns, disarm, and respect international law. Despite these

calls, the world is seeing rising militarization and conflict, a steady erosion of international legal obligations, and challenges to multilateralism. Three priorities for urgent action emerge from the review of implementation efforts.

*Strengthen financing and implementation of national action plans on women, peace and security, and fund local women's organizations in conflict settings*

290. Increased political support is needed to ensure that all adopted plans are fully financed for effective implementation at national and local levels, and codified into national law. This also requires stronger coordination between various ministries, departments, and agencies to implement gender budgeting and to monitor and report on the plan. As well as increasing financing for women, peace and security commitments, this also requires action to reduce military expenditures and ensure compliance with international norms and frameworks, with greater allocation of resources to the implementation of women, peace and security commitments and investments in economic and social policies and infrastructure that advance gender equality (S/2024/671).

291. Donors should also prioritize accessible and flexible funding for diverse and local women's organizations in conflict settings. This includes making more flexible funding accessible for women's organizations working on more sensitive and contested issues, such as sexual and reproductive rights and transformative strategies to combat the dominant discriminatory gender norms and narratives. In 2023, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund launched a campaign endorsed by the Secretary-General to mobilize new financing for 3,500 local women's organizations by the end of 2025, as well as the protection of women human rights defenders. The Gender Equality Acceleration Plan also commits to raise \$300 million for women's organizations in conflict and crisis settings over the next three years through existing financing mechanisms, such as the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

*Ensure women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security and humanitarian action, including through the adoption of targets and quotas*

292. Women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security and humanitarian action must be the norm. In 2023, the United Nations committed to advocating for and supporting an initial minimum target of one-third of participants in mediation and peace processes being women, while aiming for parity, including through the adoption of special measures, targets, and incentives, and this commitment should be matched by States. A similar approach should be applied to increase women's representation at all levels in government bodies and decision-making mechanisms, especially those working on peace and security matters, the security sector and humanitarian action. The enforcement of minimum quotas and other targeted measures can help move the needle faster, as progress in this area has been slow.

*Embed accountability mechanisms on peace and security and monitor systematic violations of women's rights in conflict-affected countries*

293. States should embed accountability mechanisms to their own policies and frameworks on peace and security and monitor systematic and gross violations of women's rights in conflict-affected countries in human rights platforms, like the Universal Periodic Review and the Committee to End Discrimination Against Women, and international courts, such as the International Criminal Court or the International Court of Justice. Building on the international jurisprudence on conflict-related sexual violence, recent attention to a broader spectrum of women's and girls' experience of war, from reproductive violence to gender-based persecution, should be supported by States and deliver consequences for perpetrators, from sanctions to sentences, and relief for survivors, whether in the form of justice, reparations, services, or asylum. There is also a need to protect

the work of women peacebuilders and women's human rights defenders who are particularly vulnerable in contexts of conflict and crisis.

## VII. Environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building

### Key messages

- Environmental and climate crises have intensified over the last 30 years, disproportionately affecting women and girls. Rising greenhouse gas emissions, largely produced by burning fossil fuels, are more than 60 per cent higher than 1990.
- Climate change, environmental degradation and related disasters magnify existing gender inequalities and pose unique and urgent threats to their rights, livelihoods, health, and wellbeing. In the worst-case climate scenario, an additional 158 million women and girls could be pushed into poverty by 2050. More than a quarter of women globally, or over one billion women, lacked access to safely managed drinking water services in 2022.
- Women's participation and leadership makes for stronger and more effective environmental and climate policymaking and governance, but women continue to be under-represented at all levels.
- Women and girls, often from rural, local and indigenous communities, are at the forefront of environmental and climate action and advocacy, risking their lives and livelihoods as environmental human rights defenders, with little protection, support, resources and funding.
- States have reported increased actions across many areas in the last five years, but gaps remain:
  - (i) More than half (53 per cent) reported that they introduced or strengthened gender-responsive laws and policies on disaster risk reduction and climate and environmental resilience, up from 39 per cent in 2019. However, only 56 per cent of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans prepared under the Convention on Biological Diversity, mention women or gender. The lack of financing of gender-responsive policies also remains a challenge.
  - (ii) Seventy per cent have taken steps to strengthen women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management, up from 61 per cent in 2019. Yet, threats and violence against women environmental human rights defenders have reached alarming proportions.
  - (iii) Globally, 48 per cent reported taking action to increase women's access to land, water, energy and other natural resources, an increase of 10 percentage points compared to 2019. 28 per cent of States have taken steps to value women's indigenous and local understandings and approaches to nature and environmental and climate action, up from 23 per cent in 2019.
  - (iv) Even though the proportion of States that have taken steps to ensure that women benefit equally from decent jobs in the green economy has increased from 27 to 34 per cent between 2019 and 2024, more is needed to equal opportunity and access.

### A. Introduction

294. The Platform for Action emphasizes that environmental degradation affects all, but particularly women's and girls' poverty, health, and livelihoods, and that of rural and Indigenous women most of all. It further notes that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, especially in industrialized countries, are at the root of global environmental degradation, poverty, and inequalities.

295. Thirty years later, the triple planetary crisis – climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – has accelerated and intensified, highlighting the urgency for environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation. Historic patterns of unsustainable production and consumption undergird the triple planetary crisis, exemplified by the exploitation of land and resources, destructive dependency on fossil fuels and wealth accumulation, principally by industrialized countries. Because the crisis exacerbates underlying gender inequalities, women and girls are disproportionately affected, especially those in situations of poverty, food insecurity, health risk, lack of sustainable water and energy, precarious livelihoods and facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.<sup>268</sup> Importantly, the 2030 Agenda makes an integral link between the achievement of all SDGs and gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (E/CN.6/2022/3). However, achieving the SDGs by 2030 appears highly unlikely, with growing global inequalities and the environmental and climate emergencies of particular concern.<sup>269</sup> As such, ensuring a focus on gender equality in the key transitions of food systems, energy access and affordability and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution will be pivotal for accelerating impact across the SDGs.

296. Since 2020, States have continued to make normative commitments to integrate gender equality and women’s rights in environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building. The sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women was devoted to this issue; and the Agreed Conclusions of the sixty-fifth, sixty-sixth and sixty-eighth sessions of the Commission (E/CN.6/2021/L.3, E/CN.6/2022/L.7, E/CN.6/2024/L.3) called for gender-responsive strategies, policies and programmes to address environmental and climate challenges and to build the resilience of women and girls and their communities, including through the provision of sustainable energy and water, land and resource security and gender-responsive just transitions.

297. The landmark 2021 Human Rights Council resolution 48/L.23/Rev.1 recognizes the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including respect for gender equality and the rights of environmental human rights defenders. Subsequently, the 2022 General Assembly of the United Nations resolution 76/300 on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment affirms the importance of gender equality, gender-responsive climate and environmental action, women’s and girls’ full, equal and meaningful participation, leadership and decision making, and women as managers, agents of change and defenders of natural resources and the environment. General recommendation No. 39 (2022) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women asserts Indigenous women’s and girls’ right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; their free, prior and informed consent before authorizing extractive and climate mitigation and adaptation projects on their lands and territories; and their meaningful and effective participation in environment and climate decision making. The Declaration on Future Generations also recognizes the rights of Indigenous peoples in relation to their lands and ecosystems.

298. As well as advances on environmental human rights, the movement for the rights of nature has gained momentum with the international recognition of the rights of nature and the rights of Mother Earth, along with protection of environmental human rights defenders, in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022 (CBD/COP/DEC/15/4). This framework also includes a dedicated target on

<sup>268</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “Summary for policymakers”, in *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Hoesung Lee and José Romero, eds. (Geneva, 2023).

<sup>269</sup> United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024* (New York, 2024).

gender equality: ensure gender equality and a gender-responsive approach for biodiversity action.<sup>270</sup> At the regional level, the Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted in Escazú, Costa Rica in 2018, entered into force in April 2021. It is the first agreement to include explicit provisions to prevent the criminalization of environmental human rights defenders.

## B. Global and regional trends

*Environmental and climate crises have intensified over the last 30 years*

299. Rising greenhouse gas emissions, largely produced by burning fossil fuels, are more than 60 per cent higher than when international climate negotiations began in 1990.<sup>271</sup> Extractive industries are responsible for over 55 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions and over 90 per cent of biodiversity loss.<sup>272</sup> Human pressures are pushing one million species to extinction in the coming years, with the catastrophic risk of losing 30–50 per cent of all species by 2050.<sup>273</sup> Pollution is closely linked to and magnifies climate change and ecosystem destruction.

300. Those least responsible for climate change and environmental degradation are often the most adversely affected.<sup>274</sup> The climate impacts of high-income countries are ten times more per capita than those of low-income countries.<sup>275</sup> Least developed countries and small island developing states, among the most vulnerable to climate change, contribute only 3.3 per cent and less than 1 per cent, respectively, of global greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>276</sup> Human influence has heated the atmosphere, oceans and land, while climate change exacerbates poverty and inequalities, especially those of gender, race, class, caste, age, indigenous status, migration status and disability, putting at risk all human and non-human life on earth.<sup>277</sup> Globally, Indigenous peoples, local communities, the urban poor, and women and girls disproportionately suffer the effects of biodiversity loss.

*Climate change, environmental degradation and related disasters magnify existing gender inequalities and pose unique and urgent threats to their rights, livelihoods, health, and wellbeing*

301. Discriminatory laws, policies and practices persist in impeding women's full and equal participation in the economy, environment and agriculture. In 190 economies assessed in 2023, women have less than two-thirds of the legal rights of men.<sup>278</sup> Women's land and resource rights are critical for livelihoods and resilience. Less than 15 per cent of agricultural landholders globally are women, ranging widely across countries from 6.6 per cent to 57.8 per cent.<sup>279</sup> Fewer women than men have ownership and/or secure tenure rights in 40 of 46 countries, and legal protections for women's land rights are low or absent in 60 per cent of

<sup>270</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/23>.

<sup>271</sup> Isak Stoddard and others, "Three decades of climate mitigation: why haven't we bent the global emissions curve?", *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, vol. 46 (2021).

<sup>272</sup> UNEP, *Global Resources Outlook 2024: Bend the Trend. Pathways to a Liveable Planet as Resource Use Spikes* (Nairobi, 2024).

<sup>273</sup> Laura Ferguson, "The extinction crisis: with up to one million species on the brink of disappearing in the coming decades, what can we do?" *Tufts Now*, 21 May 2019.

<sup>274</sup> IPCC, "Summary for policymakers".

<sup>275</sup> UNEP, *Global Resources Outlook 2024*.

<sup>276</sup> UNDP, *The State of Climate Ambition: Snapshots for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)* (New York, 2023).

<sup>277</sup> Joern Birkmann, Emma Liwenga and Rajiv Pandey, "Poverty, livelihoods and sustainable development", in *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, IPCC (London, Cambridge University Press, 2022); IPCC, "Summary for policymakers".

<sup>278</sup> World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law 2024*.

<sup>279</sup> FAO, *The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems*. Range reflects latest figures for countries with available data; FAO, "The gender gap in land rights", Policy Brief (Rome, 2018).



71 countries.<sup>280</sup> Forty-three economies still do not grant equal inheritance rights to surviving spouses – which means widows are often dispossessed of property and left destitute – and in 41 countries daughters lack the same inheritance rights as sons.<sup>281</sup>

302. Climate and environment emergencies are escalating and simultaneously increasing gender disparities. In the worst-case climate scenario, an additional 158 million women and girls could be pushed into poverty by 2050 (see sect. III).<sup>282</sup> Disasters related to natural hazards lower women’s life expectancy and increase their mortality more than men.<sup>283</sup> Heat stress widens the income gap between women-headed and men-headed households by \$37 billion a year, and floods increase the income gap by \$16 billion a year.<sup>284</sup> The gender gap in moderate or severe food insecurity widened significantly with the COVID-19 pandemic from 1.4 percentage points in 2019 to 3.6 in 2021, as women’s livelihoods and incomes diminished and unpaid care and domestic work intensified, falling to 2.3 in 2022 and 1.3 in 2023, close to pre-pandemic levels.<sup>285</sup>

303. These crises have severe consequences for human health, including increases in food insecurity and malnutrition, infectious diseases and maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality. Air pollution and extreme heat are linked to pregnancy and birth complications, adverse neurodevelopmental outcomes and respiratory and other diseases.<sup>286</sup> Every year 3.2 million deaths, disproportionately women and children, are attributable to household air pollution produced by inefficient, polluting fuels and technologies.<sup>287</sup> Emerging evidence suggests that racialized minorities disproportionately suffer health effects of cumulative exposure to environmental hazards such as air and water pollution.<sup>288</sup> Accelerating climate change and environmental degradation have also been linked to heightened risks of gender-based violence and child, early and forced marriage (E/CN.6/2022v /3).<sup>289</sup>

*Women’s and girls’ unpaid care, domestic and communal work is intensified by climate change*

304. The triple planetary crisis has heightened women’s and girls’ already disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care, domestic and communal work – care for children, the sick, the elderly and community resources, and provisioning of food, water and energy.<sup>290</sup> Water, sanitation and energy services, infrastructure and supply – critical for women’s livelihoods, wellbeing and resilience – are at risk in a dramatically changing climate and environment, with wide variation between developing and developed countries (E/CN.6/2024/4).

<sup>280</sup> FAO, *Tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG indicators* (Rome, 2023).

<sup>281</sup> World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law 2024*.

<sup>282</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2023*.

<sup>283</sup> Eric Neumayer and Thomas Plümper, “The Gendered nature of natural disasters: the impact of catastrophic events on the gender gap in life expectancy, 1981–2002”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 97, no.3 (2007).

<sup>284</sup> FAO, *The Unjust Climate: Measuring the Impacts of Climate Change on Rural Poor, Women and Youth* (Rome, 2024).

<sup>285</sup> FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNICEF, World Food Programme and WHO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024: Financing to End Hunger, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition in All its Forms* (Rome, FAO, 2024).

<sup>286</sup> WHO, *Protecting Maternal, Newborn and Child Health from the Impacts of Climate Change: A Call for Action* (Geneva, 2023).

<sup>287</sup> WHO, “Household Air Pollution”, 16 October 2024.

<sup>288</sup> Alique G Berberian, David J X Gonzalez and Lara J Cushing, “Racial disparities in climate change-related health effects in the United States,” *Current environmental health reports*, vol. 9, No. 3 (2022).

<sup>289</sup> Sara Duerto-Valero and Sneha Kaul, *Gendered Impacts of Climate Change: Empirical Evidence from Asia* (New York, 2023).

<sup>290</sup> UN-Women, *The Climate-Care Nexus: Addressing the Linkages Between Climate Change and Women’s and Girls’ Unpaid Care, Domestic and Communal Work* (New York, 2023).

305. Women and girls are primarily responsible for provisioning water for their families' survival – for drinking, cooking, sanitation and hygiene – in many developing countries and remote, rural and impoverished areas worldwide. In the absence of water services, particularly during droughts, women and girls must cope by queuing and walking long distances to collect water. Worldwide, 1.8 billion people rely on drinking water from supplies off premises, with women and girls collecting water in 7 out of 10 households.

306. More than a quarter of women globally, or over one billion women, lacked access to safely managed drinking water services in 2022, compared to a third of women without access in 2000.<sup>291</sup> In 2023, some 380 million or nearly 10 per cent of the world's women and girls, lived with high or critical water stress, which is estimated to increase to 674 million by 2050. While 3.4 billion people still lacked safely managed sanitation in 2022, the global coverage of basic hygiene services increased by 8 percentage points since 2015, which means that in most of the 50 countries with data, over 80 per cent of women and adolescent girls have a private place to wash and change during menstruation.<sup>292</sup>

307. Although data on access to energy and clean cooking is not sex disaggregated, women and girls are most affected by lack of access given prevailing gender roles and household power relations. The percentage of the population worldwide without access to electricity more than halved from 2000 to 2022 (see figure XIV), partly attributable to the growth of solar energy. However, disruptions in energy supply caused by COVID-19, the war in Ukraine and climate change resulted in an absolute increase in the population lacking electricity worldwide for the first time in a decade, from approximately 675 million in 2021 to around 685 million in 2022. A similar trend can be observed for the percentage of population without access to clean cooking, which has almost halved from 2000 to 2022, at 26.2 per cent of the global population (see figure XIV) or 2.1 billion people worldwide in 2022. Women and girls continue to be responsible for collecting biomass for heating and cooking in the absence of electricity and clean cooking options.<sup>293</sup>

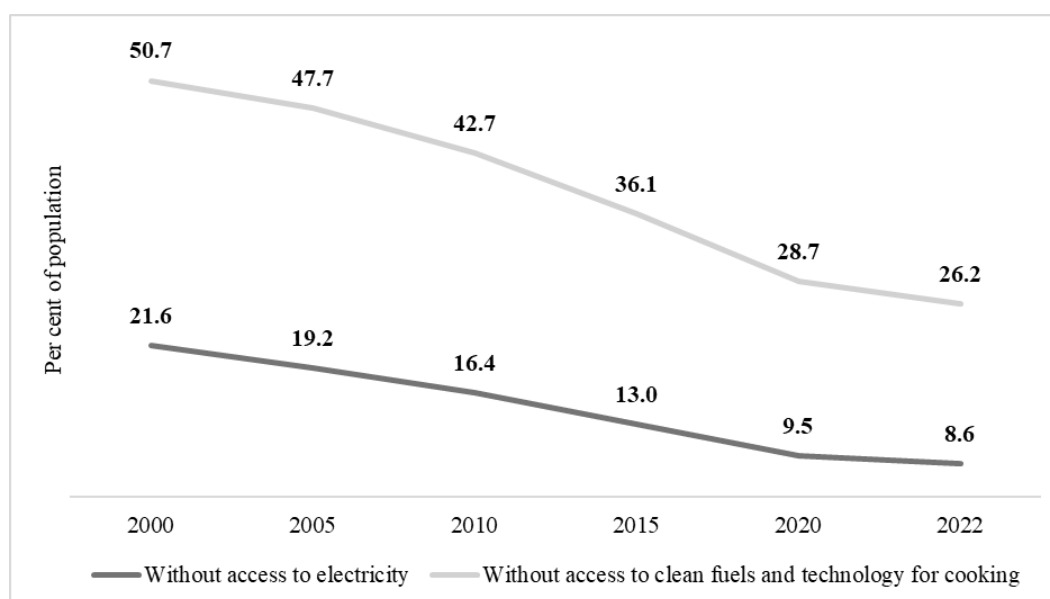
Figure XIV

**Population without access to electricity and clean cooking, 2000–2022**

<sup>291</sup> UN-Women and United Nations, *The Gender Snapshot 2023*.

<sup>292</sup> UNICEF and WHO, *Progress on Household Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene 2000–2022: Special Focus on Gender* (New York, 2023).

<sup>293</sup> International Energy Agency, International Renewable Energy Agency, United Nations, World Bank and WHO, *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report 2024* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2024); UN-Women and United Nations Industrial Development Organization, *Gender Equality in the Sustainable Energy Transition* (New York and Vienna, 2023).



Source: UN-Women calculations based on World Bank, World Development Indicators (accessed in December 2024).

#### *Gendered impacts of megaprojects and the debt crisis*

308. Despite environmentally destructive impacts, dominant economic models and financial power continue to drive megaprojects for energy and water infrastructure, both conventional and renewable, and for resource extraction, agriculture, forestry, industry and transport, disproportionately affecting women and girls (A/74/197). Consequences of large-scale projects that have climate and environmental goals can also be negative. Land acquisition for renewable energy biofuel plantations has accelerated deforestation, reduced biodiversity and increased carbon emissions, while displacing local and indigenous communities and depriving women and their households of livelihoods. Similar negative effects are associated with reforestation initiatives when designed and implemented without the free, prior and informed consent of those affected, particularly Indigenous women and communities. Skyrocketing demand for lithium for green technologies and electric vehicle batteries requires huge quantities of water, and chemical leaks from mines pollute water sources, significantly increasing women's unpaid care work to provision clean water and food (E/CN.6/2022/3).

### **C. Action taken by the States to implement the Platform for Action**

309. The national reports and surveys highlight trends in implementation in five areas: (a) integrating gender perspectives into environmental, climate and disaster risk reduction policies; (b) strengthening women's participation and leadership; (c) increasing women's access to and control over land, water, energy and other natural resources; (d) valuing women's indigenous and local knowledge and practices; and (e) supporting gender-responsive just transitions.

#### *(a) Integrating gender perspectives into environmental, climate and disaster risk reduction policies*

310. Over the past five years, States have increasingly recognized the linkages between achieving gender equality and environmental sustainability. Globally, more than half (53 per cent) of States reported that they introduced or strengthened gender-responsive laws and policies on disaster risk reduction and climate and environmental resilience, including 77 per cent of States in Latin

America and the Caribbean and 62 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and 64 per cent in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. In Latin America and the Caribbean, one State is consulting women on climate adaptation policies, and the climate strategy in another State calls for integrating gender-responsive actions into all climate change instruments. States in Oceania are also integrating gender perspectives in disaster risk reduction and climate preparedness, including support for women and girls subject to gender-based violence.

311. States strengthened the evidence base and raised awareness about disproportionate environmental and climate impacts on women and girls, which are necessary to inform policies, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (79 per cent), Central and Southern Asia (64 per cent), and Oceania (55 per cent). In Oceania, one State conducted a survey on the gendered impacts of drought to assess the unique challenges women and girls face, such as access to menstrual hygiene. Supporting women's participation and leadership in disaster risk reduction and climate and environmental resilience is indispensable for gender-responsive policies and programmes, as reflected in responses from Oceania (all States), Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (79 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (74 per cent).

312. States have elaborated climate change and biodiversity strategies and plans, including those mandated under the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity, from a gender perspective. As of 31 July 2024, 81.5 per cent of Parties referred to gender in their NDCs, a notable increase since 2016 when very few Parties did so (FCCC/CP/2024/5). These references covered multistakeholder engagement, inclusive and participatory processes involving national gender equality mechanisms and women's civil society organizations, institutional strengthening for gender mainstreaming, and national gender action plans to address the vulnerabilities of women across sectors. However, further analysis is needed to assess the integration of gender equality considerations in policy and budgetary frameworks and the impacts on women's and girls' resilience.

313. In a complementary undertaking, 23 countries to date have developed climate change gender action plans, supported by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), through participatory, multi-stakeholder processes involving local women's organizations to identify gender issues in priority sectors and strengthen climate action for all.<sup>294</sup>

314. Regarding the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans prepared under the Convention on Biological Diversity, only 56 per cent mention women or gender, an indication of the challenges ahead for many countries in integrating the gender targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2022–2030 Gender Plan of Action. The lack of sex-disaggregated data is a significant concern in gender-responsive reporting on national biodiversity strategy and action plan targets.<sup>295</sup>

315. Progress on gender-responsive policy frameworks has not been matched by the financing necessary to transform the resilience of women and girls, their communities and environments. The share of climate-related bilateral allocable ODA with gender equality as a principal objective has not increased since 2015 when the Paris Agreement was signed.<sup>296</sup> In 2022, just 2 per cent of mitigation ODA and 4 per cent of adaptation ODA had a principal gender equality objective.<sup>297</sup> Out of \$2.4 billion of climate ODA channelled via civil society organizations, mostly in donor countries, only \$43 million went to feminist and

<sup>294</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Gender Programme, "Climate change gender action plans", email to authors, 25 November 2024.

<sup>295</sup> Christina Supples and others, *Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, and Leadership in National Biodiversity Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting* (New York, UNDP, 2024).

<sup>296</sup> OECD, *Development Finance for Gender Equality 2024*.

<sup>297</sup> Beata Cichocka, Sam Hughes and Ian Mitchell, "Are providers of climate finance tackling gender effectively?", 7 March 2024.

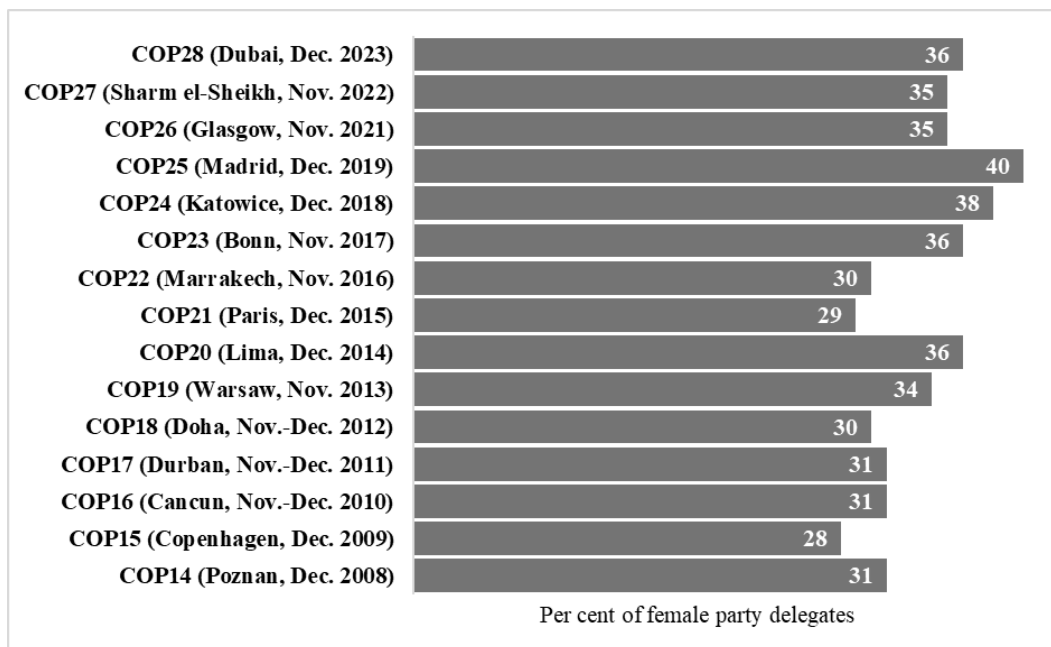
women's organizations and movements,<sup>298</sup> reflecting the huge challenge to building climate resilience by and for women and girls. At the twenty-ninth session of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties, Member States agreed to raise at least \$1.3 trillion each year from a wide range of sources, including private investment, by 2035 for developing countries, which presents an important opportunity to increase significantly resources available for gender-responsive climate action.

(b) *Strengthening women's participation and leadership*

316. Crucially correlated to more gender-responsive policy frameworks are women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in environmental governance and decision making. Women and girls are taking action on the environment and climate in all regions; yet, gender parity and commensurate policy influence are far from achieved. Few data and monitoring mechanisms exist to assess and support women's and girls' environmental and climate action. In international climate meetings under the UNFCCC, 36 per cent of delegates and 27.5 per cent of heads or deputy heads of delegation were women in 2023 (FCCC/CP/2024/4), compared to 40 and 27 per cent, respectively, in 2019 (FCCC/CP/2020/3) (see figure XV). At the national level, the proportion of environmental ministers who are women increased from 12 per cent in 2015, to 15 per cent in 2020,<sup>299</sup> and almost doubled to 28 per cent in 2024.<sup>300</sup> It remains to be seen if this progress can be sustained. At the local level, 41 per cent of 68 countries have quotas for women's participation in land governance, and only 22 per cent of 104 countries have high levels of women's participation in water management.<sup>301</sup>

Figure XV

**Women's participation in delegations to UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties**



<sup>298</sup> OECD, "Development finance for gender-responsive climate action", OECD Development Perspectives, No. 16 (Paris, 2022).

<sup>299</sup> IUCN, "New data reveals slow progress in achieving gender equality in environmental decision making", 1 March 2021.

<sup>300</sup> UN-Women's poster "Women political leaders 2024", available at [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/06/poster-women-political-leaders-2024](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/06/poster-women-political-leaders-2024).

<sup>301</sup> FAO, *The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems*.

Source: Women's Environment and Development Organization, "Statistics by bodies", Gender Climate Tracker (accessed in September 2024).

Note: COP: Conference of the Parties.

317. Closing these gender gaps is critical, since more equitable participation and leadership of women not only fulfil women's human rights but make climate, environmental and disaster risk governance more effective. Women's representation in national parliaments is associated with more stringent climate change policies, resulting in lower emissions. Women's participation in local natural resource management leads to better governance and conservation outcomes, and the application of gender quotas, for example in land governance and forest user groups, enhances sustainability and more equal sharing of benefits (E/CN.6/2022/3).

318. Some 70 per cent of States, including over 90 per cent in Oceania, 86 per cent in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia and more than three-quarters in sub-Saharan Africa, have taken steps to strengthen women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management. In Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, countries are undertaking training and capacity development of women-led civil society organizations, including on gender-responsive forestry management. Gender quotas have enhanced women's leadership in local natural resource management councils and participation of women experts in national environmental protection councils in Central and Southern Asia. In sub-Saharan Africa, one State's public extension services have assisted almost a million farmers (51 per cent are women) on women's empowerment in climate adaptation and resource management.

319. Women's environmental participation and leadership, as vital as it is, comes at a cost: intensifying unpaid care, domestic and communal work; tensions due to discriminatory gender norms and unequal power relations between women and men; and, at the frontlines of climate and environmental action to protect land and resources, women's safety, security and even their lives are at risk.<sup>302</sup> Threats, assaults, criminalization, gender-based violence and femicides against women environmental human rights defenders have reached alarming proportions.<sup>303</sup>

320. In the last decade, 3,000 killings of human rights defenders were documented. In 2023, at least 300 human rights defenders were killed from 28 countries with Indigenous peoples, environmental and land, women and LGBTIQ+ rights defenders the most targeted.<sup>304</sup> This is a direct reflection of the escalating climate and environmental emergencies, the impunity of powerful interests and the shortcomings of civil, legal and judicial protections.<sup>305</sup> As of January 2022, the Environmental Justice Atlas,<sup>306</sup> a global database of socio-environmental conflicts, documented at least 3,545 socioenvironmental conflicts worldwide. Almost a quarter of these conflicts (842 cases), visibly involved women environmental defenders, including 81 cases that led to the assassination of women environmental defenders.<sup>307</sup>

321. Some States have taken steps to protect women environmental human rights defenders, including national protection units offering bodyguard and transportation services and early warning systems in high-risk contexts; police protection, safe houses, security escorts, legal aid and public campaigns and advocacy for defenders at risk, especially Indigenous women defenders; support and funding for community-based environmental and climate justice

<sup>302</sup> UN-Women, *The Climate-Care Nexus*.

<sup>303</sup> UN-Women, "Women environmental human rights defenders", Brief (New York, 2024).

<sup>304</sup> Front Line Defenders, *Global Analysis 2023/24* (Dublin and Brussels, 2024). In descending order of magnitude although these categories overlap.

<sup>305</sup> Global Witness, *Missing voices: The Violent Erasure of Land and Environmental Defenders* (London, 2024).

<sup>306</sup> See <https://ejatlas.org/>.

<sup>307</sup> Laura Turquet and others, *Feminist Climate Justice*.

organizations; and recognition of the rights and roles of women environmental and land defenders in contesting large-scale development projects. While such measures are promising, they need to be scaled up and replicated globally.

(c) *Increasing women's access to and control over land, water, energy and other natural resources*

322. The pace of increasing women's access to land, water, energy and other natural resources has not closed gender gaps or responded to women's and girls' needs and priorities, jeopardizing their livelihoods and resilience. Less than half of States surveyed (48 per cent) have taken steps to increase women's access, although some regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa (88 per cent) and Central and Southern Asia (64 per cent), have made greater progress.

323. States have undertaken diverse measures to increase women's access to resources, particularly land (see also sect. II). In Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, States have supported women's capacity to address procedural aspects of land titling and succession, updated administration regulations to integrate gender considerations in land ownership decisions, benefiting rural and Indigenous women, and expanded gender quotas from 30 to 50 per cent in soil management and biodiversity conservation projects. States in sub-Saharan Africa have passed legislation to promote equitable access to land and increase women's land ownership and surveyed communities to better understand gender barriers to land ownership, such as gender-based violence or caregiving responsibilities. In Europe and Northern America, one State is increasing the number of women, including Indigenous women, in the natural minerals sector to 30 per cent of the mining workforce by 2030. While these measures demonstrate progress, greater efforts are needed to ensure women's access to and control over land, water, energy and other natural resources, particularly legal reform.

(d) *Valuing women's indigenous and local knowledge and practices*

324. Closely related to increasing women's access to and management of land and natural resources is supporting Indigenous and local women's knowledge and practices, which are fundamental for sustainability (see box XIII). Globally, 28 per cent of States have taken steps to value women's indigenous and local understandings and approaches to nature and environmental and climate action, although this is more significant in some regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania and Latin America and the Caribbean (all over 40 per cent). No States in Northern Africa and Western Asia reported any measures to protect and preserve women's knowledge and practices.

325. In Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe and Northern America, States have developed climate adaptation plans with knowledge derived from all sectors of society, including indigenous communities, incorporating both scientific evidence and ancestral knowledge; consulted with more than 300 women leaders from indigenous, rural Afro-Colombian and peasant communities on gender and climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience plans and implementation; held workshops with young and Indigenous women to design climate adaptation projects; and sought recommendations from the national Indigenous parliament to ensure that climate adaptation plans reflect Indigenous peoples' knowledge and practices.

## Box XIII

**Indigenous knowledge and practices for environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building**

Indigenous women and their communities make significant contributions to biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable management of land, water and other resources. Their knowledge and practices are an expression of rights, resilience and territories, even as these come under increasing threat. As farmers and producers, they practice agroecology, agroforestry and sustainable agriculture, based on ancestral and modern knowledge of plant, tree and crop diversity, seed preservation and soil health and conservation. As water users and managers, they employ knowledge of local water sources and indigenous irrigation systems and water-saving methods.

In Kenya, Maasai women, supported by the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust<sup>a</sup> and Justdiggit Foundation,<sup>b</sup> are rehabilitating degraded landscapes and helping to recover hundreds of hectares in Amboseli National Park through grass seed banks, water bunds to capture rainwater and native tree regeneration. Grass seed banks serve as repositories of diverse grass species, adapted to local climatic and drought conditions, for pasture and reseeded and revegetation of degraded areas, as well as sources of livelihood through sale of seeds and grass harvests.

In the Peruvian Andes, Quechua women domesticated a wild tuber and native medicinal plant with antioxidant properties, *Lilaeopsis macloviana* or *cuchucho*, turning to a synergistic combination of ancestral and modern knowledge to source water for cultivation during the 2022–2023 drought. They employed radiesthesia, or divining, to find groundwater, which was extracted with small family wells and solar pumps connected to sprinkler irrigation systems. Recognizing this successful innovation, supported by the GEF Small Grants Programme,<sup>c</sup> local authorities initiated a \$3.9 million public investment project to install 350 solar-powered wells to supply water and build community climate resilience.

States can support and scale up such indigenous knowledge and practices for sustainability by incorporating them into environmental laws and policies that are funded and implemented more widely, thereby protecting and promoting the rights of nature and of Indigenous women and their communities.

Source: UN-Women and OHCHR, *Realizing Women's Rights to Land and other Productive Resources*, 2nd ed. (New York, 2020); E/CN.6/2022/3; Lorena Aguilar, *Women-Led Solutions for Drought Resilience* (Bonn and Rome, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2024).

<sup>a</sup> See <https://amboseliecosystem.org/our-campaigns/>.

<sup>b</sup> See <https://justdiggit.org/>.

<sup>c</sup> See [GEF Small Grants Programme](#).

(e) *Supporting gender-responsive just transitions*

326. Over the past five years, the concept of feminist climate justice has become central to gender-responsive policy and action on the triple planetary crisis, grounded in the Paris Agreement, which notes: “the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and noting the importance for some of the concept of ‘climate justice’, when taking action to address climate change” (FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1). Inherent in feminist climate justice are questions of law and rights, recognition, redistribution and representation and intergenerational and gender equity (see box XIV), which also come to the fore in advocacy and policies for gender-responsive just transitions (E/CN.6/2022/L.7).



## Box XIV

**Gendered climate litigation led by women and girls**

Climate litigation is a new global grassroots movement to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on diverse groups, denounce violations of human rights and the rights of nature and advocate for intergenerational and gender equity and justice, and to set precedents and effect change. In 2023 nearly 2,200 climate cases were brought in 65 jurisdictions and international courts, up from 1,550 cases in 2020 and 884 in 2017. Women and girls are increasingly at the forefront, bringing cases in over 25 jurisdictions and international courts.

In *Maria Khan et al. v. Federation of Pakistan et al.* (2019), a pending case, a group of women argued that the government of Pakistan's inaction on climate change violated commitments under the Paris Agreement to renewable energy and the constitutional rights of women and future generations, including rights to a healthy environment and a climate capable of supporting human life and to equal protection under the law and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.<sup>a</sup>

In *Herrera Carrion et al. v. Ministry of the Environment et al. (Caso Mecheros)* (2020), nine girls in Ecuador claimed that gas flaring is unlawful and violates their rights and the rights of nature, damages the environment and contributes to climate change. The Provincial Court of Justice of Sucumbios declared that "the Ecuadorian State has ignored the right of the plaintiffs to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment and their right to health by promoting polluting activities, and by refusing to use environmentally clean and energy-efficient technologies" and that gas flares be progressively eliminated by December 2030.<sup>b</sup>

In *Held v. State* (2020), led by a young woman in the state of Montana, United States of America, 16 young people argued that the state violated their constitutional rights by pursuing fossil fuel development without considering climate change, causing mental and physical harm. In 2023, the district court ruled the state was violating their constitutional rights to "a clean and healthful environment," dignity, health and safety, and equal protection of the law. In the first case in the United States of America on state obligations to protect its citizens from climate change, the court found that each additional ton of greenhouse gas emissions exacerbates climate impacts and the plaintiffs' injuries.<sup>c</sup>

In *KlimaSeniorinnen v. Switzerland* (European Court of Human Rights) (2020), Senior Women for Climate Protection, 2000 women over the age of 64, took their case to the European Court of Human Rights, arguing that Switzerland's emissions reduction trajectory was a human rights violation and that older women are especially vulnerable to climate change-induced heatwaves. In 2024 the Court ruled that Switzerland had "failed to comply with its duties" to combat climate change and meet emissions targets, violating the European Convention on Human Rights. The court called on Switzerland to comply with the 1.5° warming limit and net zero emissions by 2050, in a case that could have wide repercussions for climate policy.<sup>d</sup>

Source: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023 Status Review* (Nairobi, 2023).

<sup>a</sup> See <https://climatecasechart.com/>.

<sup>b</sup> See <https://www.r2heinfo.com/>.

<sup>c</sup> OHCHR, "This is about our human rights: U.S. youths win landmark climate case", 29 August 2023; Amber Polk, "Montana kids win historic climate lawsuit – here's why it could set a powerful precedent," *The Conversation*, 15 August 2023.

<sup>d</sup> Sarah Schug, "How a human rights case brought by Swiss women could reignite climate policy", *The Parliament*, 12 April 2024.

327. The triple planetary crisis threatens decent work and livelihoods, particularly for women in informal and vulnerable positions, with 1.2 billion jobs dependent on the environment and ecosystems at serious risk. Women are expected to be severely affected given their high participation in sectors prone to climate change impacts, such as agriculture. As countries pursue decarbonization

to meet Paris Agreement goals, the ILO estimates that with supportive policy measures, a shift to low-carbon and circular economies could create some 100 million jobs by 2030, although mostly in male dominated sectors.<sup>308</sup> Just transitions can rectify such gender inequalities in the labour market through the creation of decent jobs for women in the green, blue and care economies more broadly (see sect. II).<sup>309</sup> Gender-responsive social protection systems also play a key role in responding to shocks and supporting disaster resilience (see sect. III).

328. Countries are taking steps in this direction. Sixty-three per cent of countries surveyed have promoted women's and girls' STEM education and other disciplines relating to the natural environment, which is important preparation for work in green and blue economies. Fewer countries (41 per cent) have enhanced women's access to sustainable time- and labour-saving infrastructure and climate-resilient agricultural technology, which are critical for alleviating paid and unpaid care, domestic and productive work as well as greening agriculture. Yet fewer (34 per cent) have taken steps to ensure that women benefit equally from decent jobs in the green economy, but this is nonetheless promising. States have promoted green jobs for women and youth, deliberately recruiting women, Indigenous peoples, refugees and migrants in the forestry sector or training women energy auditors to support the renewable energy transition, and supporting women's sustainable, climate-resilient businesses. However, these efforts are still sporadic and limited in scope.

#### **D. Priorities for future action and accelerated implementation**

329. Despite women's and girls' heightened visibility as environmental activists and defenders, their voice and agency continue to be under-recognized, undervalued, under-supported and under-resourced in environmental and climate decision-making and policy. Three priorities for urgent action emerge from the review of implementation efforts.

*Centre women and girls in a global just transition to benefit equally from jobs in the green, blue and care economies*

330. Transitions away from economies based on the exploitation and extraction of fossil fuels and natural resources are imperative to mitigate climate change and environmental degradation. To be just, States must ensure transition policies give priority to decent work and livelihoods and minimize and mitigate negative impacts on people and the planet by protecting and promoting human rights, gender equality and the rights of nature.<sup>310</sup> Improving women's and girls' STEM education related to environment and climate and ensuring women benefit equally from environmental and climate policies and programmes and from decent jobs in the green, blue and care economies are also urgent priorities for accelerating gender-responsive just transitions.

331. Central to a just transition is the recognition that developing countries most negatively impacted by the climate crisis have contributed least to the problem. Developed countries have a responsibility to ensure adequate financing and the redistribution of resources is key. In this respect, setting up a fund for loss and damage was a significant development at UNFCCC COP28. However, it will be important to ensure that the implementation of the fund considers the gendered

<sup>308</sup> ILO, *Achieving a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All* (Geneva, 2023).

<sup>309</sup> Carla Kraft and Seemin Qayum, *A Gender-Responsive Just Transition for People and Planet* (New York, UN-Women, 2023); UN-Women, *The Climate-Care Nexus*.

<sup>310</sup> Emanuela Pozzan, Elena Dedova and Gabriela Balvedi Pimentel, "Just transition policy brief: gender equality, labour and a just transition for all", *ILO Policy Brief* (Geneva, 2022); Carla Kraft and Seemin Qayum, *A Gender-Responsive Just Transition for People and Planet*.

dimensions of both economic and non-economic losses.<sup>311</sup> Financing, primarily from developed, industrialized countries, should be significantly increased to make such efforts viable and effective in redressing climate and environmental injustice.

*Accelerate women's full and equal and meaningful participation in decision-making related to natural resource management, disaster risk reduction and response, environmental governance and climate action*

332. Dedicated efforts are needed to ensure full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in environmental and climate decisions, policies and programmes as a lever for achieving gender equality and sustainable development. States should adopt temporary special measures and prioritize action to remove barriers for women's participation in all aspects of environmental decision-making. Enabling women's and girls' collective action for environmental and climate resilience and protecting women environmental human rights defenders are crucial for a more equal and sustainable present and future for all. This also requires ensuring gender-responsive environmental and climate finance is directly channelled to funding feminist and women's organizations. Women's participation is pivotal to the success of the key transition of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution to catalyse impact across the SDGs (E/2024/52).

*Realize women's land and resource rights and equal inheritance rights*

333. To ensure women's access to and control over land and natural resources, States should increase support for feminist, grassroots organizations working on women's land and resource rights and tenure security at the local level. At the national level, gender-responsive data, policies and budgeting on land and resources should be strengthened to bolster women's access, control and ownership. Accelerating legal reform on women's land and resource rights, including to equal inheritance, and promoting their involvement in sustainable land use and management also supports gender-responsive implementation of the Rio Conventions.

## VIII. Lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations

334. The urgency of accelerating progress on gender equality has never been greater. As the world struggles to recover from the ongoing effects of multiple and interlocked crises and escalating conflict, the vision of the Platform for Action is more relevant than ever to achieve gender equality, peace and sustainable development.

335. While the cascading crises of the past five years have created a challenging environment, the lack of progress, and stagnation in most areas, can also be attributed to a mismatch between normative commitments, on the one hand, and the resources and political will needed to deliver results, on the other. The persistence of discriminatory laws, patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes also continues to hold back progress. While new laws and policies have been introduced by Governments, investments in implementation have been insufficient to make a difference at scale. For example, paid parental leave policies will have limited impact on women's labour force participation without an investment in comprehensive care services to alleviate unpaid care and domestic work over the life cycle. Similarly, laws criminalizing intimate partner violence will have limited impact without large-scale efforts to prevent violence from happening in the first place and investments in comprehensive services to enable victim and survivors to heal and recover. Too often, equality under the law

<sup>311</sup> Nidhi Tewari and others, *Gendered Dimensions of Loss and Damage in Asia* (Oxford, Oxfam International, 2023).

is undermined in practice by a lack of resources for implementation, weak accountability mechanisms, discriminatory social norms, institutional barriers and women's lack of power and resources. Further, growing economic inequality between and within countries and the persistent drive towards fiscal austerity have undermined the availability, affordability and quality of public services that are critical to the achievement of the Platform for Action and the SDGs.

336. In the last five years, there has been growing attention to the synergies between the critical areas of concern and across the SDGs. For example, social protection schemes are increasingly recognizing the impact of gender-based violence. Further, there is greater recognition of the linkages between women's unpaid care and domestic work and the impacts of climate change. However, an uneven focus across the areas and siloed approaches to implementation remain common. For example, the focus on girls' education has not systematically translated to better access to decent work and economic independence for women, signalling the need for greater coordination with gender-responsive economic policies. While there is a greater focus on more integrated approaches to addressing gender in humanitarian settings, this has not translated to comprehensive approaches across the board that integrate women's economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights and broader health needs and participation in decision-making.

337. The lessons from implementation across the six thematic areas point to four guiding principles that must inform the implementation of the recommendations below:

- Centring human rights and substantive equality: Laws, policies and actions must be grounded in international human rights standards and principles, prioritizing the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and all global and regional human rights instruments. The stark gap between global norms and standards and women's and girls' practical enjoyment of human rights calls for urgent attention to bridging the gap and achieving substantive equality for women, including through effective accountability mechanisms and ending impunity.
- Equality and non-discrimination: Laws, policies and actions should intentionally seek to understand and respond to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, addressing differences among women and girls, recognizing that while all women and girls have the same human rights, women and girls in different contexts have particular needs and priorities, requiring appropriate responses. This also requires looking beyond "averages" to use disaggregated data to monitor the impact of laws and policies for women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Adopting holistic and integrated approaches: Accelerating the implementation of the Platform for Action requires breaking siloes and addressing the uneven attention across the critical areas of concern and SDGs. Integrated approaches are needed to maximize the synergies between both frameworks and to realize all human rights, including the right to development for all women and girls, in line with the principles of interdependence, universality and indivisibility of rights. Multi-stakeholder partners can play a role in enabling integrated approaches.
- Acknowledging the role of States as the main duty bearers: Governments remain responsible for the implementation of global commitments and norms. Governments also have a role in creating an enabling environment for all actors to play their part in achieving gender equality, inter alia by strengthening and properly resourcing national gender equality machineries, ensuring participatory processes for women's and feminist organizations

and ensuring that the private sector protects, respects and fulfils the human rights of women and girls.

338. Alongside Member States, the United Nations system has a critical role to play in developing integrated approaches and harnessing synergies to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action and to get the SDGs back on track. The Secretary-General's Gender Equality Acceleration Plan sets out how the United Nations system must recalibrate and pivot, to place gender equality and women's rights at the centre of the United Nations' work and engrained across all its endeavours. It puts a spotlight on accountability, leadership and political will, as critical drivers to deliver on the United Nations system's gender equality commitments and ambitions. In light of the growing pushback on women and girls' rights, the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan includes a Clarion Call for leaders across the United Nations system, to reinforce a strong normative policy stance for gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of all women and girls everywhere. Calling for intentional collective efforts to reinforce gender equality and human rights as central to the United Nations' core values and obligations, the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan aims to recentre the United Nations system's role to advance gender equality and the rights of women and girls as a central prerequisite to peace and security, and sustainable development. Positioning gender equality as a collective responsibility, and calling for an "all in" approach, the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan recognises that the commitment to gender equality starts at the top and demands leadership accountability across all United Nations entities.

339. This report has highlighted the importance of resourcing, which is similarly critical for the United Nations system. With its minimum target of 15 per cent, the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan seeks a transformative increase in budgetary allocations of all United Nations entities to be dedicated to gender equality initiatives by 2030. Finally, the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan emphasizes the importance of strategic and inclusive partnerships with Member States, civil society and the private sector to drive the change that is urgently required.

340. The review of measures taken by States in sections II–VII identifies the need for prioritised and focused actions to accelerate progress. In addition to the priorities for accelerated implementation identified at the end of each thematic cluster, the review of implementation identifies the following five cross-cutting priorities for action.

***Closing the accountability gap and fortifying institutional mechanisms for gender equality to lead and coordinate gender equality policies***

341. The implementation of the Platform for Action has been hampered by the absence of strong institutional mechanisms to ensure implementation and accountability mechanisms to hold decision-makers accountable for their actions. Key institutions and mechanisms for advancing gender equality and implementing policies, such as national gender equality machineries, have been weakened and repurposed and remain underfunded without the mandate and recognition they need to effectively fulfil their role. The weakening of participatory processes and oversight mechanisms in the context of democratic erosions also undermines the ability of women's organizations to hold decision-makers answerable on commitments. Strengthening institutional mechanisms, establishing inclusive and participatory processes and systematically embedding gender mainstreaming is key to ensuring all policy and programme areas contribute to achieving gender equality across all SDGs. Further, as per the commitment made at the five-year review of the implementation of the Platform for Action, removing discriminatory provisions under the law is a long overdue priority.

342. The growth of online spaces characterized by misogyny and gender-based hate speech, the spread of dis- and misinformation undermining women's human rights, the increasing attacks on women in public and political life and shrinking

space for civic action all have a silencing effect both on individual women and the collective voice of women's and feminist organizations, denying their role in driving positive change towards gender equality. The private sector, including big tech companies, have a responsibility to fight dis- and misinformation and end violence against women both online and offline.

343. While there has been some progress in closing data gaps to monitor progress on the SDGs, the lack of quality and comparable trend data remains a challenge. This is particularly the case for the availability of disaggregated data to monitor trends and patterns for women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting inequalities. The lack of global data on the role, resourcing and effectiveness of national gender equality machineries also stands in the way of monitoring progress on gender equality.

**344. States should urgently review and strengthen national gender equality machineries and prioritize sustainable funding so they can fulfil their role. States should also strengthen inclusive and democratic processes, including participatory processes for women's and feminist organizations, to ensure accountability and responsiveness to gender equality and women's and girls' human rights. Law reform to remove discriminatory provisions, particularly in family law, is long overdue. States should also strengthen regulatory frameworks for the private sectors based on due diligence principles, so they respect, promote and fulfil the human rights of women and girls. States should increase investments in statistical capacity to regularly produce gender statistics, with a focus on comparable trend data and availability of disaggregated data to measure multiple and intersecting inequalities.**

*Accelerating gender parity and women's full and equal participation, leadership and influence in decision-making across sectors and at all levels*

345. While there has been some limited progress, men continue to dominate decision-making at all levels and across all sectors including local governments, national parliaments, peace processes, climate and humanitarian decision-making and global governance. Women's participation is of critical importance, both as a matter of equality and because the active presence of women tends to result in positive decisions and outcomes supporting gender equality. In recent years, the importance of women's participation in decision-making was thrown into sharp relief in the response to COVID-19 stronger feminist movements, higher levels of women in politics and more robust democracies were associated with a more gender-sensitive response to COVID-19. Although women's participation in decision-making across sectors is on the rise, it is important to recognise women and girls in all their diversity by supporting their full participation. Accelerating gender equality also requires the participation and influence of feminist and women's organizations in shaping and monitoring policies across all policy areas at all levels of decision-making, and a safe and enabling environment for women human rights defenders.

**346. States should urgently address all barriers to the full and equal participation of women to achieve gender parity at all levels of decision-making. Temporary special measures, such as legislated gender quotas and targeted appointments, provide a proven strategy for increasing women's representation in decision-making, and should be implemented with parity targets and strict enforcement provisions. Enhancing political representation of marginalized groups of women and girls, including Indigenous and minority women, also requires specific quotas. States should ensure enabling and participatory processes and spaces for women's organizations. States should ensure enabling and participatory processes and spaces for women's rights organizations to influence priorities and decision-making and protect women human rights defenders and ensure a safe and enabling environment for their work.**

***Closing the financing gap and investing in catalytic interventions to drive impact***

347. Dire levels of financing for gender equality persist as a major challenge for progress. While countries are increasingly tracking budget allocations for gender equality, national gender equality strategies and plans remain significantly under-resourced, hindering the full implementation of the Platform for Action. Economic policies and regressive tax policies that have decreased resources available for public services and social policies have also undermined progress on gender equality commitments. At a global level, international financing for gender equality has decreased since 2020. The current international financial system is also failing to effectively scale up financing for gender equality. Skyrocketing debt service payments in developing countries continue to crowd out investment in public services, especially for the poorest, among whom women and girls are overrepresented.

348. There is an opportunity to boost domestic resource mobilization for gender equality, based on solidarity and redistribution through a focus on progressive taxation, taxing those with the highest ability to pay, including through wealth and corporate taxes. In the wake of successive crises, a renewed investment in gender equality can play an important role in re-invigorating social contracts between people and governments which have come under strain. As well as gender-responsive public finance management, this requires gearing macroeconomic, fiscal and monetary policies towards investments in essential public services and social policies, and transforming economies towards gender equality, sustainability, and social justice.

349. An enabling and equitable global financial architecture based on solidarity, fairness and redistribution is also critical. This requires reforms to the international financial architecture to lift constraints on developing countries in mobilizing resources for gender equality, including social protection and public services, with a focus on sustainable debt solutions and global tax cooperation. Harnessing international climate finance for gender equality and increasing ODA targeted to gender equality across all sectors is critical.

350. States should centre gender equality within global normative financial frameworks and fulfil existing commitments and obligations, including under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and its follow-up processes. These commitments must be strengthened in the outcome document of the upcoming Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), and clear monitoring and accountability mechanisms discussed and adopted.

**351. States should urgently strengthen efforts to mobilize more domestic and international resources for gender equality, including through progressive tax systems as well as official development assistance. This requires reorienting fiscal and monetary policies to increase public investments in gender equality and systematic gender-responsive budgeting to monitor allocations. Public investments in universal and gender-responsive social protection systems and public services are critical for reducing inequalities and providing meaningful opportunities for all women and girls. All developed countries should meet their ODA commitments, including the commitments to the least developed countries, ensuring a stronger focus on gender equality, with attention across all sectors. As envisaged in the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, United Nations system entities must aim to gradually increase expenditures on all programmes for outputs where gender equality is the principal objective to a minimum of 15 per cent. International finance institutions must be held accountable for the promotion, protection and fulfilment of women's and girls' human rights.**

***Harnessing the transformative power of technology to advance gender equality and bridging the gender digital gap***

352. Technological advances are part and parcel of everyday life, with many important benefits for enhancing productivity, providing access to knowledge, information and education, and improving the reach and availability of services. Technology has significant potential to be further harnessed for gender equality, for example to deliver programs that prevent gender-based violence or provide services at scale, or to support the delivery of health services and social protection, including in rural and remote areas and during crises.

353. However, the risks that technological change carries must also be carefully managed. For example, this includes legal, policy and regulatory reform to address violence against women and girls that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology and the violation of privacy for individuals using technology-based public services. Further actions, including regulatory frameworks, are needed to respond to the risk of entrenching bias and discrimination in the generative artificial intelligence-based platforms for the delivery of services and employment. Increasing women's representation in the technology sector is also crucial.

354. For the full benefits of technology to be harnessed, as well as investing in technological solutions to advance gender equality, the gender gaps in digital access and connectivity must be addressed. There is also an urgent need to bridge the development divide, to ensure that women and girls across all countries benefit from technological developments. For digital tools to work for women, they should be devised based on consultation with users and key experts including women's organizations. Further, laws, policies, accountability mechanisms and capacity building are all needed to guard against the risks of technology increasing gender inequalities and vulnerabilities.

**355. To harness the potential of technology to improve women's and girls' lives, States should prioritize gender equality to close the digital divide and put in place gender-responsive digital transformation, and systematically integrate gender analysis, targets and disaggregated data collection in their digital policies. States should also strengthen accountability and human rights in the digital age. States must implement laws, policies and regulations to combat the risks of technology for gender equality, including the risk of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, threats to privacy rights and bias in artificial intelligence.**

*Ensure that systems policies and infrastructure to respond to crises centre women's and girls' human rights*

356. The widespread, deep and lingering effects of successive crises, including COVID-19, food and fuel crises, protracted conflicts and climate-related natural disasters, have all exacerbated or intensified gender inequalities. A key lesson from the last five years is that gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities, such as heightened exposure to violence against women and girls and disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work, tend to increase during crises. Yet, gender concerns are not systematically integrated into crisis prevention and response plans. At the same time, existing services and systems have not been robust enough to withstand the shocks associated with crises. The repeated failure to protect people against shocks and crises has also fuelled the sense of insecurity and declining trust in public institutions.

357. A positive lesson from the last five years has been the impact of adaptations to services and systems as a result of crises. For example, social protection systems across many countries demonstrated flexibility in the context of COVID-19 to address gender-specific vulnerabilities and needs, for example income support for single mothers and eligibility of informal workers. Further, services to support victim-survivors of violence against women and girls also adapted during COVID-19 to provide remote support and access to justice, such as protection orders. These adaptations should be designed into policies and programs to shock-proof services and infrastructure and ensure that crises do not



adversely impact women and girls. At a broader level, services and systems should strengthen resilience and the ability to withstand sudden reversals, and provide support and protection for women and girls across the life cycle, including through the stronger integration of social protection, support for women's access to decent work, care and other essential services.

**358. States should design and implement crisis prevention and response plans that are gender-responsive, flexible and inclusive, based on a robust understanding of women's and girls' risks and needs over the life cycle. States should integrate lessons from crises responses and advance coordination between national gender equality machineries and agencies responsible for crisis responses to ensure an integrated approach. States should prioritize a comprehensive and integrated approach to gender equality in the context of humanitarian responses.**

## Annex

## National reports and survey responses by region

<i>Economic Commission for Africa</i>	<i>Economic Commission for Europe</i>	<i>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	<i>Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</i>	<i>Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia</i>
Algeria	Albania	Antigua and Barbuda	Armenia	Algeria
Angola	Andorra	Argentina	Australia	Bahrain
Benin	Armenia	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Azerbaijan	Djibouti
Botswana	Austria	Brazil	Bangladesh	Egypt
Burundi	Azerbaijan	Canada	Bhutan	Iraq
Cabo Verde	Belarus	Chile	Brunei Darussalam	Jordan
Cameroon	Belgium	Colombia	Cambodia	Kuwait
Central African Republic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Costa Rica	China	Lebanon
Chad	Canada	Cuba	Fiji	Morocco
Comoros	Croatia	Dominican Republic	France	Oman
Congo	Cyprus	Ecuador	Georgia	Qatar
Côte d'Ivoire	Czech Republic	El Salvador	India	Saudi Arabia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Denmark	France	Indonesia	Somalia
Djibouti	Estonia	Germany	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Sudan
Egypt	Finland	Grenada	Japan	Syrian Arab Republic
Eswatini	France	Guatemala	Kazakhstan	Tunisia
Ethiopia	Georgia	Honduras	Kiribati	United Arab Emirates
Gambia	Germany	Italy	Kyrgyzstan	State of Palestine
Ghana	Greece	Jamaica	Lao People's Democratic Republic	
Kenya	Hungary	Japan	Malaysia	
Lesotho	Iceland	Mexico	Maldives	
Liberia	Ireland	Netherlands	Marshall Islands	
Madagascar	Italy	Nicaragua	Micronesia (Federated States of)	
Malawi	Kazakhstan	Norway	Mongolia	
Mali	Kyrgyzstan	Panama	Nauru	
Morocco	Latvia	Paraguay	Nepal	
Mozambique	Malta	Peru	Netherlands	
Namibia	Netherlands	Portugal	New Zealand	
Niger	North Macedonia	Republic of Korea	Pakistan	
Nigeria	Norway	Saint Lucia	Palau	
Rwanda	Portugal	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Samoa	
Senegal	Republic of Moldova	Spain	Singapore	
Seychelles	Romania	Suriname	Solomon Islands	
Sierra Leone	Russian Federation	Türkiye	Sri Lanka	
Somalia	Slovenia	Uruguay	Tajikistan	
South Africa	Spain	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Thailand	
South Sudan	Sweden	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern	The Philippines	
Sudan	Switzerland		Republic of Korea	
Togo	Tajikistan		Russian Federation	
Tunisia	Türkiye			
	Ukraine			

<i>Economic Commission for Africa</i>	<i>Economic Commission for Europe</i>	<i>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	<i>Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</i>	<i>Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia</i>
Uganda	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ireland	Timor-Leste	
United Republic of Tanzania		United States of America	Tonga	
Zambia	United States of America		Türkiye	
Zimbabwe	Uzbekistan		Tuvalu	
			United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	
			Ireland	
			United States of America	
			Uzbekistan	
			Vanuatu	
			Viet Nam	
<b>44/54</b>	<b>44/56</b>	<b>38/46</b>	<b>48/53</b>	<b>18/21</b>

*Notes:* A total of 159 national survey responses/reports were received by UN-Women, either directly from States through the online platform or through the regional commissions. The table reflects the distribution by regional commission. Countries are listed under all the regional commissions they belong to. The number before the slash represents the number of countries within the respective regional commissions that have submitted survey responses or reports, while the number after the slash indicates the total number of United Nations Member States in the regional commissions.