

1. Introduction

'The idea of national machineries was conceived in a recommendation of the World Conference on the International Women's Year held in Mexico City in 1975. Since then, the subject of national machineries has been taken up systematically by the subsequent world conferences." ¹Thereafter, a new, second wave of women's movements swept the globe which demanded that governments address deep-seated gender biases and enhance women's rights. Governments in all regions of the world responded by creating governmental mechanisms with a much broader scope.²

In tandem with this, and for many decades prior, marginalized women (including Indigenous women, racialized women, women with disabilities) were facing additional challenges to the realization of their human rights. It would take decades or years to achieve the promotion of the human rights of these and other particularly vulnerable or marginalized groups.³

However, while National machineries for the advancement of women had been established in almost every Member State by 1995 in order to design, execute, monitor, evaluate, advocate and mobilize support for policies that promoted the advancement of

¹ Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year Mexico City 19 June -2 July 1975 Para 18 (1)-(2), Para 18(3)(a)-(c) at pp 91-92 see also Para 73 at pp 134 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/otherconferences/Mexico/Mexico%20conference%20report%20optimized.pdf> See also Ertürk, Yakin, and WYN GRANT. "Foreword." *Mainstreaming Gender, Democratizing The State?: Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women*, edited by SHIRIN M. RAI, Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. xv-xvi. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1155j9vp.6>. Accessed 29 July 2024.

² **Institutional Mechanisms as Critical Actors for Gender Equality: A Review from the OSCE Region** Published by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) pp 5 Warsaw, Poland 2023

³ **A/77/246** Protection of the rights of minorities in the institutions, structures and initiatives of the United Nations; Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues Fernand de Varennes 2022 Para 43 : in 2022 it was observed that it had taken decades or years to achieve the promotion of the human rights of particularly vulnerable or marginalized groups including combating racism and racial discrimination(3 decades and 2 years) for women (a decade and a year) for disabled persons (a decade and a year) for indigenous peoples (3 decades and a year) for people of African descent (a decade and a year) for refugees (a year) and for children (2 years)

See also A/HRC/RES/26/4 Protection of Roma Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council 2014: "Recognizing that Roma have faced, for more than five centuries, widespread and enduring discrimination, rejection, social exclusion and marginalization all over the world, in particular in Europe, and in all areas of life" Expressing concern that Roma in many parts of the world continue to be socially and economically marginalized, which undermines the respect of their human rights, propagates prejudice and impedes their full participation in society and the effective exercise of civic responsibilities,

women,⁴ major obstacles remained.⁵ National machineries were still diverse in form and uneven in their effectiveness⁶ and in some cases had declined.⁷ Inequalities between women and men had also persisted,⁸ In addition, often marginalized in national government structures, these mechanisms were frequently hampered by unclear mandates, lack of adequate staff, training, data and sufficient resources, and insufficient support from national political leadership.⁹ All of this had serious consequences not only for women and girls but for the well-being of all people,¹⁰

2. The Beijing Platform for Action

In 1995, through its Beijing Platform of Action, the United Nations helped to put IMs firmly on the map, defining them as a solution to the “central policy-coordinating unit inside government [whose] main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender- equality perspective in all policy areas”.¹¹

⁴ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women** Date 15 September 1995 **Annex II Beijing Platform for Action** Para 196 pp 84 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>
See also / **CN.6/2000/PC/2** Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action Report of the Secretary-General January 19, 2000 Para 450 and 451
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:356a3a49-28e6-4fee-8d09-62e3b16bec15>

⁵ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing)** Date 15 September 1995 **Annex 1 UN Declaration** Date 15 September 1995 Para 5 at pp 5
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or
[Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:](#)

⁶ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women** Date 15 September 1995 **Annex 11 Beijing Platform for Action** Para 196 pp 84 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>
see also **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women** Date 15 September 1995 **Annex 1 UN Declaration** Date 15 September 1995 Para 5 at pp 2
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or
[Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:](#)

⁷ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women** Date 15 September 1995 **Annex II Beijing Platform for Action** Para 196 pp 84 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁸ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing)** Date 15 September 1995 **Annex 1 UN Declaration** Date 15 September 1995 Para 5 at pp 2
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or
[Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:](#)

⁹ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women** Date 15 September 1995 **Annex II Beijing Platform for Action** Para 196 pp 84 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

¹⁰ **UN Resolution Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing)** Date 15 September 1995 **Annex I UN Declaration** Date 15 September 1995 Para 5 at pp 2
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or
[Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:](#)

¹¹ **Institutional Mechanisms as Critical Actors for Gender Equality: A Review from the OSCE Region** Published by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) pp 6 Warsaw, Poland 2023 citing [Beijing Declaration](#), p. 84

In 1995, the states which adopted the Beijing Platform for Action were convinced that although women's rights were human rights,¹² there continued to be obstacles which prevented government-wide mainstreaming of a gender- equality perspective in all policy areas. By creating the Beijing Platform of Action, the United Nations hoped to put IMs firmly on the map as a "central policy-coordinating unit inside government [whose] main task" was "to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender- equality perspective in all policy areas".¹³

After its adoption, the Beijing Platform of Action, became known as the 'women's policy machineries'.¹⁴ However, the UN was serious about changing the trajectory of women and girls' human rights as it viewed its duty as ensuring the full enjoyment by women and the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to take effective action against any violations of these rights and freedoms.¹⁵ Developing the fullest potential of girls and women of all ages, by ensuring their full and equal participation in building a better world for all and enhancing their role in the development process was also viewed as being a necessity.¹⁶

In 1995, the UN also did not mince words regarding their duty to achieve these goals: they dedicated themselves "unreservedly" to addressing these constraints and obstacles and "enhancing" the advancement and empowerment of women all over the world as this required "urgent action in the spirit of determination, hope, cooperation and

¹²

UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing) Date 15 September 1995 Annex I Beijing Declaration Para 14

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or [Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)

¹³ **Institutional Mechanisms as Critical Actors for Gender Equality:** A Review from the OSCE Region Published by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) pp 6 Warsaw, Poland 2023 citing [Beijing Declaration](#), p. 84

¹⁴

Institutional Mechanisms as Critical Actors for Gender Equality: A Review from the OSCE Region Published by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) pp 6 Warsaw, Poland 2023 citing [Beijing Declaration](#), p. 84

¹⁵

UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing) Date 15 September 1995 Annex I Beijing Declaration Para 23

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or [Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)

¹⁶ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing)** Date 15 September 1995 Annex I Beijing Declaration Para 34 and Para 13

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or [Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)

This development process was to also include promoting people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth, through the provision of basic education, life-long education, literacy and training, and primary health care for girls and women Ibid at Para 27

solidarity, now and to carry the world forward into the next century”.¹⁷ In performing this duty, States also recognized their need to intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who faced multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they were indigenous people;¹⁸

3.What Part Was Institutional Mechanisms/National Machineries To Play Under the Beijing Platform for Action?

Eleven critical areas of the Platform for Action explored issues of a substantive nature that were of concern to women and girls, and made specific recommendations. Critical area H, involved the creation of Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. It was to create the roles and responsibilities of the mechanism established to implement the recommendations in those eleven key areas.¹⁹

The main sections of Platform for Action Strategic objective H.1 - Strategic objective H.3. listed three components to advance the critical area of concern relating to institutional mechanisms: the creation or strengthening of national machineries and other governmental bodies²⁰ the integration of gender perspectives into legislation, public policies, programmes and projects²¹ and the generation and dissemination of data and information disaggregated by sex for planning and evaluation.²²

¹⁷

UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing) Date 15 September 1995 Annex I Beijing Declaration Para 7
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or
[Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)

¹⁸ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing)** Date 15 September 1995 Annex I Beijing Declaration Para 32
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or
[Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)

¹⁹ **E/ CN.6/2000/PC/2** Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action Report of the Secretary-General January 19, 2000 Para 449
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:356a3a49-28e6-4fee-8d09-62e3b16bec15>

²⁰

UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action -Platform for Action Strategic objective H.1:** Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies Para 203(a)-203(f)

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UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action -Platform for Action Strategic objective H.2:**Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects By Governments :Para 204(a)-204(e) By National Machinery Para 205(a)-205(f)

²²

All three of the Strategic Objectives for Institutional Mechanisms were designed to work together. The preliminary focus centered on the Governments role as they had the primary responsibility to implement the Platform for Action.²³ In order to successfully implement the Beijing Platform for Action and before they could even address how policies and programs or data would be created or implemented, the UN focused on 203(b)²⁴ as that Strategic objective focused in on establishing or improving the effectiveness of national machineries for the advancement of women

In order to establish or improve the effectiveness of national machineries for the advancement of women, the UN believed that a number of other actions were also needed. In order to avoid challenges arising from a lack of commitment at the highest levels,²⁵ insufficient support from national political leadership,²⁶ or situations which often marginalized women's mechanisms or institutions in national government structures²⁷ the UN created Strategic objective H.1 (203(a))²⁸ which was to ensure that the responsibility for the advancement of women would be vested in the highest possible level of government such as a Cabinet minister²⁹ This was considered to be essential to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.³⁰

E/CN.6/2015/3 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 15 December 2014 Para 229

see also **Platform for Action Strategic objective H.3** Actions to be taken: Para 206(a)-206(k) By Governments Para 207(a)-207(d) by the United Nations Para 208(a)-208(e) By multilateral development institutions and bilateral donors: Para 209

²³ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 293 pp 120 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

²⁴ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 296 pp 120 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

See also UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 203(b) pp 85

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

²⁵ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 197 pp 84 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

²⁶ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 **Annex II Beijing Platform for Action** Para 196 pp 84 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

²⁷ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 **Annex II Beijing Platform for Action** Para 196 pp 84 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

²⁸ UN Report of the n Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 203(a) pp 85

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

²⁹ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 201(a) pp 84

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

³⁰ UN Report of the n Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 203(a) pp 85

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

In order for the Platform for Action to be implemented, it was also necessary for Governments to establish or improve the effectiveness of national machineries for the advancement of women by creating appropriate intra- and inter-ministerial procedures and adequate staffing³¹ as well as professional capacity.³² Governments were to also provide training and advisory assistance to their agencies in order to integrate a gender perspective in their policies and programmes.³³ There was also a need for Governments to ensure sufficient resources in terms of any budget in order to achieve these goals. (201(c))³⁴

In addition, in the past, mechanisms had also been frequently hampered by unclear mandates.³⁵ Paragraph 203(b) of Strategic Objective HI aimed to change that by requiring clearly defined mandates and authority. Clear objectives and accountability mechanisms were also required.³⁶

Implementation of the Platform for Action by national, subregional/regional and international institutions, both public and private, were to also be facilitated by transparency, increased linkages between networks and organizations and by a consistent flow of information among all concerned. Links with other institutions at the national, subregional/regional and international levels and with networks and organizations devoted to the advancement of women were also specifically needed.³⁷

Other critical elements also included adequate resources and the ability and competence to influence policy and formulate and review legislation³⁸ as needed to

³¹ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 **Annex II Beijing Platform for Action** Para 196 pp 84 and Para 296 pp 120 see also Para 36 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

³² UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 201(c) pp 85 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

³³ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 205(f) pp 87 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

³⁴ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing)** Date 15 September 1995 Annex I Beijing Declaration Par 36 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or [Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)

³⁵ **UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women** Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 196 pp 84 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

³⁶ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 288 pp 119 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

³⁷ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 288 pp 119 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

³⁸ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 203(b) pp 85 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

ensure respect for international law, including humanitarian law, in order to protect women and girls in particular;³⁹ According to Paragraph 203(b) Governments were to also perform a policy analysis, undertake advocacy, communication with the assistance of coordination and monitoring of implementation⁴⁰ Platform for Action Strategic objectives H.2 and H-3 went into more detail as to how all of this was to be specifically accomplished.

4. So, what else had to be done in order to assist the Government in successfully implementing the IMS upon its creation?

Effective implementation of the Platform required changes in the internal dynamics of institutions and organizations, including values, behaviour, rules and procedures that were harmful to the advancement of women.⁴¹

The success of policies and measures aimed at supporting or strengthening the promotion of gender equality and the improvement of the status of women had to also be based on the integration of a gender perspective in general policies relating to all areas of society as well as the implementation of positive measures with adequate institutional and financial support at all levels.⁴²

Groups who were viewed to be crucial in providing input on policies or measures which supported or strengthened the promotion of gender equality and the improvement of the status of women in 1995 had to include National Mechanisms and institutions for the advancement of women⁴³ as well as a broad and diverse range of other institutional actors, including legislative bodies, academic and research institutions, professional associations, trade unions, cooperatives, local community groups, community organizations from the grass -roots upwards,⁴⁴ non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations and feminist groups, the media, religious groups, youth

³⁹ **UN Resolution Fourth World Conference on Women(Beijing)** Date 15 September 1995 Par 33 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf> or [Resolution 1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)

⁴⁰ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 290 pp 119 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁴¹ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 290 pp 119 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁴² UN Resolution Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 57 pp 20 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁴³ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 294 pp 120 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁴⁴ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 201(b) pp 84-85 see also Para 289 pp 119 and Para 295 pp 120 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

organizations and cultural groups, as well as financial and non-profit organizations.⁴⁵ Promoting the increased participation of women as actively involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action.⁴⁶ as well as both active agents and beneficiaries of the development process, was also predicted to result in an improvement in the quality of life for all;⁴⁷

As to financial contributions. In 1995, financial and human resources had generally been insufficient for the advancement of women. This had contributed to the slow progress to date in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action, including the relevant commitments made at previous United Nations summits and conferences, would require a political commitment to make available human and financial resources for the empowerment of women. This would also require the integration of a gender perspective in budgetary decisions on policies and programmes, as well as the adequate financing of specific programmes for securing equality between women and men. To implement the Platform for Action, funding would also need to be identified and mobilized from all sources and across all sectors⁴⁸ for the advancement of women as well as to all institutions, as appropriate, that could contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action.⁴⁹ Where national machineries for the advancement of women did not yet exist or where they had not yet been established on a permanent basis, Governments were to strive to make available sufficient and continuing resources for such machineries.⁵⁰

Finally, to facilitate implementation of the Platform for Action, interested developed and developing country partners, who agreed on a mutual commitment to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national

⁴⁵ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 201(b) pp 84-85 see also Para 289 pp 119 and Para 295 pp 120 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁴⁶ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 289 pp 119 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁴⁷ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 205(d) pp 86 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁴⁸ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 345 pp 128 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁴⁹ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 347 pp 128 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁵⁰ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 348 pp 128 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

budget to basic social programmes were asked to take into account a gender perspective in allocating those funds.⁵¹

5.1999-2024

“Progress in gender equality and women’s empowerment during the past 25 years has been undeniable. However, the progress is fragile. Current global security threats, including the COVID19 pandemic, increasing global inequalities and social unrest, and the climate crisis, together with a geopolitical climate characterized by increased conservatism, nationalism, and tensions over national security, influence, and values, present very different pressures from the drivers of gender equality 25 years ago. Gender equality must be robust enough to withstand these new threats and enable women to contribute equally to solutions”.⁵²

Since its creation, for decades the Beijing Platform for Action has been a work in progress repeatedly addressing challenges involving the interpretation, expansion and implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action’s Institutional Mechanism’s Strategic objectives H.1.-H.3 as these objective dealt with creating an effective “engine” which would advance states to effectively implement all of Beijing’s other 11 substantive areas of concern in a timely manner. The following discussion deals with what the states and global community believed were and to some extent still are the issues which need to be addressed today:

1999

1999 was an important year for institutional/mechanisms as that was the year in which the Commission on the Status of Women’s specifically focused on what issues still existed in achieving the implementation of the IM’s which was necessary for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Commission confirmed that for national machineries to be effective there had to be clearly defined mandates⁵³ which

⁵¹ UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Date 15 September 1995 Annex II **Beijing Platform for Action** Para 358 pp 130 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁵² Lancet: Challenges and priorities for delivering on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years Published **Online** September 24, 2020 at pp 1 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S01406736\(20\)320043](https://doi.org/10.1016/S01406736(20)320043)

⁵³ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 Para 4** at pp 18 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

defined their function as a policy advisory body.⁵⁴ This was to be accompanied by ensuring that mainstreaming

a gender perspective was fully understood, institutionalized and implemented by the IMS including by promoting awareness and understanding of the Platform for Action. The Commission also acknowledged that, in order to accomplish these goals, Governments had to also ensure that national machineries as well as focal points within its specific institutions were not marginalized in the administrative structure but supported at the highest possible level of government⁵⁵ This also included IMS being invested with the authority needed to fulfil their mandated roles and responsibilities.⁵⁶The Commission also made it clear that, in order to accomplish these goals successfully, it was crucial that governments continued to possess a strong political commitment to support the strengthening of national machineries and the advancement of women.⁵⁷ These concerns would continue to surface throughout the following decades.

In addressing what needed to be addressed in achieving success in IMS in 1999, the Commission also addressed other issues which would continue to be challenges between 1999 and 2024.

In order to ensure accountability and transparency of any government's implementation of the IMS, there had to be effective monitoring mechanisms and tools such as gender-disaggregated statistics, gender budgeting, gender auditing and gender impact

⁵⁴ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(b) and 7(1)(i)** at pp 19

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁵⁵ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Para 2 at pp 18

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁵⁶ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(b)** at pp 19

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁵⁷ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Para 4 at pp 18 and **Para 7(1)(a) and 7(1)(b)** at pp 19

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

assessment, based on established benchmarks, and other performance indicators as well as regular public reporting, including under international agreements;⁵⁸

In order to accomplish these goals, the Commission also focused on the specific need for data monitoring which had to involve continuously improving the gathering and disaggregation of data and the development of statistics and indicators in all critical areas of the Platform for Action for use in analysis, policy development and planning.⁵⁹ It would also have to ensure effective gender-sensitive planning, monitoring, evaluation and implementation of programmes.⁶⁰ Any monitoring and reporting would also have to involve not only governments but parliaments and, wherever appropriate, the judiciary in monitoring progress in gender mainstreaming and strengthening gender-related aspects of all government reporting. Transparency would also have to be ensured through open and participatory dialogue and the promotion of balanced participation of women and men in all areas and at all levels of decision-making.⁶¹ The Commission also encouraged Governments and national machineries to undertake wide consultations with their civil societies when providing information on gender and

⁵⁸ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(k)** at pp 19-20

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁵⁹ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **1.Actions Taken By Governments ibid at Para 7(1)(m)** at pp 20 and **Para 7(2)(c)** at pp 21 (other parts of the government) assistance by donors or international NGO's e.g, in obtaining such data ibid at **Para 7(3)(k)** at pp 22-23; Promote research and dissemination of research findings and information on women and gender equality ibid at **Para 7(2)(d)** at pp 21 and create the establishment of documentation centres, to disseminate gender-relevant data and other information Ibid at **Para 7 (2)(e)** at pp 21 and use the analysis and evaluation of activities on gender issues and the results to influence the transformation of policies and programmes ibid at **Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(u)** at pp 20

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁶⁰ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **3. Actions to be taken by the international community, including the United Nations system Para 7(3)(j)** at pp 22

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁶¹ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(x)** at pp 21

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

women's issues to relevant international bodies⁶² including having women in development programmes or gender units play a crucial role in documenting "good practices or providing logistical support including ensuring equal access to information technology where appropriate."⁶³

Three other issues were specifically focused on by the Commission in 1999. One included providing adequate and sustainable financial and human resources to national machineries and other institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women through financial resources which were incorporated in national budgets, while also granting national machinery the possibility of attracting funds from other bodies for the purpose of specific projects.⁶⁴ The Commission also required the UN to support national Governments in their efforts to strengthen national mechanisms through official development assistance (ODA) and other appropriate assistance⁶⁵ and encourage multilateral, bilateral, donor and development agencies to include in their programmes of assistance, activities that strengthen national machineries.

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⁶² **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 3. Actions to be taken by the international community, including the United Nations system Para 7(3)(h) at pp 22**
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁶³ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 3. Actions to be taken by the international community, including the United Nations system Para 7(3)(i) at pp 22**
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁶⁴ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(c) at pp 19**
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁶⁵ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 3. Actions to be taken by the international community, including the United Nations system Para 7(3)(f) at pp 22**
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁶⁶ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 3. Actions to be taken by the international community, including the United Nations system Para 7(3)(g) at pp 22**
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

The Commission also focused in on two other issues which involved creating or strengthening human resources and the capacity of IMS and collaborative links with civil society including women's organizations, non- governmental organizations, academic institutions, the media and other agencies on a transparent political process.

For example, In addition to seeking financial resources for staff training and recruiting experts. the Commission also urged governments to promote capacity-building ensuring ongoing gender training at all levels for both women and men in government ministries such as IMS in order to be more responsive to the needs and interests of women and gender equality, develop their own capacity by making use of available national and international models and methodologies in the field of gender equality⁶⁷ and promote programme and policy sustainability.⁶⁸ The Commission also urged governments to develop for IMS, as appropriate, policies to recruit technical staff with expertise in gender equality issues .⁶⁹ In addition, as gender equality was to be advanced with the full involvement of women and men as it was essential⁷⁰ the Commission required that appropriate assistance from gender experts or gender focal points be available.⁷¹

⁶⁷ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(j)** at pp 19

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁶⁸ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **2.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(2)(f)**at pp 21

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁶⁹ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **2.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(2)(g)**at pp 21

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁷⁰ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Para 2 at pp 18

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁷¹ **E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999** Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality **1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(g)** at pp 19

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

Women were to also be actively involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action ⁷² and Governments were to respect the involvement of non-governmental organizations in assisting Governments in the implementation of regional, national and international commitments through advocacy and raising awareness of gender equality issues. ⁷³ Governments were to also ensure transparency through open and participatory dialogue and the promotion of balanced participation of women and men in all areas of decision-making.⁷⁴ as civil society was an important source of support and legitimacy. The Government was to also create and strengthen the relationship with civil society through regular consultations with non-governmental organizations, the research community, social partners and other concerned groups as this would also create a strong basis for gender-sensitive policy and the advancement of women; ⁷⁵

⁷² E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(r) at pp 20

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁷³ E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(r) at pp 20 see also Para 7(1)(s) at pp 20

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁷⁴ E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(t) at pp -20

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁷⁵ E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 2.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(2)(i) at pp 21

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

The Commission also urged the governments to create or strengthen collaborative links with other agencies at local, regional, national and international levels ⁷⁶ as well as the private sector. ⁷⁷

Finally, in 1999 the Commission also Included vulnerable groups as being a focus of IMS. Governments were to insure that the needs, rights and interests of all women, including those who were not members of organizations, and lived in poverty in rural and urban areas, were identified and mainstreamed into policy and programme development. This was to be done in ways that valued the diversity of women and recognized the barriers many women faced that prohibited and prevented their participation in public policy development. ⁷⁸

2000

In 2000, a review of the Institutional Mechanisms/National Machineries(IMS) implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) revealed that all Member States and multilateral development agencies had emphasized their intention to accelerate or continue with the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by strengthening their institutional mechanisms and by using the available financial and human resources in a more focused manner. The Member States and the multilateral development agencies also reported a high level of mainstreaming a gender perspective in their institutional policies and budget processes to the extent that some

⁷⁶ E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 2.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(2)(h)at pp 21 and Para 7(1)(p) at pp 20 see also Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 Para 4 at pp 18 see also Actions Taken By Governments Para (2)(l) at pp 21

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁷⁷ E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 2.Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 2.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(2)(h)at pp 21 and Para 7(1)(p) at pp 20 see also Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 Para 4 at pp 18 see also Actions Taken By Governments Para (2)(l) at pp 21

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

⁷⁸ E/1999/27 E/CN.6/1999/10 CSW 43 (II) Commission on the Status of Women Report of the 43rd Session Institutional mechanisms March 11-12, 1999 Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality 1.Actions Taken By Governments Para 7(1)(q) at pp 20

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw99.pdf>

could not report on actual women- specific expenditures.⁷⁹ Nearly three quarters of Member States had also established some form of a national machinery for the advancement of women.⁸⁰

However, “the bloom” was fading on the IMS/BPFA “rose” in a number of ways. A survey of national machineries among Member States revealed that although the Platform for Action had recommended that national machineries be located at the “highest possible level in the government”, one third of the respondents indicated that their national machineries were placed in a non-governmental organization or a mixed structure.⁸¹ The selection of this type of location could present an obstacle in obtaining the potential benefits that a national machinery would otherwise receive if it was located within the Government, in terms of authority and access to decision-making bodies, and those of locating it externally, in terms of greater flexibility, freedom from political constraints, and enhanced interaction with civil society.⁸² Findings from an Expert Group Meeting⁸³ in 1998, indicated that, in some cases, a national machinery located in the central planning or policy coordination area of government was better able to monitor all policies to ensure gender mainstreaming, while, in other cases, the existing political systems restricted the functioning of the machinery rather than facilitate its role in mainstreaming.⁸⁴ The location and composition of a national machinery would continue to be ongoing issue throughout the next two decades.

The review also listed other obstacles that still existed in 2000 despite the efforts of the Member States. For example, a number of countries described inadequate financial and human resources and a lack of political will and commitment as being the main obstacles confronting their national machineries. These obstacles were further exacerbated by an insufficient understanding of gender equality and gender mainstreaming among government structures, as well as prevailing gender stereotypes,

⁷⁹ E/ CN.6/2000/PC/2 Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action Report of the Secretary-General January 19, 2000 Para 792

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:356a3a49-28e6-4fee-8d09-62e3b16bec15>

⁸⁰ E/ CN.6/2000/PC/2 Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action Report of the Secretary-General January 19, 2000 Para 452

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:356a3a49-28e6-4fee-8d09-62e3b16bec15>

⁸¹ E/ CN.6/2000/PC/2 Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action Report of the Secretary-General January 19, 2000 Para 452

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:356a3a49-28e6-4fee-8d09-62e3b16bec15>

⁸² E/ CN.6/2000/PC/2 Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action Report of the Secretary-General January 19, 2000 Para 453

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:356a3a49-28e6-4fee-8d09-62e3b16bec15>

⁸³ It was an expert group meeting which was organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (September 1998)

⁸⁴ E/ CN.6/2000/PC/2 Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action Report of the Secretary-General January 19, 2000 Para 453

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:356a3a49-28e6-4fee-8d09-62e3b16bec15>

discriminatory attitudes, and competing government priorities. Some other countries listed unclear mandates, a marginalized location within the national government structures, a lack of data disaggregated by sex and age in many areas, insufficiently applied methods for assessing progress, a paucity of authority, insufficient links to civil society and structural and communication problems within and among government agencies as also being obstacles.⁸⁵

2006

Eleven years after the creation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its Institutional Mechanisms, the Commission was still dealing with some of the issues which had been raised before. In 2006, the UN Secretary General's report regarding the progress that had been made in the implantation of the IMS /BPFA observed that there was room for improvement in several areas. To begin with, the report acknowledged that a significant gap between policy and practice still remained. Effective gender mainstreaming still also required strong political commitment in the form of clear mandates, regular monitoring and enforcement of accountability mechanisms. There was also an insufficient allocation of specific resources which were given to both gender specialists and financial resources, for gender mainstreaming which also served as an obstacle to an effective implementation of those goals.⁸⁶

According to the UN Secretary's report in 2006, other gaps which needed to be addressed on a priority basis included inadequate understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming and lack of practical implementation strategies and skills. In addition, while the development of many innovative methodologies and tools was seen as a positive development, the problem was that they were not being utilized as systematically as required for effective implementation. As such, ensuring broader dissemination and more effective use of existing methodologies and tools had to also be a priority.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ **Beijing Plus 5 Declaration and Outcome** UN Women 2000 Achievements in and obstacles to the implementation of the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action pp 208-225 Para 25

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:f4fb7a8e-2225-46ad-9eda-40abfebb0a95>

⁸⁶ **E/CN.6/2006/2** Measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to and implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly: review of progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes Report of the Secretary-General 2006 Para 69

⁸⁷ **E/CN.6/2006/2** Measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to and implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly: review of progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes Report of the Secretary-General 2006 Para 31, 28, 42-44, 48-49 and 70,

In addition, the catalytic role of national mechanisms for women, including ministries, gender equality commissions and committees and parliamentary bodies, in supporting gender mainstreaming had to be strengthened according to this report. The mandates, resources, management support and access to decision-making of focal points in line ministries were to also be enhanced and the coordination between line ministries increased. Increasing the interaction with gender specialists in other bodies at national level, such as NGOs, women's groups and networks and academia, and networking and sharing of good practice within and across regions, could also support the implementation of gender mainstreaming at national level.⁸⁸

In 2006 the Commission also still believed that there was insufficient data and national mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and accountability.⁸⁹ and urged States to develop and implement effective national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at all levels to evaluate progress towards gender equality, including through the collection, compilation and analysis and use of data disaggregated by age and by sex and gender statistics as well as continue developing and using appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators;⁹⁰

In 2006, the Commission agreed that there should be an enhanced coordination and collaboration between all mechanisms for the advancement of women and gender equality at all levels such as women's ministries, gender equality commissions, relevant parliamentary committees, ombudspersons, gender focal points and working groups in line ministries, as well as with women's groups, associations and networks.⁹¹

The Commission's focus also included the issue of whether or not BPF/IMS had adequate funding to fulfill its mission again. It acknowledged that although the BPF/IMS mission included the creation of an enabling environment at all levels of the BPF/IMS as it was necessary to enhance women's participation in and benefit from development processes challenges, that were still an insufficient number of national

⁸⁸ **E/CN.6/2006/2** Measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to and implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly: review of progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes Report of the Secretary-General 2006 Para 72

⁸⁹ **CSW 50(A) Agreed Conclusions** Enhanced participation of women in development: an Enabling Environment for achieving gender Equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of Education, health and work 2006 **Para 5(k)**

⁹⁰ **CSW 50(A) Agreed Conclusions** Enhanced participation of women in development: an Enabling Environment for achieving gender Equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of Education, health and work 2006 **Para 7(c)**

⁹¹ **CSW 50(A) Agreed Conclusions** Enhanced participation of women in development: an Enabling Environment for achieving gender Equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of Education, health and work 2006 **Para 7(p) see also CSW 50(B) Agreed Conclusions** Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels 2006 **Para 17(gg)**

mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and accountability.⁹² Therefore, the Commission again urged governments to mobilize adequate funding for gender-sensitive development policies and programmes and for national mechanisms for gender equality, through national, regional and international resource mobilization and gender-responsive budget processes in all sector areas, as well as allocate adequate funding for women-specific measures.⁹³

In 2007 and 2008, the UN again urged states to intensify action to achieve the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through strengthening the role of national institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the advancement of women, including through financial and other appropriate assistance, to increase their direct impact on women;

⁹⁴

In 2007, the **Committee of Ministers to the Council of Europe** also focused in on the goal of gender equality and the standards and mechanisms that implemented this goal and made a series of recommendations regarding these goals. The Committee began by acknowledging gender equality as a principle of human rights and a government responsibility.⁹⁵

Gender equality was defined by this Committee as a principle of human rights and women's human rights which was an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. In this case, Gender equality also contained a requirement for the achievement of social justice and a "sine qua non of democracy."⁹⁶

⁹² **CSW 50(A) Agreed Conclusions** Enhanced participation of women in development: an Enabling Environment for achieving gender Equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of Education, health and work 2006 **Para 5(k)**

⁹³ **CSW 50(A) Agreed Conclusions** Enhanced participation of women in development: an Enabling Environment for achieving gender Equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of Education, health and work 2006 **Para 7(b) 7(c) and 7(n)**

⁹⁴ **A/RES/62/137** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly a Para 7(g) see also **A/RES/63/159** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2008 Para 7(i)

⁹⁵ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 1-7

⁹⁶ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 1

However, the Committee also added that acceptance of these principles implied not only the elimination of all forms of discrimination, legal or otherwise, on the basis of sex, but also required the fulfilment of a number of other requirements that had to be seen as qualitative indicators of political will to achieve substantive gender equality or de facto equality.⁹⁷

The Committee listed 6 paragraphs which defined the elements which would be indicative of a states' political will and commitment to gender equality. In this regard these elements were similar to that proposed by the BPFA and included the following issues which the UN had dealt with since 1995:

- i. That gender equality policies be devised and included in the overall framework of human rights protection and promotion, even if specific programmes and responsible institutions are required in particular areas;⁹⁸
- ii. That no cultural tradition or social custom that negatively affects, in particular, women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights or their human dignity be accepted or tolerated. The measures taken to eradicate these traditions or customs shall be complemented by appropriate measures aimed to meet the specific needs of the women concerned;⁹⁹
- iii. that no social, economic or political circumstance be invoked to deny or not fulfil gender equality requirements or the enjoyment by women of their human rights;¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 2

⁹⁸ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 3(i)

⁹⁹ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 3(ii)

¹⁰⁰ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 3(iii)

iv. that the global nature and horizontal character of gender equality objectives be acknowledged and pursued through comprehensive action plans and programmes that encompass different areas and different levels of governance and that must be closely monitored and evaluated;¹⁰¹

v. that adequate human and financial resources be allocated to programmes, projects and initiatives for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment and that gender budgeting be used in all programmes in all areas, as a necessary tool to guarantee that the principle of gender equality is respected in the distribution and allocation of resources;¹⁰²

vi. that sex-disaggregated data and statistics in all areas and regarding all policies and programmes be regularly gathered and analysed, as indispensable tools to monitor progress on the way to achieving substantive gender equality.¹⁰³

When it came to addressing what elements were needed to show that states had political will and commitment to implement gender equality, the Committee observed one element would involve a states' act of regularly assessing the percentages of women and men in leading bodies of both political and administrative bodies including leading bodies of political and administrative institutions and of civil society organisations (political parties, social partners, youth organisations, academic institutions, private sector organisations, etc.) would be one element which was needed

¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 3(iv)

¹⁰² Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 3(v)

¹⁰³ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 3(vi)

¹⁰⁴ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 6(i)

There were two other elements. The second element involved political and administrative institutions as well as civil society and private sector organisations having mandatory/voluntary gender equality plans and the adoption of norms/guidelines to achieve balanced participation of women and men in their leading bodies, including targets and timeframes of implementation.¹⁰⁵ The third element involved the existence of and support to research and policy-related analytical studies on women's participation at the different levels of the above institutions and organisations, including at a decision-making level, on obstacles/barriers which prevented women's access to decision-making and on effective strategies to promote that participation.¹⁰⁶

The Committee also addressed what was required of the states in accomplishing these goals. Because gender equality was a requirement of democracy and of human rights, governments of member states had a clear and pressing obligation to eliminate discrimination and achieve gender equality. Commitment and transparency in the adoption, implementation and evaluation of their gender equality policies were requirements that governments must follow; Governments also had to be accountable in regard to the results of these policies.¹⁰⁷

In evaluating what elements were required by the States to fulfill, many mirrored the same requirements as the BPFA. For example, States had to possess clear identification and acknowledgement of problems and shortcomings that showed that, in spite of equality norms and past efforts, these problems and shortcomings persisted in regard to the situation of women and the achievement of gender equality.¹⁰⁸ States were to also establish of targets and time frames for the effective implementation of gender equality

¹⁰⁵ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 6(ii)

¹⁰⁶ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 6(iii)

¹⁰⁷ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 7

¹⁰⁸ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 8(i)

plans and programmes in all relevant public policy areas ¹⁰⁹ and adopt and use clear indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, to evaluate results and progress achieved.

¹¹⁰

States were to create and reinforce monitoring mechanisms, both at central and decentralised level, to pursue the process of establishing gender equality ¹¹¹ Monitoring programs could include regular reporting to parliament on progress achieved and obstacles encountered, ¹¹² and regular evaluation of progress at all levels of implementation of gender equality policies ¹¹³. It also called for collaboration with other groups including the establishment of formal co-operation structures and mechanisms and other links with civil society organisations working for the promotion of human rights and gender equality; ¹¹⁴, the establishment of regular communication channels with media organisations to ensure a frequent flow of information on gender equality issues

¹⁰⁹ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 8(ii)

¹¹⁰ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 8(iii)

¹¹¹ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 8(iv)

¹¹² Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 8(iv)

¹¹³ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 8(vi)

¹¹⁴ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 8(ivii)

and on programmes and progress in this area;¹¹⁵ and finally, the adoption of methodologies for the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy, including gender budgeting, gender-based analysis/gender impact assessment, cross-checking where necessary gender- or sex-related data with statistics on socio-economic or other relevant personal circumstances.¹¹⁶

The Committee then turned its focus on Section H (Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women) on the BPFA. It began by acknowledging that Institutional mechanisms/national machinery were essential instruments that governments must establish or reinforce to pursue their obligation to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex and to achieve gender equality.¹¹⁷ It then added that it had also observed an overall trend towards the diversification and multiplication of gender equality mechanisms and their progressive establishment in various policy areas and at different levels of power, including in parliaments, regional and local level bodies and also as independent institutions.¹¹⁸

The Committee then observed that, while there were no ideal, fixed models valid for every country,¹¹⁹ there were some basic requirements for the creation, reinforcement or effective functioning of these mechanisms which should be

¹¹⁵ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 Recommendation **CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 8(viii)

¹¹⁶ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 Recommendation **CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 8(ix)

¹¹⁷ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 Recommendation **CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 68

¹¹⁸ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 Recommendation **CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 69

¹¹⁹ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 Recommendation **CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 70

pointed out and envisaged as indicators of the political will and commitment and of the strategic goals of states in regard to the achievement of gender equality.

¹²⁰Those basic elements included many of the requirements needed to implement the Institutional Mechanisms/National Machineries within the Beijing Platform for Action including that States fully implement the strategic objectives and actions contained in Chapter IV of the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular Section H (institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women).¹²¹ It also required that gender equality mechanisms be at the highest political level; more specifically, that the national co-ordinating unit be at the highest level of government, under the direct responsibility of the president, prime minister or cabinet minister, and that units or focal points be set up within ministries or other government departments or within regional and local power structures, at the highest level of those departments and structures;¹²²

These institutional mechanisms were to also have the necessary authority, visibility, political recognition, necessary funding and human resources, and have their action be fully supported by political power at the different levels of its exercise;¹²³ It also required that the overall structure of the gender equality machinery include an interdepartmental/interministerial structure which also had high level representative with decision-making powers from all relevant policy areas in order to ensure the effective functioning of the process of gender mainstreaming;¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 71

¹²¹ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(i)

¹²² Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(ii)

¹²³ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(iii)

¹²⁴ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(iv)

Any mandate of institutional mechanisms also had to have a clear legal basis with well-defined functions and responsibilities; and that the mandate would necessarily include the dual-track approach to gender equality work: 1. specific policies and actions, including positive action when appropriate, in critical areas for the advancement of women and for gender equality and 2. promotion, monitoring, co-ordination and evaluation of the process of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes;¹²⁵

Institutional mechanisms were also required to develop gender expertise both within themselves and as capacity builders for gender equality at different levels of government and administration and for that purpose develop methods, instruments and tools for gender analysis/gender impact assessment and gender budgeting, as well as training on gender equality and the use of these methods, instruments and tools;¹²⁶

In addressing gender budgeting, the Committee also confirmed that any resources for the core operational costs of institutional mechanisms – staff, facilities, regular functioning of the institution – were the sole responsibility of the state, even if funding for specific actions and projects could also be found from various sources;¹²⁷

As to collaboration and cooperation, institutional mechanisms were to establish formal and informal links of co-operation with other public institutions and administrations in general and establish formal and informal links of co-operation with a wide range of civil society organizations, namely women¹²⁸'s and human rights NGOs, the media, the research and academic community, social partners and other relevant social actors, as well as with international and European organizations pursuing gender equality objectives;¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 72vi)

¹²⁶ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(vi)

¹²⁷ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(vii)

¹²⁸ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(viii)

¹²⁹ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of**

Finally, mechanisms for gender equality were to be established at parliamentary level, as well as independent agencies and other bodies, such as ombudspersons that may receive complaints for discrimination on the basis of sex.¹³⁰ But they also had to fully implement the strategic objectives and actions contained in Chapter IV of the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular Section H (institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women)¹³¹ as well as establish formal and informal links of co-operation with a wide range of civil society organizations, namely women's and human rights NGOs, the media, the research and academic community, social partners and other relevant social actors, as well as with international and European organizations pursuing gender equality objectives;¹³²

In 2007, the UN Secretary General's report also addressed how Member States Institutional Mechanisms were addressing the discrimination and violence against the girl child. It was observed that the most commonly reported measures to address discrimination and violence against the girl child were legislative ones, including efforts to strengthen and enforce existing legislation, and actions to incorporate attention to girls in existing policies, strategies and action plans. While some member States developed institutional mechanisms, such as national commissions and advisory bodies, to support increased attention to girls, and/or incorporated the attention of the girl child into the work of line ministries and other bodies, constraints reported in such efforts included a lack of resources, institutional capacity, data and coordination. There was also little discussion of the accountability mechanisms established to monitor the implementation of those mandates.¹³³

Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)* Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(ix)

¹³⁰ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 Recommendation **CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms***(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)* Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(x)

¹³¹ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 Recommendation **CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms***(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)* Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(i)

¹³² Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 Recommendation **CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms***(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)* Accessed online July 2024 Para 72(ix)

¹³³ **E/CN.6/2007/3** Progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluations of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child Report of the Secretary-General Para 56 link E/CN.6/2007/3 [A C E F R S]

As to how States would establish and reinforce Section H (Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women) of the BPFA.¹³⁴

2010

The 2010 UNDAW Global Study¹³⁵ discussed the achievements and challenges which were faced by IMS in Europe in 2010

Achievements

Noteworthy gains had been achieved on many fronts. Laws had been enacted or reformed to remove discrimination against women in a number of areas. The goals of gender equality and women's empowerment had achieved greater political visibility. The strategy of gender mainstreaming was increasingly being used in all regions. Capacity to address gender equality issues had also been developed through the availability of methodologies and tools; training; research and analysis, and data and statistics.¹³⁶

Several factors contributed to these achievements. Mechanisms had become more mature and had learned to draw lessons from their setbacks and successes. In some countries strong leadership had built the capacity of national mechanisms. In many countries the strengthened voice of civil society had also enabled national mechanisms to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.¹³⁷

Regional and international processes and institutions also lent legitimacy to the gender equality agenda and helped in exchange of knowledge that had strengthened the capacity of national mechanisms.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Council of Europe, [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#), 2007 **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 November 2007 at the 1011th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) Accessed online July 2024 Para 67(ii)

¹³⁵ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010

¹³⁶ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.71

¹³⁷ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.71

¹³⁸ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with

Finally, while it was not possible to isolate the contribution of a single mechanism/actor or of a set of mechanisms/actors in realizing the gains towards gender equality, the collaboration of different mechanisms/actors on a particular issue had also created the synergies that ultimately resulted in positive change.¹³⁹

Constraints and challenges

Sustainability of funding and gender as sole focus

The studies from all the regions highlighted many continuing challenges facing the national mechanisms.(see below) However, the most important was their sustainability. As the study from the European Union and Western countries pointed out, “sustainability is at risk due to a number of threats. Sustainability is at risk because of lack of funding when international support ends; because officials that are not interested in the subject will tend to move away from such responsibilities; sustainability is at risk because leaders that do not understand or accept the issue of gender equality as a serious human rights issue will tend not to give the required status and means, both human and financial, to national mechanisms and even, as noticed in some cases, made frequent shifts of location and scope”.⁶⁶ The studies from other regions, particularly South Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Arab and the Africa regions similarly raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of national mechanisms, especially because of over dependence on donor funds.¹⁴⁰

The studies from the European Union and Western Countries as well as from Latin America and the Caribbean region cautioned about another potential risk - the new trend of considering gender based discrimination as one form of discrimination comparable to other forms such as race, ethnicity and class. Both studies voiced concern as to whether this trend would diminish the visibility and hence the effectiveness of the work of national mechanisms. This concern was also flagged in the study from Africa, where in a least one country there was a constant struggle of the national machinery in maintaining its separate existence.¹⁴¹

sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.71

¹³⁹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.71

¹⁴⁰ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.66

¹⁴¹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with

Other Challenges

Despite many positive developments national mechanisms still faced many constraints. In some countries they were still structurally marginalized and had to cope with frequent reorganization and change in leadership. Mandates were sometimes diffuse and poorly designed. Staff and budgetary resources were severely limited. Technical expertise to address gender equality was inadequate both within national mechanisms and in other places in government. Coordination amongst various mechanisms within government was weak. Collaboration between mechanisms and between mechanisms and other stakeholders was also limited. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was not effective. In addition, limitations of data, statistics research, methods and tools also constrained policy analysis and programme development from a gender perspective.¹⁴²

Other challenges also challenged national mechanisms. E.g. Sustaining political will, overcoming resistance and opposition and institutionalizing the gender mainstreaming strategy were continuing challenges for national mechanisms.

¹⁴³

Below are specific areas which were discussed in 2010 which I have included as they had also been an issue around in our region as well as in certain regions around the world prior to that date.

Accountability-Positive developments have taken place to ensure accountability. Still, all the regional studies noted that it had been difficult to hold the government as a whole accountable for gender equality. The study from South Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States summed up the situation in a way that can be applicable to many countries in all regions. It stated that accountability issue, especially at high level, remained out of the discourse.¹⁴⁴

sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.66

¹⁴² UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Emporment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.71

¹⁴³ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.71

¹⁴⁴ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with

Capacity- Despite many positive developments national mechanisms still faced many constraints. In some countries they were still structurally marginalized and had to cope with frequent reorganization and change in leadership. Staff and budgetary resources were also severely limited which weakened their capacities to discharge their mandates¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁶

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, efforts have been undertaken in most countries in all regions to build capacity within national mechanisms as well as in other levels and branches of government. Various tools and methodologies such as gender analysis, gender budgeting, gender impact assessments etc. had been developed and used. Training has been organized for the staff of both national mechanisms as well as other officials of government and even encompassed general gender sensitivity training as well as technical training in tools and methods for gender mainstreaming. While all of these efforts had undeniably resulted in progress in enhancing understanding and expertise both within national mechanisms and outside in the government as a whole, all regional studies still highlighted inadequate capacity both within the national mechanisms and outside, particularly in implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy.¹⁴⁷

A specific study on South Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States similarly noted a lack of expertise within national mechanisms and lack of understanding and commitment at the higher decision-making levels about the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The study called on national machineries to develop standards for gender mainstreaming and provide knowledge, expertise, and tools to different agencies of government. It also highlighted the need for

sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp 62

¹⁴⁵ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.vi

¹⁴⁶ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.vi

¹⁴⁷ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.vi

systematic training of newly appointed gender focal points to make them more effective in their work. ¹⁴⁸

A study from the European Union and Western countries acknowledged significant progress in building gender expertise, and developing and using tools and methods such as gender budgeting and gender impact assessment. Still the study argued for additional gender expertise and more professionalized gender training for national mechanisms and beyond. It specifically cited the need for designing instruments of analysis and evaluation to assess the effective implementation of gender equality policies. ¹⁴⁹

Technical expertise to address gender equality was also inadequate both within national mechanisms and in other places in government as there were still wide gaps in capacity, in terms of technical expertise and tools, the plan was to mainstream gender perspective across all policies, strategies, plans and actions. ¹⁵⁰ Coordination amongst various mechanisms within government was also weak¹⁵¹ and here was still wide gaps in capacity, in terms of technical expertise and tools, to mainstream gender perspective across all policies, strategies, plans and actions. ¹⁵²

Co-ordination and Collaboration

¹⁴⁸ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.60

¹⁴⁹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.60

¹⁵⁰ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.59-60 see also pp 69

¹⁵¹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.59-60

¹⁵² UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.iii

Many countries had established specific structures such as inter- and intra-departmental/ministerial committees/working groups to facilitate coordination amongst various mechanisms within government and assured that formal rules/guidelines were also in place in many countries. However, all the studies acknowledged that in reality coordination was weak for a variety of reasons. Sometimes structures and rules were missing. Sometime rules/guidelines were not systematically implemented. Most importantly, the national machineries which had relatively low status vis-à-vis other ministries and were unable to coordinate their activities. ¹⁵³

While collaboration between mechanisms in different branches of government, and with autonomous bodies had improved in many places through concerted efforts to promote various initiatives such as legal reforms, regional studies also still noted room for greater effort and improvement. ¹⁵⁴

While collaboration between mechanisms within government and other stakeholders outside government had also generally improved in all regions, there were still countries where national mechanisms and civil society organizations were not working in a collaborative way. For example, they were competing over resources, particularly donor resources, and constituencies. ¹⁵⁵ Collaboration between mechanisms within the government and civil society also varied across countries and regions. In some countries, government mechanisms successfully built alliances with civil society and women's movements, creating a successful strategy of inside outside advocacy to advance the agenda of gender equality and women's empowerment. The studies from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean region affirmed this trend of increasing collaboration. ¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.v and at pp 70

¹⁵⁴ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.v and pp 70

¹⁵⁵ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.v and ppvi at pp 70

¹⁵⁶ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well

The goals of these policies were also not always supported by the macro policy environment, which favored economic liberalization, deregulation and cutting back of public services.¹⁵⁷

Data- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems were still not effective. The effect? Limitations of data, statistics research, methods and tools constrained policy analysis and programme development from a gender perspective.¹⁵⁸

Although **sex disaggregated data and statistics** and gender-sensitive research were increasingly available in all regions, there were still gaps. In some countries even rudimentary sex disaggregated data and statistics was not available. In some other countries, their quality was also questionable. Data, statistics and research on new and emerging issues was scant.¹⁵⁹ The fourth was a problem of scarcity of gender-sensitive research to analyze some of the new and emerging problems. The study from the European Union and Western countries highlighted some of these issues: migration, minorities and refugees linked to globalization; demographic movements and conflict situations; the degradation of environmental conditions; aging and poverty; economic and financial crisis with its gendered impact on unemployment, violence and trafficking etc.

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as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp 61

¹⁵⁷ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp 65

¹⁵⁸ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at ppvi

¹⁵⁹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.iv

¹⁶⁰ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.63 and pp 69

Moreover, in many places despite availability of sex disaggregated data and statistics and gender sensitive research their use by governments in planning and budgetary allocation processes was limited. ¹⁶¹

It was also believed to be difficult to identify what kinds of data and statistics needed to be collected and what kinds of issues needed to be researched in order to address the specific gender equality concerns and to establish the discriminatory treatment of women both by the state and within the market. ¹⁶²

Some progress was noticeable in developing indicators to monitor realization of the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment. But, the existing measures and indicators were limited in scope. ¹⁶³

The countries had also fallen short in building a sound monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, which had constrained national mechanisms from systematically learning from their work experiences. ¹⁶⁴

Finance

Budgetary resources were severely limited.¹⁶⁵

Unfortunately the resources available to national mechanisms did not match the rising expectations from their constituencies. Mechanisms in all regions worked under severe

¹⁶¹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.iv and pp 69

¹⁶² UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.63

¹⁶³ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.iv

¹⁶⁴ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.iv

¹⁶⁵ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.vi

staff and budget constraints. Mechanisms in many countries were heavily dependent on donor money which risked their sustainability as donor funds and priorities tended to fluctuate.¹⁶⁶

In some countries, the mechanisms had been able to overcome the financial resource constraint by tapping into three other key resources: strength of leadership of mechanisms; support from top political leadership; and wide base of constituency support.¹⁶⁷

National mechanisms universally remained constrained by lack of other resources: E.g. staff as well as budget, which had also weakened their capacities to discharge their mandates. E.g. National mechanisms had faced rising expectations from their constituencies such as women's groups, for a stronger role in shaping government policy, as well as for targeted projects and services for women. However, staff and budgetary resources had not increased to meet this demand. While resource constraints had been particularly evident in the poorer countries, with a weak revenue base, such budgetary limitations also reflected the lower allocative priority assigned to gender equality concerns. The lack of domestic resources to staff national machineries or underwrite policy work, or targeted women's programmes had, in many cases, led to a growing dependence on external donors to cover the budgets of the national mechanisms. The problem with that was that such aid was that it had often come with certain conditionalities, imposed reporting burdens on the recipients and put the absorptive capacity of weaker governments under severe stress. This aid dependency had, in particular countries, also compromised the legitimacy of these mechanisms and weakened domestic support for their policy agendas. High aid dependence further imperiled the capacities and performance of the national mechanisms because both external resource flows as well as donor priorities tended to fluctuate. The problem of resource constraints was highlighted by all regional studies. The European Union study summed up one of the most problematic consequences of external dependence when it

¹⁶⁶ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.v at pp 70

¹⁶⁷ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.v at pp 70

observed that, in the case of countries relying heavily on such funds, “sustainability is at risk because of lack of funding when international support ends”.¹⁶⁸

Gender budgeting and Millennium Development Goals did not help as they were also limited in scope. Budget was only one input, though it was a critical one. Similarly Millennium Development Goals monitored outcomes of only selected areas. Progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment needed to be monitored by a wide variety of indicators beyond gender budgeting and the limited Millennium Development Goals indicators.¹⁶⁹

Highest position

Notwithstanding the overall trend towards expansion, national mechanisms were far from being institutionally stable. In many countries they faced frequent reorganization, location

shifts and leadership changes¹⁷⁰ which created instability in their work.

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As to leadership changes, the agenda and the authority of the national machinery could suffer when regime changes and the new leadership did not prioritize the goal of gender equality.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp 59

¹⁶⁹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp 62

¹⁷⁰ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.iii

¹⁷¹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp 57 citing *Regina Tavares da Silva, 2010, p. 41*

¹⁷² UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well

Despite the recommendation of the Platform for Action that the national machinery be located “at the highest possible level in the government,” in many countries machineries continued to be structurally located in marginal positions with little direct access to key policy and decision making processes. The national machineries were generally a department or a unit in a ministry and as such their heads did not have a seat in cabinet meetings. In these situations, the machineries depended on the support of the head of the ministry, who often combined multiple portfolios and might or might not prioritize the agendas of the national machinery. Other mechanisms, such as gender focal points, were also structurally marginalized. Usually junior officials were made gender focal points, and gender equality issues were add-ons to their routine responsibilities. ¹⁷³

In several countries of Europe and Latin America, a new trend was to make gender equality only a part of the mandate of organizations, which had a broader overall mandate on equality and antidiscrimination including discrimination based on other factors such as race, ethnicity etc. In these situations, gender equality mandates ran the risk of losing priority amongst competing mandates of organizations. ¹⁷⁴

Mandates –

Mandates were sometimes diffuse and poorly designed. ¹⁷⁵ Although the Platform for Action guidelines were clear that the mandate of national machineries were to promote the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment through catalytic work and dual-track strategy of gender mainstreaming and targeted measures, there was still a lack of understanding about what catalytic work and gender mainstreaming entailed. In many countries national machineries were still too busy implementing their own projects delivering services to women, rather than doing catalytic work providing policy advice to other ministries and departments to mainstream gender equality issues in their

as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp 57

¹⁷³ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.56

¹⁷⁴ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.57

¹⁷⁵ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.vi

policies and programmes.¹⁷⁶ In some countries mandates of national machineries did not highlight gender equality and women's empowerment. Instead, they were framed in a way that highlighted a social welfare approach focusing on family and children.¹⁷⁷ The family and children focus would continue to be an issue when political groups began to focus only on family and children and not exclusively on women or girls.

Political Will

Lack of political will to promote gender equality was identified by all regional studies as a major constraint.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, Political will for achieving the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment had on the whole improved but there were still variations between regions and countries. E.g. The rise in social conservatism posed a threat to the women's movement and the national mechanisms in many countries.¹⁷⁹

This lack of will manifested itself in different ways. E.g. The European Union study noted that lack of political will was reflected in weak and inconsistent implementation of laws and policies; resource limitations and power of the mechanisms; lack of interest and knowledge of government officials, particularly of senior officials; lack of interest on the part of parliamentarians and other high-level officials "and so on".¹⁸⁰

There could also be a lack of political will among members of the executive branch and limited sensitivity and commitment to gender equality as a priority of state policy. It was

¹⁷⁶ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.iv and pp 69

¹⁷⁷ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp 69

¹⁷⁸ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.iv

¹⁷⁹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp 64

¹⁸⁰ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.iv

evident, that a minimum threshold of resources had to be domestically generated and prioritized in order to sustain the national mechanisms. However this was most likely to occur where gender equality concerns enjoyed strong political support at home which could be reflected in the budget decisions of the state.¹⁸¹

A word about : Laws Noteworthy gains had been achieved in many fronts. Laws had been enacted or reformed to remove discrimination against women in a number of areas. The goals of gender equality and women's empowerment had also achieved greater political visibility. The strategy of gender mainstreaming was increasingly being used in all regions. Capacity to address gender equality issues had also been developed through methods and tools; training; research and analysis, and data and statistics.¹⁸²

2014 Europe

Beyond the widespread existence of institutions, several regional studies looked at mandates and capacity. A 2014 study in the European Union found that, as of 2012, all 28 member States had established governmental gender equality bodies, but no substantial progress has been observed in relation to their mandate, the allocation of human resources or their capacity to promote gender equality. The study also found that since 2005, the human resources allocated to in government gender equality bodies had decreased in 14 member States. Another study regarding 13 countries with available data found that government spending on national machineries was less than 0.4 per cent of GDP. That study also found that spending levels had either remained unchanged or had declined since the financial crisis, as a result of austerity measures implemented by governments worldwide. Similarly, a study of 53 African countries found that financial constraints topped the list of challenges confronting these mechanisms. Studies of national mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean; South-East and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and in Asia and the Pacific and Western Asia also revealed the lack of adequate financial resources and, in some

¹⁸¹ UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.59 and pp 71

¹⁸² UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW, now UN Women), [Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. A Global Synthesis Study](#), with sub-regional studies on IMs in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as in EU Member States and candidate countries, and other developed economies of the UNECE Region. Published in 2010 at pp.v-vi

contexts, an increased dependency on donor funding to sustain activities; low levels of technical capacity, decision- making power and visibility within the government and the lack of political will to prioritize gender mainstreaming in all government policies and programmes, were key challenges experienced across all regions. ¹⁸³

2014

In 2014, it was observed that In many countries, examples of constructive approaches, national legislation and institutional attention existed for the implementation of minority rights, equality and the accommodation of diverse groups within society which could be replicated. However, in all regions significant challenges still remained for minority communities.¹⁸⁴ In those regions where challenges remained, factors included the lack of recognition of minorities, discrimination, exclusion and lack of knowledge and awareness of minority issues result in inadequate inclusion of minority issues by national institutions, both governmental and independent, within their work and priorities. Human rights and socioeconomic development policies frequently did not fully take account of their unique circumstances, their rights and their needs and consequently failed to benefit minorities.¹⁸⁵ The lack of financial resources also played a part in institutional mechanisms denying minority communities the attention and resources they needed.¹⁸⁶

2015

¹⁸³ **SUMMARY REPORT: THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION TURNS 20**

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¹⁸⁴ **A/67/293** Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Report of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues 2014 Para 5

¹⁸⁵ **A/67/293** Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Report of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues 2014 Para 7

¹⁸⁶ **A/67/293** Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Report of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues 2014 Para 52 Where dedicated institutions or bodies are created, financial resources must be sufficient to enable them to conduct the full range of mandated activities; and separate budget lines should be provided and guaranteed. Where the mandates of existing human rights bodies are enlarged to incorporate minority issues, their capacity, resources and staffing should also be enhanced. However, there was a trend in Europe which they found disturbing e.g. Para 53. A recent trend towards integration of specialized minority and ethnic equality bodies into wider human rights institutions has been identified in the European context. Funding issues, rather than real or perceived lack of need, may contribute to decisions to abolish or merge institutions, particularly in the context of the current global financial crisis. However, economic conditions should not be considered a valid reason to reduce necessary attention to minority issues. Merger of institutions should not weaken the required institutional attention and resources dedicated to minority issues or limit their independence or the scope of their work.

In 2015, the Directorate General for Internal Policies also conducted an evaluation of the BPfA. which resulted in 4 key findings:

1) Global progress on the implementation of the BPfA had been slow, uneven and limited. 2)¹⁸⁷ Increased efforts at the EU level have had an effect in the past years. Nevertheless, significant room for improvement remained as women and girls were still at a disadvantage in all 12 critical areas of concern.¹⁸⁸ 3) Discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes, as well as women's unequal participation in decision-making had hampered progress in all critical areas of concern, at the EU and global level.¹⁸⁹ 4) Both globally and in the EU, progress on the critical areas of concern had been particularly slow for women and girls who experienced multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.¹⁹⁰

In 2014, The Directorate General then engaged in an analysis of factors which affected the production of data and gender and gender disaggregated statistics. Despite increased efforts at the EU level, monitoring progress on the implementation of the BPfA was challenged by a lack of comparable, high quality data on gender equality globally.¹⁹¹

At both the EU and Member State level, progress had been made with regards to the collection and dissemination of gender-disaggregated statistics. In this respect the

¹⁸⁷ **DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY** Evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action +20 and the opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda Study **European Parliament 2015 at pp9**

¹⁸⁸ **DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY** Evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action +20 and the opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda Study **European Parliament 2015 at pp9**

¹⁸⁹ **DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY** Evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action +20 and the opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda Study **European Parliament 2015 at pp9**

¹⁹⁰ **DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY** Evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action +20 and the opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda Study **European Parliament 2015 at pp9**

¹⁹¹ **DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY** Evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action +20 and the opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda Study **European Parliament 2015 at pp9**

creation of the European Institute for Gender Equality had been an important development. Among other things, EIGE's Gender Equality Index had been a major improvement in the visibility of statistics disaggregated by sex.¹⁹² However, as the States would later see, having statistics disaggregated by sex is of no assistance if you do not have access to them.

While the production of gender statistics had increased in recent years, the focus was predominantly on areas such as mortality, education and labour force participation and less on areas such as violence against women and girls or the measurement of unpaid care work through time use surveys.¹⁹³

2015 The UN Review

In 2015, the UN also released a summary report regarding the progress of the BPFA. It began by observing that there were goals which needed to be prioritized. The UN's list included :strengthening institutional mechanisms to advance gender equality, continuous capacity strengthening and technical support; allocating sufficient human and financial resources; ensuring national women's ministries or other mechanisms are located at the highest possible level of government and improving the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated statistics were to be prioritized.¹⁹⁴

Regarding gender statistics, a review of 126 countries conducted in 2012 shed some light on global trends in building capacity for collecting and using gender statistics (see E/CN.3/2013/10). This review found that while focal points or desks for gender statistics in national statistical offices existed in over two thirds of countries, a dedicated office for gender statistics within the national statistical office existed in only 31 per cent of countries, indicating that insufficient priority was given to this area. Furthermore, only 12.7 per cent of countries had a dedicated gender statistics budget, while 48 per cent depended on ad hoc funds and budgets (see E/CN.3/2013/10). While the production of gender statistics had increased in recent years, the focus was also predominantly on areas such as mortality, education and labour force participation and less on such areas

¹⁹² **DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY** Evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action +20 and the opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda Study **European Parliament 2015 at pp19**

¹⁹³ **SUMMARY REPORT: THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION TURNS 20** **UN Women** March 2015 pp 33

¹⁹⁴ **SUMMARY REPORT: THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION TURNS 20** **UN Women** March 2015 pp 33

such violence against women and girls or the measurement of unpaid care work through time use surveys.¹⁹⁵

In moving forward, in 2015, the UN believed that priorities for future action and accelerated implementation included a number of the goals that female NGO's were also concerned with. It included The need for institutional mechanisms to be vested with adequate authority; to have a clear mandate; to have sufficient human and financial resources; and to be accountable for delivering the mission. It also included the ability to hold other government bodies to account. All of these goals were key to achieving gender equality commitments and for effective gender mainstreaming. Ensuring that national women's ministries or other mechanisms were also located at the highest possible level of government was also crucial to mobilize political will and obtain support from the rest of government.¹⁹⁶

Continuous capacity strengthening and technical support for national machineries for gender equality was also still required to support them to fulfill their mandates. Cross-sectoral collaboration, across government, and involving other stakeholders, especially women's organizations, was still needed to strengthen coordinated action on gender equality. National action plans and policies for gender equality, as well as strategies for gender mainstreaming played an important role and should be prioritized. In order to properly assess the challenges facing national machineries and other institutional mechanisms in advancing gender equality, as well as to learn from successful strategies, there was also a need for systematic, cross-country research on their performance and effectiveness over time.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ **SUMMARY REPORT: THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION TURNS 20**
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¹⁹⁶ **E/CN.6/2015/3** 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 15 December 2014 Para 253

¹⁹⁷ **E/CN.6/2015/3** 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 15 December 2014 Para 254

A rising trend in the collection, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated statistics was to also be promoted,¹⁹⁸ as well as a renewed effort to fully analyze existing survey data, and to invest in other data sources, including administrative records.¹⁹⁹

The 2015 Political Declaration

In 2015, the Political Declaration on the Occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women 2015 also described institutional mechanisms as well as the BPFA as still being relevant. Member States *emphasized* that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was essential for achieving the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals and for tackling the critical remaining challenges through a transformative and comprehensive approach in the post-2015 development agenda, including through the sustainable development goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It also recognized that other inputs were to also be considered, in the intergovernmental negotiation process at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, and also through the integration of a gender perspective into the post-2015 development agenda.²⁰⁰

Member states also pledged to take further concrete action to ensure the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the BPFA and the outcome documents of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly including through institutional mechanisms and other related drivers that female NGO's were concerned with... strengthened and increased support for institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at all levels; the transformation of discriminatory norms and gender stereotypes and the promotion of social norms and practices that recognize the positive role and contribution of women and eliminate discrimination against women and girls; significantly increased investment to close resource gaps, including through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including domestic resource mobilization and allocation and increased priority on gender equality and the empowerment of women in official development assistance to build on progress

¹⁹⁸ **SUMMARY REPORT: THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION TURNS 20**
UN Women March 2015 pp 35-determined that increasing efforts to collect, disseminate and use gender statistics, for example, through establishing national gender equality observatories and gender teams at the local and national levels to lead in the collection of statistics disaggregated by sex and develop national gender indicators and the establishment of regional statistical databases that measure gender equality observatories and gender teams at the local and national levels to lead in the collection of statistics disaggregated by sex and develop national gender indicators and the establishment of regional statistical databases that measure gender equality

¹⁹⁹ **SUMMARY REPORT: THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION TURNS 20**
UN Women March 2015 pp 35

²⁰⁰ CSW 59 Political Declaration on the Occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women 2015 Para 7

achieved and ensure that official development assistance is used effectively to contribute to the implementation of the Platform for Action; strengthened accountability for the implementation of existing commitments; and enhanced capacity-building, data collection, monitoring and evaluation, and access to and use of information and communications technologies;²⁰¹

2020

In 2020, the UN conducted the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action which dealt with the Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women as well as certain areas of the European Union. It began by observing that, under the BPfA, national governments had committed to promoting institutional mechanisms that support gender equality, including establishing a gender equality body, mainstreaming a gender perspective in policy and producing sex-disaggregated statistics. Advances in these areas helped to ensure that progress in the other areas of the BPfA was possible (EIGE, 2014), and accordingly they were of critical importance. Gender mainstreaming had also safeguarded the consideration of women's representation, interests and needs in decision-making which was one important aspect of parity democracy, as it included 'the full integration of women on an equal footing with men at all levels and in all areas of the workings of a democratic society, by means of multidisciplinary strategies.

²⁰²

Although there had been a number of achievements in creating institutional mechanisms that had successfully moved toward achieving the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action according to the review it still remained a work in progress in some cases. As to the EU, the fifth review highlighted a range of challenges at the EU level in relation to Area H, including the lack of a gender perspective in EU economic, employment and social inclusion policies, insufficient mechanisms and indicators for monitoring and evaluation, and the absence of an intersectional perspective. Additional factors aggravated the above challenges in Area H at the national level ²⁰³ which are discussed below. For example:

As to **accountability**, it was suggested that a greater openness to different types of evidence, such as practice based case studies and first hand narratives from frontline

²⁰¹ CSW 59 Political Declaration on the Occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women 2015 Para 6

²⁰² Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 281 Setting the Scope at pp 103-104 citing (Council of Europe, 2003, page 28)

²⁰³ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 281 Setting the Scope at pp 103-104

workers, for monitoring progress and accountability could serve to highlight more creative, effective, and sustainable strategies for working towards a more equal society.²⁰⁴

As to **capacity**, there were still challenges when dealing with at least two goals. To begin with, it was believed that some of the new Member States might not have the same understanding of gender equality as some of the older Member States, leading to reduced progress on gender equality as relevant proposals (e.g. the directive to improve gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges) being blocked (Hubert and Stratigaki, 2016). The financial crisis which diminished the resources available to some states also saw social policies, such as gender equality, also delayed in favour of economic and fiscal measures in some cases.

²⁰⁵

The Fifth review observed that there appeared to be little or no commitment by Member States to collecting and disseminating sex-disaggregated data which was unfortunate as the availability of high quality sex-disaggregated data was ‘a major precondition for effective gender equality policies and legislation’. In 2012 the laws of 13 Member States included an obligation to produce statistics disaggregated by sex, and those of nine Member States included an obligation to disseminate statistics disaggregated by sex (EIGE, 2014). Unfortunately, at the time of writing, no new data was available to analyze more recent developments.²⁰⁶

In addition, while all ministries had established gender focal points, which are responsible for implementing gender mainstreaming within the ministries, compliance was recommended rather than mandatory, which led to varying work arrangements and powers of focal points in different ministries (UNECE, 2019a). Attempting to obtain valid data as to the number of employees within ISM which would indicate whether or not that ISM had sufficient human resources (staff) to carry out its mission was also challenging in some cases particularly regarding tracking changes in the numbers of employees of independent gender equality bodies which were more limited and more difficult to compare because of shifts in the mandates of these bodies from the promotion of gender equality to addressing multiple grounds of discrimination. Such shifts were impossible to identify based on the data available at the time of the writing of the report.

²⁰⁴ Lancet: Challenges and priorities for delivering on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years Published **Online** September 24, 2020 at pp 2 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S01406736\(20\)320043](https://doi.org/10.1016/S01406736(20)320043)

²⁰⁵ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283. Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²⁰⁶ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) at Para 281 Setting the Scope at pp 103-104

²⁰⁷The fifth review also recognized that a greater openness to different types of evidence, such as practicebased case studies and first hand narratives from frontline workers, for monitoring progress and accountability could serve to highlight more creative, effective, and sustainable strategies for working towards a more equal society.²⁰⁸ Finally, when discussing the training of representatives from grassroots organizations and from government departments to gain a better understanding of the international processes, such as the role of the BPfA's Institutional mechanisms to support gender equality, the Fifth review pointed out that those trainings were often presented in language that was not easily accessible to those who need to use it which defeats its purpose.²⁰⁹

Other obstacles which affected the size of gender budgets when implementing the ISM's had to do with a rise in anti-gender movements which had negatively affected the institutional and policy framework for gender equality in some Member States. This was particularly the case in Member States without a long history of democratic governance, strong women's movements and a tradition of civil society organization. Gender equality mechanisms at national level had been weakened in some cases by restructuring and budget cuts (European Parliament, 2018a).²¹⁰ Another obstacle was created when gender budgeting had not been incorporated into budget processes and that a lack of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data limited a budget impact analysis in some European States until changes were made in how the state budget was analyzed.²¹¹

Gender equality and mainstreaming

Insufficient gender mainstreaming existed at national levels. E.g. Gender mainstreaming at Member State levels has often weakened, rather than strengthened, since 2013. This has occurred despite EU calls for Member States to strengthen their gender-mainstreaming efforts (e.g. Council of the European Union, 2013c).²¹²

²⁰⁷ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283. Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²⁰⁸ Lancet: Challenges and priorities for delivering on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years Published **Online** September 24, 2020 at pp 2 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S01406736\(20\)320043](https://doi.org/10.1016/S01406736(20)320043)

²⁰⁹ Lancet: Challenges and priorities for delivering on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years Published **Online** September 24, 2020 at pp 2 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S01406736\(20\)320043](https://doi.org/10.1016/S01406736(20)320043)

²¹⁰ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283. Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²¹¹ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283. Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²¹² Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 281 Setting the Scope at pp 103-104

Government's commitment to promote gender equality also declined in some Member States²¹³.

There are a variety of reasons as to why this might be happening. For example, the financial crisis saw social policies, such as gender equality, delayed in favour of economic and fiscal measures.²¹⁴

This negative trend may also be explained by a reduced focus on gender equality at EU and Member State levels. Some authors (Hubert and Stratigaki, 2016) highlighted a general shift within the EU from gender equality to broader human rights issues, with a particular focus on gender-based violence, caused in part by administrative reform related to the EU enlargement.²¹⁵ In this context, some of the new Member States might not have the same understanding of gender equality as some of the older Member States, leading to reduced progress on gender equality as relevant proposals being blocked (Hubert and Stratigaki, 2016).²¹⁶

A rise in anti-gender movements has negatively affected the institutional and policy framework for gender equality in some Member States. This is particularly the case in Member States without a long history of democratic governance, strong women's movements and a tradition of civil society organization. Similarly, gender equality mechanisms at national level have been weakened in some cases by restructuring and budget cuts (European Parliament, 2018a).²¹⁷

Gender-mainstreaming efforts and Indicator H3, on 'Gender mainstreaming', measured the extent to which governments have committed to gender mainstreaming and implemented tools to facilitate this. This included the status of governments' commitment to gender mainstreaming in public administration (247); the structures of gender mainstreaming (248); and the extent to which Member States have committed to using various methods and tools for gender mainstreaming (249). The average score for

²¹³ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283.Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²¹⁴ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283.Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²¹⁵ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283.Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²¹⁶ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283.Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²¹⁷ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283.Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

Member States in 2012 was 8.4 (out of a total possible score of 16), representing a poor level of achievement. Perhaps more disappointingly, this fell to 7.4 in 2018. The change in score by Member State between 2012 and 2018, highlighted this negative trend in 18 Member States.²¹⁸

The low scores were largely driven by limited use of various methods and tools for gender mainstreaming, and limitations in the structures of gender mainstreaming resulting from the absence of interministerial gender-mainstreaming structures, focal points responsible for gender mainstreaming in ministries and/or consultations with the governmental gender equality body. In part, this reduced focus on gender mainstreaming could also be explained by the emergence of a family mainstreaming approach in some Member States, which was implemented instead of gender mainstreaming (European Parliament, 2018a). This approach involves considering the impacts of actions on families and ensuring that family concerns are considered throughout the policy process. In practice, this may involve a focus on demographic increase and fertility. Although not inherently negative, in some Member States the trend towards family mainstreaming has become a tool by which to entrench traditional values and oppose women's rights (ibid.)²¹⁹

The Gender equality score may be lower due to ISM shifts in positions within cabinets for a variety of reasons. According to the Fifth Review, only six Member States have increased their score since 2012, while eight have stayed the same. The remaining 14 Member States have a lower score now than in 2012. This development believed to have been driven by small reductions across different aspects of government efforts to promote gender equality, such as the location of the government gender equality body within the government hierarchy or its function.²²⁰ E.g. The most noticeable decline in scores for this indicator relates to the lowering of the level at which governmental gender equality bodies are positioned within the government hierarchy compared with 2012. This is mostly because the governmental body was positioned at the highest level

²¹⁸ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283. Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²¹⁹ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283. Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²²⁰ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283. Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

in a ministry or formed an entire ministry itself, in only ten Member States in 2018, compared with 16 Member States in 2012.²²¹

Inadequate government commitment to gender equality was another factor which affected the implementation of the ISMs. Government support for gender equality has been identified as one of the key factors for the development and sustainability of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (EIGE, 2014). Yet government commitment continues to be insufficient at national level, and in some cases has weakened since 2013 (see below).²²²

As previously observed, this negative trend may be explained by a reduced focus on gender equality at EU and Member State levels due to highlight a general shift within the EU from gender equality to broader human rights issues, with a particular focus on gender-based violence, caused in part by administrative reform related to the EU enlargement.²²³

And a rise in anti-gender movements has also negatively affected the institutional and policy framework for gender equality in some Member States especially those Member States without a long history of democratic governance, strong women's movements and a tradition of civil society organization. The result of this movement might be gender equality mechanisms at national level being weakened in some cases by restructuring and budget cuts (European Parliament, 2018a).²²⁴

A rise in anti-gender movements (see Section 2.9 for more detail) has negatively affected the institutional and policy framework for gender equality among female NGO's in some Member States. This is particularly the case in Member States without a long history of democratic governance, strong women's movements and a tradition of civil society organization. (European Parliament, 2018a).²²⁵

²²¹ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283.Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²²² Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H Para 281 Setting the Scope at pp 103-104

²²³ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283.Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²²⁴ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283.Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

²²⁵ Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (BPfA Area H) Para 283.Key challenges and trends in the EU pp105-109

2023

In 2023 the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023 conducted a study which produced some interesting results.

A very recent study- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023 addressed a number of challenges which Europe faced in 2023:

1. To begin with the study found that most Member States' institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming required strengthening. There was room for improvement across all indicators, particularly Indicator H3, on gender mainstreaming, which had the lowest overall average score, at 39 % of the maximum possible score. ^[4] The average results for all four indicators also showed significant room for improvement in all areas, particularly in relation to the resourcing of gender equality bodies (H2) and in the use of dedicated tools and methods to support the process of mainstreaming gender across all areas of policy (H3). ²²⁶

Indicator H1, on the status of commitment to the promotion of gender equality, which was the highest scoring indicator, **still only achieved 61 %** of the maximum. ^[4] Too often, the government's vision for gender equality was not translated into a concrete, well-costed and fully transparent action plan with clear and quantifiable targets for change. ²²⁷ Indicator H1, on the status of commitment to the promotion of gender equality, revealed three key weaknesses. First, the absence of action plans in 11 Member States limited the accountability of governments in meeting their commitment to promoting gender equality. Second, the location of the governmental body as a department (rather than a ministry) within the government structure restricted the power and visibility of governmental bodies to promote gender equality in 19 Member States. Third, 12 Member States had a governmental body with a mandate for gender equality combined with other non-discrimination areas, affecting the focus on promotion of gender equality through policies, awareness-raising and information. ^[5] H1's link was also supported by lower resources for such bodies, as captured by Indicator H2. ²²⁸

²²⁶ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 9

²²⁷ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 8

²²⁸ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 61

Nevertheless, there are areas of strength under Indicator H1. Notably, responsibility for gender equality was invested in a senior minister (rather than a junior minister) in all but four Member States (BE, EL, PL, RO), making it the highest scoring sub-indicator. However, more work was needed to translate this power into meaningful commitments across the indicators, which remained very uneven.²²⁹

Indicator H2: Indicator H2, on human resources of the national gender equality bodies, placed at 43%.¹⁴¹ Effective national machineries demand adequate resources. Generally low scores for indicator H2 (average of 43 % of the maximum possible) suggest that many gender equality bodies are under-resourced. Governmental bodies are better resourced (50 % of maximum for sub-indicator H2a) than independent bodies (39 % of maximum for sub-indicator H2b). In both cases, but particularly for independent bodies, the evidence suggested that the tendency to include gender as part of a wider equalities remit may limit the resources and thus capacity to focus specifically on gender issues.²³⁰ Resources were key to implementing the mandate and function of the governmental and independent bodies in practice, as captured under Indicator H2. Overall, resources were low for both bodies, but particularly so for independent bodies: nine governmental bodies and 10 independent bodies had fewer than 10 staff working on gender equality issues, making it very challenging for them to fulfil all of the tasks and functions necessary for an effective national machinery.²³¹

Indicator H3: Gender mainstreaming. Despite some notable exceptions, scores for indicator H3 were, on average, the lowest among the four indicators (39 % of the maximum possible). Structures to coordinate gender mainstreaming activities across governments could be strengthened and there was also significant room for improvement in the use of gender mainstreaming tools such as *ex-ante* gender impact assessments and gender budgeting. There was also some evidence that legislation could help in this respect. The new sub-indicator H3d also showed that there was room to increase the involvement of independent gender equality bodies in the process of integrating a gender perspective into all areas of policy, in line with the recommendations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).²³²

²²⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 61

²³⁰ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 8

²³¹ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 61

²³² European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 8-9

Indicator H4: Production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex.

There was a mixed picture on the commitment of countries to the production and dissemination of gender statistics. Some had legislation in place to ensure the production of such data but then had poor dissemination systems, while others provided good access to gender statistics, but without any legislative driver. Overall, scores average 56 % of the maximum possible, left considerable room for improvement, ²³³Governments' commitment to the production of statistics disaggregated by sex was generally in place but did not translate into effective dissemination (i.e. statistics are accessible and used). Indicator H4, on the production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex, showed that dissemination was highly polarized. Fourteen Member States had a website to disseminate statistics, which generally fulfilled the main requirements for effective dissemination. The remaining 11 Member States failed to disseminate statistics in this key format, despite most indicating that the majority of datasets available were disaggregated by sex. ²³⁴

Several countries stand out as high-scoring across the indicators. Spain scored uniquely highly for its consultation with the independent body, as well as the resources of both national bodies, although it lost points for not having a national action plan in place at the time of data collection in December 2021. Similarly, Portugal scored highly across the indicators, despite locating its governmental body outside the government structure. Sweden also scored well, despite not having a national action plan in place. ²³⁵

Poland and Hungary were the lowest-scoring overall, primarily due to data unavailability. Slovakia's low scores reflected a similar lack of data on the independent body. Other low-scoring countries were Malta, Lithuania and the Netherlands, partly because their governmental bodies are a department within a ministry, with a mandate for both gender equality and other non-discrimination areas, and partly reflecting poor use of gender mainstreaming tools. Malta lost additional points for weak dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex. Cyprus' governmental body has a more focused mandate on gender equality, but failed to pick up points across all indicators. ²³⁶

In conclusion, institutional mechanisms held promise for their ability to promote gender equality across the EU. All Member States have a designated body to promote gender

²³³ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 9

²³⁴ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 61

²³⁵ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 61

²³⁶ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 61

equality, often led by a senior minister with a seat at the highest level of decision-making, and with formal commitments to gender mainstreaming in place. However, this does not translate into the more detailed commitment needed to promote gender equality in a meaningful and effective way. National action plans with measurable targets are needed to hold the governmental body to account, while significantly more resources are needed for gender equality bodies to effectively carry out their mandate and function, and to support gender mainstreaming.²³⁷

Agreed Conclusions 2021-2024

The Agreed Conclusions which were adopted between 2021-2024 have also recently addressed many of the issues that involve the Institutional Mechanisms/National Machineries.

Beijing is alive and well

The UN General Assembly has recently confirmed that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals²³⁸ In addition, the UN General Assembly has also recently acknowledged that the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the fulfilment of the obligations of States parties under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are also mutually reinforcing in respect of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.²³⁹ The Commission has also recently confirmed that the BPFA will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.²⁴⁰

Accountability

²³⁷ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [The Pathway to Progress: Strengthening Effective Structures for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the EU](#), 2023. at pp 61

²³⁸ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 5

²³⁹ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 4 and 7

²⁴⁰ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 3
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

The Commission and the UN General Assembly have also recently urged the Governments to strengthen the effectiveness and accountability of institutions at all levels in order to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. In Agreed Conclusion 65, the Commission also added that Governments should also ensure equal access to justice and public services.²⁴¹

Agreed Conclusions and the General Assembly

The General Assembly has also recently taken the opportunity to *welcome* the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and expressed their appreciation regarding all of its agreed conclusions. It also acknowledged the need for their implementation which would include the Agreed Conclusions dealing with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Institutional Mechanisms.²⁴²

The General Assembly also affirmed its primary and essential role as well as the Economic and Social Council and the catalytic role of the Commission on the Status of Women, in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, based on the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session, and in promoting and monitoring gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system. It also encouraged the Commission to contribute to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as the enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls.²⁴³

Challenges and Obstacles

In 2023, the UN General Assembly stressed that although progress had been made towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, challenges and obstacles remained in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for

²⁴¹ **E/CN.6/2021/L.3 Agreed Conclusions 65:** 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 Para 61(gg) 30 March 2021

see also **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 18(c) and 18(f)

²⁴² **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Preamble

²⁴³ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 3

Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session.²⁴⁴ Included among the challenges and obstacles facing the BPFA was 1) Changing discriminatory attitudes and gender stereotypes, which perpetuated discrimination against women and girls and stereotypical roles of girls and boys and women and men, and 2) challenges and obstacles which remained in the implementation of international standards and norms to address inequality between women and men.²⁴⁵

Civil Society

In 2023, the UN General Assembly continued to recognize that the participation and contribution of civil society, in particular women's groups and organizations and other non-governmental organizations, were important to the successful implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session, as well as to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.²⁴⁶ In 2023, the Commission also confirmed that women and girls played a vital role as agents of change for sustainable development.²⁴⁷

The Commission also expressed concern that such civil society organizations now faced many challenges and barriers to full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership, including diminishing funding, as well as violence, harassment, reprisals directed at, and threats to the physical security of, their members.²⁴⁸ At that time the

²⁴⁴ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Preamble

²⁴⁵ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Preamble

²⁴⁶ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Preamble

²⁴⁷ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 4

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

see also

E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 4

²⁴⁸ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 50

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

see also

Commission also urged states to monitor and evaluate measures to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.²⁴⁹

In 2024, the Commission also urged states to promote a safe and enabling environment for all civil society actors and increase public and private financing, including robust, sustainable, flexible, multi-year financing, for civil society organizations, prioritizing local community-level initiatives, and strengthen monitoring and accountability at the national, regional and international levels, as appropriate²⁵⁰

Data and Statistics

In 2021, the Commission urged states to strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant government institutions to collect, analyze and disseminate data, disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, to support the design, implementation and tracking of policies aimed at 1)improving women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and 2) to assess laws, policies, strategies and programmes to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls. States were also urged to enhance partnerships and the mobilization, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance to enable developing countries to systematically design, collect and ensure access to high-quality, reliable and timely disaggregated data and gender statistics.²⁵¹

In 2023, both the UN General Assembly and the Commission addressed the gaps in data, evidence and statistics as these gaps were affecting the evaluation and

E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 35

²⁴⁹ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 50

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

see also **E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66** 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 35

²⁵⁰ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(qqq)

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

²⁵¹ **E/CN.6/2021/L.3 Agreed Conclusions 65:** 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 Para 61(o) 30 March 2021

implementation of policies and programs. The UN General Assembly observed that Member States needed to close the data and evidence gaps through improved regular collection, analysis and use of gender statistics, including through strengthening national statistical capacities, in order to strengthen the implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes.²⁵² The Commission observed that significant gaps clearly existed in the data and statistics available to rural women and girls but also added that Member States had reported some progress despite the disruptions to statistical operations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁵³

In 2024, the Commission urged Member States to strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and government institutions, through providing financial, technical and human resources, including for developing countries, from all sources to collect, analyze, disseminate and use disaggregated data and gender statistics on multidimensional poverty, including on women and girls living in poverty, as well as on the formal and informal economy, income and asset distribution within households, unpaid care and domestic work, women's access to, control and ownership of assets and productive resources, and women's participation at all levels of decision-making, including on how women's engagement impacts policy-making. Member States were to also ensure access to high-quality, reliable and timely data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, marital status, migration status, disability, geographical location, educational level and other characteristics, relevant in national contexts;²⁵⁴

In 2024, the Commission also urged Member states to strengthen the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders in the systematic collection and analysis of comprehensive and disaggregated data in order to address challenges faced by women and girls living in or at risk of poverty in order to inform policy and program design and implementation and assessment, including in the areas of social inclusion, decent employment creation and inequality reduction. It also urged Member States to increase opportunities to use data.²⁵⁵

²⁵² **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 18(h)

²⁵³ **E/CN.6/2023/4** Review of the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women Report of the Secretary-General 2023 Para 51

²⁵⁴ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(vvv)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

²⁵⁵ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(www)

Financial Resources

For a variety of reasons, the issue of obtaining adequate financial funding for women and girls was a topic of intense interest by the Commission during 2022-2024

In 2022, the UN Secretary General observed that Member States were emphasizing the importance of gender-responsive budgeting as a tool to implement economic and social policies for Rural Women.²⁵⁶ In 2022, the UN General Assembly also urged Member States and encouraged stakeholders to address gaps and challenges and take specific, measurable, time-bound actions and mobilize adequate financial resources for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in line with the commitments made in the political declaration on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.²⁵⁷

In 2022, the Commission expanded this further, it urged Member States to take concrete steps to support gender-responsive budgeting and tracking across all sectors of public expenditure in order to address gaps in resourcing all national and sectoral plans and policies for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Member States were to also ensure their effective implementation; and increase transparency and accountability in the planning, budgeting and financing process as well as adopt practices to identify potential gender impacts of budget decisions and develop and strengthen methodologies and tools to monitor and evaluate investments for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.²⁵⁸

In 2023, the UN General Assembly called *upon* Governments, relevant funds and programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, as well as other international and regional organizations, including financial institutions and all relevant actors of civil society including non-governmental organizations, to intensify and accelerate action to achieve the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the outcome of

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

²⁵⁶ **E/CN.6/2023/4** Review of the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women Report of the Secretary-General 2023 Para 43

²⁵⁷ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 18(a)-(h)

²⁵⁸ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(eee)

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

the twenty-third special session.²⁵⁹ According to the UN General Assembly this included urging Member States to match commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls with adequate financing through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources.²⁶⁰

In 2024, The Commission emphasized the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It acknowledged that achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and decision making in addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective, was essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all. It also recognized that women and girls played a vital role as agents of change for sustainable development.²⁶¹

However, in March of 2024, the Commission voiced its concern regarding the negative impacts of the global economic and financial crises on sustainable development and the realization of the human rights of all women and girls. It also acknowledged that there were long-standing gaps and challenges within the international financial system, which limited capacity to scale up financing for poverty eradication, gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. It further recognized that the twenty-first century required an international financial architecture that was more fit for purpose, equitable and responsive to the financing needs of developing countries and the needs of all

²⁵⁹ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 19

²⁶⁰ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 18(e)

²⁶¹ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 4
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

see also **E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66** 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 4

women and girls living in poverty and, as such, stressed the urgent need for bold and ambitious reforms.²⁶²

In 2024, the Commission also recognized the importance of monitoring and evaluating measures to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including by strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.²⁶³

In an effort to address these problems the Commission urged Member States to do a number of things:

Member States were to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation and representation of women in diverse situations and conditions in all spheres of public life and at all levels, as well as their leadership in decision-making processes, including in economic policy, budget and financial processes, public institutions in order to design and implement poverty eradication policies. These policies were to address institutional gender biases and promote pro-poor, economic and social policy actions that fully respected the human rights of all women and girls;²⁶⁴

Once Member States obtained funding, they were to take concrete steps to support gender-responsive budgeting and tracking across all sectors of public expenditure and to address gaps in resourcing all national and sectoral plans and policies for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls to ensure their effective implementation. Member States were to also increase transparency and accountability in the planning, budgeting and financing process. This would include adopting practices to identify potential gender impacts of budget decisions as well as develop and

²⁶² **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 43
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

²⁶³ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 50
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

see also **E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66** 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 35(e.g. diminishing funding for women who are environmental activists)
<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/n22/303/59/pdf/n2230359.pdf?token=KeqXjDFe2VDY6yxgLZ&fe=true>

²⁶⁴ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(t)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

strengthen methodologies and tools to monitor and evaluate investments for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;²⁶⁵

When Member States were to also encourage the full, equal and meaningful participation of all women, as well as encourage the active engagement of women's rights organizations and feminist groups, in budget processes through open budgets as well as community and citizen participation in monitoring of service delivery, including in the process and outcomes of gender-responsive budgeting. They were to also ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of all public programmes and services;²⁶⁶

Member States were to also strengthen national and local planning and budgetary processes to enable governments to cost, allocate and invest in policies and programmes that addressed challenges facing all women and girls living in poverty, including by conducting gender analyses that were embedded in policy and decision-making processes, and by increasing the capacity of ministries of finance in assessing the different impact of fiscal policies on women;²⁶⁷

There were several other sections that specifically deal with civil society actors including women and finance. For example, Member States were to support the important role of civil society actors and organizations, trade unions and national human rights institutions, in promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms, of all women and girls in particular those living in poverty as well as in the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session and the 2030 Agenda.²⁶⁸ in addition to

²⁶⁵ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(eee)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

²⁶⁶ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(fff)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

²⁶⁷ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(ggg)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

²⁶⁸ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(sss)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

promoting a safe and enabling environment for all civil society actors under the BPFA, Member States were to increase public and private financing, including robust, sustainable, flexible, multi-year financing, for civil society organizations, prioritizing local community-level initiatives, and strengthen monitoring and accountability at the national, regional and international levels, as appropriate²⁶⁹

Gender mainstreaming/equality/perspectives

In 2021, the Commission called on the United Nations system to continue to mainstream a gender perspective into its policies and programs, including those who were addressing COVID-19 response and recovery at that time.²⁷⁰ This was to also include the use of the gender mainstreaming strategy to accelerate the implementation of legislation and public and fiscal policies, including through gender-responsive budgeting for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.²⁷¹

In 2023, *the* Economic and Social Council resolution [2023/11](#) of 7 June 2023, entitled “Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programs in the United Nations system” reaffirmed that gender mainstreaming constitutes a critical strategy in the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.²⁷²

In 2023, the UN also reaffirmed that the commitments to gender equality and the advancement of women made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and at major United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions towards a full, effective and accelerated implementation were integral to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, “especially

²⁶⁹ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(qqq)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

²⁷⁰ **E/CN.6/2021/L.3 Agreed Conclusions 65:** 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 Para 61(dd) 30 March 2021

²⁷¹ **E/CN.6/2021/L.3 Agreed Conclusions 65:** 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 Para 61(x) 30 March 2021

²⁷² **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Preamble

considering that, halfway through the 2030 Agenda, the world was currently failing to achieve gender equality”.²⁷³

In 2023 the UN General Assembly reaffirmed that gender mainstreaming was a globally accepted strategy for promoting the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality by transforming structures of inequality,²⁷⁴ and also *Reaffirming* the commitment to actively promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, as well as the commitment to strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system in the area of gender equality,²⁷⁵

In 2023, the UN General Assembly then called upon Governments and all other stakeholders to systematically mainstream a gender perspective into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in order to contribute to the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and also stressed in this regard the importance of ensuring synergies between the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.²⁷⁶

Between 2022 and 2024 the UN was monitoring and evaluating measures to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.²⁷⁷

In 2024, the Commission again emphasized the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At that time, it also acknowledged that achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women’s full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and decision

²⁷³ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Preamble

²⁷⁴ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Preamble

²⁷⁵ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Preamble

²⁷⁶ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 4

²⁷⁷ **E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66** 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 35

making in addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective, as it was essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all. It also recognized that women and girls played a vital role as agents of change for sustainable development.²⁷⁸

The Commission also urged Member States to strengthen authority, operational and technical capacities and resources for national mechanisms working on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls to support gender-responsive approaches and mainstreaming a gender perspective in ministries and public agencies, including labour, economic and financial government agencies, and into the design, delivery and evaluation of financing policies and plans aimed at enhancing access to affordable quality basic services for all women and girls, particularly women and girls living in poverty;²⁷⁹

Of interest was that in 2024, Member States were also urged to provide national gender equality mechanisms and entities responsible for climate change, environmental and disaster risk management and reduction policies, among others, with adequate human and financial resources to ensure that a gender perspective was integrated into the design, implementation and evaluation of relevant policies, programmes and projects; facilitate adequate and simplified access to financing for and build the capacities of, women's, grassroots women's and youth organizations and Indigenous women leading local adaptation and mitigation efforts, including through the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms; and promote the provision of quality public goods and services that benefit women and girls experiencing poverty;²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 4
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

see also **E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66** 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 4

²⁷⁹ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(zz)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

²⁸⁰ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(k)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

Government responsibility

Between 2021 and 2024 the Commission acknowledged the important role played by regional conventions, instruments and initiatives and their follow-up mechanisms in their respective regions and countries, in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.²⁸¹

In 2023, the Commission affirmed that Governments have the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and global levels with regard to progress made.²⁸²

In 2023, the UN General Assembly also confirmed that the responsibility for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session rested primarily at the national level and that strengthened efforts were necessary in this respect. It also confirmed that enhanced international cooperation was essential for full, effective and accelerated implementation.²⁸³

In 2023, the UN General Assembly also reaffirmed that the primary and essential role of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the catalytic role of the Commission on the Status of Women, in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, was based on the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session, and in promoting and monitoring gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system. It then encouraged the Commission to contribute to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to accelerate the realization of

²⁸¹ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 8
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

see also **/CN.6/2021/L.3 Agreed Conclusions 65**: 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 Para 10 30 March 2021

see also **CSW 67 Agreed Conclusions E/CN.6/2023/L.3** Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls Para 5

²⁸² **CSW 67 Agreed Conclusions E/CN.6/2023/L.3** Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls Para 7

²⁸³ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Preamble

gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as the enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls;²⁸⁴

Finally, in 2023, the UN General Assembly also *encouraged* all Member States to also make ambitious commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;²⁸⁵

National machinery

In 2023, the Commission acknowledged the important role of national machineries for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the relevant contribution of national human rights institutions where they existed, and the important role of civil society and the media in 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.²⁸⁶

In 2024, the Commission further recognized that ministries of finance determined the scope and direction of national fiscal policy, but added that they might have limited capacity to analyze the gender impacts of fiscal policy including taxation and spending. It also acknowledged that national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were important institutional actors that contributed to policy development and can transform public policy values.²⁸⁷

National Mechanisms and Climate Change and the Digital Age

In 2022, the Commission recognized the need to take a whole-of-government approach to ensure that climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes are gender-responsive, including through the coordination and capacity-building of parliamentarians, national gender equality mechanisms, mayors, local

²⁸⁴ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 3

²⁸⁵ **A/RES/78/182** Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2023 Para 23

²⁸⁶ **E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66** 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 31

²⁸⁷ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 42

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

elected officials, and municipalities and the institutions responsible for measures to address climate change, environment and disaster risk reduction. It emphasized the importance of the work of the scientific community in support of strengthening the global response to climate change, environmental degradation and disasters and respecting and protecting traditional and ancestral knowledge, including of indigenous peoples.²⁸⁸

In 2022, the Commission also called upon the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and in supporting Governments and national gender equality mechanisms, upon their request, in coordinating the United Nations system and in mobilizing civil society, the private sector, employers' organizations and trade unions, and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development towards 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.²⁸⁹

In 2023, the Commission called upon the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and in supporting Governments and national gender equality mechanisms, upon their request, in coordinating the United Nations system and in mobilizing civil society, the private sector, employers' organizations and trade unions, and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age.²⁹⁰

Women-Diversity

In 2022 and 2023, the Commission acknowledged that multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization were obstacles to women's full and effective

²⁸⁸ **E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66** 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 32

²⁸⁹ **E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66** 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 65

²⁹⁰ **CSW 67 Agreed Conclusions E/CN.6/2023/I.3** Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls Para 89

participation and decision-making in public life as well as to the elimination of violence. It added that the Commission respected and valued the diversity of situations and conditions of women and girls and recognized that some women face particular barriers to their empowerment. It stressed that, while all women and girls had the same human rights, women and girls in different contexts has particular needs and priorities, requiring appropriate responses.²⁹¹

Grassroots Governance or Mechanisms and Social Development

In 2023, a study entitled Grassroots governance and social development: theoretical and comparative legal aspect focused on Grassroots governance or mechanisms and social development.²⁹² It reviewed included acknowledging studies between 1997 and 2022 as well as e.g. European Charter of Local Self Government,²⁹³ the Federal Act on Political Rights²⁹⁴ and the Switzerland's Federal Constitution.²⁹⁵ This study first observed that “democracy, as a political regime and a political system in which the people are recognized as the source of power”, was now facing new challenges” as the expansion of human rights had raised “important new issues for society, such as who should be held accountable for decisions”. In contrast to traditional representative democracy, grassroots democracy” was viewed as expanding “civil rights and liberties” and held “citizens more accountable at the local level”. Concurrently, it generated “some potential benefits for social development, both for the individuals who take part in it and for society as a whole”. The above study examined the “experience of nations worldwide in implementing grassroots democracy and grassroots governance

²⁹¹ **E/CN.6/2022.7 CSW 66** 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 Agreed Conclusions Para 19

see also **CSW 67 Agreed Conclusions E/CN.6/2023/I.3** Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls Para 16

²⁹² Grassroots governance and social development: theoretical and comparative legal aspects by Yunyi Qin - *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 331 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8> accessed online July 2024 Published: 15 June 2023 <https://citation-needed.springer.com/v2/references/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8?format=refman&flavour=citation>

²⁹³ **European Charter of Local Self Government** [https://www.coe.int/en/web/impact-convention-human-rights/european-charter-of-local-self-government#/.](https://www.coe.int/en/web/impact-convention-human-rights/european-charter-of-local-self-government#/)

²⁹⁴

The Federal Act on Political Rights

https://fedlex.data.admin.ch/filestore/fedlex.data.admin.ch/eli/cc/1978/688_688_688/20221023/en/pdf-a/fedlex-data-admin-ch-eli-cc-1978-688_688_688-20221023-en-pdf-a.pdf

²⁹⁵

The Switzerland's Federal

Constitution <https://www.parlament.ch/en/%C3%BCber-das-parlament/how-does-the-swiss-parliament-work/Rules-governing-parliamentary-procedures/federal-constitution.>

mechanisms and attempted to evaluate the potential and prospects of legal conceptualization of the concept of grassroots governance and adaptation of personal self-governance systems in terms of the social growth of communities.”²⁹⁶

The above study came to the following conclusions:

“Exploring the GG (Grassroots Governance) phenomenon, a very important feature should be noted—the fact that at present there is no legal or exhaustive scientific definition of what should be understood as what is called GG. At the same time, analysing the views of modern researchers, it becomes obvious that today it is quite difficult to unify definitions and come to a common understanding of the term since politicians within national jurisdictions often put different meanings into this concept.”²⁹⁷

It went on to observe that:

“The GG is currently a complex symbiosis of the concepts of local government, civic activism, and elements of direct democracy. Existing as a theoretical category, its mechanisms do not yet have legal institutionalization in any of the countries considered”. The study went on to observe that: “ At present the category of GG is not represented at the regulatory level, existing as a political guideline. At the same time, this category correlates with the traditional Western ideas about local self-government.”

²⁹⁸

The study went on to compare how GG was applied in two different countries :
”In the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the modern specificity of GG is associated with the expansion of powers in the field of local self-government with an emphasis on the interests of communities. Due to multi-level management, the state involves social

²⁹⁶ Grassroots governance and social development: theoretical and comparative legal aspects by Yunyi Qin - *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 331 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8> accessed online July 2024 Published: 15 June 2023

<https://citation-needed.springer.com/v2/references/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8?format=refman&flavour=citation>

²⁹⁷ Grassroots governance and social development: theoretical and comparative legal aspects by Yunyi Qin - *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 331 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8> accessed online July 2024 Published: 15 June 2023

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²⁹⁸ Grassroots governance and social development: theoretical and comparative legal aspects by Yunyi Qin - *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 331 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8> accessed online July 2024 Published: 15 June 2023

<https://citation-needed.springer.com/v2/references/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8?format=refman&flavour=citation>

and market entities in management processes at different levels, but at the same time retains the ability to strategically intervene.” In Switzerland, “the specific implementation of the GG, expressed through the use of such forms of direct democracy as a referendum and legislative initiative, is presented in its entirety.” The referendum “allowed Swiss citizens to reject measures taken by their representatives, while the initiative gives the Swiss the opportunity to personally, independently of the legislature, enforce laws”. According to the study, “from the point of view of issues of social development, the examples of the countries considered can show the difference between the traditional worldview and the classical Western European idea of the democratic structure of society, which will make it possible to better understand the existing obstacles in the development of modern democracies.”²⁹⁹

This study added that, “as part of a study of grassroots governance, the concept of GG did not yet have a clear formal framework or definition as there was currently insufficient research to improve the understanding of the differences between direct democracy and grassroots governance”. The study drew on several conclusions that contributed to the ongoing debate about citizens’ support for various grassroots governance processes”. One thing was certain: “It was critical to recognize that, despite differences in practical approaches, grassroots governance creates many potential social development benefits for its participants and society at large”.³⁰⁰

The study’s conclusion was that

“Concepts of grassroots democracy and grassroots governance might “have evolved in different historical and political contexts”. However, at the moment, it was difficult to see GG as a single solution that can be successfully applied to various political models” as “the examples of grassroots governance approach from China, the Philippines, and Switzerland demonstrate how different grassroots governance arrangements can be implemented depending on the historical–political context. In the first case, one can safely speak not only of the exercise of local power but also of direct

²⁹⁹ Grassroots governance and social development: theoretical and comparative legal aspects by Yunyi Qin - *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 331 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8> accessed online July 2024 Published: 15 June 2023
<https://citation-needed.springer.com/v2/references/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8?format=refman&flavour=citation>

³⁰⁰ Grassroots governance and social development: theoretical and comparative legal aspects by Yunyi Qin - *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 331 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8> Accessed online July 2024 Published: 15 June 2023
<https://citation-needed.springer.com/v2/references/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8?format=refman&flavour=citation>

influence on participation in political decision-making and policy formation at both the municipal and national levels. In the second and third cases, it is more a matter of improving the interaction between state and local governments”³⁰¹

Given the cases examined, it was clear that none of these examples could be regarded as a model for how to put grassroots governance into practice. The connection between the notions of grassroots democracy and grassroots governance could be the subject of future study.³⁰²

In 2024, there was a report which acknowledged the importance of local also known as grass roots organizations which were primarily made up of civilians advocating a cause to spur change at local, national, or international levels. The above report gave [15 examples of grassroots organizations](#) “working towards change across the globe with “Bottom-up” approaches allowing for the citizens– sometimes through grassroots organizations– to define their own goals and how to achieve them. The opposite approach was called top-down, normally employed by IOs, governments, or corporations, that instituted policies and regulations that affected the populations they served and while these were two distinctive management styles, a feedback loop of bottom up and top down approaches was viewed as being able to help create, track and monitor innovative projects”.³⁰³

2024

In 2024, one message became clear. In order to provide adequate funding for effective and sustainable funding to implement institutional mechanisms/national machineries,

³⁰¹ [Grassroots governance and social development: theoretical and comparative legal aspects](#) by Yunyi Qin - *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 331 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8> accessed online July 2024 Published: 15 June 2023
<https://citation-needed.springer.com/v2/references/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8?format=refman&flavour=citation>

³⁰² [Grassroots governance and social development: theoretical and comparative legal aspects](#) by Yunyi Qin - *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 331 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8> accessed online July 2024 Published: 15 June 2023
<https://citation-needed.springer.com/v2/references/10.1057/s41599-023-01830-8?format=refman&flavour=citation>

³⁰³ UNHCR [Innovation Service Grassroots organizations are just as important as seed money for innovation](#)
By Alexandra Bettencourt, Associate Governance and Public Administration Officer 2024 accessed online July 2024
<https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/grassroots-organizations-are-just-as-important-as-seed-money-for-innovation/>

the UN must strengthen and reform institutions and financing to include a gender perspective.

To begin with, the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024, the UN Secretary General observed that this report “made for sobering reading “as it determined that only 17 per cent of the SDG targets were on track with nearly half showing minimal or moderate progress, and progress on over one third having stalled or even regressed.”³⁰⁴

In addition to the scarring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, escalating conflicts, geopolitical tensions, and growing climate chaos which were hitting SDG progress hard, the UN Secretary General also pointed out that systemic deficiencies and inequities in the global economic and financial system had left developing countries to tackle enormous and growing challenges with only a fraction of the international support they needed and deserved. This situation was not going to improve on its own: developing countries, as a whole, faced the worst medium-term economic outlook in a generation.³⁰⁵

As part of the UN Secretary General’s proposed reforms he proposed that the UN must reform the outdated, dysfunctional and unfair international financial architecture to facilitate far greater investment in the SDGs. However, underpinning all their efforts -which would include reforming financial architecture- there had to be a more concerted effort to dismantle gender barriers and empower all women and girls – because the UN could not expect to achieve the Goals without gender equality. At present, this was a tall order as inequities toward women and girls kept growing and progress towards gender equality remained disappointing.³⁰⁶

Between 2021 and 2024, the Commission also acknowledged the important role played by regional conventions, instruments and initiatives and their follow-up mechanisms in their respective regions and countries, in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including by addressing poverty and

³⁰⁴ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 Introduction By UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres

UN Secretary of the United Nations at pp 2

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2024.pdf>

³⁰⁵ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 Introduction By UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres

UN Secretary of the United Nations at pp 2

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2024.pdf>

³⁰⁶ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 Introduction By UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres

UN Secretary of the United Nations at pp 2

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2024.pdf>

strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.³⁰⁷ Specifically, in 2024, the Commission urged Member States to strengthen authority, operational and technical capacities and resources for national mechanisms working on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls to support gender-responsive approaches and mainstreaming a gender perspective in ministries and public agencies, including labour, economic and financial government agencies.³⁰⁸

In addressing how the UN obtains adequate financial support for effectively and sustainably implementing Institutional Mechanisms/National Machineries, the UN must keep in mind the recommendations of the UN Sustainable Development Report 2024 and the recent recommendations by the CSW Commission. The UN must think outside the box rather than proceed with business as usual

Financial Architecture for Gender Equity

Access to Finance and Funding, Institutional Mechanisms and Procurement

B+30 Background Paper for Institutional Mechanisms 8-14-2024 Shaila Rao Mistry CEO STEM Institute

Integrating funding and financing into the Beijing + 30 review is critical to advancing women's economic empowerment. The exclusion of financial architecture from the Beijing Platform for Action 1995 and the 12-point agenda overlooks the systemic barriers that financial institutions and infrastructures pose to embedded biases, inequality and poverty perpetuation. However, as we approach the B+30 30-year review, it is imperative to include financial architecture in discussions to address these challenges effectively.

³⁰⁷ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 8
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

see also /CN.6/2021/L.3 **Agreed Conclusions 65**: 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 Para 10 30 March 2021

see also **CSW 67 Agreed Conclusions E/CN.6/2023/L.3** Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls Para 5

³⁰⁸ **CSW 68 Agreed Conclusions** 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 Unedited version March 2024 Para 54(zz)
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/csw-68-agreed-conclusions-advance-unedited-version-2024-03-22-en.pdf>

In the following discussion we provide highlights of the critical issues surrounding financial emphasize the need for increased access to financial services, particularly for women and under-served groups, as a key component for economic growth and social protection.

The statistics presented underscore the disparities in access to financial services, particularly for women and marginalized communities, highlighting the urgent need for regulatory measures to combat discriminatory practices and promote financial inclusion. The data also points to the role of financial institutions in exacerbating income inequality and perpetuating poverty, emphasizing the importance of addressing these systemic issues.

Incorporating financial architecture into discussions around sustainable development goals, such as SDGs 1 and 8, is crucial for understanding the intersectionality of infrastructures and mindsets that contribute to poverty. By implementing recommendations that promote gender equity, expand financial inclusion, regulate predatory lending practices, invest in infrastructure, and advocate for women's economic security, governments, financial institutions, and civil society can work towards building a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

The following is an overview of the challenges posed by current financial systems and the potential solutions to address them. By prioritizing financial architecture in discussions and policy decisions, we can take significant steps towards promoting economic growth, alleviating poverty, and fostering an equitable society.

Financial Institutions-Infrastructure and Embedded Bias and Exclusions

Financial institutions and infrastructures, intended to promote economic growth and alleviate poverty, in fact contribute to perpetuating and exacerbating the problem. Exposing systemically generated poverty, is essential to understanding the intersectionality of infrastructures and mindsets, embedded in the dynamics UN Sustainable Development Goals SDGs 1 and 8 both address eradication of poverty and causal linkages with inhibitive financial restrictive policies. These brief urges exponentially improved access to financial services, as a foundation for economic growth, and effective social protection systems.

Statistics - Financial Access, Discrimination and Exclusions - US and Global

- 46.1% of heads of households are women, responsible for major life expenses of housing, health education and food. Credit worthiness is critical to survival, economic independence, and security.³⁰⁹
- Women are 18% less likely to have loan applications approved than men. More profit is associated with applications rejected to gender discrimination by 23% of median loan size average \$7,500³¹⁰.
- Only in 1974 Credit card gender equity was legislated, shifting societal perceptions and women struggle to access financial security and granting women to own a credit card in their name.³¹¹
- Until 2012: Women were charged ½% more in interest on credit cards than men.³¹²
- Only in 2014 saw the first female Chair of Federal Reserve Bank. In 2018 as Treasury Secretary, CFO first action for women's inclusion in financial and economic decision making.³¹³

Dynamics of Key Facts on Financial Exclusions

1. The World Bank declares 2.5 billion globally remain unbanked, with limited access to formal financial services, thus excluded from participating in the economy and denied access to save, invest, and accumulate assets, perpetuating the cycle of poverty, 2021.

³¹⁴

2. Nearly 22% of U.S. households deemed unbanked turn to extortionist predatory lenders as costly alternative financial services, for payday loans and high-interest credit cards. Low-income families become vulnerable targets, further driven to debt and poverty, with food, health, and housing insecurity.³¹⁵

³⁰⁹ Urban Institution

:<https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/more-women-have-become-homeowners-and-heads-household-could-pandemic-undo-progress>

³¹⁰ IDB

Labs:<https://blogs.iadb.org/ideas-matter/en/how-gender-discrimination-stops-women-from-getting-loans/>

³¹¹ Urban Institution

:<https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/more-women-have-become-homeowners-and-heads-household-could-pandemic-undo-progress>

³¹² Readers Digest <https://www.rd.com/list/things-that-cost-more-for-women/#:~:text=>

³¹³ Wikipedia : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janet_Yellen

³¹⁴ McKinsey

:<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/financial-services/our-insights/counting-the-worlds-unbanked>

³¹⁵ [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation \(FDIC\)](https://www.fdic.gov/). World Bank, Global Findex database, 2017)
<https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/>

3. Inequality in wealth distribution means wealthiest individuals and corporations often create financial systems and regulations, to benefit themselves by concentrating wealth and exacerbate income inequality. This can limit economic mobility and keep people in poverty. Oxfam's "Time to Care" Report, 2020).³¹⁶

4. Financial institutions tend to concentrate their services in urban areas, making access to banking, loans, and other financial services more challenging for rural populations. Rural poverty rates can be higher due to limited financial infrastructure. (Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs).³¹⁷

5 Infrastructure gaps impacting economic opportunities, limited, weak, and insufficient infrastructure can impede economic growth and exacerbate poverty. Inadequate transportation networks, energy grids, and digital connectivity isolate communities from economic opportunities, markets, and public services contribute to persistent poverty. (Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs)³¹⁸

6. Lack of financial literacy and education hinder individuals' ability to save, invest, and make informed financial decisions. This lack of knowledge can reinforce poverty cycles and leave people vulnerable to predatory financial practices. (Source: Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center, George Washington University).³¹⁹

7. Financial institutions often exacerbate systemic inequality, with consequential disproportionate impact on marginalized Communities. Particularly discriminatory practices of redlining, limits access to credit and affordable housing for minorities and low-income groups whose mortgage denial rates are significantly higher compared to whites, perpetuating racial wealth gaps.³²⁰

Measurement Indicators of Generated Poverty - 3 Indexes

Insightful understanding of generated poverty requires using intersectional measurement utilizing following contemporary indexes Effective use of these models facilitates aggressive action, helps lay foundation to alleviate poverty and build exclusive financial institutions and sustainable economy.

³¹⁶ Oxfam : <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/time-care>

³¹⁷ UNDESA : <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/>

³¹⁸ UNDESA : <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/>

³¹⁹ Global Financial Literacy Center: <https://gflec.org/initiatives/personal-finance-index/>

³²⁰ Boston Consulting Group

:<https://www.bcg.com/publications/2021/unbanked-and-underbanked-households-breaking-down-the-myths-towards-racial-equity-in-banking>

1. The Multidimensional Poverty Measure MPM, clarifies poverty beyond the monetary dimension to include access to education and basic infrastructure.³²¹
2. Social Index, measures social well-being or development in society using intersectional indicators of education, healthcare, income, employment, social equality, women's economic empowerment³²²
3. Gender Inclusive Leadership Index- directs how effective inclusion of women in leadership in financial institutions greatly impacts bottom line to create better policies, programs, and initiatives.³²³

Funding as an Institutional Mechanism

Integrating funding and financing into the Beijing + 30 review is critical to advancing women's economic empowerment. Funding and financing are central institutional mechanisms to drive gender equality. By addressing financing, funding and embedded infrastructural biases, we ensure a better chance of equitable access for women to resources, to create a more inclusive economic and social landscape. Governmental entities have a key role in their funding capacity as an Institutional mechanism, and they are closely intertwined with funding policies and practices of all other sectors. This IM mechanism needs to be now center staged.

Contextually the Beijing Platform 1995 outlined a comprehensive roadmap for achieving gender equality, however, funding and financing were not addressed. At the time women were not recognized for their financial strengths or entrepreneurship. Today, we recognize funding and financing as benchmark of societal advancement and a measurement for gender equity, and bias and women access to resources, empowerment and advancement as follows :

1. Decision Making: Restrictions and bias in funding disproportionately impact women's participation in decision-making processes. When women lack access to financial resources, their influence in shaping policies and practices diminishes and male-centric

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<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/617011616789217662/pdf/March-2021-Update-to-the-Multi-dimensional-Poverty-Measure-What-s-New.pdf>

³²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Progress_Index https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amartya_Sen

³²³ <https://www.genderconcerns.org/news/COP-27-Final-Remarks-and-Conclusions> Gender Concerns International

decision-makers perpetuate gender disparities. Inclusion of funding mechanisms empowers women to actively participate in decision-making is essential.

2. Entrepreneurship and Business Ownership: Limited access to capital hinders women entrepreneurs means women face challenges in starting and scaling businesses due to biased lending practices and lack of investment opportunities. Promoting gender-responsive financing and tailored support for women-owned businesses can drive economic growth.

3. Access to Loans and Funding: Biased lending practices and discriminatory loan terms means women struggle to secure loans, limiting their ability to invest, expand, or innovate. We need to implement gender-sensitive lending criteria and ensure equal access to financial services.

4. Selection of Candidates for Financial Jobs: Gender bias in hiring and promotion means that fewer women occupy leadership roles in financial institutions, affecting policy decisions. Encourage diversity in financial institutions and address unconscious biases.

5. Communication and Access to Technology: Gender gaps in digital access means that women face barriers in accessing information, markets, and financial services. Invest in digital infrastructure and promote digital literacy among women.

In summary financial institutions and Infrastructure, and embedded policies and practices are the very institutional mechanisms that are perpetuating bias.

Procurement as an Institutional Mechanism

Procurement plays a significant role in impacting women's access to opportunities and economic empowerment. Governments, as the largest procurers, along with major suppliers to government, control this institutional mechanism. During the Beijing Platform 995, procurement was not recognized as a factor affecting gender equity. The original platform did not explicitly address entrepreneurship and access to procurement. However, today we recognize that restrictions and biases in procurement policies and practices are major barriers to women's economic empowerment and advancement. Today we recognize the critical role of procurement in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, thus warranting inclusion in this review.

The landscape of procurement has evolved considerably, with a growing emphasis on gender-responsive practices. It is essential to comprehensively assess the progress

made in integrating gender considerations into procurement policies and practices and to recognize that procurement processes are made more inclusive and enable equitable access for women. Unfortunately, hidden barriers persist, hindering women's access to contracts, employment, and opportunities. Decision-makers need to be made aware.

1. Inhibitive Procurement Practices: Restrictions and bias in government and private sector procurement perpetuate gender disparities. Male-centric policies and practices hinder women's access to procurement opportunities. Inclusion of gender-responsive procurement policies that promote women-owned and women-led businesses is essential.

2. Linkage to Government and Prime Suppliers: Lack of representation for women in procurement decisions. Women face barriers in accessing government contracts and supply chains. We need to encourage gender-balanced decision-making bodies and prioritize women-owned suppliers.

3. Supply Chain Challenges: Gender bias in supply chain management is essential. Women-owned businesses struggle to integrate into supply chains. We need to promote supplier diversity and create pathways for women entrepreneurs.

4. Career Paths and Job Access: Limited opportunities for women in procurement-related careers. Fewer women in procurement roles limit career growth. We need to encourage women's participation in procurement jobs and leadership positions. Gender bias in hiring and promotion because fewer women in financial roles affect policy decisions.

5. Decision Making and Entrepreneurship: Biased funding allocation affects women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses lack access to capital and resources. We need to close the credit gap and provide financial support to women-led enterprises.

6. Access to Loans and Funding: Discriminatory lending practices means women struggle to secure loans for business expansion. We need to implement gender-sensitive lending criteria and support women-owned ventures.

Summary and Recommendations

Governments, State Department, financial institutions and Private sectors and Civil Society are urged to take aggressive actions to ensure elimination of prohibitive practices and ensure women inclusion high Financial and political and decision-making bodies to equitable leadership in influence economic security and development.

A) Promoting Gender Equity Measures by - Governments legislation and private sector regulation against gender discrimination in employment and financial sector lending and credit practices, including mandate gender-responsive budgeting, financial inclusion initiatives, promoting financial literacy education, and leveraging technology for digital banking services and online protections

B) Expanding Financial Inclusion instituting collaborative efforts e to ensure universal access to financial services by promoting policies that enable affordable banking options, promoting innovative mobile banking solutions, and expanding financial education programs targeting marginalized communities.

C) Regulating Predatory Lending Practices with stricter regulations and increased consumer protections to event predatory lending practices that disproportionately affect low-income individuals. Increased transparency in lending decisions, penalties for discriminatory practices, and incentives for financial inclusion.

D) Investing in Infrastructure: Governments and international institutions should prioritize infrastructure development in impoverished and underserved regions. By improving transportation, energy, and digital connectivity, opportunities for economic growth and poverty reduction can be fostered.

E). Collaborating global efforts to share best practices for advocating for women's economic security.

