

UNECE B+35 Chapeau Outcome Document
(Work in Progress)

Definition

The purpose of the Chapeau Statement is to highlight the overall process of the civil society consultation on B+35 plus give some quick insights into the cross cutting issues found through the Working Groups.

Introduction to methodology

The WG has used a questionnaire to find responses to questions relating to BPfA and SDGs and the civil society inclusion process and what happens after 2030. The WG has undertaken research relating to liquidity challenges and funding for civil society. The WG has undertaken research relating to the affect of technology on all critical areas plus the emerging issue of women and water. In addition the WG has created an outline of the initial findings from each of the 14 WGs.

Summary of analysis undertaken

The B+35 evidence does not describe twelve critical areas failing separately. It describes one structural pattern expressing itself across all of them, a pattern with beneficiaries, which is why it endures. Each working group reached the same conclusions though working independently: the issues are interconnected, they are structural rather than managerial, they compound across the whole of a woman's life, and they are being actively reproduced in the generation now growing up online. An accountability deficit is at the heart of the on-going inability to achieve the goals of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Commitments are made without consequence, and those who are accountable have changed. Harm experienced by women and girls across the whole life course plus a widening definition of violence is clearly evident. The purpose of the Chapeau Statement thus becomes more clear: it enables every Working Group to see its own findings reflected in a single coherent picture. Key areas of interconnection are funding, the effect of technology including AI and the link to the 2030 Agenda.

Funding

The United Nation's liquidity crisis is structural rather than managerial, and the reforms secured to date do not reach — let alone resolve — its underlying causes. The June 2026 credit-return correction, though significant, is temporary and leaves untouched the late, partial and conditional payment of assessed contributions that still drive the shortfall. At present there is no rule governing the timing of payment, nor the practice of restricting contributions away from disfavoured mandates — including the gender-equality work serving women and girls — and the Working Capital Fund that once covered some thirty weeks of operations now covers fewer than four, attempts to strengthen it have been rejected or deferred eight times. These gaps persist because the rules permit them: a concentrated few large contributors pay late, in part, or with conditions, exploiting the absence of any authority to govern payment conduct while Article 17 obligations go unenforced. The harm is structural, and it still falls hardest on the women and girls the mandates exist to protect.

This is the issue on which all the others turn: policies cannot be made or verified if there are no resources to define, understand, monitor and address through concrete action. The cost of inaction is already quantified — an EU study puts the economic cost of online violence against women and girls at €49–89.3 billion per year, including health, policing and victim-service costs (UN Women, 2025; EWL, 2024). Yet the financing is thin and shrinking: only 8 of 27 UNECE countries systematically budget for gender equality (gender- responsive budgeting being “the principal instrument by which fiscal compression is mediated for gender outcomes”), regional ODA has halved amid a shift toward military spending, and “not all national statistical plans are fully

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financed” (UNECE, 2026). A very small share of development assistance reaches adolescent girls (Girl Goals, 2025). The direction of travel should reverse: EIGE calls for dedicated budget for cyber-violence research under the EU multi-annual financial framework (Art. 44, VAW Directive) and sustained financing for specialist support services — and school-based adolescent mental-health interventions return \$22.60 for every \$1 invested (Girl Goals, 2025).

Reducing women’s poverty requires adequate investment in care services, social protection, and policies that promote women’s economic autonomy. Education and training require sustained investment in equitable access, digital infrastructure, teacher development, scholarships, and lifelong learning opportunities. The imperative of sustainable funding and support for the WPSA in general and specifically for women’s organisations and community based women’s led organisations and networks is clear. This will include the documentation of rights violations by preserving evidence, and producing data to strengthen accountability, advocacy and evidence based policy making. Finance is central to every theme related to women and the economy: Public budgets, gender-responsive budgeting, taxation, pension systems, financial inclusion, access to banking, investment, and ownership determine whether women can participate equally in the economy.

All four key themes covered by the Health WG are fuelled by a 30–40% collapse in global health financing since 2023. Therefore, public spending on mental health and reproductive healthcare faces global cuts, shifting the financial burden onto individuals. Disasters and wars drain national budgets, leaving zero funds for resilient public health systems. Shortages in global aid mean life-saving programs for women and marginalized groups remain permanently under-financed. Violence against older women has significant implications for finance including economic abuse (including the theft or control of pensions, savings, property, and benefits). This demonstrates the need for sustained, age- and gender- responsive funding for specialist services, advocacy, research, and prevention initiatives. It also highlights the importance of recognising economic abuse as a core form of violence against women, including in later life.

Women's economic participation is hindered by unequal access to finance. Despite high levels of gender equality in countries such as Sweden, women-owned businesses receive just 2.5% of venture capital funding. Similar disparities exist in the UK, where all-female founding teams receive less than 1p of every £1 invested, compared with 82% to 89% going to all-male teams. This highlights the need to address structural barriers to investment and improve women's access to capital. Institutional mechanisms require predictable, adequate and long-term financial resources to fulfil their mandates effectively. Gender-responsive budgeting and dedicated financing for national gender equality institutions are essential to strengthening institutional capacity, supporting evidence-based policymaking, engaging stakeholders and monitoring implementation. Investment in institutional mechanisms should be recognized not as a discretionary expenditure but as a strategic investment in inclusive governance and sustainable development.

Technology

Technology can be used positively and is both the vector and the frontier of harm to women and girls. Generative AI has made non-consensual deepfakes and AI-generated child sexual abuse material cheap, fast and scalable, and abuse is now migrating into VR and metaverse spaces that are barely regulated (EIGE, 2026; UN Women, 2025). The Digital Services Act, the VAW Directive, the Istanbul Convention and the EU AI Act are emerging levers, but the landscape remains “highly fragmented,” platforms carry weak obligations, and enforcement has not caught up (UN Women, 2025) proving the gap in governance.

On 7 July 2026, at the UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance in Geneva, France, Spain and Kenya chaired the launch of the Coalition for Children’s Rights and Protection in the Age of Artificial Intelligence — bringing together seventeen States and UN agencies including UNICEF, OHCHR, ITU, UNESCO and the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, alongside tech companies, civil society and child-welfare experts. Grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child — the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world — the Coalition treats children as rights-holders whose voices should shape how AI is built, not merely as users to be protected after the fact, and takes forward the Secretary-General’s call, made at the same Dialogue, for an “AI

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Child Safety Pledge.” As UNICEF put it at the launch, “AI does not change our promise to children, but right now, it is outrunning it.” For the girl child, this is the governance counterpart to everything above: the mechanism through which definitions, data and financing could finally be brought up to the speed of the technology. Technology can contribute to reducing poverty of women by improving access to employment, education, digital financial services, and innovative care solutions. In regard to education and training, technology including online learning, AI, and digital tools expands access, supports inclusion, and prepares women for future employment while highlighting the need to close the digital gender gap. AI health tools are trained on flawed data, which reinforces gender and racial gaps in medical diagnosis and care, leading to systematic discrimination against women at a scale not previously encountered. Digital tracking technologies are weaponized to monitor and restrict reproductive choices in restrictive regions. Unequal access to tech means vulnerable groups miss out on modern mental health and medical platforms.

Digital exclusion can further isolate older women and restrict access to information, support, and justice. This also links older women’s experiences to wider concerns about cyberviolence, technology-facilitated abuse and emerging AI-related harms. Technology is becoming an increasingly important enabler of financial inclusion through digital banking, digital financial services, fintech, and access to the digital economy. At the same time, technological transformation must avoid reproducing existing gender inequalities and instead promote equal opportunities.

The outcomes of the Working Groups show a strong concern that AI and digital technologies can reinforce existing gender and racial inequalities, particularly disadvantaging women and women of colour when systems are developed within largely male-dominated environments. Participants in the B+35 consultations emphasised the importance of ensuring that technological innovation is inclusive and equitable, recognising that stereotypes, double standards, and wider societal expectations continue to restrict women’s advancement, both through external barriers and the impact these attitudes can have on women’s own confidence and aspirations. Concerns were also raised about the growing prevalence of online misogyny, including content associated with the “manosphere”, and the long-term risks this poses to gender equality.

As media and technology play a significant role in shaping perceptions of women, the Working Groups called for stronger legal protections, improved moderation and regulation of online platforms, and safeguards to prevent AI systems from entrenching existing biases. Participants also highlighted the need for greater representation of women’s diverse potential and capabilities online, arguing that digital content should present a more balanced picture of women’s lives rather than perpetuating outdated stereotypes or disproportionately promoting traditional gender roles. Protective regulation and inclusive technological development can contribute to a new culture where women and girls’ potential is not capped by themselves or others, allowing leadership and positions of power to feel more attainable and theirs to take in the first place. It is also essential to combat the rollback of women’s rights.

There is a growing importance of technology and digital transformation in advancing institutional effectiveness but biased AI and shrinking rights roll back decades of progress for women and girls. Digital tools can improve coordination, data collection, monitoring, reporting, public participation and service delivery. At the same time, persistent digital inequalities continue to limit access to information and opportunities for many women and girls. Institutional mechanisms should therefore promote inclusive digital governance, support digital literacy and advocate for equitable access to technology while ensuring that innovation contributes to human rights, transparency and social inclusion.

Agenda 2030

The financial crisis across the UN and global governance has affected every Sustainable Development Goal of the 2030 Agenda and Strategic Objective of the Beijing Platform for Action. The cross-cutting threads map the same way: each reaches across multiple Sustainable Development Goals and multiple Critical Areas of Concern rather than sitting neatly within one. Today, reading the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda together is no longer optional but the natural frame for everything that follows. The work on women and

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poverty contributes to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), by addressing the structural causes of women's poverty and promoting a more equitable distribution of unpaid care work. Advancing women's education directly contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), while also advancing SDGs related to poverty reduction, health, decent work, innovation, reduced inequalities, and strong institutions. These priorities align with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by promoting critical thinking, digital and environmental literacy, global citizenship, ethical technology use, leadership, and lifelong learning to build more resilient and sustainable societies.

Women and health is linked to indicators for SDG 3 (Health), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and the intersection of SDG 13 and 16 (Climate and Peace). Mental health collapse and regressive reproductive laws directly block universal health coverage goals. War and climate crises multiply poverty and instability, rendering sustainable development targets unreachable. Violence Against Women and girls addresses issues related to SDGs 1, 3, 5, 10 and 16, particularly those relating to poverty reduction, gender equality, health and wellbeing, reduced inequalities, and access to justice. Women and the economy contributes particularly to SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 17 (Partnerships, including gender-responsive budgeting), and links with SDG 2 through women's land rights and productive assets. Strengthening women's economic empowerment is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and creating more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economies.

Institutional mechanisms are also indispensable to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While they contribute directly to Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality, they also support progress across the broader Sustainable Development Goals by strengthening governance, promoting accountability, advancing human rights and integrating gender perspectives into national development strategies. Strong institutions contribute to reducing poverty, improving health and education outcomes, promoting decent work, strengthening climate resilience, advancing peace and justice and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. They can be seen to influence Goals 9,10,16 and 17.

Eliminating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls "is a critical enabler for achieving all the SDGs" and contributes directly to SDGs 3, 8 and 16 as well (UN Women, 2025). But the region is failing the girl child against the 2030 promise: with only five years left, "no country has met even half of the 16 SDG targets central to adolescent girls' well-being" (Girl Goals, 2025), and the UNECE region cannot presently verify whether it is meeting that promise because more than a third of child-related indicators have no data (UNECE, 2026). Closing the definitional, data and financing gaps is what would make SDG 5 measurable — and therefore deliverable — for the girl child. These are not new commitments but unfinished ones. Thirty years ago the Beijing Platform for Action already placed the girl child and technology on the same page — and from both directions. Under Strategic Objective L.2, States undertook to "develop and adopt curricula, teaching materials and textbooks to improve the self-image, lives and work opportunities of girls, particularly in areas where women have traditionally been underrepresented, such as mathematics, science and technology" (para. 276). And in pursuit of Strategic Objective L.1 — the elimination of all forms of discrimination against the girl child — States undertook to eliminate "the root causes of son preference, which result in harmful and unethical practices such as prenatal sex selection and female infanticide," a discrimination "often compounded by the increasing use of technologies to determine foetal sex" (para. 277). The through-line to today is direct: the Platform sought both to bring girls safely into technology and to stop technology being turned against them before birth.

Achievements

In many areas there has been progress. This WG has yet to undertake research in this area.

Gaps and Challenges

I. The problems are structural, they interlock, and the structure has beneficiaries

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I.1 The problems are structural, not accidental. The most consistent finding across the Working Groups is that women's inequality is systemic and intertwined rather than a collection of discrete failures. The Economy Working Group states it plainly: inequality is "rooted not in a single issue, but in interconnected structural systems" that produce cumulative disadvantage across a woman's life. The Financing Working Group reaches the identical conclusion by an entirely different route, describing the liquidity crisis as "structural, rather than managerial." The Health group supplies a third, framing its agenda as "four interconnected health crises" rather than a set of separate ailments. The Poverty group, reporting since, arrives at a fourth, finding women's poverty "a multidimensional and structural issue that goes far beyond income alone." Four groups examining entirely different subjects arrived, unprompted, at the same diagnosis. This shared insight is the chapeau's organizing principle: the concerns below are not a list of separate problems but a single pattern that cuts across every structure meant to address it, gathering force wherever it lands, with women and girls absorbing the cumulative cost.

I.2 Power, information, technology and capital are concentrated in a few, unaccountable, and largely male hands. The same structural shape appears in four unrelated groups. The Financing group finds the crisis driven not by the wider membership but by "a concentrated few" large contributors paying late, in part, or with conditions. The Media group describes the "concentration of media platforms in the hands of wealthy owners which are usually men with political agendas harmful to women," alongside women's underrepresentation in ownership and leadership. The Technology group warns of artificial intelligence "concentrating power and wealth in a handful of technology corporations and billionaires" who set their own priorities outside multilateral channels. Power and Decision-Making adds capital itself as cited above. The same group shows the concentration operating inside institutions as well as across them, with women appointed to social portfolios and absent from justice, defence, security, finance, operations and technology. The consultation's research synthesis puts numbers to that pattern: women hold 27.4 per cent of parliamentary seats, 35.6 per cent of local government positions and 30.5 per cent of managerial roles worldwide; at the current pace, equal representation in management is more than fifty years away; 77 per cent of parliamentary speakers in 2025 were men over the age of forty; and women's representation relative to their population stands at 0.80 in public service and 0.88 in the judiciary. Three countries still have no women in parliament at all, and gender quotas, which are shown to elect 15 to 17 percentage points more women, exist in fewer than half of countries. Money, information, technology and investment are each drifting into the same few hands, and in each case beyond the reach of any accountable framework; and the rooms where that drift might be stopped are the rooms where women are least present.

I.3 The harm is profitable, and the remedy is not, which is why voluntary measures keep failing. The Girl Child group identified: "these harms persist because they are profitable." Platforms are engineered to hold children's attention rather than to keep them safe, internal Meta documents having valued teenage users at roughly \$270 each; the pornography industry, the cosmetic-procedure market targeting minors and AI companion applications each monetize the vulnerability of the girl child; and early marriage persists in part as a household economic strategy, "through bride price and the transfer of a daughter's maintenance costs." The Media group asks the same question of information: "Who profits from what? Who puts out what information for what goals?" and notes the "lack of resources for investigative journalists" who might answer it. The Financing group describes technology diverting "donor attention and capital toward the technology race and away from multilateral commitments" while automation "erodes the tax bases from which governments draw their contributions." The mirror image is that the cost is hidden and the remedy unfunded: an EU study puts online violence against women and girls at €49–89.3 billion a year while the equivalent figure for early marriage and child widowhood does not exist at all; only 8 of 27 UNECE countries systematically budget for gender equality; official development assistance fell by a record 23 per cent in 2025 while the annual financing gap for the Goals hovers around \$4 trillion, with regional assistance halving amid a shift toward military spending; 123 countries have adopted elements of gender-responsive budgeting but only one in four has a comprehensive system to track and fund gender-equality commitments, and just over half of those with gender-equality policies have actually financed them; and the Institutional Mechanisms group finds sustained financing for national machineries treated as discretionary rather than as "a strategic investment in inclusive governance." Prevention

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is the clearest casualty. The Armed Conflict group states that “the long term focus will be on prevention”; the Violence against Women group adopts prevention as the first of the Istanbul Convention’s three pillars; school-based adolescent mental-health interventions return “\$22.60 for every \$1 invested”; and cash and in-kind transfers that keep girls in secondary education are the best-evidenced single intervention against child marriage. Yet prevention education “receives almost none of the money that the harms themselves generate.” Stated as a thread: these harms are revenue to those who cause them and costs to those who have no part in the decision, and until that asymmetry is named and dealt with the remedies will keep being voluntary.

II. Accountability: commitments without consequence, and an accountable party that has changed

II.1 Commitments exist; consequences do not. A gap between mature normative frameworks and empty enforcement architecture runs through group after group. Armed Conflict presses for “member states’ accountability for implementation” and stronger monitoring frameworks for Resolution 1325 and the WPS Agenda, and asks that the National Action Plan mechanism be reviewed as a priority. Financing observes that “diplomatic objection carries no operational consequence”: the under-funded mandate fails however strenuously its defenders speak. It notes that since 1946 every Secretary-General has warned of financial danger, proposals have been tabled, and each has been deferred. On 30 June 2026, the United Nations took a step in the right direction by overhauling a decades-old “Kafkaesque financial rule” (credit returns) that required it to return unspent funds to Member States, even when those funds had never been deposited in the first place. Institutional Mechanisms is concerned with whether national machineries have “clear mandates, adequate authority” and genuine enforcement teeth. Media asks, simply, “who, if anyone, establishes standards?” Across conflict, finance, institutions and information the finding is the same: the world is rich in commitments and poor in the means to enforce them.

II.2 The treaties bind States; a growing share of the harm is inflicted by private actors. This is a distinct failure and it should be stated precisely. It is not that no one has standing against private actors. Care providers can be charged with neglect and with crimes in many jurisdictions; media owners can be sued civilly; and some States criminalize torture with no public-official element at all, California being among them, which is the ground on which the Violence against Women group’s own submission on non-State torture rests. The gap is at the level of the treaties. The international definition of torture requires that the pain be inflicted “by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.” Identical conduct inflicted by a husband, a trafficker, a stranger, a gang or a family therefore falls outside it. As the Violence against Women group records, non-State torture “is committed intentionally by non-State actors, in public or private, in relationships, perpetrated within families, in human trafficking, in prostitution, in pornographic exploitation,” and women’s truth-telling about it “has yet to be addressed as a specific infringement and violation of women’s human rights” notwithstanding that the Beijing+30 Regional Review Meeting did identify non-State actor torture as a distinct form of violence. States may legislate what the treaty does not reach. Meanwhile a woman tortured by a private actor may not be, in treaty terms or even under her own country’s law, a torture victim at all.

CEDAW General Recommendations 19 and 35, and Article 5 of the Istanbul Convention, establish an obligation of due diligence: the State answers for its failure to prevent, investigate, punish and provide reparation for acts committed by private persons. That is a real bridge and it is the basis of much of what the groups ask for. But it holds the State liable for its omission rather than the private actor for the act; it is monitored where GREVIO reaches and largely unmonitored elsewhere; and it gives the woman no claim against the person who harmed her. One case falls outside even this. The Girl Child group finds commercial sexual exploitation now operating through “platform pipelines in which no visible trafficker exists, so that existing trafficking law does not reach the harm.” The result is an offence with no identifiable offender to charge. That is the genuine gap in standing: a wrong without a wrongdoer. The operative conclusion is the Girl Child group’s: that “legislative accountability for the technology industry be addressed directly rather than through voluntary codes.” Alongside this also sits a quieter version of the same problem which must also be addressed: child marriages solemnized by religious or customary ceremony without civil registration, “so that the girl acquires a husband but no legal status, no protection and no entry in the official statistics.”

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II.3 Where standing does exist, it is uneven and it is priced, which puts the remedy furthest from those most harmed. The consequence of leaving private harm to domestic law and private litigation is that protection depends on jurisdiction rather than on a human right: California, not the treaty. And the remedies that do exist cost money, counsel and years. The Girl Child group finds that legal aid is under-resourced and awareness of how CEDAW supplements national legislation is low, with access “most restricted for exactly those populations in which child marriage and child widowhood concentrate: rural women, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, widows, women with disabilities, and Roma, Sinti and Kalé women.” Reservations to CEDAW Articles 2 and 16 remain in force in several States; Article 16 being precisely the provision governing equality in marriage and family life. Reference to CEDAW in domestic courts remains limited, since judges and attorneys default to national law even where CEDAW protection against sex-based discrimination is stronger. Low conviction rates for trafficking, exploitation, rape and sexual assault deter reporting and deepen distrust of the systems meant to protect women and girls. The Human Rights group frames the same problem from the other direction, arguing that legislation unknown to those it protects confers no rights. Four asks follow from this section, and they are specific rather than rhetorical: recognize non-State torture as a distinct violation at the international level; make due diligence enforceable rather than reportorial; establish legislative accountability for platforms in place of voluntary codes; and fund legal aid and legal literacy so that the standing which already exists for all women and girls can actually be used.

III. Harm across the whole of a life, and across a widening definition of violence

III.1 Violence operates as a continuum, not a single event. Taken together, the groups redefine violence against women far beyond the battlefield. The Working Group on Violence against Women and Girls provides the baseline and the frame: one in three women, some 840 million aged 15 and older, has experienced intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence, the narrowest of the definitions used in this note; domestic violence is defined not by physical harm but by “the use of power and control to restrict a person’s freedom, safety, dignity and autonomy”; and its three sub-groups deliberately refuse to silo domestic violence, violence against older women and non-State torture from one another. Around that center the other groups extend the definition in every direction. Armed Conflict documents conflict-related sexual violence and connected harms including child, early and forced marriage and widowhood. The Economy and Poverty groups name economic violence as a structural harm, and the Violence against Older Women sub-group makes it concrete as “the theft or control of pensions, savings, property, and benefits,” asking that economic abuse be recognized “as a core form of violence against women, including in later life.” Media identifies technology-facilitated violence and image-based sexual assault as direct threats to women’s voices and safety.

Human Rights records the abuse of women during birthing and the medical dismissal of menstrual pain and endometriosis as everyday, unremarked harms. Health extends the pattern furthest, describing digital tracking technologies “weaponized to monitor and restrict reproductive choices” and biased artificial intelligence producing “systematic discrimination against women” in diagnosis and care. The Girl Child group closes the circle, asking that underage marriage be “recognized as a form of slavery” and documenting AI-generated deepfake abuse, sextortion and grooming as the current edge of the continuum. The chapeau can state, with evidence drawn from eight independent groups, that violence against women is no longer only physical. It is delivered digitally, medically, institutionally and through psychological and economic control, across every field of life, social, cultural, political, economic and environmental alike. A response confined to physical violence will miss most of it.

III.2 The care economy is extracted and the maternal role devalued. The Economy group sets out the “motherhood penalty,” unpaid care work, interrupted careers and the reduced pension accumulation that follows women into old age. The Poverty group has since made this its single first priority, agreed on 24 June 2026, “recognizing it as a major driver of women’s poverty and as being closely linked to women’s economic autonomy and economic violence.” Human Rights documents birthing abuse, the low status accorded to motherhood, and a bias in family-court decision-making that skews custody away from mothers precisely where abuse is alleged. The Violence against Older Women sub-group closes the loop at the far end of the life,

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finding that lifetime inequalities “in employment, pay, unpaid caring responsibilities and pension entitlement can leave women financially dependent and less able to access safety, support, and justice.” Read together, four groups describe a single mechanism: societies rely on women’s care labour while systematically penalizing them for providing it, from the first interrupted career to the last inadequate pension. Moreover, the penalty is not only economic; it is also the route into violence a woman cannot afford to leave.

III.3 Inequality compounds across the life course, and women and girls are rendered invisible at both ends of it. The evidence runs the length of a life, and both ends now have dedicated groups behind them rather than passing mentions. At one end the Girl Child group documents child widows, technology-facilitated abuse, mental health and early marriage; at the other the Violence against Older Women sub-group expressly adopts “a life-course and intersectional approach” on the ground that inequality, discrimination and violence “accumulate over time and are often intensified in later life,” and finds violence against older women “largely invisible in policy, data collection, and service responses.” Between them sit the motherhood penalty and economic exclusion, and alongside them the striking Media observation that women over fifty simply vanish from television and public representation altogether, while adolescent girls and child widows remain invisible within data that should include them. The Economy group explicitly adopts a life-course approach and the Health group organizes its entire agenda the same way, making mental health across the life-course, “maternal, adolescent and ageing,” its central pillar. The Girl Child group also supplies the transmission mechanism the framing has lacked: widowed mothers, “under financial pressure, are more likely in turn to marry their own children off underage.” That single finding turns the life-course claim from a description of one woman’s life into a description of how the pattern reproduces itself across generations, and it is worth quoting directly.

III.4 A large part of the harm registers as absence. Several groups independently describe a consequence that appears in no complaint statistic, because its measure is the woman or girl who is no longer there. The Girl Child group documents it most fully: 82 per cent of women aged 18–34 subjected to image-based abuse “reported feeling less safe, some withdrawing from online spaces entirely”; girls withdraw from online, gaming and civic spaces, “some changing schools to escape”; and 18 per cent of young women and girls subsequently had problems at school. The Media group asks it directly: “Will women withdraw from public?” alongside its finding on the invisibility of women over fifty and its insistence that “women’s voices need to be heard and taken seriously.” The Human Rights group frames the positive right at issue: “women’s right to speak, to read, to understand language and to communicate on formal and substantive terms of equality with men,” and calls for literacy and media-training programmes to secure it. Power and Decision-Making completes the circuit, identifying stereotypes and double standards as operating not only as external barriers but through “the impact these attitudes can have on women’s own confidence and aspirations,” such that leadership must be made to feel “attainable and theirs to take in the first place.” The consultation’s research synthesis records the same effect at the top of public life: rising harassment and violence, much of it online and increasingly AI-enabled through deepfakes and disinformation, is now driving women out of office or deterring them from making a stand at all. That is the identical mechanism as the schoolgirl changing schools, operating on a parliamentarian. Read together: harassment need not succeed in silencing a woman in order to remove her, and a policy response that counts only reported incidents will record this harm as falling at the very moment it is rising. It bears directly on the Platform’s participation objectives and on Sustainable Development Goal 5.5.

The Way Forward

Financing gender equality must move from commitment to implementation, from allocation to accountability, and from short-term projects to sustainable institutional investment.

A strengthened financing framework should:

1. Protect the financing of gender-equality mandates within periods of institutional liquidity pressure and fiscal constraint.
2. Strengthen national gender machineries by ensuring that mandates are accompanied by adequate and predictable resources.
3. Integrate gender equality into national financing frameworks, including medium-term expenditure frameworks, public investment plans and development strategies.

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4. Require gender-responsive budgeting and expenditure tracking so that commitments can be measured from allocation through implementation.
5. Establish stronger accountability mechanisms linking financial commitments to measurable outcomes for women and girls.
6. Expand innovative financing, including gender bonds, blended finance, pooled funds and other sustainable financing instruments.
7. Protect investments in the care economy, social protection and essential services, recognizing their contribution to women's economic participation and resilience.
8. Strengthen data systems so that financial allocations and outcomes can be disaggregated by sex, age, geography and other relevant dimensions.
9. Align the implementation of the Sevilla Commitment with the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs, creating greater coherence among global commitments.
10. Ensure meaningful participation of women and civil society in financing decisions, implementation monitoring and accountability processes.

Conclusion

Financing is not merely a technical or accounting issue. It is an implementation issue. A commitment without financing cannot be reliably implemented. A budget without accountability cannot guarantee results. And an institution without adequate resources cannot fully exercise its mandate. The advancement of women and girls therefore requires a financing architecture capable of translating international commitments into sustained national and local action.

The Beijing Platform for Action established the framework. The Sustainable Development Goals established measurable global objectives. The Sevilla Commitment provides a renewed financing-for-development framework. The challenge now is to connect these commitments through institutions, budgets, investment decisions and accountability systems that are capable of delivering measurable progress.

With the 2030 deadline approaching, financing gender equality must be treated as an investment in sustainable development, economic resilience, peace, human rights and institutional effectiveness not as a discretionary or secondary expenditure. The central question for the next phase of implementation is therefore not whether the world has made commitments to gender equality. It is whether the financial architecture of the international system, national governments and institutions is sufficiently equipped to finance, implement, measure and sustain those commitments for every woman and girl.