



EU external action

GENDER ACTION PLAN III

2021 - 2025

Report on the results of the online
targeted consultation

April 2nd - May 4th 2020



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EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III 2021 – 2025

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Acronyms

ACT	Action for Churches Together
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AECID	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo – Spanish International Development Agency
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AICS	Agencia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo – Italian International Development Cooperation Agency
AIMF	Association Internationale des Maires Francophones – International Association of Francophone Mayors
ASEAN	Association of South Eastern Asian Nations
AU	The African Union
BC	British Council
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
Camões	Institute for Cooperation and Language of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDSE	international network of global justice organizations
CONCORD	European confederation of Relief and Development NGOs.
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPRD	UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Educations
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ireland
DGPOLDES	Spanish International Development Agency
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DSW	Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung
EC	The European Commission
EDF	European Disability Forum
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIP	European Institute of Peace
Enabel	Belgian International Development Agency
EPD	European Partnership for Democracy
EPLO	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office

EU	European Union
EU-CORD	European Christian Organizations for Relief and Development
EuroMed Rights	network representing 80 human rights Organizations
EUD	European Union Delegation
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FLD	Front Line Defenders
FNF	Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e.V.
FORUM-ASIA	Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development
FPS	Belgium - Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs / Directorate General Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GAP III	EU Gender Action Plan (2021-2025)
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
Genderforce	NGO with the aim to fight and prevent acts of Sexual and Gender Based Violence in conflict and post-conflict situations
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH – German International Development Agency
GSGE	General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
HIV	Human immunodeficiency viruses
ICAN	International Civil Society Action Network
IDDC	International Disability and Development Consortium
IDSN	International Dalit Solidarity Network
IFE-EFI	Euromed Feminist Initiative
ILC	International Land Coalition
ILGA	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
IPPF EN	International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
ITC/ILO	International Training Centre of the ILO
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IOs	International Organizations
KAFA	Enough Violence and Exploitation (NGO)

KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau German Government owned Development Bank
KWN	Kosovo Women's Network
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual and intersex
LGBTQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, Queer or questioning
MAECI	Directorate For development cooperation Italy
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affaires
MFEA	Ministry of Foreign and European Affaires Croatia
MFF	EU Multiannual Financial Framework
MISP	Minimum Initial Services Package
MPV	Muslims for Progressive Values
MS	(EU) Member States
MUAC	Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MZV	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OHCHR	UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights
PLATFORMA-CCRE	European platform of local and regional authorities for development
PROMSEX	Centro de Promoción de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos - Center for the Promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Rights Latin American Regional NGO
PSAf	Panos Institute Southern Africa
QCEA	Quaker Council for European Affairs
SAARC	The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIHA	Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa Network
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SIS	SIS Forum (Malaysia) (publicly known as Sisters in Islam)
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristic
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
STD	Sexually transmitted diseases
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematic

TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNOCT	The United Nations of Counter Terrorism
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEP	The United Nations Environmental Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund (
UNICRI	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
UNOCT	United Nations Office
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VAW	Violence Against Women
WECF	Women Engage for a Common Future
WEP	Women Environmental Programme
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WIA	Women in Africa Initiative
WILDAF - FeDDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa
WO=MEN	Dutch Gender Platform
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Introduction

An online targeted consultation was organised jointly by the Commission Services and the EEAS as part of the preparation of the gender action plan 2021 – 2025 (GAP III). It aimed to gather the views from EU Member States, civil society organisations and international organisations engaged in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of EU external action and international cooperation. The consultation was launched on EU Survey (<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/>) with a questionnaire, available in English, French and Spanish, composed of seventeen questions all opened for comments. The questionnaire contained also an invitation to present position papers.

The consultation was launched on April 2nd and closed on May 4th 2020. Late submissions were accepted until May 20th, 2020 to account also for the COVID 19.

This report reflects the findings of the online targeted consultation which fed the drafting process of GAP III. Other events were organized to complement the consultation with all stakeholders; their content is not included in this document.

2. Profile of the respondents to the targeted consultation

289 stakeholders were invited to contribute to the targeted consultation: 31 governmental agencies from the EU, 42 international and regional inter-governmental organisation, and 211 civil society organisations from across the globe.

By 20 May, 2020, 112 replies were received: 23 EU Member States¹ (replies to the questionnaire from 29 public authorities; 4 Member States submitted position papers), 13 from international organisations (6 position papers were submitted, including one from the UN Office in Brussels representing 13 UN Agencies), 64 from non-governmental organisations (24 position papers submitted, some of which jointly by more than one organization) and 5 from entities classified as "Other" meaning public-private partnerships, local associations of public entities, mixed coalitions, etc (2 position papers submitted).

70 respondents work at a global level while the others are distributed among national (10), regional (14), local (1) and multiple (15) levels.

¹ The EUMS that responded are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

3. Synthesis of responses

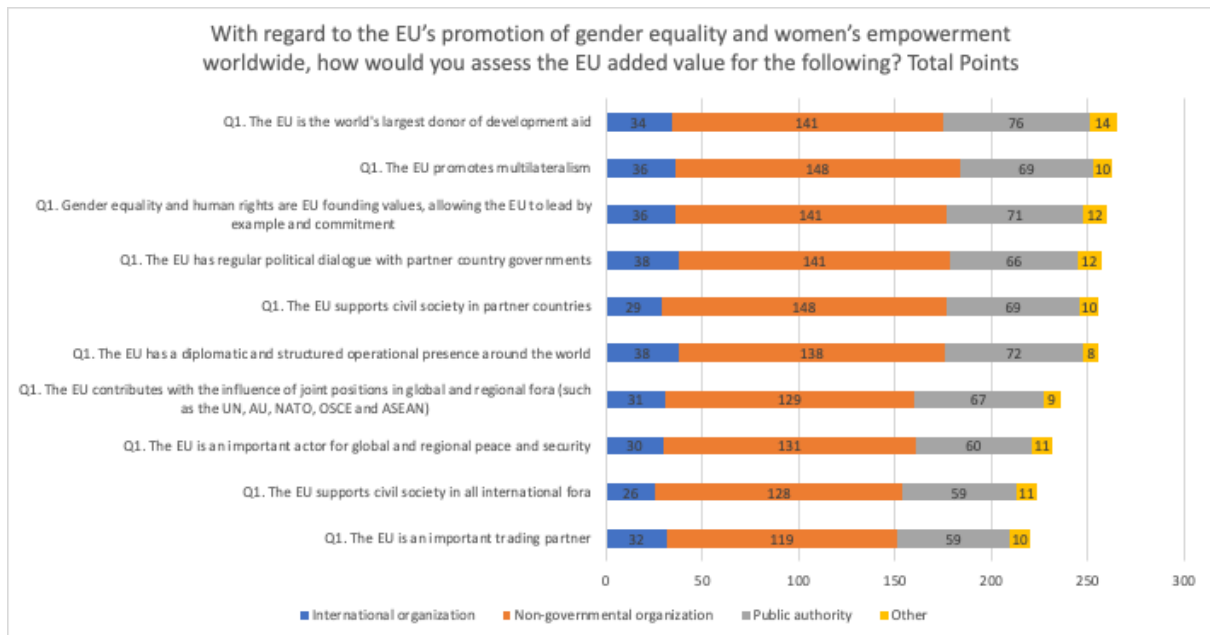
The analysis is presented following the structure of the questionnaire. When applicable, inputs from the position papers are also included in the synthesis of the results.

Whenever needed, questions were posed using a “Likert scale” which measure attitudes and opinions with a greater degree of nuance than simple “yes/no” questions. The questionnaire can be seen in Annex 2. The respondents rated their preference using an order of importance. The respondents rated their preference using an order of importance (1 = most important; 10 = least important; Whenever respondents were asked to use the Likert scale, for the purposes of analysis, ratings were weighted e.g.: “Insignificant” and “I don’t know” - a weighting of 0; “Limited” – a weighting of 1; “Significant” – a weighting of 2; “Predominant” – a weighting of 3, and so on. The graphs that are used to illustrate the answers to each question, in their “x” axis show the number of points that resulted from the answers and not the number of respondents choosing a given item).

3.1. Question 1. EU added value. With regard to the EU’s promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment worldwide, how would you assess the EU added value for the following areas?

There is general agreement on the potential of the EU as a global champion for gender equality. All respondents acknowledge that the EU, as the largest provider of development aid, has a significant or predominant role in promoting GEWE. The importance of the linkages between gender equality, human rights and the EU core values, and the EU support to multilateralism are also reflected in the high scores attributed by all respondents to these two sub-questions. There is also large consensus on the value of the EU diplomatic and operational presence around the world and the EU regular political dialogue with partner countries.

The graph presents the ratings in an aggregate manner while showing the rankings according to the type of organisation: International Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, and Public Authorities.

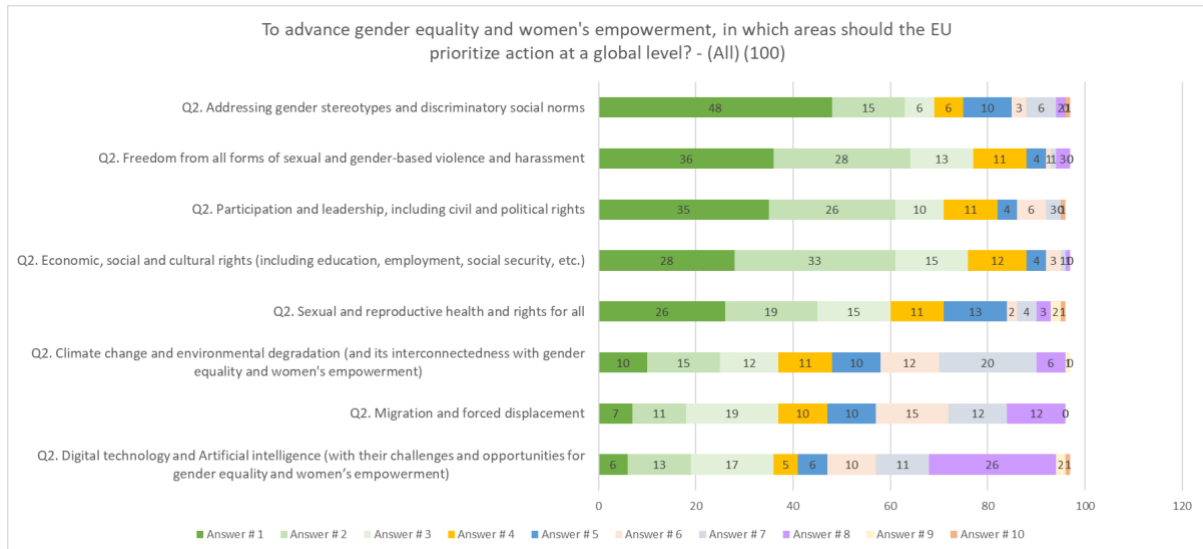


Areas receiving a lower score are: the EU's political contribution in global and regional fora, its role in global and regional peace and security, EU support to civil society in international fora and the EU role as an important trading partner.

Stakeholders point to the need for GAP III to:

- Continue to be **fully rooted in the international human rights framework**, directly contribute to the **SDG agenda** and implement the “**Leave no one behind**” principle.
- Take the shape of an official **Communication**;
- Play the role of an **overarching instrument for formal and strategic guidance with clear links to other relevant EU policies**;
- Lead to the establishment of a **horizontal system for regular and formal discussions on EU external action for gender equality**;
- Take **full advantage of the EU weight in global affairs**, influencing all instruments guiding EU external relations - particularly **trade**, humanitarian action, refugee protection and migration –requiring that they mainstream a gender perspective, and allow for targeted actions;
- Have GAP III priorities reflected in the budget allocations of the **EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** and that the new MFF ensures gender-responsive budgeting;
- Increase funding allocation for all External Actions marked **Gender Marker 2** (principal).
- Recognise the current backlash against gender-equality policies and the protection of rights of other groups such as LGBTI+ people and the **shrinking space for organised civil society**;
- Establish a methodology for **the full involvement of feminist civil society** and ensure that priorities and actions are planned, implemented and monitored in consultation with the **full diversity of women's organizations**, feminist groups and human rights defenders.

3.2. Question 2 To advance gender equality and women's empowerment, in which areas should the EU prioritise action at a global level?



The respondents rated their preference using an order of importance (1 = most important; 10 = least important; the colours in the graph above show for each option, how many of the respondents rated them 1 to 10.)

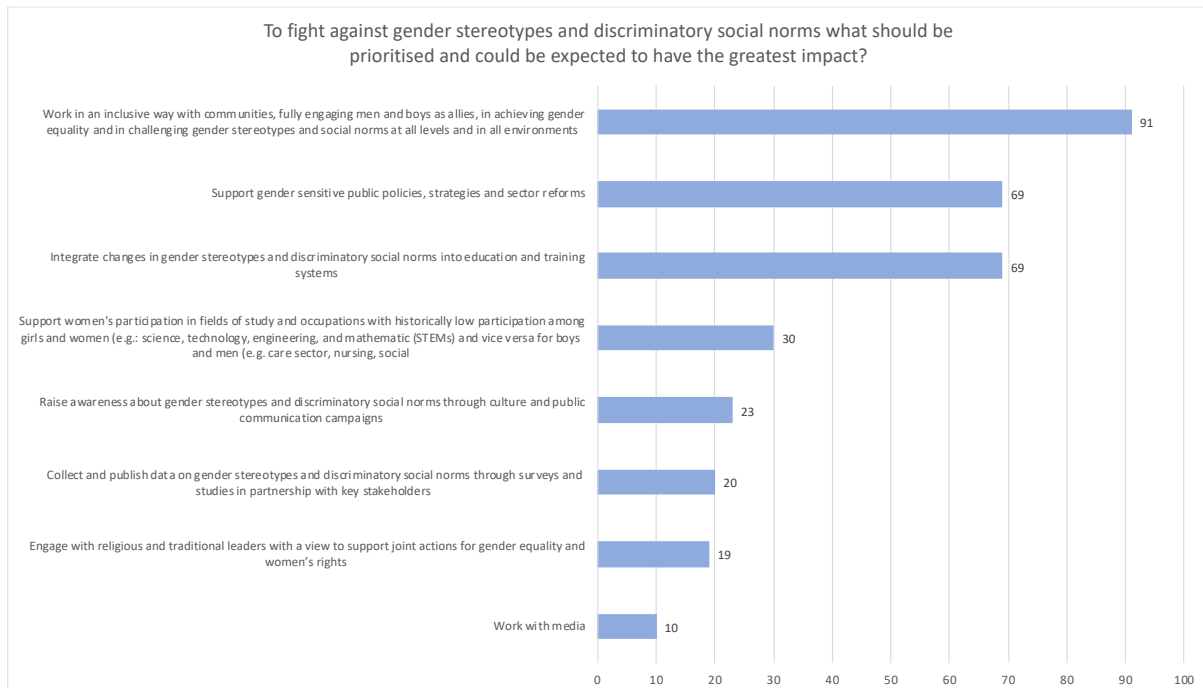
The results show a general agreement on top priorities:

- Addressing gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms (1st for IOs and NGOs, 3rd for MS)
- Freedom from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and harassment (1st for MS, 2nd for IOs, 3rd for NGOs)
- Participation and leadership, including civil and political rights (2nd for NGOs, 3rd for MS, 1ST for Other)
- Economic, social and cultural rights (including education, employment, social security, etc.) (2nd for IOs, 4th for NGOs, 5th for MS)
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights for all (2nd for MS, 5th for NGOs)

In addition to the above, based on the comments and the inputs from the position papers, the following emerge as issues where there is most agreement as being key for GAP III:

- **Addressing gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms should be an overarching priority of GAP III.**
- In line with the approach adopted by the **EU Gender Equality Strategy (2020-2025)**, it should aim to achieve equality between women and men, girls and boys, **in all their diversity, including in relation to their sex, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.**
- **Engage men and boys and promote positive masculinities at all levels, including among EU leadership.**
- The integrated, **three-pronged approach of GAP II** (political dialogue, targeted activities and gender mainstreaming) **should be continued and reinforced.**
- GAP II **crucial work on institutional cultural shift** must be continued and accelerated.

3.3. Question 3. To fight against gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?



The respondents gave their preference on the options included under question three, as well as suggested additional comments.

According to preference on the options provided, these are the top priorities that emerge:

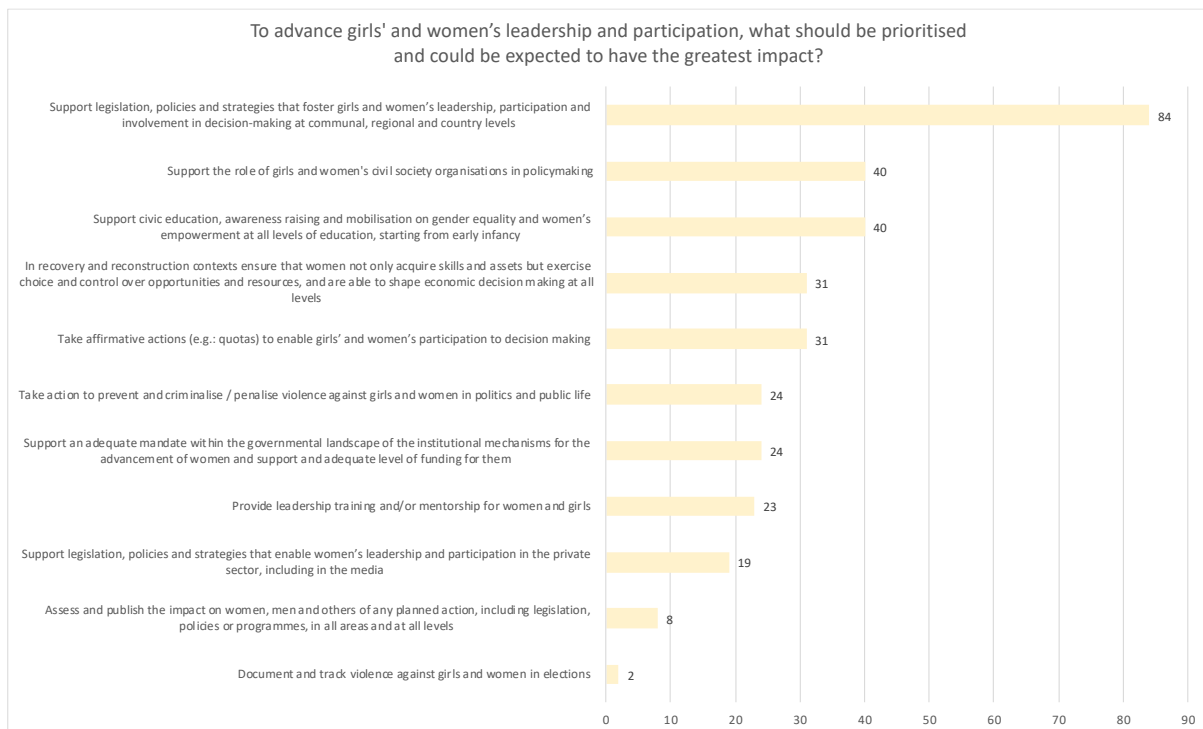
- Work in an inclusive way with communities, fully engaging men and boys... (1st for NGOs, 1st for MS, 1st for IOs)
- Integrate changes in gender stereotypes (...) into education... (2nd for NGOs, 2nd for MS)
- Support women's participation in (...) STEMs and vice versa for boys and men... (2nd for IOs)
- Support gender sensitive public policies, strategies and sector reforms (3rd for NGOs, 3rd for MS, 3rd for IOs)

In addition to the above, based on the comments and the inputs from the position papers, the following emerge as issues that need to be included in GAP III:

- Support gender **transformative** public policies and sector-reforms.
- Encourage changes in the **education and training systems and promoting the role of early education and of policies to de-segregate TVET** and higher education.
- Influence and **change structurally discriminatory norms and behaviours**.
- Ensure that non-discrimination and the transformation of negative gender norms should inform all areas of action and be the first cross-cutting priority of GAP III, **as a way to address the root causes of inequalities in each supported action**.

- Ensure that work with men and boys is done critically as part of the process of transformation.
- Work in **multi-stakeholder partnerships**.
- Focus on the intersection of gender and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (**SOGIESC**).
- Support actions to **review and transform law-making and law enforcement institutions** in light of international non-discrimination law (CEDAW, ILO Convention no. 100 and no. 111, CPRD).

3.4. Question 4. To advance girls' and women's leadership and participation, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?



From the choice of options provided with the question, there is consensus that the GAP III should influence **legal and policy environments** to enable all women and girls to take a leadership role in their societies, and act as a catalyst to boost existing women's CSOs and other interest groups. The top selected options are represented in the graph above. In the list below a more detailed view of the choices, based on the type of respondents, are presented:

- Support legislation, policies and strategies that foster girls and women's leadership, participation and involvement in decision-making at communal, regional and country levels (1st for NGOs, MS and IOs)
- Support the role of girls and women's CSOs in policymaking (2nd for NGOs and MS).
- Support civic education, awareness raising and mobilisation on GEWE at all levels of education, starting from early infancy (equally a 2nd for MS)

- Take affirmative actions (e.g.: quotas) to enable girls' and women's participation to decision making (2nd for IOs).
- In recovery and reconstruction contexts ensure that women (...) exercise choice and control over opportunities and resources (3rd for MS)
- Provide leadership training and/or mentorship for women and girls (3rd for IO's)

In addition to the rating above, more ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers:

- Adopt a **twin track approach to women's leadership and participation**: combining targeted action and **mainstreaming across all EU external action policies**.
- Approach involvement and empowerment of women's CSOs and gender advocates with attention to **intersectionality, non-binary identities, and localised view of the priorities**.
- Work for the empowerment and engagement of those who are deprived of their rights because of structural discrimination, or who are at risk of human rights abuses due to their gender.
- Work so that humanitarian crises and conflicts (e.g. COVID-19) are also opportunities to establish a more "gender-just" social and economic order.
- Support **women and girl leaders and change-makers in all sectors**, and to promote **role models of women and girls** in all their diversity.
- Support **capacity-building of decentralised levels of government** effectively receiving and responding to citizens' voices, and capacity building of CSOs
- Support the involvement of **migrant women** in migration governance.
- Support **women's leadership in social dialogue** and organisational power among informal women workers, in **unions, cooperatives**, low pay and **migrant** workers and in female-dominated **supply chains**, which have particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis, also through digital means.

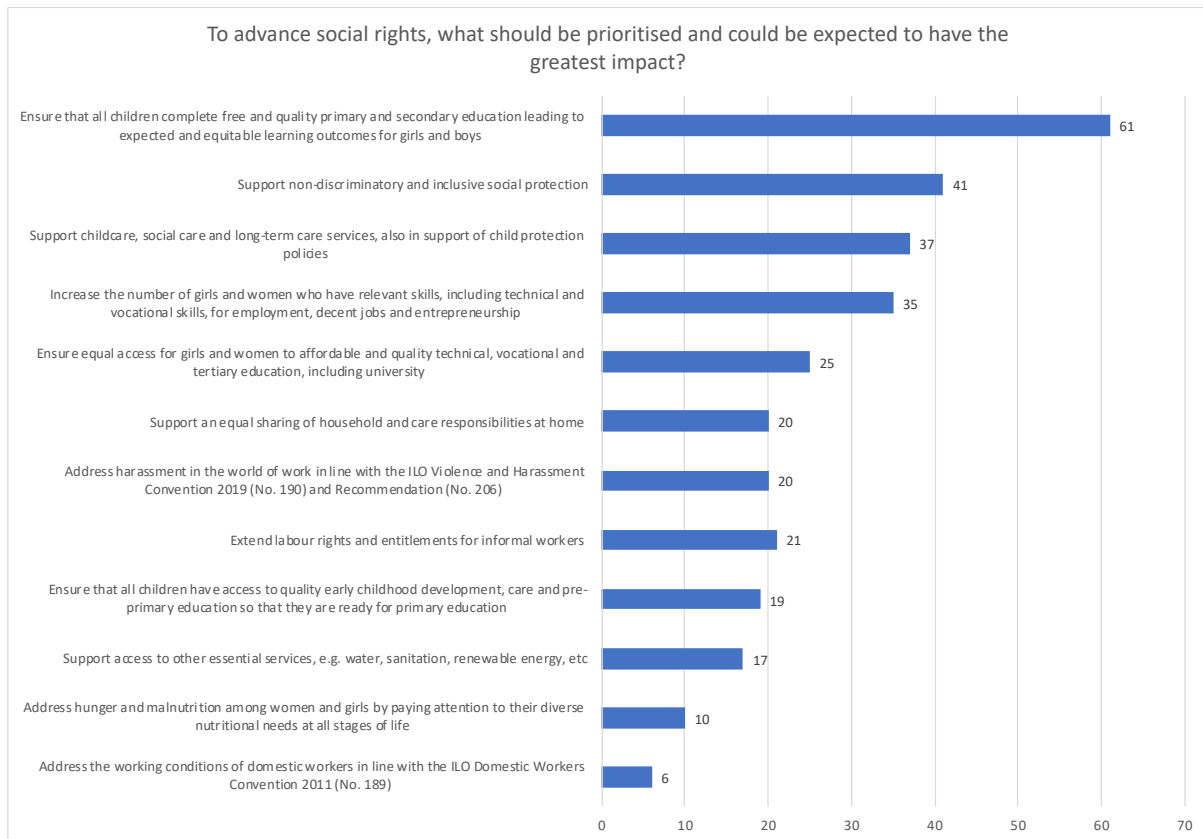
3.5. Question 5. To advance social rights, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

The respondents gave their preference on the options included in the question, as well as suggested additional comments.

The top selected options are represented in the graph below. In the list that follows, there is more detail of the selections, per type of respondents.

- Ensure that all children complete free and quality primary and secondary education leading to equitable learning outcomes for girls and boys (1st for MS, equally a 2nd for IOs, 1st for "Others")
- Support non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection (2nd for NGOs, 3rd for MS, an equal 2nd for IOs)
- Support childcare, social care and long-term care services (...) (3rd for NGOs, an equal 2nd for MS, an equal 2nd for IOs)

- Increase the number of girls and women who have relevant skills (...) (an equal 2nd for MS, equal 2nd for IOs)
- Ensure equal access for girls and women to affordable and quality (...) education (1st for NGOs and IOs)



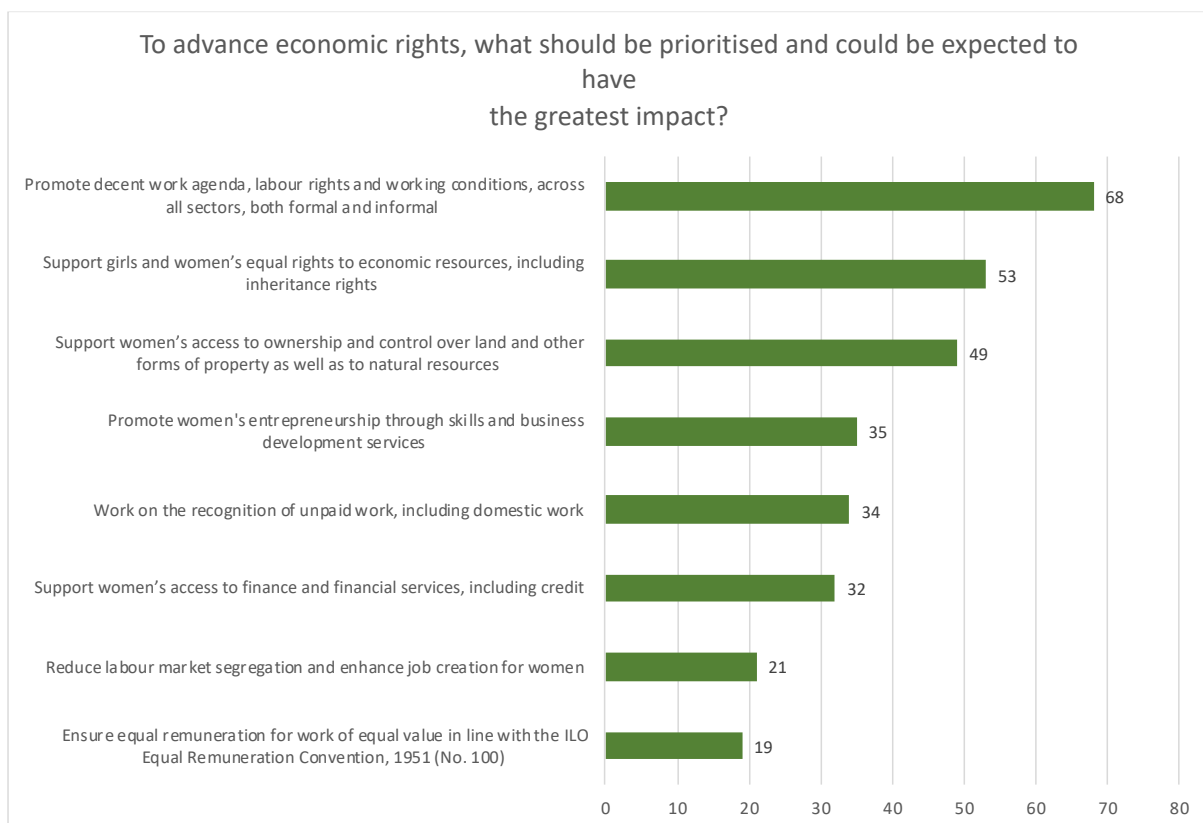
From the comments to this question, it emerges that most NGOs and Member States public authorities prioritise **universal quality education for girls, particularly in poor and conflict-affected situations**. They also stress the need to **eradicate forced marriage**. The inclusion of **quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education** is a welcomed addition. In addition to the above, more ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers, as important for GAP III to contribute to:

- Integrate gender equality in education system's **leadership and teaching practice, and to promoting women and girls' participation in under-represented subjects**.
- Boost the use of **sex-disaggregated data** and indicators for collection of qualitative data.
- Support the **transition from education to employment**.
- **Promote affordable, universal and reliable technologies**, innovations and connectivity.
- **Support increased visibility of unpaid care work**
- **Promote universal and gender-transformative social protection systems and funds**, that support childcare, social care and long-term care services to allow

women’s participation and empowerment (including for women with disabilities) and the provision of public services such as healthcare, education, water and sanitation.

- Support investments in **the development of culturally appropriate, accessible, affordable, gender-responsive and energy-saving infrastructure, technology and housing.**
- Promote **positive masculinities.**
- Encourage an intersectional approach promoting **the right of individuals to register as non-binary or third gender.**
- Support special measures for **legal aid that is effectively accessible to women.**

3.6. Question 6. To advance economic rights, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?



The respondents gave their preference on the options included in the question, as well as suggested further comments.

The top selected options are represented in the graph above. In the list that follows, there is more detail of the choices, per type of respondents, on what GAP III priorities should be:

- Promote the decent work agenda, labour rights and working conditions, across all sectors, both formal and informal (1st for NGOs, 1st for MS, 2nd for IOs)

- Support girls and women's equal rights to economic resources, including inheritance rights (2nd for NGOs and MS)
- Support women's access to ownership and control of the land and other forms of property as well as access to natural resources (3rd for NGOs and MS, 1st for "Other")
- Support women's access to finance and financial services (an equal 2nd for IOs)
- Promote women's entrepreneurship (1st for IOs)

From the comments to this question, there is general agreement that suggested means of actions to pursue economic rights are **multi-dimensional** and can be sustainable only if aiming at **challenging biases** and transforming gender relations in the economic sphere. Proposed strategies include **mainstreaming a gender dimension across macro-economic, employment and private sector development policies**, combined with **specific measures to empower women**, with attention to remove obstacles **at the intersection of different forms of exclusion**. In addition to the above, more ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers, regarding possible means of action for GAP III, such as:

- **Support to laws, policies and actions that promote the respect for human rights**, promoting the **ratification and implementation of international conventions related to women's rights**, such as the CEDAW and the ILO Conventions (C111; C100; C190; C189).
- Work **against discriminatory legislation and norms that restrict women's and girls' economic and social rights** and that aim to **reduce market and legal constraints** in women's rights to inherit, own, access or control property, with attention to women with disabilities.
- Work towards eliminating the gender pay gap and to promoting the full application of the **principle of equal pay for equal work**.
- Support **legal and policy solutions for women in the informal sector**, including formalisation of employment and **minimum wages, work transitions from informal to formal economy**, including access to TVET, STEM, green jobs and digital skills.
- Promote non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection, and labour rights for informal women workers, as for **those caught in crisis and displacement contexts**.
- Provide **financial, digital and fintech education and training** for all women and girls.
- **Enhance credit and business development** services in both urban and rural contexts.
- Support the recognition and fairer distribution of **unpaid care work**, by **collecting data collection** for evidence-based **gender-transformative public policy responses**.
- Support **gender assessment of fiscal, trade, monetary or exchange rate policies**.
- Ensure the EU **international trade and investment agreements** are not gender-blind but ensure women's economic empowerment and equal rights.
- Monitor and advocate to address **the impact of multinational corporations and global supply chains** on women's access to economic resources and decent work, particularly in **rural and indigenous communities**.
- Encourage all enterprises funded by the EU to implement **human rights due diligence**.

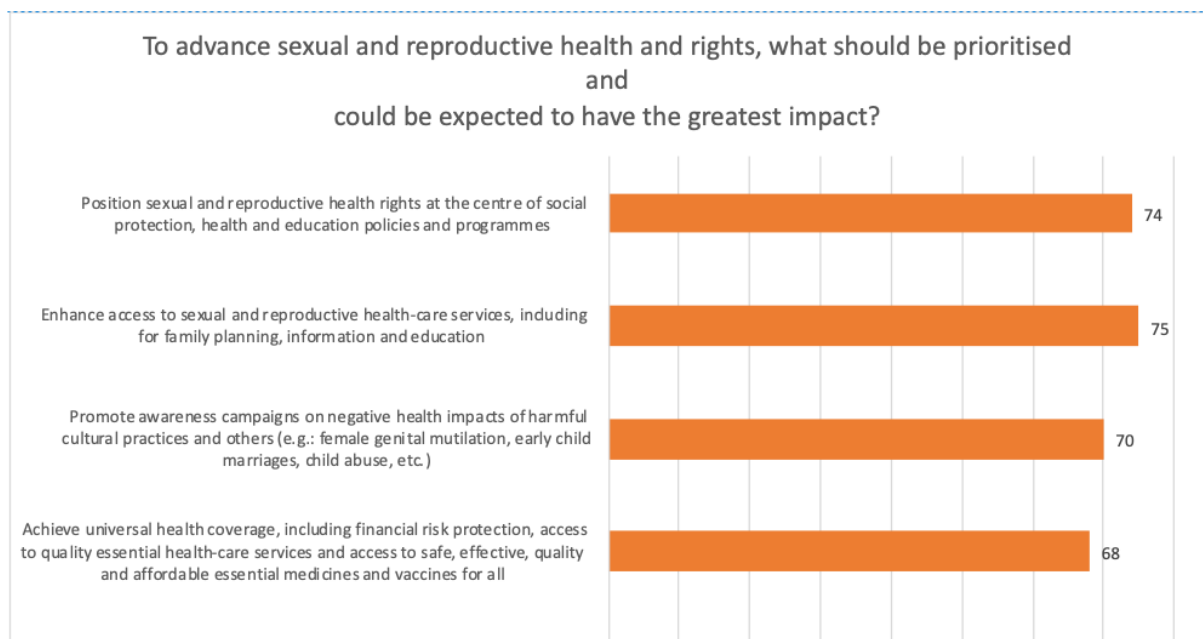
- Establish **corporate leadership** on gender equality, and support partnerships and coalition with responsible enterprises.
- Engage in multi-stakeholder dialogues and partnerships to **create enabling environments for women's entrepreneurship** at transnational, national and local levels, including through the use of digital platforms, and provide targeted support to women-owned SMEs.

3.7. Question 7. To advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

The respondents gave their preference on the options included in the question, as well as suggested further comments.

The top selected options are represented in the graph below. In the list that follows, there is more detail of the choices, per type of respondents, on what GAP III priorities need to be:

- Position SRHR at the centre of social protection, health and education policies and programmes (1st for NGOs, 2nd for IOs,
- Enhance access to SRH services, including family planning, information and education (an equal 1st for NGOs, 2nd for MS, 1st for "Other")
- Promote awareness campaigns on the negative impact on health of harmful cultural practices and others (...) (1st for MS and IOs)
- Achieve universal health coverage (...) (2nd for NGOs, 3rd for MS and IOs)



More ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers, regarding possible means of action for GAP III, such as:

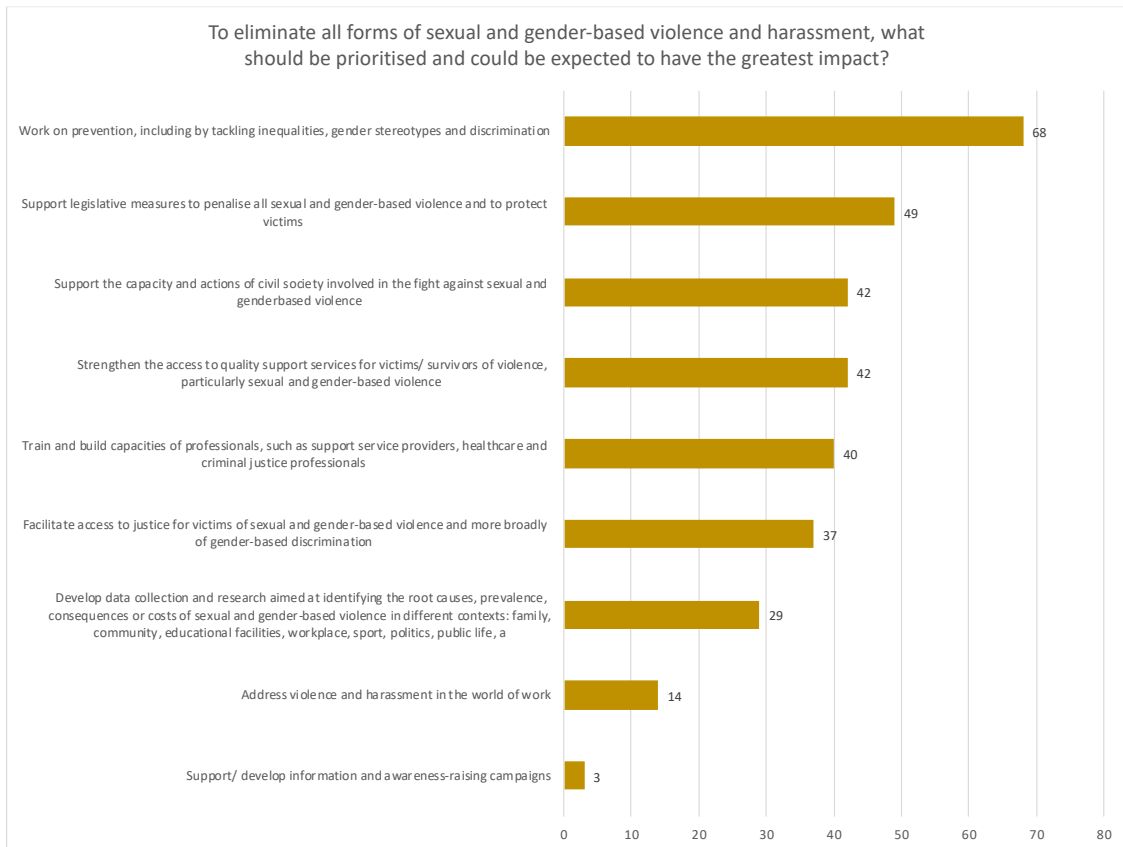
- Support the adoption and endorsement by partner countries of **a comprehensive package of SRHR interventions** to be delivered through universal health coverage (UHC) schemes. UHC, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all **has become more important than ever** as is made evident from **the COVID-19 crisis**.
- Work to counteract the effects that restrictions on movement, **during in public health crises**, have in aggravating barriers to SRHR.
- Work to support **maternal health**, especially where crises impact resource-strained health systems.
- Ensure that **marginalised and excluded groups** including low-income and LGBTI+ individuals and communities, have access to the health services they need.
- Support a **holistic approach**, comprising universal access to SRHR education, information and services, rights to bodily integrity and autonomy; while linking them with wider human rights and democracy agendas, youth rights, gender-based violence and others, including LGBTI+ people's right to equality and non-discrimination and access to SRH services.
- Expose the inherent **gender discrimination in many data systems** and help meet the need for investment in gender statistics on SRHR.

3.8. Question 8. To eliminate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

The respondents gave their preference on the options included in the question, as well as suggested further comments.

The top selected options are represented in the graph below. In the list that follows, there is more detail of the choices, per type of respondents, on what GAP III priorities should be:

- Work on prevention, including by tackling inequalities, gender stereotypes and discrimination (1st for NGOs, MS, IOs and "Other")
- Support legislative measures to penalise all forms of gender-based violence and to protect victims. (2nd for NGOs and MS, 3rd for IOs,
- Other issues, given high importance were:
- Support the capacity and actions of civil society involved in ending gender-based violence (2nd for NGOs)
- Strengthen the access to quality support services for victims/ survivors of gender-based violence (3rd for MS, 2nd for IOs)
- Train and build capacities of professionals, such as support service providers, healthcare and criminal justice professionals (an equal 3rd for MS, an equal 3rd for IOs, 2nd for "Other")
- Facilitate access to justice for victims of SGBV (...) (an equal 2nd for MS)



The issues related to sexual and gender-based violence, draw a legitimate attention and concern from the stakeholders. This is evident also in the array of the proposals. Ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers, as important for GAP III to:

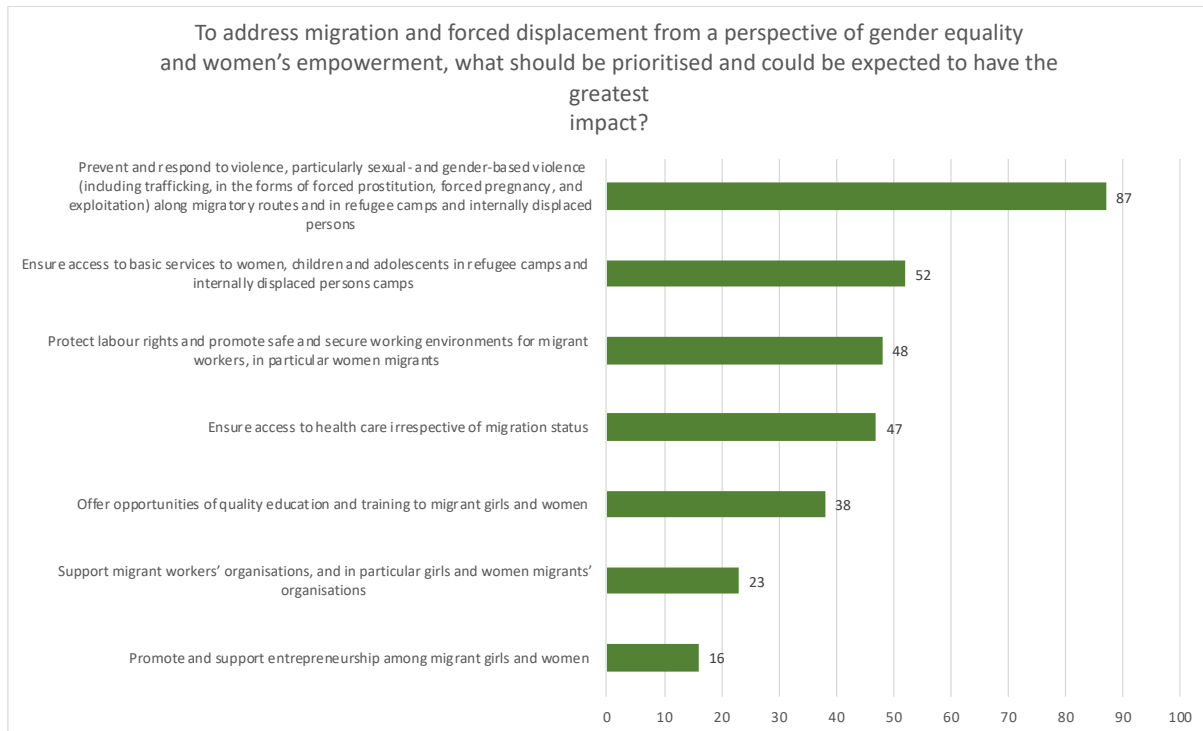
- **Support legislative measures**

- **Promote alignment with international legal and policy frameworks:** The GAP III should support national authorities and all other relevant actors to respect, protect and fulfil international standards and obligations related to the physical and mental wellbeing and resilience of women and girls, including SGBV in conflict situations. It should use **policy dialogue** to advocate for and invest in **inclusive and accountable institutions**. This includes **support to the ratification and implementation of the ILO Convention 190** on Violence and Harassment in the world of work. It also introduces the issue of domestic violence as a world of work issue, which is particularly relevant under the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- At regional level GAP III should work with African partner countries to **ensure the full domestication of the Maputo Protocol, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa**². GAP III should **promote the ratification of the Istanbul Convention**.

² This includes the legal prohibition of FGM and of forced marriage and marriage of girls under 18, the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence against women (GVAW), in public and private spheres, and the legal protection of adolescent girls from abuse and sexual harassment (DSW).

- GAP III should use political leverage to advocate for laws and actions that improve and develop the **documentation of violations against WHRDs**.
- **Strengthen the access to quality support services for victims/ survivors of violence, particularly sexual and gender-based violence**
 - The EU GAP III should support access to high-quality and inclusive support services in all contexts. This should include integrate healthcare, social services, the police, the justice sector, employment related services accessible to all - including female migrants, women with disabilities, indigenous women or women living in remote areas. Responses should also include **psychosocial support** for SGBV survivors and promote their full reintegration and socio-economic agency.
 - Programmes should **support the strengthening of justice mechanisms and legal aid** particularly for groups suffering from intersectional discrimination. Programmes should **train and build the capacities of all law enforcement actors** as well as all service providers across the prevention, law enforcement continuum. There is a wealth of experience, research and previous EU-funded programmes such as the Spotlight Initiative.
- **Support the capacity and actions of civil society involved in the fight against and gender- based violence**
 - GAP III should partner with feminist movements and CSOs serving SGBV survivors. GAP III should build on expertise of decades of women's rights and LGBTI+ organizations and movements, across the continuum of response strategies. There is **need for increased support to organisations providing shelter and services to SGBV survivors**, particularly in context of shrinking resources or increased emergencies such as during the lockdown in **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- **Issues of specific concern**
 - GAP III should support specific actions aiming to prevent violence, abuse and harassment **against women and girls with disabilities**, as described by the Istanbul Convention.
 - A growing concern is **violence against women and girls in politics**. ILO C190 is useful as it addresses violence and harassment in the world of work, including politics as a place of work.
 - In the context of **migration** GAP III should support the integrated systems to facilitate reporting and response of SGBV among vulnerable **migrants, asylum seekers and refugees** (women, girls as well as men and boys, and gender non-conforming persons).
- **Humanitarian emergencies and the humanitarian-development nexus**: a large NGO coalition recommends to mainstream gender considerations throughout all steps of the humanitarian programme cycle, adopting a coordinated approach between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors to tackle SGBV before, during and after a crisis. This goes from access to comprehensive survivor centred SGBV response services planned at the onset of every humanitarian response to engaging with men and boys to shift social norms that lead to SGBV.

3.9. Question 9. To address migration and forced displacement from a perspective of gender equality and women's empowerment, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?



The respondents gave their preference on the options included in the question, as well as suggested further comments.

The top selected options are represented in the graph above. In the list that follows, there is more detail of the choices, per type of respondents, on what GAP III priorities need to be:

- Prevent and respond to violence, particularly sexual- and gender-based violence (1st for NGOs, MS, IOs and "Other")
- Ensure access to basic services in refugee and IDPs camps (2nd for NGOs and MS, 3rd for IOs, 2nd for "Other")
- Protect labour rights for migrant workers (an equal 2nd for NGOs, 2nd for IOs)
- Ensure access to health care irrespective of migration status (3rd for NGOs, MS and IOs)
- Offer opportunities of quality education and training to migrant girls and women (an equal 3rd for IOs)

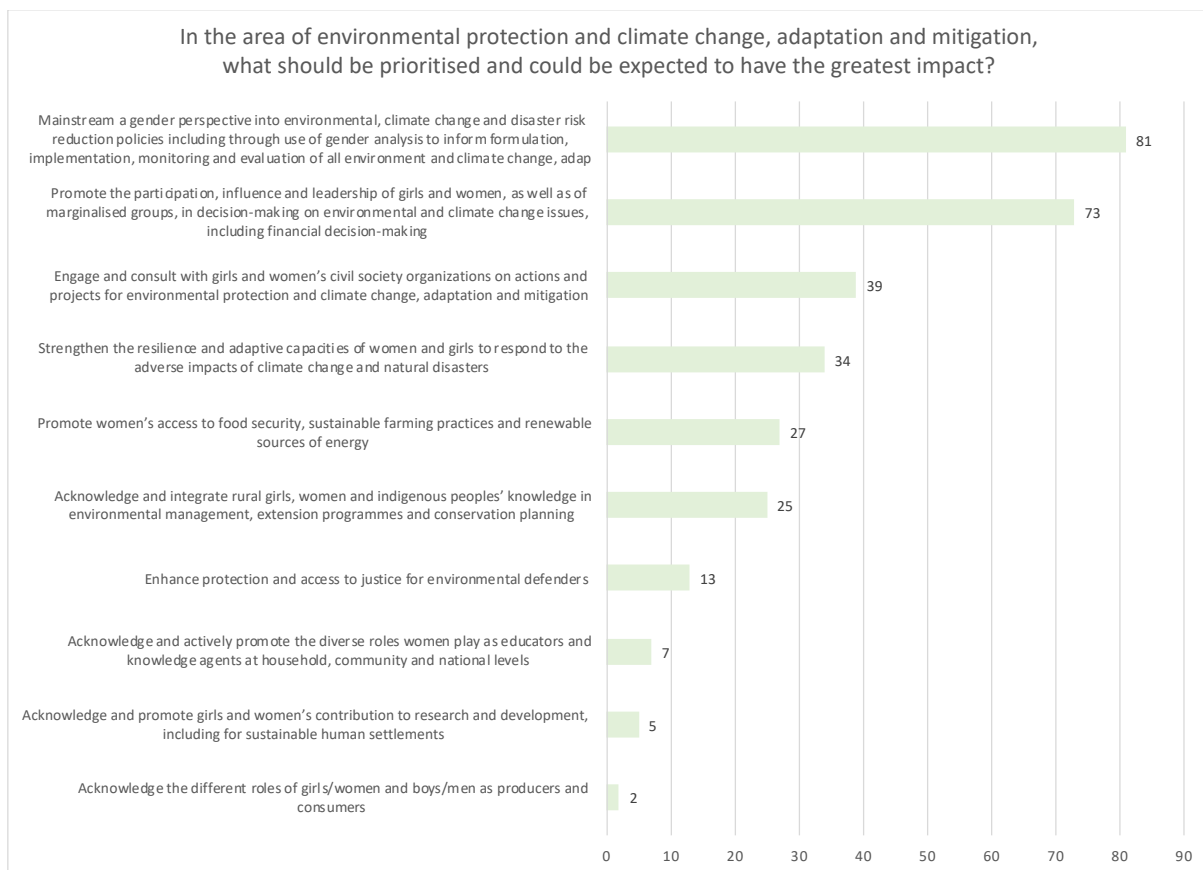
More ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers, that are important to be addressed through GAP III, such as:

- **Access to basic services for women, children and adolescents in refugee camps and internally displaced persons camps.** These services would include quality health and SRH.

- Provision of services needs to be made with the needs and rights of people most at risk/discriminated against such as LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Contribute to increase financial and political commitments of the EU and its Member States to SRHR in emergency settings.

3.10. Question 10. In the area of environmental protection and climate change, adaptation and mitigation, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

The respondents gave their preference on the options included in the question, as well as suggested further comments.



The top selected options are represented in the graph above. In the list that follows, there is more detail of the choices, per type of respondents, on what GAP III priorities need to be regarding environmental protection and climate change (EP/CC):

- Mainstream a gender perspective into environmental, climate change and disaster risk reduction policies (1st for NGOs, MS and IOs)
- Promote the participation, influence and leadership of girls and women (...) (2nd for NGOs, MS and IOs)
- Engage and consult with girls and women's CSOs on actions and projects for EP/CC (3rd for NGOs)

- Strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to respond to the adverse impacts of CC (3rd for MS and IOs)

More ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers, that are important to be addressed through GAP III, such as:

- The EU's gender perspective in environmental protection and climate change, adaptation and mitigation need to be a priority of GAP III.
- GAP III and the EU Green Deal should further increase **financial support to gender-just actions tackling climate impacts**, for adaptation and addressing loss and damage in developing countries.
- GAP III should make clear links with the **Paris Agreement** and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, specifically by:
 - Accelerating **gender mainstreaming** in all environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes, as well as in all climate policy and action, climate approaches, including **in the European Green Deal**, to be more efficient, effective, and equitable.
 - Supporting **gender-just national climate action plans (NDCs)**, **build the capacities of national actors** to develop gender-sensitive climate change adaptation strategies. Require **gender analysis for all climate policy and programme** documents and initiatives resulting in concrete measures to advance gender-just climate actions.
- Step up protection, funding and involvement for collective action towards environmental and gender justice, by:
 - Ensuring that **women's groups are represented** at international climate negotiations and dialogues, and involved in design, implementation and monitoring of National Climate Action Plans.
 - Giving higher priority to programmes on climate action and gender equality, including climate action undertaken by grassroots women's organisations
 - Enabling **targeted funding for grassroots, feminist and women organisations** and complement the larger financing mechanisms
 - Ensuring that women's rights and feminist organisations are involved in the implementation, formulation, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes.
 - **Protecting CSOs**, particularly in countries and regions where their space to contest institutional actions is shrinking and where they face life threats.
- Recognise the disproportionate impact of climate change on **women and girls in fragile and least developed contexts, and propose interventions that increase their leadership and participation in response to climate change**
- Include gender issues in **forest and natural resource management, and energy mitigation actions**.
- Invest in **climate-smart and regenerative livelihood interventions that increase women's economic empowerment and equip displaced and host populations** with the knowledge to limit environmental impact and prepare for climate shocks.
- Include **strategies to address the barriers to women's participation in local early warning systems, disaster risk reduction planning, and natural resource management, as well as in climate change related financial transactions and climate justice pathways**.

- Support sound **gender analysis** and seek to complement it with **institutional buy in** for gender equality. Programmes **should use gender-based assessments, to enhance knowledge of the linkages between gender and environmental protection**³.
- Encourage action-oriented research on the role of **negative masculinities** in perpetuating climate change and identify opportunities to engage men and boys as agents of positive change.
- Support **fair transition to more socially and sustainable economies** which will provide **equal entrepreneurship and job opportunities for women and girls**.
- Support **gender and employment sensitive impact assessments of adaptation and mitigation plans** – including **gender analyses of green job sectors**, at national and local levels. Sex-disaggregated data are critical for understanding the barriers **and help increase women’s participation in traditionally male-dominated sectors**
- Enhance the role that women and girls **play in water management and the management of natural resources**
- Support **collective action by rural women**

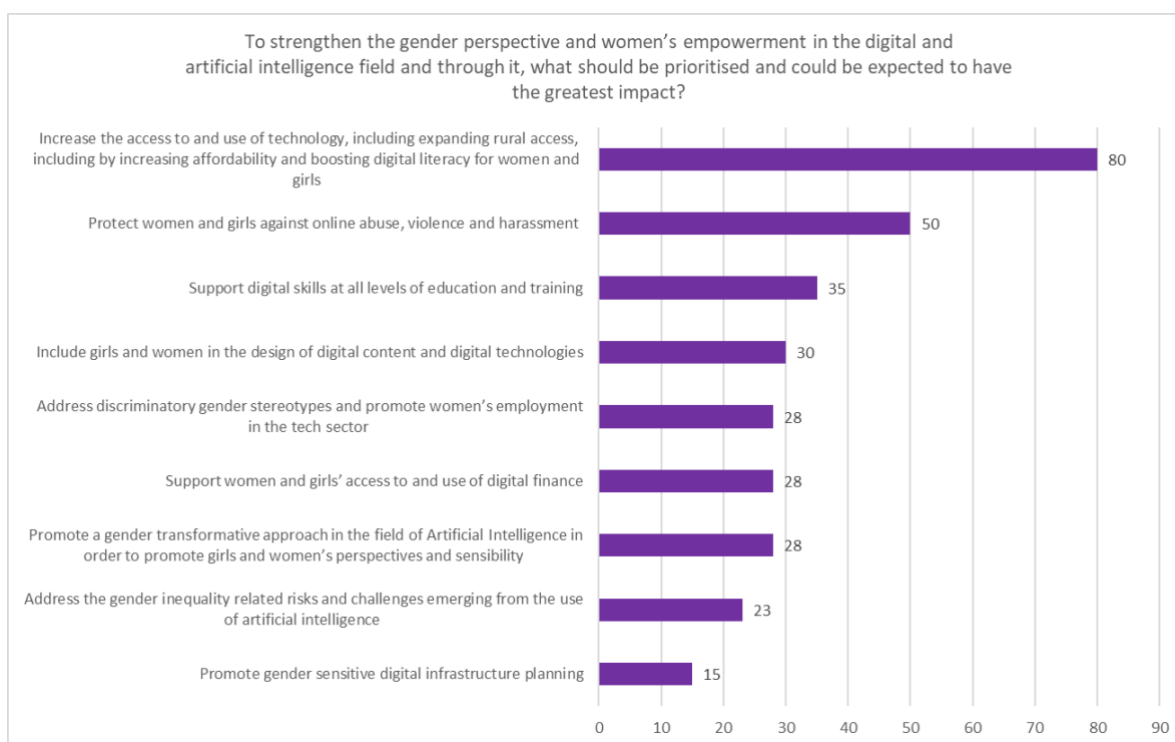
3.11. Question 11. To strengthen the gender perspective and women’s empowerment in the digital and artificial intelligence field and through it, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

Respondents were asked to indicate their top three priorities out of nine options included in the question. The respondents gave their preference on the options included in the question, as well as suggested further comments.

The top selected options are represented in the graph below. In the list that follows, there is more detail of the choices, per type of respondents, on what GAP III priorities need to be regarding the digital technology and related issues:

- Increase the access to and use of technology, including expanding rural access (...) (1st for NGOs, MS, IOs, and “Other”),
- Protect women and girls against online abuse, violence and harassment (2nd for NGOs, MS)
- Support digital skills at all levels of education and training (3rd for NGOs and MS, 2nd for “Other”)
- Include girls and women in the design of digital content and digital technologies (an equal 3rd for NGOs, an equal 2nd for “Other”)
- Address discriminatory gender stereotypes and promote women’s employment in the tech sector (an equal 3rd for MS, 2nd for IOs)
- Support women and girls’ access to and use of digital finance (an equal 2nd for IOs)
- Promote a gender transformative approach in the field of Artificial Intelligence (...) (an equal 2nd for IOs)

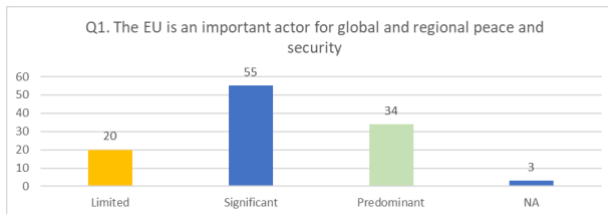
³ I.e. illicit wildlife trade, sustainable access to and use of natural resources and forests, climate change gendered implications



More ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers, that are important to be addressed through GAP III, such as:

- **Bridge the digital divide in a gender-fair and transformative manner** and contribute to fill the gap in investments for technology infrastructure.
- **Mainstream gender across future digital policies, programs and actions**, including the ambitious digital agenda promoted by the European Commission
- Support **gender mainstreaming in all new technologies** and leverage the sector's potential to address specific gender issues - for example, in the area of sexual and reproductive health information, access to justice for victims of SGBV, etc.
- Support affordability and easy access to digital IT
- Combat online violence and abuse and address discriminatory gender stereotypes through use of digital technology
- Support the use of digital technology to benefit enjoyment of civil and political rights, skills and economic empowerment paying attention to the voices of **LGBTI+ women, persons with disabilities and adolescents**
- Promote women's employment in the tech sector
- Access to digital financial services, particularly to forcibly displaced and crisis-affected populations (FDPs)
- More investment in **data collection and analysis** on the gender dimensions of digital and artificial intelligence is crucial to overcome the digital gender gap.

3.12. Question 12. To accelerate the implementation of the EU policy framework on Women, Peace and Security, which objectives/actions have the greatest impact to contribute to gender equality and women's rights and empowerment in the short to medium term?



In their response to Question 1 stakeholders showed that the EU is considered as a predominant (54%) and significant (33%) actor for global and regional peace and security and important commitments taken at the European level continue to galvanise the international

community. The analysis of the data from Question 12 specifically referring to the implementation of the Women Peace and Security agenda is presented below.

- Enhance women's leadership and participation in all policy-making decisions/processes in all areas related to peace and security (...) (1st for NGOs, MS and "Other"; 2nd for IOs)
- Systematically mainstream a gender perspective, as an integral part, in all EU planning and action related to peace and security (2nd for NGOs, MS and "Other"; 1st for IOs)
- Ensure that humanitarian responses address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls, boys, men of all ages (3rd for NGOs and MS, an equal 1st for IOs)



More ideas were contributed through comments to the question.

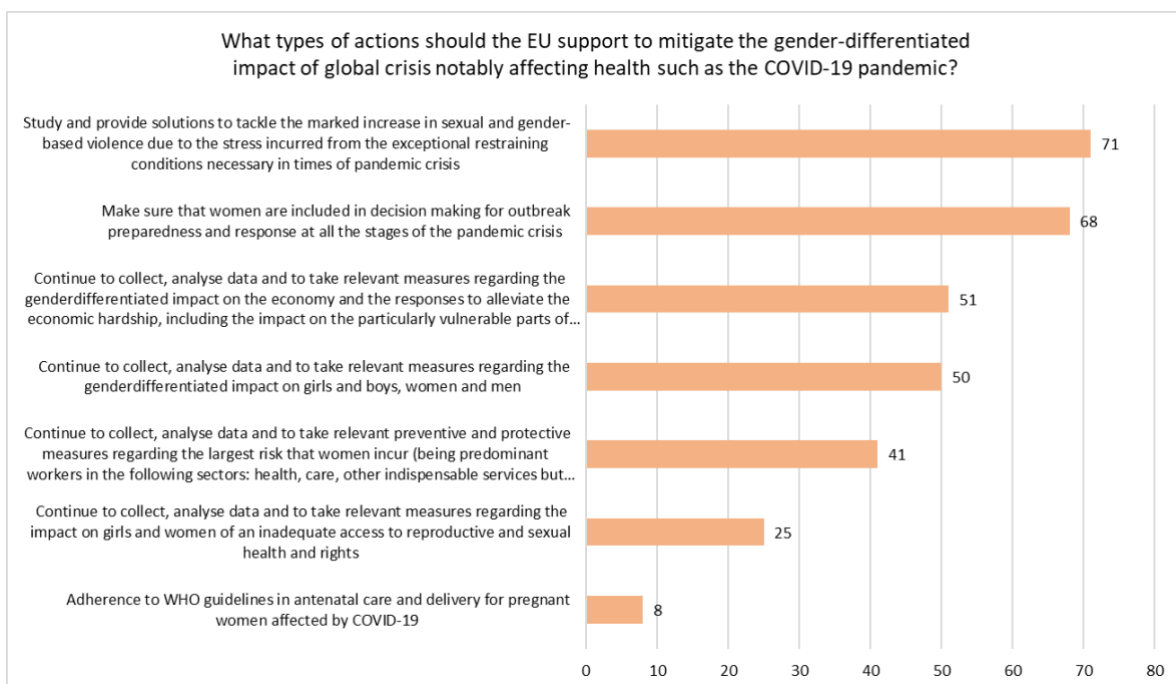
- **Alignment and complementarity with the EU's Strategic Approach to WPS:**
 - From the comments to the question the need to align GAP III with the EU's Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security as well as the mainstreaming of gender into the WPS agenda is put forward (e.g. by three Member States and four NGOs networks). It is recommended the two documents be kept complementary, in that GAP III can play a crucial role in reinforcing the relief and recovery pillar of the WPS strategy, while aiming to increase gender equality in emergencies in all priorities.
 - GAP III should include proportionate safeguards in the form of compliance/due diligence frameworks, in particular human rights due diligence and its gender dimensions.
- Adopt an **intersectional approach to WPS** to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls, boys, men of all ages, and the representation of marginalised groups, such as rural and disabled women, women from ethnic or religious minorities, and LGBTI+ groups which are highly exposed to stigmatisation and violence and excluded from peacebuilding processes. It is essential to recognise these individuals as **experts and leaders**.
- Link the role of **women's organisations, CSOs, feminist organisations and peacebuilders** to formal peacebuilding and negotiation processes, including through **systemic funding, engaging in more structured dialogue** with CSOs by promoting **multi-stakeholder partnerships** for joint actions on WPS and supporting networks of women peace activists, particularly those that are locally driven.
- Strengthen the key role of **women human rights defenders** in peacebuilding by both addressing the shrinking space for women's CSOs in societies in conflict and protecting them from the risks of human rights violations and abuse.
- Address **sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** as a standalone pillar of GAP III, and incorporate principles outlined in the EU Strategic Approach on WPS. For instance, SGBV should be tackled as a driver of conflict and a potential indicator to be taken into consideration in early-warning analyses, conflict prevention, and crisis management.
- Support **SRHR in emergencies** to meet the needs of the growing number of crisis-affected communities. Availability and accessibility of comprehensive services should be supported, including for marginalised groups such as LGBTI+.
- GAP III should emphasise strategies to **address the differentiated social and economic impacts of new and emerging crisis** on women, including those brought by climate change, environmental degradation and health pandemics. Attention should be given to women in vulnerable situations, living in conflict zones, refugees and internally displaced.
- (Several NGO networks underline the need to) include gender-conflict analysis as the basis of peacebuilding and humanitarian policy and programming.

3.13. Question 13. What types of actions should the EU support to mitigate the gender-differentiated impact of global crisis notably affecting health such as the COVID-19 pandemic?

Respondents were asked to indicate their top three priorities out of nine options included in the question. The respondents gave their preference on the options included in the question, as well as suggested further comments.

Question 13 was drafted as the pandemic was developing and well ahead of a fuller understanding of the impact that COVID-19 would have on countries. This has particularly been the case in those countries that are involved in manufacturing that is linked to the global supply chains. The comments by the respondents have reflected these developments as part of their answers to the questionnaire. In particular COVID-19 policy responses by UN agencies⁴, the European Commission and EEAS⁵ and Concord Europe members' inter-action with the Commission⁶.

The overall top selected options are represented in the graph below. In the list that follows, there is more detail of the choices, per type of respondents, on what GAP III must include in response to global crisis.



⁴ Listed on UN Women's website <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/unsystemcoordination/gender-related-covid-19-resources-by-un-entirety-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2803>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/joint-comm-2020-eu-global-response_en.pdf

⁶ See <https://concordeurope.org/blog/2020/04/07/covid19-support-resources/> that provides information on the interaction with the Commission and policy statements by members. Of particular relevance to this Consultation, Care International's [The Global Rapid Gender Analysis](#) (launched together with IRC)

The aggregated data indicates support for two objectives:

- Study and provide solutions to tackle the marked increase in gender-based violence due to the stress incurred from the exceptional restraining conditions necessary in times of pandemic crisis (2nd for NGOs, 1st for MS and IOs, 2nd for “Other”)
- Make sure that women are included in decision making for outbreak preparedness and response at all the stages of the pandemic crisis (1st for NGOs and an equal 1st for IOs, 2nd for MS, 1st for “Other”)
- Continue to collect, analyse data and to **take relevant measures regarding the gender-differentiated impact on the economy** and the responses to alleviate the economic hardship (3rd for MS, 2nd for IOs, and equal 2nd for “Other”)
- Continue to collect, analyse data and to take **relevant measures regarding the gender-differentiated impact** on girls and boys, women and men (3rd for NGOs; an equal 3rd for MS, an equal 2nd for “Other”)

More ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers. These echo ideas that were mentioned in answers to other questions , such as:

- Ensuring **freedom from violence and protecting SRHR**.
- Provide continuous **support to SGBV prevention, response, and risk mitigation and ensure continuity and access to essential service to address SGBV**. Ensure **criminal justice responses to SGBV**, during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Ensure and monitor access to SRH services**.
- Valuing health and who takes charge of (paid and unpaid) **care work**. Contribute to **improving working conditions and pay** for front-line workforce and caregivers in fields that are essential and employ a majority of women.
- Measures to counteract the effects of the pandemic on **women** who disproportionately work in insecure labour markets and **are harder hit by the economic impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic is driving**. Among these vulnerable categories of workers which lose part or all of their income, due to underlying discrimination, women are also facing a high price: **low-income, migrant, informal and temporary workers**.
- In setting up responses to the crisis, these should be considered:
 - Sex, age and disability **disaggregation**, as well as other key indicators, in data collection, analyses and reporting.
 - Support the provision of gender-responsive public services.
 - Ensure communications, treatment, support and other services are culturally and gender sensitive to ensure access for women, and that they are responsive to the rights and needs of **women and girls from marginalised groups**.
 - **LGBTI+** people face heightened risks during the pandemic, as many work in the informal sector, with high rates of unemployment and poverty and limited health and social protection.
 - Ensure that **every girl and woman is digitally literate and has access to digital technology**.
 - Focus on **women’s empowerment** and their **role in rebuilding economies, including them in decision-making**, both for preparedness and response at all the stages of the pandemic crisis.

- Include provisions establishing that women and men **have equal rights in the world of work and equal access to social protection**.
- Advocate for **gender-responsive social assistance and protection** measures.
- Provide support to female-headed households, as migrant workers or recipients of remittances, including **childcare, health services and other social protection is imperative** for vital frontline workers.
- Focus the response to the COVID-19 **on rights-based approaches** by favouring **bottom-up, community-based solutions** to better engage women in decision making and economic empowerment processes.
- Improve **rural women's capacity to deal with the COVID-19 effects on their livelihoods**, facilitating their access to inputs services, markets, and financial resources.

3.14. Question 14. How should intersectionality be addressed in the implementation of the GAP III?

This was an open question. It provided links to the EU Gender Equality strategy 2020-2025, EIGE's definition of 'intersectionality', and Article 10 TFEU. Overall, respondents welcome GAP III coherence with the EU Gender Equality strategy 2020-2025, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, and the humanitarian principles of 'do no harm' and 'leave no one behind', and European Consensus (paragraph 16) about key definitions of intersectionality.

Answers showed convergence on using intersectionality in GAP III as a tool to understand the structures of power and to achieve broader gender and social equality. Recommendations and suggestions have been clustered into six macro-areas.

- **Conceptualisation of intersectionality**
 - Reflect the definitions used in the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024⁷. (contribution from NGO)
 - Address inequality in structures, the distribution of power and resources, and in the social value assigned to different groups, as well as the effect of social norms in perpetuating these differences. (contribution from NGO)
 - In addition to the intersection of gender with sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics; actively include other intersections, e.g. caste, disability, socio-economic situation, religious ethnic and geographic backgrounds, interests, opinions, ideas, etc. (contribution from several EUMS, NGOs, IOs)

⁷ EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025: "Where women or men are mentioned, these are heterogeneous categories including in relation to their sex, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics". The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024: "Step up action to combat all forms of discrimination including on grounds of sex, race, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity, and continue calling on all states to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of persons belonging to minorities, including national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Step up action to prevent and combat all forms of discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) persons, including LGBTI-phobic violence and hate speech".

- **Intersectionality as a tool**
 - Involvement and strengthening of civil society organisations and activists working in an intersectional perspective throughout the lifespan of the GAP III. (contribution from NGOs)
 - Interconnect oppressive structures (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, and so on) as causing vulnerability and inequalities in privilege and power, and further entrench inequalities and injustices. (contribution from several EUMS, NGOs, IOs)
- **Interdependency and complementarity**
 - The GAP III intersectionality approach should stand on the foundation that all sectors are complementary and interdependent. All interventions must be multidimensional. (contribution from EUMS, NGOs, IOs)
 - Ensure that the principle of equity is embedded in all responses by understanding unique and specific vulnerabilities, e.g. the adoption of gender negative coping strategies or the intersectional stigma in the context of SRHR that converges with criminalisation. (contribution from NGOs, IOs)
- **Making intersectionality a part of the working and decision-making processes**
 - Feature more prominently the intersectional perspective on gender equality by turning it into a cross-cutting principle and clarifying how it will be applied across sectors. (contribution from EUMS, NGOs, IOs)
 - Promote the intersectional approach from normative frameworks to programming and financing. (contribution from EUMS, NGOs)
 - Consider how the GAP III indicators can be linked to other EU policies (for example, EU guidelines on LGBTI+). (contribution from NGOs)
 - Adopt an intersectional approach in relation to agency, engaging boys and men, changing condition and position of girls and women in society. (contribution from NGO)
 - Consult interested groups to ensure a “do-no harm” approach. (contribution from NGO)
 - Approaches should be contextualised so that they help shift social norms, beliefs and assumptions on gender and identity and promote a more progressive understanding of intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion, and their impacts. (contribution from NGOs)
 - GAP III should adopt a life-cycle approach throughout all its pillars and actions. (contribution from NGOs)
- **Gender analysis, research, and communication**
 - In line with SDG target 17.18, strengthen systems for the collection and monitoring of disaggregated data by sex, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability, migratory status, class, geographic location, etc., while being mindful of ethical considerations and data privacy. Set objectives and indicators according to these markers, as well as guiding questions for reporting. (contribution from NGOs, EUMS, IOs, “Other”)
 - Increase action-oriented research and conduct intersectional analysis of gender, identity-based inequality, and associated power and conflict dynamics. (contribution from NGOs, IOs)

- **Leading by example**

- The EU should promote an increase of understanding about intersectionality among staff and partners not only as a tool but also as a way of thinking, strategizing, and implementing, also via regular training. (contribution from NGOs)
- GAP III should promote the application of the intersectional analysis and approach across all the EU's work, including multilateral and bilateral funding and should ensure binding requirements to integrate the intersectionality approach into gender analysis.
- The EU should explore non-traditional alliances for national governments and policymakers, e.g. in the worlds of sports, media, cinema, entertainment etc. (contribution from EUMS)

3.15. Question 15. Which concrete actions could the GAP III include to strengthen gender mainstreaming in EU external action?

This was an open question. The answers to it show that there is an expectation for GAP III to demonstrate commitment at the highest level, ensuring full endorsement by all EU actors. Contributions underlined the opportunity for GAP III to strengthen the role of the EU to lead by example and to improve gender mainstreaming requirements, policy coherence and alignment and the adoption of transformative approaches to gender equality.

It emerges from answers to other questions (e.g. Question 3 above) as well as from answers to question 15, coming mainly from EUMS and NGOs, that there is need for GAP III to continue the three-pronged approach, where the EU uses political dialogue, targeted activities and gender mainstreaming to bring about the transformation of gender relations.

Recommendations and suggestions are clustered into six macro-areas.

- **Leading by example**

- Building on GAP II, GAP III should continue its progress in boosting institutional shift, demanding accountability to GAP priorities and objectives with concrete results and indicators, also allowing for a more qualitative approach in reporting and ensuring a more accurate tracking of progress and greater transparency.
- Require improved collection and maintaining of data as part of systems (e.g., OPSYS) with gender-disaggregated data, including on expenditures.
- Require transparent tracking of expenditures towards gender equality.
- Enhance the inclusion of gender equality in the everyday work of EU actors
- Promote women's roles and gender equal representation at all levels of EU external action, especially in management roles.
- Promote transformative leadership and strengthen senior EU managers' capacity with regards to gender equality and increase gender expertise in strategic positions in EU partner countries as well as in HQ.
- Consider including gender in the performance review of all EU staff and integrate gender issues into annual performance review.
- Enhance coordination and a closer cooperation and regular meetings between all EU actors present in partner countries on gender.
- Draw good practices and lessons learned and make them visible

- **Resources and funding**

- Increase the EU's integrated and targeted support for gender equality and women's and girls' rights
- Allocate and increase financial and technical resources to gender equality; multi-year allocation of specific budgets for GAP III implementation
- Increase gender budgeting in aid and budget for gender analysis 4

- **Gender mainstreaming, policy coherence and alignment**

- Elaborate common guiding strategies for supporting gender mainstreaming, including gender analysis to inform policy-making, programming and spending, gender mainstreaming at all levels: planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies, programmes and activities.
- Consult with women and girls, men and boys and women's rights organizations.
- Strengthen attention to non-traditional and non-social sectors such as trade, energy, security, migration, and macroeconomics.
- Have a higher level of ambition and be fully implemented in the programming of development aid at all stages and across all areas of EU external relations: constitute an overarching instrument for strategic, formal and horizontal guidance and discussions on EU external action for gender equality.
- Increase commitment to GAP at the highest political level. GAP III priorities should be included in EU actors' policy and political dialogues with partner countries, on all sectors.
- Strengthen GEWE as a conditionality and funding requirement by making gender mainstreaming a prerequisite for EU funding instruments.
- Develop and inform policies and programmes, improve availability of data, improving statistical mechanism and collection instruments to guarantee the collection of gender sensitive data disaggregated by sex, age and disability, and that move beyond to capture the realities and the intersection of different grounds of discrimination, including hidden or hard-to-reach groups.
- Require more systematic and mandatory training on gender equality, intersectionality and gender mainstreaming for EU staff, including management and senior staff and, policy-makers, and partner organizations.
- Align and enhance GAP III synergy with the Council working groups and bodies on gender equality, including geographic and thematic, with EU policies and strategies, among others: Roma Strategy, the Disability Strategy and the Youth Guarantee; Women, Peace and Security; trade policies; the Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024; the EU Gender Equality strategy 2020-2025; EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline, paving the way for an integrated and consistent gender equality EU approach in all contexts.
- Reinforce linkages and synergies with humanitarian aid and emergency response. Link with the women, peace and security and align with peace, development and humanitarian aid nexus.

- **Partnership**

- Encourage partner countries alignment, commitment, implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda as well as the ratification and implementation of UN Conventions

and relevant international and regional human rights instruments, with the aim of enhancing the international cooperation and respect of international provisions.

- Hear all voices: set up mechanisms for the systematic inclusion and full participation of CSOs, women's and feminists' organisations and groups of women from marginalised groups, and foresee dedicated assistance to build their capacity on mainstreaming gender and addressing intersectionality in their work.
- Facilitate exchanges and dialogues with different actors; Multi-stakeholders must be present in strategic positions and policy-making bodies.
- **Programming**
 - Work in an inclusive way with communities, promoting women's involvement in projects, fully engaging men and boys as allies, engage with community leaders in joint actions to achieve gender equality and in challenging gender stereotypes and social norms, including enhancing access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education.
 - Put a stronger focus on addressing discriminatory social norms, through:
 - supporting women's empowerment to ensure that women exercise choice and control over opportunities and resources, and are able to shape decision making at all levels;
 - addressing gender equality within a comprehensive context of good governance;
 - promoting a feminist approach to leadership; SRHR; women's, as well as non-binary and third gender people effective participation to decision-making;
 - addressing limited access to land and credit, unpaid care work, decent jobs, entrepreneurship, access to finance and financial services, and social protection as cross-cutting issues undermining women's social, economic, educative possibilities;
 - promoting and fostering positive/transformational masculinities;
 - investing in care for gender equality and development, to redistribute the burden of unpaid care;
 - working to ensure access to quality public services and to create millions of quality green jobs;
 - eliminating gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work;
 - ensuring participation of women and girls in decision making about climate change and environmental protection
 - leveraging the digital technologies to combat stereotypes.
- **Communication**
 - Promote awareness campaigns on gender and strong work on communication, both internal and external.

3.16. Question 16. What could make GAP III more relevant, and would maximise its impact, at country /local level at the partner countries?

The qualitative analysis of stakeholders' answers to this open question led to clustering of ideas into four groups, as follows.

- Policy coherence and alignment, coordination and burden sharing with country partners, CSOs and EU actors
- Communication on and visibility of the commitments and the results obtained for gender equality
- Ensuring a participatory gendered process and adequate resources for gender equality
- Gender analysis and research to build knowledge and inform decision making

3.17. Question 17. How could the EU improve its reporting and in better communication on the GAP III and its results?

The contributions to this question can be grouped in three categories: regular reporting, monitoring and evaluation that is fully inclusive of rights holders, stakeholders and partners, and clear and continuous communication at global and country level.

- Reporting output

- Clear guidelines regarding the reporting. The information collected and analysed, and the analyses produced for the purposes of reporting need to be made available to the EU Member States to use for planning, advocacy, etc. A systematic involvement of the stakeholders is required in the scrutiny of the results of GAP III at the global level.
- Integrate the results from the GAP III report into annual reports on the EU instruments for financing external actions.
- Civil society calls for dissemination of all available contributions that are collected as a result of the reporting exercise to ensure full transparency.
- Formats of the report(s): The reports would need to be periodically produced providing a qualitative analysis of the work done. Different formats are expected so that the full analysis of the periodic report is complemented with lighter versions for dissemination among partners.
- Promising practices and lessons learned need to be drawn, disseminated widely and discussed with partners.
- Reporting templates: The reporting templates need to be simple.
- Sources of data: As much as possible, rely on the core data sources that are collected through regular monitoring work. Ensure the availability of disaggregated data through the EU results frameworks and monitoring activities that could facilitate the analysis of the results achieved on gender equality and women's empowerment. Rely on partner countries' own statistical bodies to ensure the availability of sex and age disaggregated data and support their capacity as needed. Other levels of disaggregation that reflect intersectionality need to be used and encouraged. Support to independent national and regional institutions that have the capacity to generate analysis.

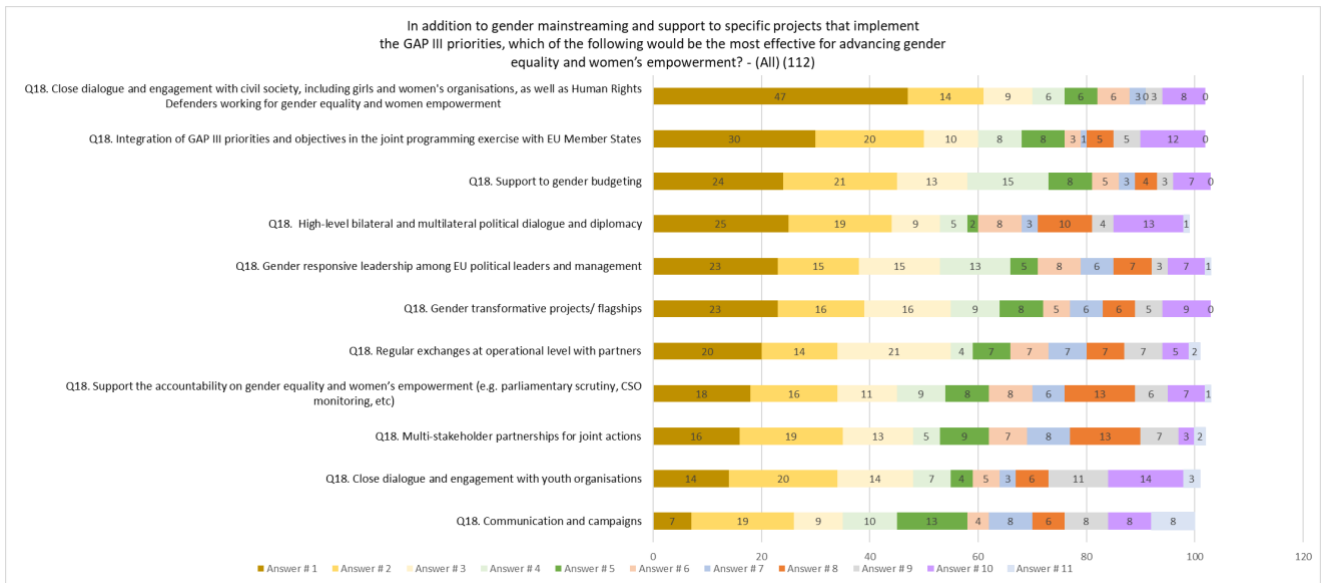
- Monitoring and evaluation of GAP III

- Contributions on monitoring refer to both the structure of the monitoring framework of GAP III, as well as the capacities needed to generate a gender mainstreamed regular monitoring work beyond GAP III reporting and monitoring.
- Less indicators that are more strategic. The use of the SDG indicators is to be complemented with others that can allow measurement of the EU results, including qualitative indicators. Use of targets is encouraged.

- The indicators need to be identified against clearly defined objectives that are part of country strategies of EU delegations and EU missions/ agencies at the level of partner countries.
- Inclusion of stakeholders in the monitoring of the results of GAP III.
- Setting up mechanisms and relying on existing ones to ensure a systematic involvement of the civil society into the monitoring of the GAP III results.
- An advisory body can be set up with professionals knowledgeable about gender equality, women's empowerment and results-based monitoring.
- Ensure that disaggregated data is available at the level of partner countries. Support to the capacity to generate disaggregated data is needed.
- Clear guidance in understanding the use of GAP III into planning work, including clarifying specific methodological issues such as the accurate use of the OECD policy marker on gender.
- **Communication:** communication of results was highlighted as very important across the contributions, both as a means to keep the EU actors accountable and as a means of celebrating progress on gender equality and women's empowerment.
 - Global level
 - Establishing a strategy for communication shared and accessible to partners and stakeholders.
 - The results of the regular GAP III reporting need to be widely disseminated to stakeholders.
 - Based on the report, success stories and promising practices need to be identified and packaged in attractive formats including videos, to encourage also engagement with civil society, partners, etc.
 - Country level
 - Establish a clear strategy for implementation of GAP III, that is also visible and accessible to partners.
 - Make the reports easily available on the websites of the Delegations and a summary available in the local language(s). Other outreach means that fit with the capabilities of the rights holders need to be considered when communicating the EU's contribution to gender equality.

3.18. Question 18. In addition to gender mainstreaming and support to specific projects that implement the GAP III priorities, which of the following would be the most effective for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment?

Respondents were asked to indicate the order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important. The respondents gave their preference on the options included in the question, as well as suggested further comments. The respondents rated their preference using an order of importance (1 = most important; 10 = least important); the colours in the graph show for each option, how many of the respondents rated them 1 (e.g. Answer #1) to 10 (e.g. Answer #10.)



The top selected options are represented in the graph above. In the list that follows, there is more detail of the choices, per type of respondents, on what strategies can be used to achieve GAP III objectives.

- For NGOs, the top strategy is dialogue with civil society, followed by integration of GAP III priorities and objectives in joint programming with EUMS, and the third is support to gender budgeting.
- For EUMS, the top strategy is high-level bilateral and multilateral political dialogue and diplomacy, followed by integration of GAP III priorities and objectives in joint programming with EUMS, and the third is gender responsive leadership among EU political leaders and management.
- For International Organisations the top strategy is gender responsive leadership among EU political leaders and management, followed with equal value by integration of GAP III priorities and objectives in joint programming with EUMS, and support to gender budgeting.
- The respondents in the “Other” category selected as top priority the dialogue with civil society and multi-stakeholder partnerships for joint actions

More ideas were contributed through comments to the question, as well as through the position papers, on the type of strategies and approaches that would drive a successful implementation of GAP III.

Multilateralism

- The EU is a recognised global leader in promoting gender equality and should continue to ensure that gender equality is at the centre of diplomatic and political engagement.
- The EU should continue to promote and support the global frameworks to accelerate action to advance global commitments, and with EU MemberStates to oppose any action seeking to undermine or weaken existing international agreements on gender equality.
- The EU should strengthen coordination mechanisms, and lead on multi-stakeholder partnerships.

- **Working with civil society organisations, and especially women's organisations**
 - Close dialogue and engagement with civil society, including girls' and women's organisations, and Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women empowerment should continue to be high priority for the EU. Dialogue with civil society needs to be inclusive of LGBTI+ groups.
 - Funding and other forms of support to women's rights organisations and CSOs working for gender equality is essential to enable them to play their key roles in reaching those living in the most marginalised communities
 - Increase support to Women's Human Rights Defenders.
 - Support community-led initiatives and ensure that actions are informed, designed and implemented by communities themselves.
 - Community-level work must be recognised, funded and strengthened to enable it to scale up. It also requires an enabling environment, and support to engage in decision-making processes.
- **Working with local and regional governments.**
 - Focus on local and regional governments as they can develop meaningful municipality-wide plans and initiatives that advance gender equality and women's empowerment by applying policies that have been informed by civil society organisations and grassroots women's groups.
- **Methodological approaches**
 - Support the production of reliable and disaggregated data for measuring, monitoring and review, for example in area of crime and criminal justice, and women's and children's wellbeing and development, in the framework of the SDGs.
 - Ensure accountability, integrate GAP III priorities into the programming exercise of the next MFF so that GAP III is firmly reflected in choices, including NDICI, using both mainstreaming and targeted actions.
 - Increase accountability for ensuring the systematic mainstreaming of gender equality in the programming process in EU Delegations.
 - Systematically include gender equality, including SRHR, in the country assessments prepared by EU Delegations.
 - Include gender equality in the future flagship initiatives of each EU Delegation must be an absolute priority of GAP III, in consultation with women's rights organisations.
 - Emphasise the complementarity between dialogue, use of different modalities, and funded actions, and across different sectors, as a package of measures to strengthen effectiveness.
 - Use special expertise, ranging from academia to CSOs, to ensure the advancement of GEWE. Build cross-connections between engagement with different stakeholders, for example, CSOs, youth organisations, parliamentarians, local authorities.
 - Foster peer-to-peer learning, for example, among local and regional governments, CSOs, other stakeholders, making full use of digital technologies.
 - Sharing experiences between national, regional and international frameworks is vital for sustainability.

List of annexes to the report

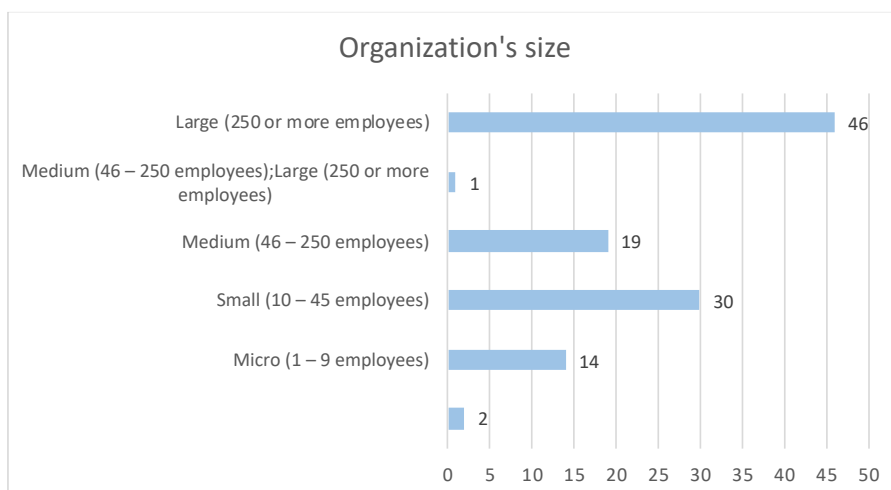
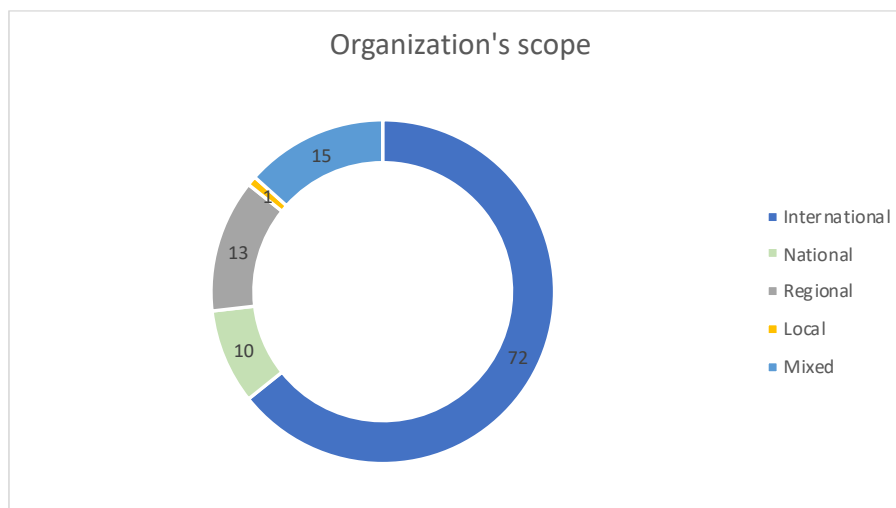
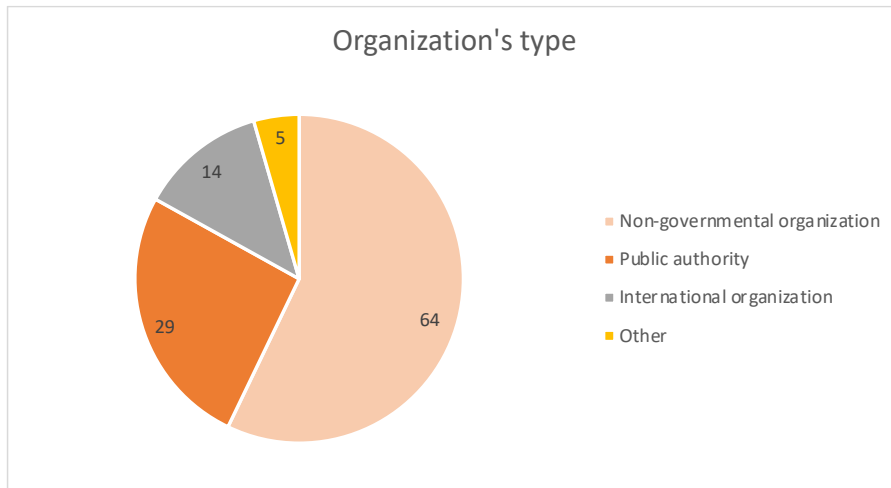
Annex 1 Respondents to the online targeted consultation on the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP)43 III 2021 – 2025

Annex 2 Questionnaire for the targeted consultation on the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP)43 III 2021 – 2025

Annex 3 Position papers submitted for the online targeted consultation on the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP)43 III 2021 – 2025

Annex 1 Respondents to the online targeted consultation on GAP III

1. Respondents by type, scope and size of Organisation



2. List of Respondents – Non-governmental Organisations

1. ACT Alliance EU
2. ActionAid International
3. Aidsfonds
4. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
5. British Council
6. CARE International Aisbl
7. Center for Reproductive Rights
8. Central and Eastern European Bankwatch Network
9. Centro de Promoción de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos -PROMSEX
10. CIDSE-international network of global justice organizations
11. Concern Worldwide
12. CONCORD Europe
13. Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung (DSW)
14. DRC Danish Refugee Council
15. Equal Rights Trust
16. Euromed Feminist Initiative
17. EuroMed Rights
18. European Christian Organizations for Relief and Development (EU-CORD)
19. European Disability Forum
20. European Foundation Centre
21. European Institute of Peace
22. European Partnership for Democracy
23. European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)
24. Fairtrade International
25. Fédération Ouest Africaine des Associations de Personnes Handicapées
26. Forus
27. Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e.V.
28. Free Press Unlimited
29. Front Line Defenders
30. Fundación Guatemala (FUNGUA)
31. Genderforce
32. ILGA-Europe
33. International Civil Society Action Network
34. International Dalit Solidarity Network
35. International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)
36. International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN)
37. International Rescue Committee
38. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
39. Islamic Relief Worldwide
40. KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation
41. Kosovo Women's Network
42. Kvinna till Kvinna
43. L'être égale
44. Lumos Foundation
45. Marie Stopes International
46. MenEngage Alliance
47. Mizan for law
48. Muslims for Progressive Values
49. Panos Institute Southern Africa

50. People in Need
51. Plan International
52. Quaker Council for European Affairs
53. Red Jubileo Sur/Américas
54. Saferworld
55. SIS Forum (Malaysia) (publicly known as Sisters in Islam)
56. Smart Africa Secretariat
57. Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) Network
58. The End FGM European Network
59. WECF - Women Engage for a Common Future
60. WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform
61. Women Environmental Programme (WEP)
62. Women in Africa Initiative
63. Women in Law and Development in Africa/femmes, Droits et Développement en Afrique-Bénin (WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Bénin)
64. Women's World Banking

3. List of Respondents – EU Member States' Institutions

1. **Austria** Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs
Austrian Development Agency (ADA)
2. **Belgium** Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs / Directorate General
Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
Belgian Development Agency (Enabel)
3. **Bulgaria** Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. **Croatia** Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
5. **Czech Republic** Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6. **Denmark** Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7. **Estonia** Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
8. **Finland** Ministry for Foreign Affairs
9. **France** Le Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères
Agence Française de Développement
10. **Germany** Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
(BMZ)
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
GmbH
11. **Greece** Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs/ General Secretariat for Family
Policy and Gender Equality
12. **Hungary** Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary/ Department for
International Development
13. **Ireland** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
14. **Italy** Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale/
Directorate for development cooperation
Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo – Italian
International Development Cooperation Agency (AICS)
15. **Lithuania** Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|--|
| 16. | Luxembourg | Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs/ Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs |
| 17. | Malta | Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs |
| 18. | Poland | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 19. | Portugal | Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ Camões - Institute for Cooperation and Language |
| 20. | Slovakia | Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs |
| 21. | Slovenia | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 22. | Spain | Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, UE y Cooperación/ Unidad de Igualdad/ Dirección General de Políticas para el Desarrollo Sostenible
Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID) |
| 23. | Sweden | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |

4. List of Respondents – International Organisations

1. Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)
2. International Labour Organisation (ILO)
3. International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC/ILO)
4. Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
5. The Red Cross EU Office
6. United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
7. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
8. United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)
9. United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
10. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
11. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
12. United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
13. World Trade Organisation (WTO)
14. (International Organization for Migration (IOM) - contributed to the joint UN Brussels position paper)
15. (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) - contributed to the joint UN Brussels position paper)
16. (UN Women - contributed to the joint UN Brussels position paper)
17. (United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) - contributed to the joint UN Brussels position paper)
18. (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - contributed to the joint UN Brussels position paper)
19. (United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office (UNOCT) - contributed to the joint UN Brussels position paper)
20. (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - contributed to the joint UN Brussels position paper)
21. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - contributed to the joint UN Brussels position paper)

5. List of Respondents – Others

1. Association Internationale des Maires Francophones (AIMF)
2. EQUALS Global Partnership (EQUALS)

3. International Land Coalition (ILC)
4. KfW Development Bank (Germany)
5. PLATFORMA - European platform of local and regional authorities for development (CCRE/ CEMR)

**Annex 2 Questionnaire for the targeted consultation on the EU external
action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III 2021 – 2025**

Targeted consultation on the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III 2021 - 2025

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Targeted consultation on the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III - 2021-2025

This survey is available in English, French and Spanish (see drop down menu on the right-hand side bar). You can reply in any of these three languages.

The consultation will be open between 2 April and 4 May 2020.

Contact: EuropeAid-TARGETTED-CONSULTATION-GAP3@ec.europa.eu

Privacy statement on the processing and the protection of your personal data.

[Targeted consultations privacy statement - GAP III.pdf](#)

I have viewed and understand the privacy statement on the processing and the protection of personal data.

* Organisation contributing to the consultation

Please provide contact information

* Email

* Do you consent that the name of your organisation or institution be made public in the list of contributors to this targeted consultation?

Yes

No

I am giving my contribution as:

- Non-governmental organization
- Public authority
- International organization
- Other

Scope of your organization's activity:

- Local
- National
- Regional
- International

Organization's size:

- Micro (1 – 9 employees)
- Small (10 – 45 employees)
- Medium (46 – 250 employees)
- Large (250 or more employees)

Does your organization have a gender equality strategy?

- Yes
- No

Give a concise description of the gender strategy, if applicable, such as title, period covered, url, etc.

3000 character(s) maximum

EU's added value

Question 1. With regard to the EU's promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide, how would you assess the EU added value for the following?

	Insignificant	Limited	Significant	Predominant	I don't know
Gender equality and human rights are EU founding values, allowing the EU to lead by example and commitment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EU contributes with the influence of joint positions in global and regional fora (such as the UN, AU, NATO, OSCE and ASEAN)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The EU promotes multilateralism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EU has regular political dialogue with partner country governments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EU has a diplomatic and structured operational presence around the world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EU is the world's largest donor of development aid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EU supports civil society in partner countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EU supports civil society in all international fora	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EU is an important trading partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EU is an important actor for global and regional peace and security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional remarks including any region or context specific focus

3000 character(s) maximum

Areas for action

Question 2. To advance gender equality and women's empowerment, in which areas should the EU prioritize action at a global level?

Please indicate the order of importance: 1 = most important; 10 = least important.

	Mark 1 to 10
Addressing gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms	
Participation and leadership, including civil and political rights	
Economic, social and cultural rights (including education, employment, social security, etc.)	
Sexual and reproductive health and rights for all	
Freedom from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and harassment	
Migration and forced displacement	
Climate change and environmental degradation (and its interconnectedness with gender equality and women's empowerment)	
Digital technology and Artificial intelligence (with their challenges and opportunities for gender equality and women's empowerment)	

Mention any other specific or critical area for action to take into consideration

3000 character(s) maximum

Indicate any regional or context specific area for action

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 3. To fight against gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

at most 3 choice(s)

- Integrate changes in gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms into education and training systems
- Work with media
- Raise awareness about gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms through culture and public communication campaigns
- Work in an inclusive way with communities, fully engaging men and boys as allies, in achieving gender equality and in challenging gender stereotypes and social norms at all levels and in all environments
- Collect and publish data on gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms through surveys and studies in partnership with key stakeholders
- Engage with religious and traditional leaders with a view to support joint actions for gender equality and women's rights
- Support women's participation in fields of study and occupations with historically low participation among girls and women (e.g.: science, technology, engineering, and mathematic (STEMs) and vice versa for boys and men (e.g. care sector, nursing, social care, etc)
- Support gender sensitive public policies, strategies and sector reforms

Other region or context specific issues that require consideration

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 4. To advance girls' and women's leadership and participation, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

at most 3 choice(s)

- Support legislation, policies and strategies that foster girls and women's leadership, participation and involvement in decision-making at communal, regional and country levels
- Assess and publish the impact on women, men and others of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels
- Take affirmative actions (e.g.: quotas) to enable girls' and women's participation to decision making
- Document and track violence against girls and women in elections
- Support the role of girls and women's civil society organisations in policymaking

- Support legislation, policies and strategies that enable women's leadership and participation in the private sector, including in the media
- Take action to prevent and criminalise / penalise violence against girls and women in politics and public life
- Provide leadership training and/or mentorship for women and girls
- Support civic education, awareness raising and mobilisation on gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels of education, starting from early infancy
- Support an adequate mandate within the governmental landscape of the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and support and adequate level of funding for them
- In recovery and reconstruction contexts ensure that women not only acquire skills and assets but exercise choice and control over opportunities and resources, and are able to shape economic decision making at all levels

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 5. To advance social rights*, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

* For a definition of social rights, see: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en

at most 3 choice(s)

- Ensure that all children complete free and quality primary and secondary education leading to expected and equitable learning outcomes for girls and boys
- Ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- Increase the number of girls and women who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- Ensure equal access for girls and women to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- Support an equal sharing of household and care responsibilities at home
- Support childcare, social care and long-term care services, also in support of child protection policies
- Extend labour rights and entitlements for informal workers
- Address the working conditions of domestic workers in line with the ILO Domestic Workers Convention 2011 (No. 189)
- Address harassment in the workplace in line with the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206)
- Address hunger and malnutrition among women and girls by paying attention to their diverse nutritional needs at all stages of life
- Support non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection
- Support access to other essential services, e.g. water, sanitation, renewable energy, etc

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 6. To advance economic rights, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

at most 3 choice(s)

- Support girls and women's equal rights to economic resources, including inheritance rights
- Support women's access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property as well as to natural resources
- Promote decent work agenda, labour rights and working conditions, across all sectors, both formal and informal
- Work on the recognition of unpaid work, including domestic work
- Support women's access to finance and financial services, including credit
- Reduce labour market segregation and enhance job creation for women
- Promote women's entrepreneurship through skills and business development services
- Ensure equal remuneration for work of equal value in line with the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 7. To advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

at most 3 choice(s)

- Position sexual and reproductive health rights at the centre of social protection, health and education policies and programmes
- Enhance access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education
- Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio
- Reduce selective gender/son preferences and infanticides
- Promote awareness campaigns on negative health impacts of harmful cultural practices and others (e.g.: female genital mutilation, early child marriages, child abuse, etc.)

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 8. To eliminate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

at most 3 choice(s)

- Work on prevention, including by tackling inequalities, gender stereotypes and discrimination
- Support legislative measures to penalise all sexual and gender-based violence and to protect victims
- Develop data collection and research aimed at identifying the root causes, prevalence, consequences or costs of sexual and gender-based violence in different contexts: family, community, educational facilities, workplace, sport, politics, public life, and online
- Train and build capacities of professionals, such as support service providers, healthcare and criminal justice professionals
- Strengthen the access to quality support services for victims/ survivors of violence, particularly sexual and gender-based violence
- Support the capacity and actions of civil society involved in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence
- Facilitate access to justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence and more broadly of gender-based discrimination
- Support/ develop information and awareness-raising campaigns
- Address violence and harassment in the world of work

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 9. To address migration and forced displacement from a perspective of gender equality and women's empowerment, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

at most 3 choice(s)

- Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for migrant workers, in particular women migrants
- Offer opportunities of quality education and training to migrant girls and women
- Promote and support entrepreneurship among migrant girls and women
- Ensure access to health care irrespective of migration status
- Prevent and respond to violence, particularly sexual- and gender-based violence (including trafficking, in the forms of forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, and exploitation) along migratory routes and in refugee camps and internally displaced persons camps
- Ensure access to basic services to women, children and adolescents in refugee camps and internally displaced persons camps
- Support migrant workers' organisations, and in particular girls and women migrants' organisations

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 10. In the area of environmental protection and climate change, adaptation and mitigation, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

at most 3 choice(s)

- Promote the participation, influence and leadership of girls and women, as well as of marginalised groups, in decision-making on environmental and climate change issues, including financial decision-making
- Engage and consult with girls and women's civil society organizations on actions and projects for environmental protection and climate change, adaptation and mitigation
- Mainstream a gender perspective into environmental, climate change and disaster risk reduction policies including through use of gender analysis to inform formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all environment and climate change, adaptation and mitigation actions/projects
- Strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters
- Enhance protection and access to justice for environmental defenders
- Acknowledge and integrate rural girls, women and indigenous peoples' knowledge in environmental management, extension programmes and conservation planning
- Acknowledge and promote girls and women's contribution to research and development, including for sustainable human settlements
- Acknowledge the different roles of girls/women and boys/men as producers and consumers
- Acknowledge and actively promote the diverse roles women play as educators and knowledge agents at household, community and national levels
- Promote women's access to food security, sustainable farming practices and renewable sources of energy

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 11. To strengthen the gender perspective and women's empowerment in the digital and artificial intelligence field and through it, what should be prioritised and could be expected to have the greatest impact?

at most 3 choice(s)

- Increase the access to and use of technology, including expanding rural access, including by increasing affordability and boosting digital literacy for women and girls
- Promote a gender transformative approach in the field of Artificial Intelligence in order to promote girls and women's perspectives and sensibility
- Address the gender inequality related risks and challenges emerging from the use of artificial intelligence
- Support women and girls' access to and use of digital finance
- Protect women and girls against online abuse, violence and harassment
- Address discriminatory gender stereotypes and promote women's employment in the tech sector
- Support digital skills at all levels of education and training
- Promote gender sensitive digital infrastructure planning
- Include girls and women in the design of digital content and digital technologies

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 12. To accelerate the implementation of the EU policy framework on Women, Peace and Security, which objectives/actions have the greatest impact to contribute to gender equality and women's rights and empowerment in the short to medium term?

- Ensure that humanitarian responses address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls, boys, men of all ages
- Support state Institutions including Security Sector reforms with capacity building as well as with the establishment of internal mechanisms to prevent and address Human Rights violations and the meaningful participation of women and a systematic integration of a gender perspective
- Enhance women's leadership and participation in all policy-making decisions/processes in all areas related to peace and security (from conflict prevention and conflict resolution to mediation, peace-negotiations, reconstruction/rehabilitation and peacebuilding)
- Systematically mainstream a gender perspective, as an integral part, in all EU planning and action related to peace and security
- Promote the prevention, monitoring and reporting of conflict-related human rights violations (including sexual and gender based violence) particularly against women and girls and the promotion of zero-tolerance/full accountability policies to end impunity and to bring perpetrators of such crimes to justice and to ensure safe and quality services for survivors
- Play an active role, globally, regionally, nationally and locally, throughout the conflict-cycle through the WPS approach
- Ensure access to education, health services, employment and nutrition for women and girls throughout the conflict-cycle (from conflict prevention and conflict resolution to mediation, peace-negotiations, reconstruction/rehabilitation and peacebuilding)
- Support all efforts for the protection of girls and women activists, women Human Rights defenders, peacemakers and peacebuilders
- Promote initiatives that strengthen the links across the different objectives for the implementation of the WPS Agenda (among others, in relief and recovery, rehabilitation, resettlement, reintegration, reconstruction and sustainable development policies, including gender mainstreaming in humanitarian and development aid and in emergency assistance)

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 13. What types of actions should the EU support to mitigate the gender-differentiated impact of global crisis notably affecting health such as the COVID-19 pandemic?

at most 3 choice(s)

- Continue to collect, analyse data and to take relevant measures regarding the gender-differentiated impact on girls and boys, women and men
- Adherence to WHO guidelines in antenatal care and delivery for pregnant women affected by COVID-19
-

Continue to collect, analyse data and to take relevant measures regarding the impact on girls and women of an inadequate access to reproductive and sexual health and rights

- Continue to collect, analyse data and to take relevant preventive and protective measures regarding the largest risk that women incur (being predominant workers in the following sectors: health, care, other indispensable services but also informal sector and micro/ small businesses while bearing the care burden when confinement is required)
- Continue to collect, analyse data and to take relevant measures regarding the gender-differentiated impact on the economy and the responses to alleviate the economic hardship, including the impact on the particularly vulnerable parts of the economy, such as low income women and women led micro, small and medium enterprises
- Study and provide solutions to tackle the marked increase in sexual and gender-based violence which occur during the exceptional restraining conditions necessary in times of pandemic crisis
- Make sure that women are included in decision making for outbreak preparedness and response at all the stages of the pandemic crisis

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Means for action

Question 14. How should intersectionality be addressed in the implementation of the GAP III ?

3000 character(s) maximum

See A Union of Equality: [Gender equality strategy 2020-2025](#)

EIGE [defines 'intersectionality'](#) as an “analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination”.

According to Article 10 TFEU, when “defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation”.

Question 15. Which concrete actions could the GAP III include to strengthen gender mainstreaming in EU external action?

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 16. What could make GAP III more relevant, and would maximise its impact, at country /local level at the partner countries?

3000 character(s) maximum

Question 17. How could the EU improve its reporting and better communicate on the GAP III and its results?

5000 character(s) maximum

Question 18. In addition to gender mainstreaming and support to specific projects that implement the GAP III priorities, which of the following would be the most effective for advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment?

Please indicate the order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.

	Mark 1 to 10
High-level bilateral and multilateral political dialogue and diplomacy	
Regular exchanges at operational level with partners	
Integration of GAP III priorities and objectives in the joint programming exercise with EU Member States	
Multi-stakeholder partnerships for joint actions	
Close dialogue and engagement with civil society, including girls and women's organisations, as well as Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women empowerment	
Close dialogue and engagement with youth organisations	
Communication and campaigns	
Support to gender budgeting	
Gender responsive leadership among EU political leaders and management	
Gender transformative projects/ flagships	
Support the accountability on gender equality and women’s empowerment (e.g. parliamentary scrutiny, CSO monitoring, etc)	

Other remarks / any region or context specific priorities:

3000 character(s) maximum

Closing remarks and position paper

Please, share any additional issue or recommendation.

5000 character(s) maximum

To conclude, you can upload here a position paper of your organization on GAP III; please limit the length of the paper to two pages.

The maximum file size is 1 MB

Annex 3 Position papers submitted for the online targeted consultation

1. Position papers submitted by non-governmental organizations

1. Action for Churches Together (ACT) Alliance EU
2. British Council
3. Center for Reproductive Rights
4. CONCORD Europe European confederation of Relief and Development NGOs
5. Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung (DSW)/ Youth Can jointly with International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF-EN)
6. End FGM European Network
7. European Institute of Peace (EIP)
8. European Partnership for Democracy
9. European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)
10. Free Press Unlimited
11. International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)
12. The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) - Europe
13. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
14. Jubileo Sur/Americas
15. Kosovo Women's Network
16. Kvinna til kvinna
17. Lumos Foundation
18. People in Need
19. Plan International
20. Saferworld
21. Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)
22. Women Environmental Programme (WEP)
23. Women in Africa Initiative (WIA)
24. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF/FeDDAF)

2. Position papers submitted by EU Member States' Institutions

1. France
2. Germany
3. Ireland
4. Sweden and France: Joint non-paper

3. Position papers submitted by International Organisations

1. Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)
2. International Labour Organisation (ILO)
3. The Red Cross - EU Office
4. United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
6. United Nations Brussels (Joint submission: FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNCDF, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCT, UNODC, UN Women)

4. Position papers submitted by entities classified as "Other" meaning public-private partnerships, local associations of public entities, mixed coalitions, etc

1. EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age
2. PLATFORMA Local and regional international action

1. Position papers submitted by non-governmental organizations

1. Action for Churches Together (ACT) Alliance EU
2. British Council
3. Center for Reproductive Rights
4. CONCORD Europe European confederation of Relief and Development NGOs
5. Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung (DSW)/ Youth Can jointly with International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF-EN)
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Targeted consultation on the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III - 2021-2025

Submission by ACT Alliance EU

EU Added Value

The EU plays an important leadership role in promoting gender equality globally and in relation to the implementation of international human rights and sustainable development frameworks. We would suggest that an important added value could be the potential for GAP III to promote gender appropriate actions and focus across sectors, for example in relation to EU trade policy, migration policy and other aspects of external action beyond development in which the achievement of women's rights and gender equality are central. In this way, the GAP III could become an important document for guiding the contributions of EU Member States to the Sustainable Development Goals, the imperative to 'leave no-one behind', and the other UN agreements and frameworks that underpin them, including the Addis Ababa Agenda, and the Paris agreement.

The EU also plays a crucial role linking internally-focused strategies such as the Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025 with the externally facing Strategic Framework for Gender Equality Action. From an external perspective, we believe the GAP III can strengthen some gaps that exist in the GES 2020-2025 by: (i) going beyond binary language (men-women/boys-girls); (ii) giving a stronger focus to social, cultural and economic rights; (iii) focusing on equal outcomes rather than equal opportunities; (iv) expanding the work on GBV to encompass the wider definition of violence set out by CEDAW which includes structural violence; and (v) promoting a 'gender equal economy' that not only supports structural reforms to labour markets but also challenges gendered macroeconomic policies that are responsible for 'keeping people behind'.

Priorities for action at global level

The GAP III should prioritise:

- The rights and inclusion of the most marginalised women facing multiple and intersecting barriers to their rights and development outcomes. To develop this priority, the GAP III should strengthen its analysis and data on who are these women (and girls), where they are located, the nature of exclusion and power inequalities that affect them, and who the key stakeholders are maintaining these power structures, thus identifying the most fruitful ways to work for structural changes and open dialogue.
- Macroeconomic policy to create a 'gender equal economy' - i.e. support women's economic rights and economic (self-)empowerment. Particularly important are progressive and accountable tax and fiscal policies (including gender responsive budgeting) that support women's economic (self-)empowerment and finance measures to address the disproportionate burden of unpaid care borne by women and girls, including strengthened provision of public services and infrastructure that support this.
- Support for women's rights and organisations and their inclusion in consultations and decision-making at all levels. It is important for EU Delegations and Member States' embassies to engage with organisations representing women from the most marginalised groups in their specific contexts and to promote action that addresses the intersecting barriers marginalised women face.
- The needs of women and girls affected by conflict and displacement must be addressed and these women included in decision making processes, in particular in peace negotiations and transition out of conflict; but also in all aspects of

development contributing to a sustainable peace, including to develop comprehensive approaches to address violence against women and girls, address economic inequalities and promote normative change.

- Sexual and reproductive health rights must be the central part of health-related activities because of their gendered elements.
- Gender just trade policies and regulation of international investment to ensure that trade and investment contribute to the progressive realisation of human rights and do no harm by exploiting or exacerbating gender or other inequalities or having an adverse impact in ways disproportionately felt by women, girls and marginalised genders. The GAP III could provide for mandatory gender sensitive-human rights due diligence to be applied to business and human rights norms (voluntary and binding), including bilateral trade and investment agreements.
- Gender-appropriate responses to climate change, including financing mechanisms that are both transparent and accessible to climate vulnerable communities and women's rights organisations.

Means for action

- The GAP III could develop a much stronger focus on understanding and responding to the diverse contexts of vulnerability and inequality experienced by marginalised women and girls and other marginalised genders, supported by strong evidence (qualitative as well as quantitative) and disaggregated data. In this, a stronger focus on normative change will be needed.
- The GAP III should include indicators for success that measure the EUs contribution towards progressing gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goals and the principle of 'leave no-one behind'. This could include specific indicators based on key frameworks such as the CEDAW (specially looking at structural violence and how that ties into the structural reform support programme) and the Istanbul Convention (specially looking at how this tied into the Spotlight Initiative).
- Greater investment in data disaggregation and in supporting partner countries to improve the availability of reliable data disaggregated as relevant in national contexts (i.e. to make visible and monitor horizontal inequalities such as those associated with caste, ethnicity, or migratory status) as provided for under SDG 17.18, will be critical to improve the focus on the most marginalised individuals and groups. It will be important to also use this data more widely in communications and awareness-raising and ensure data is visible to citizens as well as decision making bodies.
- In response to the erosion of civil society space and the disproportionate impacts of this on rights of women and other marginalised gender, actions should seek to create an enabling environment for a representative cross-section of civil society, promote civic and political rights and rights to freedom of association and assembly. See: <https://actalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CONCORD-Policy-paper-on-civic-space-March-2018.pdf>
- Greater investment in development cooperation that tackles religious fundamentalism and that fosters a greater integration between women's rights activists/movements and faith-based leaders/organisations.
- Greater recognition of the contributions and perspectives of faith-based organisations in building dialogues on critical issues of gender equality.
- We support the position of CONCORD that the GAP III should include the following funding commitments for EU institutions and Member States: 85% of ODA should go to programmes having gender as a significant (G1) or as a principal objective (G2). Within this broader commitment, there should be a target of 20% of ODA going to programmes having gender equality as a principal objective (G2). See: <https://>

[concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/
CONCORD_Messages_GAP3_Oct2019.pdf](https://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CONCORD_Messages_GAP3_Oct2019.pdf)

Position Paper on

EU Gender Action Plan III

30 April 2020

The British Council strongly welcomes the development of a Gender Action Plan III.

The British Council delivers a range of programmes to meet some of the specific needs of women and girls, by **creating opportunities for dialogue to influence policies that benefit women and girls**; working with partners to **promote access and opportunities for women and girls**; and **building the skills and confidence of women and girls** to achieve their potential and have **more influence over decisions** affecting their lives.

The British Council takes a holistic approach – individually, institutionally and systemically- to addressing gender inequality. We draw on a wealth of creative ways to promote the agenda of change. Our **work in the arts can challenge old and outmoded gender stereotypes and build a renewed vision of what is possible**. Education work can be used to **strengthen capacity** for reflection and critical thinking. The **networks across civil society can be engaged to bring different sections of society together** for debate and discussion and in influencing **development of policy that creates conducive environment** for positive change.

We welcome the fact that the EU supports a multi-pronged approach to Gender and we would welcome a more explicit focus on Gender under all EU funding programmes (mainstreaming). We would however also like to see more financial support made available in the future to **targeted gender actions** and we recommend four priority areas for EU support under the GAP III:

- **Participation and leadership in decision-making including in conflict and peacebuilding:** Create opportunities for women's leadership in key sectors; strengthen women's voice/influence by working with women's organisations, professional bodies, arts and cultural organisations, and other CSOs. Women's participation in peacebuilding is also relevant.
- **Gender and education:** Address gender barriers to accessing education, gender equality in leadership and teaching practice. Promote women and girls' participation in under-represented subjects.
- **Women's economic empowerment:** Support opportunities for women's participation and leadership in the economy, by developing skills for employment and enterprise, reduce

barriers to participation, particularly in social and creative enterprise, and promote women's participation in under-represented sectors.

- **Addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG):** Support change in attitudes and behaviours among girls, boys, men and women in order to prevent VAWG, both in communities and within institutions.

The British Council's cultural relations approach - which aims at enhancing intercultural dialogue and bringing about mutual benefits connected to prosperity, security and stability - is a powerful vehicle for promoting gender equality. In the GAP III, **we would like to see recognition of the fact that gender inequality is deeply contextual and multi-layered**, thus requiring effective collaborations built on trust. A **long-term approach must be supported** as this is needed to build long-term partnerships, build deep knowledge of the countries and to support locally led initiatives for change.

In terms of beneficiaries of EU support, the GAP III should explicitly refer to the **importance of working with girls (and not just adult women)** to ensure the foundations of empowerment are developed from a young age. Girls are part of a wider family, kin and cultural network, and to achieve transformational empowerment and gender equity, it is also essential to work with boys (and men), and the wider community.

The development of the GAP III is an opportunity to state more clearly the **importance of increased collaboration across European partners** on gender equality, with corresponding funds for sharing practice and innovation made available.

Recommendations regarding the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III 2021-2025

1 May 2020

The Center for Reproductive Rights welcomes the opportunity to provide input and recommendations regarding the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III for 2021-2025.

The realization of gender equality across the world can only be achieved if sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are guaranteed to everyone everywhere. The EU should therefore continue to give high priority to advancing SRHR across the world as part of its efforts to promote gender equality globally. The following sets out a number of recommendations for how the EU could strengthen its actions, programmes, and internal capacity on SRHR in the GAP III.

Prioritizing SRHR as essential for achieving gender equality around the world

Across the world challenges and shortcomings in fulfilling SRHR and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals persist. In many countries women face pervasive violations of SRHR including high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity, unsafe abortion, unmet need for contraception, and lack of respect for women's free and informed consent. A large number of countries in the global south continue to criminalize and place severe restrictions on access to safe and legal abortion exposing women to grave risks and increased rates of maternal mortality.

GAP III should support efforts to ensure that laws and policies in the area of SRHR are in line with international human rights standards and public health recommendations. It should continue to give a high priority to full implementation of the SDGs and in particular SDG 5 and SDG 16 and its objectives and indicators on SRHR should reflect human rights law and standards, align with the SDG indicators to ensure that all persons can effectively exercise and enjoy SRHR.

Under GAP III the EU should also increase its financial support to SRHR activities and should provide dedicated funding to civil society organisations working to advance gender equality and SRHR.

Furthermore, the EU should fully integrate and give high priority to gender equality and SRHR in all aspects of its diplomacy with third countries and other entities and address SRHR issues and concerns and acknowledge positive developments, achievements and progress that advance gender equality and SRHR:

- **Country strategies:** The EU's country strategies on human rights and democracy, where relevant, should address SRHR issues and challenges that the third country may be facing. These strategies should be developed in consultation with local civil society working on gender equality and SRHR.
- **Human rights and political dialogues:** The EU should systematically and coherently address gender equality and SRHR issues and concerns during all human rights dialogues with third countries and as relevant also during other political dialogues with third countries and regional organisations.

- **EU delegations** across the world should monitor the status of SRHR in third countries and identify progress as well as regression and the level of respect for international human rights law and standards. EU delegations should raise concerns regarding violations of SRHR with relevant authorities in third countries.
- **Reporting:** The EU's annual reports on human rights and democracy in the world should include a dedicated section addressing SRHR developments and outlining the EU's responses and activities to promote SRHR. Annual implementation reports under GAP III should continue to have annexes on 'Sexual and reproductive health and rights in EU external action', and track how the EU is addressing these issues.

Supporting women human rights defenders and civil society working on SRHR

Women human rights defenders and their organisations, in particular those working to advance SRHR, are increasingly experiencing threats and risks and in many countries the space for civil society activities is shrinking, with women's rights and SRHR organisations increasingly targeted and their situation ever more precarious. In light of this it is critical that GAP III gives a high priority to supporting women human rights defenders and civil society organisations working in the area of SRHR.

GAP III should establish an early warning mechanism to monitor legislative proposals and other state actions that limit the ability of civil society working on gender equality and SRHR to operate freely and effectively. It should also address the growing backlash against gender equality and SRHR and set out a series of strategic actions for strengthened EU responses to attempts to weaken or roll back protections and entitlements in the area of SRHR. Furthermore, the EU should consult regularly with civil society in relation to the development, implementation and evaluation of all its activities related to gender equality and SRHR under GAP III.

Addressing SRHR needs in the context of conflict and crises

Across the world a growing number of women are affected by conflict and humanitarian emergencies. GAP III should ensure that the EU continues to give priority to SRHR in conflict and crisis contexts, in particular ensuring access to timely and quality maternal health care, contraception, safe abortion care, and post-abortion services. It should also support efforts towards ensuring access to justice and redress for sexual and reproductive rights violations and violations stemming from sexual violence

Strengthening internal knowledge and capacity

The EU should ensure that all relevant staff has adequate knowledge, expertise and capacity to address gender equality and SRHR issues. In this regard it should ensure that all relevant staff receive regular training on gender equality and specific training on SRHR issues and relevant developments in human rights law and standards. In particular the EU should increase the capacity within the EEAS and in EU missions to promote gender equality and SRHR under GAP III.

The Center for Reproductive Rights is an international human rights non-governmental organisation working to advance gender equality and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights around the world. The Center conducts fact finding, legal and policy advocacy, litigation, and capacity building and empowerment initiatives.

Messages on EU Gender Action Plan III

October 2019

Background

The [current EU Gender Action Plan](#) (II, “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020”) is soon coming to an end. To ensure that the EU keeps gender as a top priority in all its external action, CONCORD is calling on the EU to adopt a new Gender Action Plan (III).

Messages

Continue the good work of GAP II

- A new GAP (III) should build and expand on the path laid out in the current GAP (II). As there is a lot of momentum and ownership, and given the **strong content of the GAP 2016-2020**, there should be a high level of alignment between GAP II and GAP III. The new GAP should build on activities and priorities from GAP II.
- A new GAP (III) should continue with its work on institutional and cultural shift and the **3-pronged approach**, where the EU uses **political dialogue, targeted activities and gender mainstreaming** to bring about the transformation of gender relations.
- The GAP III should continue to focus on **all aspects of EU external action**, and not only on development policies, and this at all stages, including implementation and reporting. **Gender must be mainstreamed in all sectors**, including in non-social sectors such as trade, energy, agriculture and migration.

Strengthen the work in GAP III

- To put gender equality on the top of the agenda, and acknowledging that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development will only be achieved if SDG 5 on gender equality and gender targets under other Goals are achieved, the EU needs to demonstrate its commitment at the highest level. Therefore, the next GAP **should be an official Communication**, rather than a Staff Working Document. This would require inter-institutional dialogues and send a strong message to all relevant stakeholders, particularly to EU delegations. It should also be endorsed again by the Member States through Council Conclusions, so that it commits both Member States and EU institutions.
- A new GAP (III) should underline the importance of a more systematic inclusion of gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights in **political dialogue** with partner countries, and notably be systematically included in human rights dialogue and

dialogue on social sectors and beyond. In this regard, commitment to the GAP at the highest political levels must be increased.

- The next GAP should recognise the **importance of involving CSOs** at all levels of consultation, implementation and reporting of the GAP, and to resource them in order to enable them to do so. It is crucial to have women's and girls' rights and feminist organisations at local, national and regional and international level as partners. Especially EU Delegations and Member States' Embassies should be engaging local feminist and women's rights organisations, as this is instrumental to creating ownership and ensuring impact in partner countries. The responsibility to involve these CSOs should not fall in between responsibilities of the CSO focal point and the gender focal point.
- EU delegations should strengthen their **role as coordinator** of various stakeholders and partners to increase the impact of the new GAP.
- The GAP III should **make more consistent references to girls** as well as women throughout its different thematic areas. This goes beyond simply adding "girls" wherever "women" are mentioned: the specific barriers and challenges girls face as well as the proposed actions to overcome them should be made explicit.
- A new GAP should be explicitly **linked to and aligned with the EU's Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security**.
- Gender-sensitive humanitarian aid is essential for effective humanitarian response, as emergencies impact differently on men and women, boys and girls--and women have an essential role to play in response. However, humanitarian aid was only marginally included in GAP 2. Rectifying this, **activities to increase gender equality in emergencies must be included in every pillar of the next GAP**.
- The adoption of a GAP III is an opportunity to **go further and deeper** in some areas crucial for the realisation of women's and girls equal rights in partner countries. For example, a much stronger focus on **the impact of macroeconomic policies on women's rights and gender equality** should be applied.
- The GAP III should go further in strengthening its promotion of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). To strengthen the implementation and the monitoring of this engagement, the GAP III should **adopt the comprehensive Gutmacher-Lancet Commission definition of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**.
- While lightly addressed in GAP II, a new GAP needs to go further to **ensure that trade policies are gender-just**. A gender-just trade policy goes much beyond the inclusion of a gender chapter or provision in trade agreements. **It implies undertaking ex-ante and ex-post gendered human rights impact analyses of trade agreements**, and ensuring that trade agreements do not exacerbate existing inequalities or create new ones.



- An important step to increase gender justice would be to **focus on the most marginalised women and girls and those facing intersecting discriminations**.
- The GAP III should acknowledge the adverse impact on women's and girls' rights of the increasing **privatisation of public services**, driven by trade, investment, austerity policies and public-backed private finance towards developing countries.
- GAP II has not addressed the issue of **taxation** in spite of the fact that tax is central to women's and girls' rights. How much tax is raised as well as how it is raised and spent matter enormously for gender equity and should there be a part of the GAP III. Women tend to rely more on public services, including for reproductive health and to reduce their unpaid care work, so proper resourcing for gender-responsive public services is of key concern. Also, while most of tax legislation might look gender-neutral on paper, because of women's particular income, ownership and spending patterns, tax law such as on VAT can carry an implicit bias, often putting a disproportionate burden of contributions on women.
- Despite having an indicator around the **inclusion of women in climate change decision making processes**, this activity has been prioritised least throughout GAP 2 and it should receive more attention under GAP 3. This is crucial as women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change, notably due to persistent cultural and structural gender inequalities. The next GAP should make clear links to the Paris Agreement and also commit to ensure access of women's organisations to international climate funds.

Pre-conditions for impactful GAP implementation:

- The next GAP should focus on **impact for women and girls on the ground**. Therefore all programmes that the EU funds should be based on an analysis of the current situation of women and girls, and the **identification of priority areas of intervention in consultation with women's rights groups themselves**.
- The GAP III should continue on the tracks of the gender transformative vision of GAP II and **put addressing unequal structures and power relations, gender norms, gender-based discrimination and supporting girls and women's agency at its centre**, included in all thematic objectives and supported with indicators and activities. Addressing discrimination is not optional.
- The GAP III should reaffirm that 85% of new programmes should have gender as a significant or principal objective (OECD gender marker 1 or 2). Within this target, 20% of programmes should have gender as a principal objective.
- But achieving gender equality and the objectives of the GAP will only be possible with adequate funding. Therefore we ask that the GAP III includes the following funding commitments for EU institutions and Member States: 85% of ODA should go to programmes having gender as a significant (G1) or as a principal objective (G2). Within this broader commitment, there should be a target of 20% of ODA going to



programmes having gender equality as a principal objective (G2). In our view, the EU and Member States must make efforts to ensure that *all* funding lines to developing countries are at least gender-sensitive, and where possible gender-transformative.

- To ensure a more impactful implementation of the GAP and beyond, the EU should (re)commit to **gender budgeting**. This commitment should include concrete steps and achievements.
- In terms of human resources, there is also a need to **increase in house capacity on gender equality**:
 - Provide training and ensure knowledge building so that there is a focus on gender equality at every stage of the programme cycle.
 - Gender focal points must be appointed in every delegation.
 - But implementation is not just a responsibility of gender focal points. The GAP needs to be fully implemented by all actors, including those at a senior level. To ensure this actually happens, implementing the GAP must be part of job descriptions and appraisals.

On monitoring and evaluation:

- The GAP should be accompanied by **clear, measurable, time-bound indicators of success, including an allocation of responsibility for different actors** – European Commission and Member States - and with clear objectives in each partner country, developed with the partner country and local women's CSOs, which are integrated in political dialogue and programming.
- Indicators and M&E systems should moreover:
 - **be in line with**, but not limited to, **the SDGs** and can also be complemented by EU specific indicators based on international human rights standards, such as CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention, the IPCD program of action and its follow up conferences, the EU Strategic Approach to WPS and the relevant ILO conventions (e.g. the recently adopted ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the world of work)
 - include both **quantitative indicators and qualitative indicators** such as inclusive monitoring and evaluation. This implies not just measuring the number of people that participate in an activity, but also evaluating the transformative potential/impact of that activity (e.g. in terms of changing mindsets related to gender roles).
 - be aligned with the **EU Development and Cooperation Results Framework**.
- The EU must invest more in collecting **disaggregated data** and in supporting partner countries to do so, in order to know whether the results of interventions are having a positive impact on those furthest behind. In line with SDG target 17.18, data should be disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location



- To facilitate the annual reporting on the GAP, it should be aligned with **existing reporting structures** in the EUDs.
- To ensure an increase in correct reporting, staff must be guided in how to use and report on GAP indicators and OECD **Gender markers**.
- To enhance transparency in reporting on the GAP, both **Member States' and EU delegations' contributions should be made public**. Member States should be encouraged to report more systematically their actions under the GAP and their good practices.

Gender Action Plan III: a unique opportunity to achieve Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all

The European Commission is expected to publish its new Gender Action Plan (GAP III) in October 2020. The current GAP II, through its 3-pronged approach and the institutional culture shift pillar, has greatly contributed to promote gender equality in EU external policies, in particular by giving impulse to an organizational change. However, more remains to be done to effectively achieve gender equality globally, especially with the impact of COVID 19 on women and girls (see separate box). In this context, prioritising sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is particularly important.

Why are SRHR important for gender equality?

Gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women will not be possible without the realisation of SRHR. SRHR services are critical for women and girls to have healthy lives, to address violence and power relations in their lives, to be free to participate in social, economic and political life, and to freely make decisions governing their bodies. Barriers in access to services and information, especially for women and girls living in poverty, impact on their ability to exercise free choice and participate meaningfully across social, economic and political life. SRH services and information about sexuality are crucial to ensure the fulfilment of the right of sexual self-determination for everyone, without discrimination on the basis of sexual expression, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics. For gender equality to be achieved, all women and girls must have universal access to quality services, information and education regarding SRHR.ⁱ

Women and girls' lives at stake

- About **830 women die** from pregnancy- or childbirth-related complications every day.ⁱⁱ
- **214 million women** want to prevent or postpone pregnancy but do not have access to modern methods of contraception.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Around **25 million unsafe abortions** are estimated to take place every year.^{iv}
- **1 in 3 women** have experienced **physical or sexual violence**, mostly by an intimate partner.^v
- **49 million** additional women could have unmet need for modern contraceptives and **15 million additional unintended pregnancies** as a result of COVID 19 over the course of a year.^{vi}
- An estimated **2 million more cases of FGM** and **an estimated 13 million more child marriages** could take place over the next decade due to COVID 19 consequences.^{vii}
- **20% increase in domestic violence** is estimated due to the lockdown adopted as part of the COVID 19 response, including against women and girls.^{viii}

How could the GAP support the health and safety of women and girls?

There are no accurate figures to track EU's funding directed towards SRHR, but the 2018 implementation report of GAP II has shown that the number of actions related to SRHR had decreased overall. Some of these actions are large scale global actions, such as the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, with a significant amount of funding (500 million EUR in total). However, while this initiative is counted as an action towards SRHR, it also targets other gender-related topics. In addition, discrepancies between regions in the number of SRHR-related actions were also remarkable. In a context of backlash against women's and LGBTIQ+ rights globally, with reproductive freedom being often questioned, this lack of prioritisation of SRHR in GAP II is worrying and shows the need for a renewed commitment to SRHR in GAP III:

- ➔ As a matter of urgency, GAP III should put **addressing unequal structures and power relations, gender norms, gender-based discrimination and supporting girls and women's agency** at its centre. This means addressing the global backlash against women's rights, gender equality and reproductive freedom, and in particular promoting the achievement of SRHR for all.
- ➔ Achieving gender equality and the objectives of the GAP will only be possible with adequate funding. GAP III should therefore include a **commitment of 85% of ODA going to programmes having gender as a significant or main objective**. In addition to gender mainstreaming, there should be a **target of 20% of the programmes having gender equality as a principal objective**, to ensure that specific actions are also implemented. This should include specific actions on SRHR. These two targets should be included in the GAP III as well as in the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument to ensure that gender equality remains a priority in EU development funding.

Women and girls need a comprehensive and inclusive approach

SRHR encompass a broad range of rights and services that are essential for gender equality. A comprehensive approach to SRHR is therefore necessary to ensure the complete fulfilment of, and respect for every individual's SRHR. In addition, the adoption of an inclusive approach, considering every individual in their diversity, is also crucial to achieve SRHR and gender equality.

- ➔ GAP III should **build on and strengthen GAP II's Institutional Culture Shift**, ensuring that SRHR are fully included in the efforts to change the Commission services' and the EEAS' institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments on gender equality. This should be done by strengthening the role of gender focal points in EU Delegations (EUD), ensuring they are adequately resourced; by organising mandatory trainings on gender equality and SRHR for staff in EUD and by ensuring the implementation of a gender analysis on policies and programmes implemented.
- ➔ GAP III should **ensure coherence with the EU Gender Equality Strategy** approach and should aim to **achieve equality between women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, including in relation to their sex, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics**. It should affirm the commitment to leave no one behind and contribute to a gender equal world for everyone, regardless of one's sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- ➔ GAP III should go further in strengthening its promotion of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely on matters related to their sexuality and reproductive life and health. To strengthen the implementation and the monitoring of this engagement, **GAP III should adopt the comprehensive Gutmacher-Lancet Commission definition of SRHR**.^{ix} It should also allow for an increased investment in the full range of SRHR.
- ➔ GAP III should **involve men and boys as partners in programmes on SRHR, gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls**.
- ➔ In order to support women and girls in all contexts, GAP III should also contribute to **increase financial and political commitments of the EU and its Member States to SRHR in emergency settings**, as well as in regions and countries experiencing conflicts. A comprehensive set of SRHR services should be made available and accessible, free from discrimination, stigmatisation and violence, including for marginalised communities such as LGBTIQ+ people.

Young women and girls need a youth-friendly approach

Young people have specific needs in terms of SRHR. They need equitable, accessible, affordable and appropriate youth-friendly services, as well as access to comprehensive sexuality education. However, accessing such services is not a given. Too often, young people, particularly adolescent girls, face stigmatisation, discrimination or even coercion when trying to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. In addition, health facilities do not always provide SRHR services with a youth-friendly approach.

- ➔ GAP III should therefore **support the provision of equitable, accessible, affordable and appropriate youth-friendly SRHR services, free from stigmatisation and coercion**. GAP III should be particularly attentive to the need of young people most at risk of discrimination, including adolescent girls and young LGBTIQ+ people.
- ➔ GAP III should **support access to comprehensive sexuality education**, as a mean for young people to understand better their bodies and their rights, to counter harmful gender norms and stereotypes and to limit gender-based violence.

Women and girls need a strong civil society

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) serve the hard-to-reach and most at-risk groups. They have a key role to play in services delivery, community outreach, awareness raising and advocacy, when it comes to SRHR. However, SRHR and women's rights organisations have been facing a global backlash against women's rights and a shrinking space for civil society, making it harder for them to be heard and to reach the most vulnerable people.

- ➔ GAP III should **focus on impact for women and girls on the ground**. It should therefore be based on an analysis of the current situation of women and girls and the identification of priority areas of intervention in consultation with CSOs and community-led movements, including SRHR and local women's rights organisations.
- ➔ GAP III should **prioritise support for local women rights and SRHR organisations**, which have extensive experience and reach in delivering services to communities and to those who are often excluded from public health interventions, and in representing the voice of these communities in decision-making processes. CSOs, in particular local SRHR and women's rights organisations, should be seen as key partners in shaping and implementing policies and in delivering services.

Women and girls need a GAP III that supports achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

Achieving UHC is an important part of reaching gender equality through promoting women and girls' health, and SRHR for all. Every human being has a fundamental right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination, violence or coercion of any kind. SRHR are an integral part of the right to the highest attainable standard of health. GAP III should play a role in achieving UHC through:

- ➔ Ensuring that **Human Rights and gender equality are integrated into the design and implementation of UHC models and programmes**.
- ➔ **Recognising SRHR as an indispensable and integral component of UHC**, critical to the realisation of the right to health, sustainable development and a necessary precondition for gender equality and non-discrimination.
- ➔ Supporting the adoption and endorsement by partner countries of a **comprehensive affordable package of SRHR interventions to be delivered through UHC schemes**.

COVID-19 impact on women and girls access to care and treatment

Due to the de-prioritization, disruption and decrease in the provision of SRHR services as well as mobility restrictions and changes in health-seeking behaviour, the COVID-19 pandemic has strongly impacted access to SRHR, whereas SRH services are essential and lifesaving. The pandemic has increased SRHR-related needs for communities in lockdown and seen increases in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), unmet needs for contraception, compromised SRH services, and a lack of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). A recent study estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic could result in Low- and Middle-Income Countries in an additional 49 million women with an unmet need for modern contraceptives and an additional 15 million unintended pregnancies over the course of a year.^x Another study shows that for every 3 months the lockdown continues, an additional 15 million extra cases of gender-based violence are expected; 2 million Female Genital Mutilation cases and an additional 13 million child marriages that could have been averted may occur over the next decade due to the disruptions in programmes against FGM and early and forced marriages.^{xi}

Furthermore, the pandemic has exacerbated already existing inequalities for women and girls, and for groups already marginalized and experiencing discrimination, including refugees, migrants, people living with disabilities, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, and those living in conditions of extreme poverty. It is therefore crucial that the EU addresses SRHR during and in the aftermath of the pandemic through all means possible, including the GAP.



IPPF International
Planned Parenthood
Federation
European Network

ⁱ IPPF, Sexual and reproductive health and rights – the key to gender equality and women’s empowerment Report, https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/2020_gender_equality_report_web.pdf

ⁱⁱ WHO, 2018. Factsheet on maternal mortality. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>

ⁱⁱⁱ WHO, 2018. Factsheet on family planning and contraception. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/family-planning-contraception>

^{iv} WHO, 2018. Factsheet on preventing unsafe abortion. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/preventing-unsafe-abortion>

^v WHO, 2017. Factsheet on violence against women. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

^{vi} Guttmacher Institute, 2020. Estimates of the Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Sexual and Reproductive Health In Low- and Middle-Income Countries. https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article_files/4607320.pdf

^{vii} UNPFA Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage: <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/impact-covid-19-pandemic-family-planning-and-ending-gender-based-violence-female-genital>

^{viii} UNPFA Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage: <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/impact-covid-19-pandemic-family-planning-and-ending-gender-based-violence-female-genital>

^{ix} Guttmacher-Lancet Commission, Accelerate progress report, <https://www.guttmacher.org/guttmacher-lancet-commission/accelerate-progress-executive-summary>

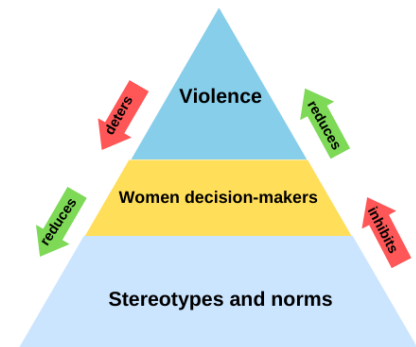
^x Guttmacher Institute, 2020. Estimates of the Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Sexual and Reproductive Health In Low- and Middle-Income Countries. https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article_files/4607320.pdf

^{xi} UNPFA Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage: <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/impact-covid-19-pandemic-family-planning-and-ending-gender-based-violence-female-genital>

GAP III: supporting women in decision-making

As a democracy support network, the European Partnership for Democracy and its members believe the EU plays an important role globally in the advancement of gender equality. The EU Gender Action Plan II 2016-2020 (GAP II) paved the way for EU action on women's voice and participation, with its focus on political and civic rights. The Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025 (GAP III) will need to build on these efforts and focus on some of the issues overlooked in the GAP II, including the role of women in media, political parties, parliaments and democratic processes.

Changing gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms is fundamental to any sustained change in favour of gender equality. When people associate leadership with male ideals and don't hold male politicians to the same standards to which they hold women, this undermines women's essential role in decision-making and political processes. This in turn mutes women's voices, experiences and perspectives in policy and legislation and deprioritises initiatives to protect women's basic rights, such as the right to live free from violence and harassment. The EU needs to focus its efforts on all three levels advancing and protecting women's indisputable role in decision-making, the need to dismantle damaging stereotypes and norms, and the urgency of removing violence and harassment from the lives of women and girls.



Social norms & stereotypes

Gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms form the basis for all limitations on women's equal access to full participation in public life, including political decision-making. Fighting these stereotypes and norms should therefore be fundamental to all objectives the GAP III aims to achieve. Treating gender inequality necessitates extending a hand to men and boys, who are frequently in a privileged position in terms of access to formal authority but who can also be important allies for equality.

Priority areas of action:

- **Collect and publish data on gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms**, supported by research on gender orders and relations.
- Support gender sensitive public policies, strategies and sector reforms.
- **Work in an inclusive way with communities** in achieving gender equality and in challenging gender stereotypes and social norms at all levels and in all environments
- **Raise awareness about gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms** through culture and public communication campaigns, and by integrating changes in education systems.
- **Involve political party leaders** to prioritise internal work to address gender norms and stereotypes which excludes women in political parties.
- **Work with media**, including by promoting inclusive spaces for women in social networks, advertisements, pop culture, and involving influential feminist figures; as well as promoting male gender championship.
- Increase support and lobbying for **advocacy campaigns** that champion the disruption of gender roles, gender orders through challenging, re-thinking, and re-branding conventional discourses of traditional masculine and feminine concepts.
- Promote **positive and healthy masculinity** over toxic masculinity by showcasing and marketing alternative male role models that are relatable in the local contexts dealt with.
- Foster a worldwide active **dialogue on different root causes** for why gender roles and patriarchal systems are in place, and the implications of this.

Women's leadership and participation

Women exercise leadership everyday often in informal settings where it is largely unrecognised. When it comes to positions of formal authority, women's representation decreases as the level of office increases. For example, only 24% of parliamentary seats in the world are occupied by women. Yet there is ample evidence of the benefits for the whole of society from women's political leadership. Advancing women's participation in decision-making means that policy and legislation are not only more inclusive and representative but are also more likely to lead to better outcomes for all of society.

Better policy: Women policy-makers are more likely to prioritise investments in health, education and infrastructure – key economic drivers that form the foundation of social infrastructure and determine a society's level of resilience to crises. Extensive research into the 2008 banking crisis and recent peace and security efforts demonstrated that higher levels of gender equality in decision-making lead to better risk management, greater resilience and more stable conflict transformation processes.

Stronger democratic institutions & processes: Women's political leadership also improves the credibility of democratic institutions and levels of citizen trust in government, which is perceived to be more responsive to constituency needs when

women are present. This can also result in better avenues for engagement with underrepresented groups and communities, who feel that elected women representatives are often better placed to handle their concerns. These gains also require regular engagement with civil society organisations, community groups and grassroots organisations, which often comes with women's political leadership.

Political parties hold a unique position in the functioning of democratic systems and therefore have an inherent responsibility to ensure their **internal structures are inclusive and representative**. This goes beyond the use of quota systems or women-only shortlists and requires parties to intervene in controlling the costs of competing in elections, to reform internal decision-making processes that are exclusive or unnecessarily combative, and to dismantle practices built around biases that favour men's economic activities and schedules. Political parties also have a responsibility to integrate women's voices in all policies areas, including those in which women are less likely to be represented such as finance, defence and security.

In the survey we identified a number of priority areas, including support to women CSOs, working with and through media, working through civic education, supporting legislation and strategies in the private sector, and creating spaces and networks for women. In addition to that, we recommend supporting political parties in the following 3 ways:

Priority areas of action for political parties:

- **Capacity-building and internal party reforms:** Combining technical support for institutional reforms in the parties, like party bylaws, quotas and women's wings, with direct support to women through training sessions and mentoring.
- **Gender audits:** The EU should support parties to carry out gender audits in order to improve party by-laws and increase the participation of women in the party structures and decide whether this is best done through women's wings, earmarked funding, or quotas.
- **Policy-development:** The EU should support political parties - in a non-partisan way - in capacity-building on developing policies for an enabling environment for gender equality and improvement of the women's living conditions, as well as their representation and influence in society. Such support may also raise awareness on the advantages of women's inclusion for political parties.

Ending gender-based violence & harassment

Access to justice: Victims of gender-based violence require special support and protection measures that help ensure their access to justice. It is critical that the EU ensures that measures to protect the fundamental rights of women and girls, such as the Victim's Rights Directive, are implemented fully throughout the EU. In addition to ensuring access to justice, it is critical the EU puts in place mechanisms to support victims and survivors from gender-based violence and their children with shelters, financial aid mechanisms, education and work.

Violence against women and girls in politics: In the last decade, there has been a marked increase in levels of political activity among women. While this is good news, it has also been met with higher levels of violence and backlash against this activism. As women's participation in politics grows, it is essential that steps are taken to ensure their right to effective representation and activism takes place in a safe and enabling environment.

In addition to considering legislation that criminalises acts or threats of violence, abuse and harassment against women in politics, political parties must take action to remove hostile and even violent practices from their political playbooks that go beyond the 'rough and tumble of politics'. Politics is meant to be an arena in which disagreement can and should take place, but democracies are designed to remove violence from this calculus, not foster it. Legislative and policy responses must consider violence and abuse in all its forms, including online violence.

Priority areas of action:

- Support **legislative measures** to penalise all sexual and gender-based violence and to protect victims;
- Develop **data collection and research** aimed at identifying the root causes, prevalence, consequences or costs of sexual and gender-based violence in different contexts;
- Support information and **awareness-raising** campaigns;
- Strengthen **access to justice and quality support services** for victims / survivors of violence;
- Address **violence and harassment in the world of work**, including politics as a place of work. In this context, cooperate and work closely with political parties to address barriers to accessing and moving up the ladder of politics.

Increasing the impact of EU action

We believe the following principles should guide GAP III in both its conception and implementation stages:

- **Contextualisation:** All EU action should be context-specific and adapted to the reality and needs of the partners. The EU should allow for flexible and adaptive programmes, so that project partners can improve and amend the suggested actions to respond to local needs and circumstances in a timely manner.
- **Localisation:** Harness local expertise through liaising with national and local organisations that are representative and inclusive of all possible hidden and formal relevant stakeholder dynamics.
- **Mutual learning:** Place honesty on the EU's own mixed track record on gender equality at the centre. The EU could develop a playbook with strategies used in Europe and the way they have worked out in practice – positively and negatively.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE THIRD EU GENDER ACTION PLAN

European Institute of Peace

April 2020

The European Institute of Peace (EIP) welcomes the Roadmap for the third EU Action Plan on Gender and women's empowerment in external relations for 2021-2025 Equality (henceforth GAP III). It particularly commends its inclusion of the lack of progress regarding the number of women mediators, negotiators, and signatories in peace processes as one of the problems it aims to tackle. EIP also emphasises the importance of the Roadmap's reference to coherence of the GAP III with the EU Gender Equality Strategy and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. Please find below EIP's 10 key recommendations for consideration which focus on how this coherency can be strengthened in the development of the Plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- The majority of the EU's external action take place in fragile and conflict affected contexts. GAP III should specifically recognize that the WPS Agenda (and the Strategic Approach and Plan) is a key part of the EU achieving gender equality. **Reporting for the GAP III and the Action Plan on WPS should be streamlined to avoid duplication both within the EU and by Member States**, particularly in relation to indicators and filling in any monitoring framework. **The EU Informal Taskforce should be kept in communication of the development of the Plan** and consideration should be given to **reopening the indicators section of the WPS Action Plan** to strengthen these synergies.
- There should be less and more strategic indicators, including that the same indicator can measure a number of actions. This will help avoid reporting fatigue.
- Indicators should in addition reference SDGs but also have EU specific **indicators based on International Human rights standards, notably the Conventions**.
- There should be consideration of a GAP III Civil Society Oversight Group, working with both in the institutions in Brussels and in EU Delegations. This should be an open process and sufficiently financed.
- At least some of the wider Consultations for the GAP III (particularly with CSOs and EU Informal Taskforce) should take place after the publication of the mid-term evaluation of the GAP II. This will allow for a more comprehensive analysis and input.



Financing:

- **Gender budgeting** should be reinforced in GAP III, including the call for analysis on **gender impact** of funding.
- Taking into account the global pushback on gender inequality, the EU should consider providing additional financing to gender, particularly in the areas of women's participation and gender perspectives in peacebuilding, sexual and reproductive health and rights and Women Human Rights Defender, LGBTQI rights and Environmental Peacebuilding.

Integrating Gender

- The focus on **gender analysis should be continued** and strengthened in GAP III, particularly its integration with political economy and conflict analysis.
- The GAP III should build on the GAP II's focus on culture change. The GAP III and WPS Action Plan needs to be fully implemented by all actors, including those at a senior level. Implementation of the GAP and the WPS Action Plan must be part of job descriptions and appraisals. Training should be provided so that there is a focus on gender equality, which includes the synergies of the GAP with the WPS Action Plan.
- MS should commit to (and be encouraged by EU institutions) to provide more secondees with gender expertise to EU Institutions (gender training should be considered a requirement). This should include but is not limited to prioritising secondees to the Office of the Principal Advisor on Gender in the EEAS.
- The GAP III should have more of a **focus on addressing root causes of gender inequality** than the GAP II, building on the references in the new EU gender strategy.
- The new EU gender Strategy has a **strong focus on intersectionality**-this should be emphasised in the text and indicators of the GAP III. This could include focus on ensuring that all action (including funding allocation) has positive impact on diverse of women and could include disaggregated data relating to gender, but also age, sexual orientation and disability. This should also ensure a do-no further harm approach.

Contribution to the EU Action Plan of Gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations for 2021-2025

End Female Genital Mutilation European Network

1. What is FGM?

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving the removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons, as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO). FGM is internationally recognised as a gross violation of human rights, a form of violence against women and girls, and a manifestation of gender inequality.

Equality between men and women is one of the European Union's (EU) fundamental values. However, 600,000 women and girls are living with the consequences of FGM in the EU and a further 180,000 girls and women are at risk of undergoing the harmful practice in 13 European countries alone,¹ contributing to the 200 million women and girls affected by the harmful practice worldwide. However, this global figure is only based on prevalence estimates from 31 countries, despite FGM being present in over 90 countries.² As this presents an incomplete picture of this global phenomenon, more urgent international action must be taken globally, in order to truly tackle FGM. The EU has been a global champion for ending gender-based violence (GBV), including FGM, for example through the Joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, where the EU invested 500 million euros towards programmes focused on the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence.

Despite the successes of programmes tackling this practice in the past years, according to 2018 UNFPA data, if population trends continue in the direction they are currently moving in, 68 million girls worldwide will be at risk of FGM by 2030, with the yearly increase expected to rise from an estimated 4.1 million in 2019 to 4.6 million per year by 2030. **The EU must continue to be a champion for women's rights and against violence against women worldwide, to ensure women and girls can thrive and fulfil their full potential.**

2. Building up from GAP II

End FGM EU welcomes that the Gender Action Plan (GAP) III will build on the results of the GAP II, regarding the three thematic pillars as key axes to promote gender equality in all societies. These include ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity, promoting the social and economic rights/empowerment of girls and women, strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation as well as the fourth horizontal pillar, shifting the institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments. We encourage the Commission to ensure that GAP III will follow the lines of GAP II, as well as its 3-pronged approach.

However, if we want to achieve SDG5 by 2030, and truly leave no woman or girl behind, the EU must step up its commitment and actions around gender equality within the next GAP III even more. To this aim, compared to the GAP II, this new phase of the action plan should:

- be backed by a higher European political support and commitment (we welcome in this sense the fact that it will be a joint communication) and followed by Council Conclusions to ensure Member States' (MS) ownership;
- involve more senior levels of officials with decisional powers in the EU Delegations in regular gender trainings, monitoring and reporting processes, to ensure there is truly a shift of culture and these issues are taken on board at all levels;
- more strongly ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout all EU external policies, with particular attention to humanitarian aid, trade and migration, across all pillars;

¹ European Parliament Resolution, 12 February 2020, find here: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-9-2020-0092_EN.html?redirect

² For further information on the global nature of FGM, please refer to our recent report on "[Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A call for a global response](#)"

- have a deeper focus on intersectional discriminations to truly leave no woman or girl behind and pay an increased attention to those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, migration status, age or disability;
- strengthen a meaningful and constructive cooperation with civil society throughout the cycle of planning, implementation and evaluation, including by reaching out to remote grassroots organisations, community-based organisations, women-led organisations and youth-led organisations that might not have access to consultations happening in capitals;
- ensure a more impactful implementation as well as sustainable change through committing to increased funding for gender equality, since recent estimates indicate that SDG5 remains severely underfunded ([Council Conclusions](#) of 25 November 2019).

Recommendation: We call on the Commission to build further on the good results and achievements of GAP II, but to strengthen the GAP III with regards to: ensuring higher and more senior political commitment, deeper mainstreaming throughout all external policies, stronger focus on intersectionality, more meaningful cooperation with civil society, increased funding for gender equality.

3. Building on existing International Framework around Gender Equality & FGM

All countries have made political commitments on gender equality, through various international agreements including Agenda 2030 with the Sustainable development Goals, , the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We also urge the European Commission to ensure GAP III is in line with the European Consensus on Development and that it compliments the EU's Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security, as well as the recently launched Gender Equality Strategy,³ to guarantee internal-external coherence. As such, the **GAP III must be framed around these comprehensive instruments.**

Currently, no country in the world can be declared as having reached gender equality in regards to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" by 2030. In particular, target 5.3 requires all 193 countries that signed onto the SDGs, to take action to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation". In order to have a Gender Action Plan III in line with commitments enshrined in the Agenda 2030, a strong focus must also be placed on eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls (SDG 5.2). With only ten years left to eradicate this widespread and harmful practice affecting millions of women and girls globally by 2030, the time to take stock and to accelerate action is now. We call on the Commission to ensure the next GAP takes into consideration the SDG requirements and obligations imposed on all signatories (including the EU and member states) to prioritise the successful implementation. In particular the EU should use its political leverage to reflect the existing shared responsibility to work toward these goals, in all its external actions.⁴

Recommendation: We call on the Commission to draft the GAP III in line with the international legal framework around gender equality and complementary to other relevant EU instruments.

4. Gender equality and FGM should be included in all policies

The EU must continue to have a threefold approach to gender equality and women's rights in its external action: mainstream a gender perspective in all policies and actions; promote and secure targeted and specific measures to eliminate, prevent or provide remedy for gender inequalities and violations of women's rights; monitor progress on the implementation of EU policies and call out violations of women's rights.

³ <https://www.endfgm.eu/news-en-events/press-releases/european-gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025-end-fgm-eus-reaction/>

⁴ All countries have a shared responsibility to achieve the SDGs, and all have a meaningful role to play locally, nationally as well as on the global scale

Women and girls' rights and gender equality should be both a mainstreamed and a specific priority in EU policy and decision making. In reaching gender equality, all forms of gender-based violence must be addressed and mainstreamed, including FGM, allowing for such issues to be addressed in a cross-sectoral and comprehensive way. It is imperative that gender equality issues be systematically considered. To this aim it would be important to maintain/establish women's rights and gender equality focal points in all EU Delegations. Similarly, all staff in EU Delegations must take responsibility for GAP III implementation as this burden cannot only be on the gender focal points.

Besides mainstreaming FGM in generalised services, due to the specificities of this traditional harmful practice, it is also imperative to ensure specific attention to some of its peculiar aspects, in terms of cultural sensitivity of initiatives to eliminate it. This can be done through the provision of specialised services and the implementation of specialised programmes tackling FGM.

Recommendation: We call on the Commission to ensure women and girls' rights and gender equality are effectively mainstreamed into its own structures and processes and considered in all external actions and policies. Moreover, we call to ensure specific attention on FGM is paid in all EU external policies.

5. Need for a stronger focus on FGM in humanitarian contexts, migration and trade

End FGM EU is pleased to see that the GAP III will set the next priorities on gender equality and women empowerment in external relations on humanitarian aid, development cooperation, enlargement, neighbourhood policies, migration, trade, conflict prevention and climate change. In particular, we believe GAP III should work towards ensuring women and girls live free from violence and harmful practices including in humanitarian crisis or fragile contexts. End FGM commends EU progress in ending FGM in development, including the Joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in prevalent countries. However, increased efforts on humanitarian contexts, migration and trade must be placed at the forefront of GAP III.

Although little research has been carried out on the impact of humanitarian emergency situations and migration on FGM, some key elements can be outlined concerning the work towards FGM abandonment. For example, the insecurity of crisis situations can reinforce some traditional harmful practices, including FGM e.g. parents cutting their daughters prior to migrating, during times of war. Women and girls are more vulnerable to other forms of gender-based violence during emergency situations i.e. rape, early forced child marriage and forced prostitution. In addition, population displacement spreads the practice of FGM, resulting in the practice impacting non-FGM communities through population displacement. Women who have undergone FGM are also more likely to suffer greater complications during childbirth.

More recently, the COVID-19 crisis has exposed gaps in national efforts worldwide to combat GBV. This has once again emphasised the drop in attention on this area during times of insecurity, which is often the case for countries with the highest FGM prevalence. Moreover, in some contexts, exactly these fragile periods of crisis might cause an increase in FGM and child marriages.⁵ The top 15 list of countries with the highest FGM prevalence rate includes 8 fragile countries in need of humanitarian aid. Since FGM is considered to be a secondary issue in situations of emergency, this often reflects a lack of adequate support services, limited (specialised) training for key professionals, poor sanitation conditions and ultimately a greater risk for women and girls affected by FGM. Undoubtedly, any progress toward the prevention of FGM is more complex in a humanitarian context and harder to track when operating in an emergency context.

Recommendation: We call on the Commission to fulfil its commitment to operationalise the humanitarian-development nexus through increased cooperation and collaborative implementation and to ensure FGM is tackled in the most fragile contexts within the framework of efforts to achieve gender equality and build stronger and more resilient societies.

⁵ Read this article published on End FGM EU's website on 2 April 2020: <https://www.endfgm.eu/news-en-events/news/covid-19-pandemic-putting-girls-at-high-risk-of-fgm-in-kenya/>

Moreover, the new GAP must ensure all trade policies are gender-just. Ending gender-based violence, including FGM, should have a prominent role in trade negotiations and monitoring of agreements. In countries with higher FGM prevalence, such systematic violation should be one of the priorities to address within the trade framework, since gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental to sustainable and growing economies. The EU should use its economic leverage with third countries' governments, to push for political commitment(s) regarding relevant international or regional instruments and standards to ensure implementation at national level.

In particular, trade agreements should also be utilised in this sense. Specifically human rights clauses should be binding in such agreements and enforced to urge countries concerned to comply, with the possibility of revision and withdrawal of such agreements in case of serious and systemic human rights violations (including FGM). Moreover, gendered human rights impact assessments should be made compulsory and binding for all trade agreements to be concluded and maintained.

Recommendation: We call on the EU to more strongly enforce the human rights clauses in trade agreements to ensure third countries comply with their human rights obligations, including ending GBV, FGM and promoting gender equality.

Finally, population movements must be a central area of work, where the EU plays a key role in the protection of women and girls, through tackling causes and consequences of gender inequalities. People on the move whether they escape conflict zones or other human-rights violations or whether they are in search for a better life, are in a situation of precariousness, which increases their vulnerabilities and further puts them at risk. The vast majority of women and girls on the move report to be affected by episodes of GBV, including sexual violence, trafficking, forced prostitution. More needs to be done to protect the most vulnerable.

To this aim the new GAP III should ensure that all migration-related policies and agreements undergo gendered human rights impact assessments and put the protection of gender equality and against GBV at the core. All external border-control officers, including FRONTEX staff, should be regularly trained on gender equality, sexual and GBV, and possible early awareness indicators of violence, including concerning FGM. The EU should ensure that all women and girls on the move can have access to appropriate healthcare, including psychosocial counselling and sexual and reproductive health and rights services, particularly those who are survivors of GBV, including FGM. Finally, external EU migration policies should look at possibilities of ensuring legal pathways of migration, through access to visa in embassies of EU MS in third countries, including for women and girls who flee situations of GBV, including FGM.

Recommendation: We call on the EU to ensure all migration-related policies and agreements undergo gendered human rights impact assessments, border officers are trained, access to healthcare services is provided and legal pathways of migration are ensured, particularly for women and girls facing GBV, including FGM.

6. Accountability framework for the EU institutions on FGM

In order for GAP III to successfully address all forms of gender-based violence, including FGM, implementation is crucial. This requires the preparation of an accountability framework for EU institutions on FGM, which clearly defines actions, with respective responsible stakeholders, a concrete timeline and benchmarks alongside measurable and time-bound indicators of success. These requirements must be clear and concrete enough to foster coordinated implementation among Member States.

The new Action Plan should include a strong follow-up and review mechanism enabling effective assessment of impact for all actions taken, to ensure progress and long-term accountability. This is especially the case for making the necessary monitoring adjustments for countries facing insecurity and crisis situations, so efforts to end gender-based violence, including FGM, continue to be prioritised and tracked. The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework should include both quantitative and qualitative indicators and targets, to guarantee evaluations are carried out to measure impact and sustainable change made, due to activities/programmes carried out i.e. shifting social norms.

Recommendation: **We urge the Commission to prepare in parallel to the GAP III, a concrete, measurable and time-bound accountability framework to ensure its correct monitoring and implementation.**

About End FGM EU

The End FGM European Network (End FGM EU), which is an umbrella network of 27 national organisations working in 14 European countries who are expert on female genital mutilation (FGM). End FGM EU operates as a meeting ground for communities, civil society organisations, decision-makers and other relevant actors at European level to interact, cooperate and join forces to end all forms of FGM in Europe and beyond. We put at the heart of our work grassroots voices to influence European governments and policy-makers to work towards the elimination of FGM. We build our members' capacity, offer spaces to share expertise and develop partnerships.

While dedicated to being the driving force of the European movement to end FGM, we are equally committed to build bridges and cooperation with all relevant actors in the field of FGM both in Europe and globally. In this sense, we actively promote and foster cooperation between the European movement and movements in other regions of the world.

For any further information, please contact Chiara Cosentino, Head of Policy & Advocacy, at ccosentino@endfgm.eu

IDDC input for EU Action Plan on Gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations for 2021-2025

The International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) commends the EU's strong commitment to gender equality and women's rights in external action, and we believe that the EU should continue to build on the achievements of the EU Action Plan on Gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations for 2016-2020 (GAP II) but we also recognise and take into account the gaps and limits. While GAP II pays attention to multiple discrimination and intersectional barriers and addresses disability as one of them, it does not effectively and systematically address the rights of women and girls with disabilities in external action.

As State Parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) the EU and all EU Member States have an obligation to ensure a stronger disability perspective in the next EU Gender Action Plan.

IDDC therefore calls on the European Commission and the European External Action Service to ensure that the EU Action Plan on Gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations for 2021-2025 (GAP III) systematically addresses the exclusion and multiple discriminations faced by women and girls with disabilities.

In General Comment No. 3 on women and girls with disabilities the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities specifies that State Parties have the obligation to “ensure that all international cooperation is disability and gender sensitive and inclusive”; “include data and statistics on women with disabilities in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, targets and indicators, as well as other international frameworks”; support partner countries' efforts; include “women with disabilities in the design, implementation and monitoring of international cooperation projects and programmes”.

One in five women worldwide live with a disability

Persons with disabilities account for 15% of the world's population. More than 80% are living in poverty, with an estimated 800 million persons with disabilities living in developing countries. Disability is more prevalent in low- and middle-income countries where poverty and disability often reinforce each other resulting in an ongoing cycle which must be broken to ensure that no one is left behind. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “aims to leave no one behind and seeks to reach the furthest behind first”.

There are more women and girls with disabilities worldwide than men and boys - disability prevalence is 19.2% among women compared to 12% among men. Evidence shows that women and girls with disabilities continue to face barriers which create situations of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including: systematic barriers in the environment and the attitudes which prevent them from having equal access to education, health care (including sexual and reproductive health care), employment and decent work, and justice as well as hindering their civic

and political participation. Women with disabilities are not a homogenous group, and face overlapping and reinforcing inequalities that arise from multiple factors such as disability, age, race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, migration status.

Recommendations for a disability-inclusive GAP III

The EU has a responsibility to ensure that all its policies and programmes related to external action and international cooperation are disability-inclusive and in line with the CRPD. To ensure that women and girls with disabilities are not left behind, the next EU Gender Action Plan for 2021-2025 (GAP III) must have an inclusive and intersectional approach. For this, IDDC see the following points as key:

- **Refer explicitly to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** in all GAP III documentation and include consistent references to disability.
- **Ensure accessible participation of women and girls with disabilities and their representative organisations** at all stages (design, implementation and monitoring phases of the GAP III; and in the programming, implementation and monitoring of subsequent projects/programmes) and at all levels (regional and country levels).
- **Provide adequate resources and funding to ensure full accessibility of processes and information** for persons with disabilities, including reasonable accommodation, in all consultations and processes related to GAP III.
- **Apply the twin-tack approach** to disability-inclusion in development cooperation to the GAP III. The twin-track approach consists of (a) mainstreaming a gender perspective and the rights of women and girls with disabilities of all ages, (b) initiatives targeting women and girls with disabilities. Provide clear guidance on the twin-track approach and good examples of mainstreaming and targeted actions.
- **Ensure the systematic collection of data disaggregated** by gender, age and disability and use the data for evidence-based policy-making. Invest in supporting to partner countries and EU Delegations to disaggregate data. For comparable data use and promote existing tools including the Washington Group on Disability Statistics Questionnaire and the indicators developed under component I of the EU funded Bridging the Gap project.
- At country level, **mainstream an intersectional analysis** taking into account that women and girls are not homogeneous groups **and support the design and implementation** of policies and initiatives that do not adversely impact women and girls with disabilities, including through conducting needs and risk assessments.
- **Strengthen internal capacities on inclusion and intersectionality**, especially the technical capacities of gender focal points in the EU Delegations and Headquarters, to ensure that all aspects and stages of design, implementation and monitoring of initiatives are disability-inclusive and accessible for women and girls with disabilities.
- **Recognise women and girls with disabilities as experts and leaders**, support their empowerment and support the capacity development of their organisations for instance by providing dedicated funding.
- **Implement the OECD DAC disability inclusion policy marker** as well as the OECD DAC gender equality policy marker to track development finance in support of disability inclusion.

- **Ensure more coherence between external and internal policies** (including the new EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, and the next European Disability Strategy) as well as with other international commitments made by the EU as a global actor (including the disability-inclusive CRPD-compliant implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, the Agenda for Humanity, the UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for action for advancing women's rights, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security).

International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)

The **International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)** is a global consortium of 32 disability and development non-governmental organisations (NGOs), mainstream development NGOs and representative organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) supporting disability and development work in more than 150 countries around the world. The aim of IDDC is to promote rights-based disability inclusive development and humanitarian action, we therefore focus our reflections and recommendations for the EU Action Plan on Gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations for 2021-2025 (EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025, or GAP III) on the intersectionality of gender and disability in EU external action.

> Full Members



> Associate Members



European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)

2-pager submission for GAP III consultation

May 2020

Input for this 2-pager was provided by some of EPLO's members and does not reflect the position of any one member organisation. For any inquiries, please contact Margot Jones (mjones@eplo.org).

The Gender Action Plan II for 2016-2020 was an important advancement in the pursuit of improving the EU's promotion of gender equality in its external action. In view of building upon the achievements and lessons learned from GAP II, the GAP III should additionally consider the following elements:

- The EU's Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is a comprehensive and substantial commitment to the WPS agenda that should be reflected in the GAP III, both as a **fifth priority** as well as **mainstreamed** in all other priorities. The [2018 annual report](#) on the implementation of GAP II welcomed the adoption of the EU Strategic Approach on WPS as important achievement. The GAP III should therefore aim to explicitly incorporate, strengthen, build upon and reinforce the Strategic Approach to WPS.
 - The GAP III should **acknowledge that in contexts affected by conflicts and violence women, girls and non-conforming men are faced with gender-specific and additional burdens** as a result of a conflict-related increase in gender-based violence, early marriages, sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as a loss in public and political participation, access to justice and protection, economic justice and sexual and reproductive health.
 - These challenges increase with the intersection with other forms of discrimination, such as on grounds of (dis)ability, socioeconomic status, ethnicity etc. The **intersectionality of challenges faced by women should be explicitly recognised** and mainstreamed in all aspects of the GAP.
- Conflicts often bring about changes in gender roles that affect men and women. For example: women sometimes take on the role of breadwinner, which is traditionally reserved for men. These changes may represent a positive **opportunity for transformation towards gender equality**. The GAP III should explicitly recognize the need to adopt an approach that not only acknowledges and addresses the difficulties faced by women, girls and sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) in emergencies but also seizes every opportunity to promote gender equality and prepare for a more inclusive post-conflict society.
- **Gender analysis should be made a cross-cutting priority in GAP III**, and all programming and policymaking should be grounded in robust conflict and gender analysis. Gender analysis will shed light on both the gendered *impacts* and the [gendered drivers](#) of conflict, and be conducted in a participatory way which reflects the diverse and intersectional experiences of women, girls, [men, boys](#) and SGMs. An intersectional approach will take into account and address the needs and concerns of people according to their diverse and intersecting identities, such as gender, age, migration status, socioeconomic background, religion, ethnicity and sexuality.

- In line with the EU Strategy on WPS, gender analysis and sensitivity should be **explicitly and systematically integrated into all EU actions**, including responses to crisis and emergencies, peacebuilding efforts, including mediation, humanitarian aid, development programmes, [counter-terrorism \(CT\) and preventing and countering violent extremism \(P/CVE\) programmes](#), CSDP missions and military assistance.
- The GAP III should **acknowledge the structural and operational challenges of implementing gender-related policies**, and tackle these by allocating sufficient funding, resources and political attention.
- High-level commitments to the WPS agenda and GAP II should be supported by **engagement at the community level** - political and financial support to inclusive civil society, and women's associations, as well as providing capacity-building to and engaging in dialogue with the same. This 'localisation' of support and engagement should be reflected in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) planning and programming.
- The EU should **prioritize funding for local women's rights, SGMs' and gender equality civil society organisations**. This is crucial to combat the shrinking civil society space in conflicts. Funding should be flexible, accessible, long-term and for their self-defined priorities and distributed among small, medium and large size organisations.
- The EU should **cease all activities (policies, support to peace processes, programs, funding...)** which systematically fail to include women, girls and SGMs meaningfully, and instead support their [meaningful \(non-tokenistic\) participation](#) at all levels and throughout the programme cycle.
- Gender-based violence (GBV) should continue to be addressed as a standalone pillar of GAP III, and **incorporate principles outlined in the EU Strategic Approach on WPS**. For instance, GBV should not only be tackled in the context of emergencies and humanitarian interventions, but also as a driver of conflict and a potential indicator to be taken into consideration in early-warning analyses, conflict prevention, and crisis management.
- The GAP III should fully **take into account the achievements, limitations and recommendations outlined in the [annual implementation reports](#) and the ongoing [external evaluation](#) of the GAP II**.
 - Local, national and regional women's rights civil society organisations should be included at all levels of preparation, implementation and reporting of the GAP.
- The EU should ensure that the launch and starting date of GAP III does not get postponed despite the policy-making challenges posed by **COVID-19**. In view of the gender impact of the pandemic, as well as the potential instability following it, it is essential to have a revised plan to mitigate the gender impacts of COVID-19, without delay.

Free Press Unlimited **People deserve to know**

Free Press Unlimited is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and Brussels, Belgium. Our mission is to ensure that impartial news and information are available to people across the globe. We believe gender equality in and through the media is essential to achieve our long-term goal, for **journalists to function as change agents and to contribute to a diverse and professional media landscape**. Our [Gender Programme](#), aiming to support female journalists and the development of gender-inclusive media content, is implemented in 15 countries worldwide.



(c) Jodi Hilton

Achieving gender equality through **the media & access to information**

Free Press Unlimited recommendations on the EU Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025

March 2020



24%

This is the proportion of women heard, read about or seen in radio, newspaper and television news.

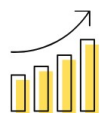
(Global Media Monitoring Project, 2015)



70%

of female journalists have experienced harassment, threats or attacks in the context of their work.

(International Women's Media Foundation, 2019)



73%

of management board positions in the media sector are held by men.

(International Women's Media Foundation, 2011)

IN A NUTSHELL

- The GAP III should recognise and support the **role of online and offline media** in achieving gender equality, and the **right to access information** as a precondition for women's and girls' empowerment
- **Gender-based violence against female journalists, structural barriers to access information** and women's under-representation in **decision-making positions** in the media sector, must be addressed in EU external action
- Involvement of **women's rights organisations and networks of female journalists** throughout the lifespan of GAP III is key to ensure its implementation matches the on-the-ground needs

Free Press Unlimited strongly believes in the transformative role the media can play in achieving gender equality. By creating gender-sensitive content and breaking gender stereotypes. By challenging traditional social and cultural norms and attitudes. By showing women in leadership roles and as experts on a diversity of topics.

The Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) is the opportunity to make use of the EU global leverage to uphold the fundamental rights of women and girls in and through the media. To do so, it should address the **following priorities**:

Supporting the media and journalists in developing gender-sensitive content

Women and girls remain largely invisible in media content and are frequently depicted in stereotypical ways. News is presented largely through the perspective of men and the lack of female sources and experts is alarming. **Supporting the creation of gender-sensitive online and offline media content is key to address stereotypes** as one of the root causes of gender inequalities.

Safety of female journalists

Globally, the safety of female journalists is a serious concern in the field and in the workplace. Online harassment, sexist hate speech and sexual abuse are some of the specific forms of violence faced by female journalists, leading to self-censorship or leaving the profession. **Safety of female journalists must be made a priority, both at country level and in the media sector.**

Equal access to information for women and girls

Fewer educational opportunities, higher rates of poverty, unequal care responsibilities and restricted access to information and communications technologies (ICT) are some of the specific barriers women and girls face to access information. These structural obstacles must be tackled, as **the right to information is crucial for self-determination and the full enjoyment of economic, social and political rights.**

Decision-making in the media sector

Journalism remains a male-dominated area. Women in the newsrooms face higher rates of precarious work and have poorer career perspectives, especially when it comes to decision-making positions. **Female journalists should be supported through leadership training, and the media sector should be encouraged to implement affirmative action policies.**

How can the GAP III promote access to information and support the media?

- The GAP II priority on **shifting the EU institutional culture** should be renewed in the GAP III. Providing EU institutions and EU delegations with technical training and assistance on addressing gender stereotypes and on gender equality in the media should be continued.
- Safety of female journalists, as well as lifting structural barriers to equal access to information for women and girls, must be addressed in **EU human rights and political dialogues, multilateral and regional human rights fora, and human rights and democracy country strategies.**
- **Targeted actions on gender equality in and through the media** should be implemented, such as:
 - helping media and journalists in developing gender-transformative content and gender-sensitive reporting,
 - collecting data and developing tools monitoring women (under)representation in the news,
 - supporting women-led community-based media,
 - providing female journalists with online and physical safety training,
 - working with the media sector to develop affirmative action policies,
 - supporting female journalists in taking up leadership roles and strengthening their participation in the media sector.
- **Networks of female journalists, as well as women's rights and press freedom organisations** must be closely involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of GAP III.
- The GAP III should be made coherent with the **programming of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)**, the **EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025**, the **EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline** and the **EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024.**

For more information

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ILGA-Europe Position Paper on the GAP III

As the EU has clearly indicated, its recent **Gender Equality Strategy** applies to “women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity”. Going further, the Strategy explains that “the expression ‘in all their diversity’ is used in this strategy to express that, where women or men are mentioned, these are a heterogeneous categories including in relation to their sex, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.”¹ In keeping with this understanding, the EU should **ensure policy cohesion between the Gender Equality Strategy and the Gender Action Plan III** in terms of LGBTI inclusion and intersectionality.

Gender stereotypes have a detrimental effect on women and girls, which is **exacerbated where gender intersects with sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)**. In a context where binary gender stereotypes are the norm - and most societies in the modern world are patriarchal and heteronormative - women are exposed to increased violence due to their SOGIESC. For example, patterns of violence against lesbian women vary from heterosexual women in that a higher share of perpetrators are known (or a household member) and LGBTI women experience higher levels of domestic and/or intimate partner violence.³ Anyone challenging prescribed binary gender stereotypes are exposed to heightened physical, verbal and online violence (including effeminate cisgender men or masculine cisgender women regardless of SO, or trans, gender diverse, and non-binary people).

LGBTI women therefore experience heightened discrimination in the field of employment. In 5 out of 13 countries in the EU’s Eastern neighbourhood,⁴ citizens are **not protected against discrimination** based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment. This number is 11 (out of 13) on the grounds of sex characteristics. In Central Asia,⁵ currently **no countries provide protection against discrimination** on grounds of SOGIESC in employment.⁶

It also means LGBTI women experience **heightened discrimination** when it comes to **treatment by medical professionals and access to medical services**.⁷ In addition, a reality for trans men and non-binary people assigned female at birth is the continued need for access to SRH, including access to contraception, gynaecological care, HIV and STI prevention, treatment, and testing, and abortion and termination services. It is vital that **discussions of SRH are inclusive** enough to incorporate the needs of these populations and that **access to health services should be dictated by which body parts the person has and what services those organs require** to remain healthy. The European Commission should **reach out to LGBTI organisations** as well as women’s organisations when designing and implementing training of health personnel and medical professionals. Similarly, sexual and reproductive education, or sexuality education, should always be inclusive of SOGIESC, so that **women in all their diversity** have the information needed to understand their right to choice and control over their own bodies, to maintain their psychological and physical integrity.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0152&from=EN> p.2 footnote 9.

³ Badenes-Ribera et al., 2015, 2016; Cramer, McNeil, Holley, Shumway, & Boccellari, 2012; De Graaf, Bakker, & Wijzen, 2015; Fundamental Rights Agency, 2014a, 2014b, World Bank, 2017; LGBT in Britain, 2017

⁴ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

⁵ Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

⁶ For data quoted in this paragraph see ILGA-Europe’s Rainbow Europe 2019: <https://www.rainbow-europe.org/>

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/social_determinants/docs/stateofart_report_en.pdf

Related to one's right to maintain their psychological and physical integrity, it is recommended to **refer to IGM as well when discussing FGM**, and to provide **access for survivors of intersex genital mutilation to reparative treatments** on the same coverage terms as those provided for survivors of FGM. It is also recommended to **incorporate discussions of intersex infanticide alongside femicide**. Intersex genital mutilation⁸ (IGM) functions in a very similar way to FGM, but has yet to receive the same broad attention and clear condemnation. These practices are similar in that they (1) are both framed in terms of the need for social acceptance, (2) are both motivated by beliefs about what is considered acceptable sexual behaviours, (3) are both motivated by the notion that body parts that are not considered female (or male) enough should be removed or altered, and (4) are both impactful on the person's life and health.⁹ While uncommon in Europe, infanticide of intersex children is alarmingly common in parts of Southern and Eastern Africa, South Asia, China, and Brazil.^{10,11}

Nearly **2 billion people**¹² have access to a legal gender category for their documents other than male or female. With an estimated 1.7% of the population having sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definition of male or female¹³, and an estimated 0.21% identifying as non-binary (broadly defined)¹⁴, this accounts for approximately 40 million people who both have the ability and the potential need to register as neither male nor female. Thus, it is imperative that **any policy designed to address gender equality takes into account genders other than male or female in a substantive and integrated manner**. Further, international human rights law mechanisms demand the right of individuals to register as a non-binary or third gender.¹⁵

The inclusion and protection of LGBTI people is an entrenched European value,^{16,17,18,19} and therefore coherent efforts to address gender stereotypes must include a focus on the intersection of gender and SOGIESC to be able to address all implications and impacts of stereotypes and to draw out their root causes. The GAP III should **explicitly recognise that LGBTI organisations** across the world are also working to reduce discrimination borne out of gender stereotypes and gender norms, such as promoting comprehensive sexuality education both within and beyond formal settings, supporting legalisation and formalisation of all forms of family, fostering community discourse on gender, gender roles and relationships in society.

⁸ "Intersex individuals are born with sex characteristics (sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal structure and/or levels and/or chromosomal patterns) that do not fit the typical definition of male or female."

https://oieurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Protecting_intersex_in_Europe_toolkit.pdf

⁹ Ibid., p12.

¹⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/BackgroundViolationsIntersexPeople.aspx>

¹¹ <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/what-are-intersex-rights>

¹² Citizens of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Malta, the Netherlands, Canada, Pakistan, Australia, Iceland, Uruguay, Nepal, New Zealand, India, Argentina, and some states within the USA

¹³ https://unfe.org/system/unfe-65-Intersex_Factsheet_ENGLISH.pdf

¹⁴ USTS 2015 and Flores, Andrew (June 2016). "How Many Adults Identify as Transgender in the United States" (PDF). *Williams Institute UCLA School of Law*.

¹⁵ Madrigal-Borloz, V., (2018). UN Doc. A/73/152.

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-equality/list-actions-advance-lgbti-equality_en

¹⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0152&from=EN>

¹⁸ Article 19 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union

¹⁹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0128_EN.html



IRC Position Paper

Gender Action Plan III (2021 – 2025)

4th May 2020

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is a leading global humanitarian organisation working with people whose lives and livelihoods have been shattered by conflict and disaster, helping them to not only survive, but to recover and gain control over their futures.

On occasion of the renewal of the Gender Action Plan for the period 2021-2025, this paper is intended to provide an overview of IRC key recommendation on the Gender Action Plan, while also highlighting key issues concerning the needs of women and girls, especially when caught in conflict and displacement settings.

2020 marks a pivotal year for gender equality and women's rights as it marks 25 years from the Beijing Declaration and 20 years from UNSC resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security. The IRC expects the EU to use this momentum to announce [ambitious commitments at UN level](#) as well as in this Action Plan. The GAP II was a vital step towards ensuring the needs of women and girls are adequately included in EU external action. With the drafting of GAP III the IRC expects the EU to scale up its commitments to address the needs of women and girls.

GAP III: the way forward

IRC very much welcomed that the GAP II emphasized women's and girls' physical and psychological integrity as well as the promotion of their economic and social rights and the strengthening of their voice and participation as three of the four pivotal areas. We are convinced, that these aspects are crucial, especially in humanitarian and displacement contexts, to break down barriers and enable women and girls to change their own future and uplift entire communities. IRC hopes that the third iteration of the EU GAP will uphold this strong focus, and will make explicit reference to displaced women and girls, as well as women and girls in fragile, conflict and emergency situations within those pivotal areas.

Gender inequality at individual, community and societal levels puts women and girls everywhere at a disadvantage in terms of social power and influence, control of resources, control of their bodies and participation in public life – all as a result of socially determined gender roles and systemic inequality. Promoting gender equality for all women everywhere is [vital to reach the SDGs](#) and ensure nobody is left behind. We need to address the barriers that displaced women and girls face to achieving those goals, which are rooted in gender inequality and further exacerbated by GBV. But funding for women's protection and empowerment is [severely lacking](#), and displaced women and girls are largely absent from the major SDG frameworks, which drive resources and attention. The GAP III should provide the basis for the EU to close this gap and champion the inclusion of displaced women and girls in the so-called "decade of delivery".

A strong focus on Gender Based Violence

The third iteration of the GAP should continue to speak to violence against women and girls as the core mandate of GBV programming. Women and girls should be at the heart of action to address GBV. There

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continues to be a trend as more actors join this field away from GBV against women and girls and towards a gender-neutral framing, which moves GBV programming away from its feminist underpinning and women's rights framing. Therefore, the EU GAP should continue to emphasize the safety of women and girls and underline the crucial need to promote gender equality to address root causes of GBV. The [IASC GBV Minimum standards](#) should be referenced and backed as the central guiding document on GBV.

Stepping up commitments for Women's Economic Empowerment

The actions to promote women's economic empowerment (WEE) in GAP II such as "improving access by women of all ages to decent work and to the national social protection floors" and ensuring "women's equal access to financial services, and to the use of, and control over, land and other productive resources, as well as support to women entrepreneurs" remain critical and should be included in GAP III as well, with a particular and explicit emphasis to women in crisis settings and forcibly displaced women. Refugee women face additional barriers to decent work, financial services and business opportunities, and are excluded from national social protection schemes. In GAP III the EU should commit to support multi-year and multi-sector interventions to build women's financial inclusion and economic self-reliance in crisis settings, while using its political and economic leverage to improve policies in partner countries to enhance gender equality and economic opportunities for refugee women.

Response to the Gendered Impact of the COVID Pandemic

The current COVID pandemic and the humanitarian response to it is a vital reminder of the centrality to pursue gender equality across the globe. The effects of the pandemic are [inherently gendered](#) – and the international community seems to be failing to provide an equally gendered response to it. Where information or protective gear is only tailored the "default male", the international community is undermining the effectiveness of its response from the get go, by excluding half of the population from our preventive measures.

However, especially in humanitarian contexts, it is necessary to look beyond mitigating the transmission at the gendered secondary impacts of the health crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbates rampant domestic violence, puts further strain on refugee women's access to resources and forces them to turn to desperate coping mechanisms, especially where they are left out of the response and expanded social safety nets. The current crisis underlines the need for the EU to ensure women and girls in humanitarian crisis are not left behind and are part of the effective part to the response.

Crucial resources

IRC, [Choices, chances and safety in crisis, a model for women's economic empowerment in crisis](#)

IRC, [Ruled out of work: Refugee women's legal right to work](#)

IRC and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, [Unlocking Refugee Women's Potential](#)

BMZ/GIZ, the Netherlands MOFA, DFID, UNHCR, AFI, Better than Cash Alliance, ILO, IRC, [Roadmap to the Sustainable and Responsible Financial Inclusion of Forcibly Displaced Persons](#)

For more information, please contact Franziska Obholzer (franziska.obholzer@rescue.org)

Posición Jubileo Sur/Américas sobre GAP III

En relación al documento GAP III nuestras valoraciones generales son las siguientes:

1. Tomando en consideración la cobertura global y las particularidades de cada región es un documento que recaba diversos elementos y aspectos relevantes en relación a la garantía y derechos de las mujeres.
2. Los objetivos generales están orientados en áreas que son estratégicas y relevantes, así como los indicadores conectados a estos.
3. Consideramos que sería útil contemplar una diferenciación de los objetivos e indicadores sobre los grupos territoriales y poblaciones indígenas de mujeres que enfrentan la implementación de procesos de militarización, judicialización y criminalización, con énfasis especial en las defensoras de derechos humano y de la naturaleza.
4. Se debería de valorar los impactos de la aplicación de las medidas de ajustes estructurales en la vida de las mujeres: precarización y acceso a los servicios básicos de salud, privatización y reducción de inversión en salud y educación, incremento y nuevos endeudamientos de los Estados para enfrentar los impactos de la pandemia del COVID-19.



Kosovo Women's Network

Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls

POLICY BRIEF

FOLLOWING THROUGH ON EU COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY

Lessons Learned from GAP II to Inform GAP III

By Nicole Farnsworth and Valmira Rashiti for the Kosovo Women's Network¹

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union (EU).² In 2015, the European Commission (EC) adopted “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020”, also known as the “Gender Action Plan II” (GAP II).³ This plan was developed based on lessons learned from the first EU gender action plan. It introduced several important measures related to “institutional cultural shift”, towards an improved EU approach in furthering gender equality in all EU external actions worldwide. It called for context-relevant actions to further gender equality, informed by gender analysis. Importantly, it also introduced mandatory annual reporting for the EU on GAP II progress.

As GAP II’s fourth year draws to a close, discussions begin surrounding GAP III, proposals arise for a potential comprehensive Gender Action Plan for the EU and the EU Multiannual Financial Framework for the next seven years is finalized, the time is ripe to take stock of lessons learned from GAP II that can inform these processes. This brief draws from the experiences of the Kosovo

¹ The Kosovo Women’s Network (KWN) is a network of 158 diverse women’s rights organisations in Kosovo, which seeks to protect and promote the rights of women and girls in Kosovo in accordance with its [Strategy](#). The EU Office in Kosovo has contracted KWN to support the implementation of GAP II, including annual reporting since 2016. KWN also has collaborated with the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and women’s rights groups in the region to independently monitor progress towards implementing GAP II in WB countries, publishing a report entitled [Mind the GAP](#) (2018). This brief draws from knowledge gained and lessons learned from these experiences. Additionally, this brief has been endorsed by the following women’s rights groups WB: Center of Women’s Rights (Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina); Foundation United Women Banja Luka; Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly Banja Luka; Reactor Research in Action (North Macedonia); and Women’s Rights Centre (Montenegro).

² Article 1 of the Treaty of Lisbon, Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community, 2007, at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:FULL:EN:PDF>.

³ European Commission, SWD(2015) 182 final, 2015, at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/staff-working-document-gender-2016-2020-20150922_en.pdf.

Supported by



Women’s Network (KWN) and its partners in the Western Balkan (WB) region in discussing key areas in which lessons have been learned from GAP II; it then puts forth recommendations to address these issues.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM GAP II

Weak Legal Basis

As a Staff Working Document, GAP II’s weak legal basis arguably has undermined its implementation. Since it is not legally binding, responsible parties have not taken it as seriously as they would if it were incorporated within EU regulations.⁴ For example, the Common Implementing Regulation “laying down common rules and procedure for the implementation of the Union’s instruments for financing external action” does not include sufficient requirements for gender impact assessment or gender mainstreaming.⁵ Therefore, despite requests in GAP II, gender has not been mainstreamed in programming as part of a standardized and institutionalized approach. In WB countries, the fact that the midterm review of the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) II did not contain any gender analysis or gender perspective was telling; GAP II seemingly was considered irrelevant to the external financing of the EU in the WB.⁶

Insufficiently Inclusive Drafting Process

Lessons learned from GAP II suggest that practitioners involved in its implementation and the encoding of EU programs perhaps were insufficiently engaged in drafting GAP II. Thus, GAP II involved some challenges that perhaps could have been avoided. For example, the language used in GAP II did not align with the language used by the EC in programming, such as “impact”, “outcome” and “output” in logical frameworks. This made it difficult for programmers to align programs with GAP objectives.⁷

Women’s rights organisations (WCOS) are well-placed to support the implementation of GAP by raising awareness about its existence and supporting EU delegations (EUDs)⁸ and Member States (MSs) in its implementation. WCOSs have extensive knowledge and experience that can support gender analysis, gender mainstreaming of programs, reaching diverse women and men during program implementation and gender sensitive evaluations. However, conversations with several WCOSs worldwide suggested that they lacked awareness about GAP II’s existence. Nor were they consulted sufficiently in its design. This represents a lost opportunity for supporting implementation.

No Attention to Men, Boys or Root Causes

Gender analysis has shown that in most all sectors and areas women tend to be unequal compared to men. Even so, for a plan towards equality among women and men, GAP II paid astonishingly little attention to men, boys, gender relations and targeting root causes of gender inequalities. Additionally, experience suggests that framing gender equality solely with respect to women can lead to misunderstandings regarding what gender equality entails. In worse case

⁴ For example, see KWN, *Mind the GAP*.

⁵ The Common Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of The Council of 11 March 2014 “laying down common rules and procedure for the implementation of the Union’s instruments for financing external action”.

⁶ For further information, see: KWN, “[A Gendered Reading of the ‘External Evaluation of the Instrument for the Pre-Accession Assistance’](#)”, 2017.

⁷ For further information on this, see the indicators section [below](#).

⁸ KWN acknowledges that Kosovo has an EU Office, rather than an EUD. However, the term “EUD” is used to refer to both for simplicity.

scenarios, this can contribute to resistance from men, undermining efforts to further gender equality.

Unaligned Programming and Budget Cycles

The GAP II timeframe did not align with EU programming cycles, particularly in EU accession countries. Programming and budgeting are carried out several years prior to implementation. Therefore, when GAP II ends, several programs planned to contribute to its implementation will have just begun or not yet begun. Therefore, the impact will not be measurable in relation to GAP II.

Further, in most WB countries, the EU intends that beneficiary governments have ownership over IPA programming. Governments are responsible for requesting IPA funds in accordance with existing sector strategies and towards implementing required reforms towards EU Accession. This presents a fundamental challenge for EUDs in the region to implement GAP II. While they can apply political pressure, as foreseen by GAP II, they rely on beneficiary countries to agree to gender mainstreamed and gender equality specific programs. In some instances, EUD officials seemed hesitant to encourage governments to address gender inequalities and to incorporate GAP II thematic objectives in programming.⁹ This suggests that some EUD officials still treat furthering gender equality as an “optional” fundamental right, rather than as an essential requirement that governments must adhere to if they want to receive EU financing.

Related, some EUD representatives noted that increasing funding for women and girls would depend on the beneficiary government’s priorities and not on the EUD.¹⁰ The GAP II weakly stated: “Change (increase or decrease) in dedicated funding to improving results for girls and women after reviews and 2017 MTR (or equivalent)”.¹¹ Worryingly, this phrasing even *allows* for a decrease in funds. The imprecise phrasing of this indicator meant that GAP II did not clearly encourage increasing funding towards gender equality, though several studies have clearly established the need for such funding.¹² Moreover, the midterm review (MTR) failed to properly assess existing funding as foreseen in this indicator, as gender analysis for informing funding needs. Thus, GAP II did not include binding measures for funding towards gender equality. Perhaps unsurprisingly, as of 2018, with few exceptions, EUDs and MSs in the WB tended to indicate that they had not changed funding significantly since the adoption of GAP II.¹³ A tendency was observed to gender mainstream existing programs, rather than initiate new programs to address gender inequalities identified through gender analysis.

Confusing Intervention Logic

Being able to measure change is important for monitoring, evaluation and justification of resources related to the EU GAP II. Generally, the EU tends to use the standardized Logical Framework Approach for most of its programming in measuring change. This involves presenting indicators at each level of an intervention logic to measure the achievement of the impact (long-term change), outcomes (midterm changes) and outputs (short-term changes). Several issues existed with the GAP II intervention logic:

⁹ KWN interviews for *Mind the GAP*.

¹⁰ KWN, *Mind the GAP*, 2018.

¹¹ Indicator 3.1.1.

¹² For example, see Miller, J., Arutyunova, A., Clark, C., & Association for Women's rights In Development (AWID), *New actors, new money, new conversations: A mapping of recent initiatives for women and girls*, AWID, 2013; Batliwala, S., Rosenhek, S., & Miller, J., *Women moving mountains: Collective impact of the Dutch MDG3 Fund*, AWID, 2013; Arutyunova, A., & Clark, C., *Watering the leaves, starving the roots: The Status of Financing for Women's Rights Organizing and Gender Equality*, AWID, 2013; [Wave Country Report 2017](#); and Kvinna till Kvinna's [Women's Rights in the Western Balkans](#).

¹³ Interviews with 27 funders from EUDs or MSs in 2019 for forthcoming research by WCSOs in the region on funding trends.

- GAP II indicators are presented in a single list. Therefore, it is unclear to which level of an intervention logic they refer. Some seem in reference to impact (e.g., the percentage of girls and women who have experienced partner-violence), whereas others refer to outputs (e.g., the number of gender champions appointed, or persons trained). The presentation of all indicators in a mixed list, rather than at each level of the intervention logic, made GAP II indicators confusing and difficult for practitioners to incorporate in the logical frameworks of their programs; they struggled to identify at which levels of intervention logics GAP II indicators should be placed.
- GAP II does not have baselines or targets. EUDs only have been required to report annually on *which* objectives and indicators that they have selected. They have not been required to report on baselines, targets or the extent to which targets have been achieved. Therefore, the EU cannot measure progress in implementing GAP II. This weakens accountability for implementing it. It also represents a lost opportunity for showing changes, which could have supported advocacy for GAP III and for resources to support it.
- The sheer number of indicators in GAP II related to institutional cultural shift may undermine interest and willingness to participate in reporting. Several indicators arguably do not show changes. For example, the appointment of “gender champions” is a nice activity, but it does not necessarily involve changes towards gender equality. Arguably it should be an activity and not an indicator.
- Some GAP II indicators are poorly phrased. For example, several indicators do not require sex-disaggregated data (see Annex 1).
- GAP II recognizes that “Human Rights Defenders, women’s organisations and women leaders play critical roles too, often putting themselves at risk”. Objective 18 states: “Women’s organisations and other CSOs and Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment and rights freely able to work and protected by law”. However, the indicators for this objective focus solely on legal protections and the number of “women Human Right Defenders who have received EU Support”. The indicator does not clearly state which kind of support: political, financial and/or other. Nor do any indicators reflect EU financial and political support to WCSOs, focusing only on individual leaders. As a result, GAP II does not clearly encourage or require monitoring and reporting on direct support provided to WCSOs as key instigators of change towards gender equality. Thus, the EU does not maintain accurate data and cannot report on its support to furthering gender equality, women’s rights and/or WCSOs, respectively.

Challenges to Accurate Reporting

Introducing mandatory reporting was very important for encouraging improved responsibility for implementing GAP II. While not all EUDs and MSs treated this responsibility in the same way, it clearly contributed to improved accountability for some. However, the fact that the reporting system for GAP II was complicated and confusing had a counter-effect in that EUDs and MSs tended to consider the exercise frustrating rather than useful. Opportunities existed to simplify the process by introducing easier technological solutions, such as by using a simple online survey and institutionalizing regular reporting. This would have reduced error due to memory loss between annual reporting exercises. It also would have made more efficient use of time, as gender focal points would save dozens of hours spent checking and merging data, which could have been done by a computer.

Concerningly, the current reporting system also results in skewed, inaccurate reporting. For example, EUDs only report on programs that seek to contribute to gender equality; they do not

report on all programs, which is a major flaw.¹⁴ If data is reported *only* on programs already contributing to gender equality, and not on *all* EU-funded programs, then reporting provides an inaccurate picture of the actual percentage of *all* programs that have been designed in accordance with GAP II. Notably, failing to ensure that all EU programs undergo gender analysis also hinders accurate reporting on the OECD gender marker, which requires gender analysis to determine the appropriate marker.

Limited Albeit Improved Staff Knowledge

In 2018, several EUD officials suggested that gender mainstreaming is of no value, but rather a “box-ticking exercise”. Such statements suggested that they had not had enough capacity development regarding what gender mainstreaming involves or its benefits. Practical skills seemed to be lacking in mainstreaming gender at all phases of IPA programming: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The fact that the EC still in 2019 had not revised job descriptions to reflect obligations for all staff to further gender equality also meant that staff did not necessarily see this as part of their responsibilities.

A best practice was identified in Kosovo where the EU Ambassador made basic gender training obligatory for all staff members. Staff members reported that this enhanced their knowledge and capacities. This was coupled with tailored coaching in mainstreaming gender in programs. The extent to which gender has been mainstreamed in programs has clearly improved between 2015 and 2019 following capacity development interventions. Another best practice was introducing required review of programs by gender equality experts from local WCSOs, which both ensured their engagement as per GAP II and contributed to reflecting accurate gender analysis within programs.¹⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

Make Commitments Legally Binding

- Several principles and best practices outlined in GAP II should be institutionalized by making them legally binding within EU law. Consider introducing in the forthcoming Common Implementing Regulation (CIR) for implementing EU instruments for financing external action¹⁶ basic requirements towards furthering gender equality through all external financial instruments. This could be done in a manner similar to the current CIR requirement for appropriate environmental screening for impacts.¹⁷ This would address recommendations from the European Parliament Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Report on EU funds for gender equality, which calls for “gender-specific indicators to be applied in the project selection, monitoring and evaluation phases of all actions that receive funding from the EU budget” and “mandatory gender impact assessment as part of general ex-ante conditionality, and for the collection of gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries and participants”.¹⁸ Additionally and more specifically the new CIR could require:

¹⁴ For example, indicators refer to the number of programs that use gender analysis to inform design [which would be a more accurate indicator if phrased as a percentage, rather than a number, considering that “all” programs should be informed by gender analysis according to Objective 4]; percentage of programs that use findings from consultations with NGEMs and WCSOs, and percentage of results disaggregated by sex where relevant, among others.

¹⁵ Further details available from the Kosovo Women’s Network.

¹⁶ To replace Regulation (EU) No. 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of The Council of 11 March 2014 “laying down common rules and procedure for the implementation of the Union’s instruments for financing external action”, following the adoption of the new seven-year Multiannual Financial Framework.

¹⁷ Ibid, Article 2, section 6.

¹⁸ 2016/2144(INI), 2017, at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2017-0033_EN.html?redirect.

- Mandatory gender impact assessment, as part of a general ex-ante conditionality to inform programming, in accordance with European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) guidance,¹⁹ and the OECD DAC criteria requirements.²⁰
- Gender impact assessment as part of all evaluations, such as within the present CIR section on “Monitoring and evaluation of actions”.
- Gender responsive budgeting, including related to programs and EU consolidated systems for tracking, monitoring and evaluating overall expenditures related to gender equality.²¹
- Adopt GAP III as a policy document, including a strategy and action plan with a budget. It should take into consideration lessons learned from GAP II.
- Adopt an accompanying Staff Working Document that can support continued capacity development and changes of attitude within the EU, towards enhancing the implementation of other policies towards gender equality.

Ensure an Inclusive Drafting Process

- Ensure practitioners, including program officers from EUDs and gender focal points, and diverse WCSOs knowledgeable of GAP II (including those working at the national level), are engaged in drafting GAP III, towards enhancing its applicability and implementability.

Attend to Men, Boys and Gender Relations

- Include more attention to men, boys and gender relations, while ensuring that inequalities facing women are prioritized. Areas to consider may include introducing early education curricula that transforms gender norms and relations; improving conditions for paternity leave towards more balanced roles in the private sphere, as foreseen in the new Work-Life Balance Directive; and tackling power relations, such as through correctional programs. Utilize context specific gender analyses to identify relevant programs.

Ensure Continuity and Political Prioritization

- Ensure some continuity between GAP II and GAP III objectives and indicators so that long-term impact on key gender inequalities can be monitored and evaluated. These should be aligned with the EU Results Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Strongly encourage EUDs to establish baselines and targets as part of the 2019 annual GAP II reporting in early 2020. These could be used in planning GAP III, enabling continuity. Setting targets also could enable greater accountability in reporting progress over time.
- Deliver a stronger message to EUDs with GAP III that gender equality is not optional or extra, but a fundamental value of the EU and, as such, furthering gender equality is a requirement for most EU programming. In addition to placing these requirements in the coming Common Implementing Regulation of the Union’s external financial instruments, continue supporting attitude changes and knowledge advancement among EU staff regarding the importance of furthering gender equality through programming, as well as practical techniques for doing so.

¹⁹ See: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment/what-gender-impact-assessment>.

²⁰ For further information regarding OECD/DAC requirements related to the gender marker, see: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm>.

²¹ For example, this could be included in a paragraph after the current CIR, Article 14. EIGE guidance can be followed: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-budgeting-mainstreaming-gender-eu-budget-and-macroeconomic-policy-framework>.

Strengthen and Hone GAP III Indicators, Baselines and Targets

- Review closely GAP II indicators to inform GAP III. Establish clear indicators to measure changes at each level of the GAP III intervention logic: impact, outcome and output. Clear indicators at each level are important for measuring short-term, mid-term and long-term changes.
- Consider reducing the number of indicators related to institutional cultural shift, focusing on key, strategic indicators.
- Ensure indicators are disaggregated by sex, where relevant.
- Establish clearer objectives and indicators that earmark “dedicated funding” for furthering gender equality and women’s rights. Earmark funds specifically for WCSOs.
- Improve data collection, maintenance and regular reporting on EU funding allocated and spent on each of the following respective categories within the new EU operational information system (OPSYS) and other systems:
 - Furthering gender equality;
 - Furthering women’s and girls’ rights; and
 - Supporting WCSOs as key actors in furthering gender equality.

Simplify Reporting

- Several opportunities exist to simplify reporting on GAP implementation, detailed in Annex 2. These will contribute to a more user-friendly reporting process and decrease human error.

Institutionalize Gender Equality Review and Continue Developing Staff Capacities

- In Brussels, Human Resources urgently need to update templates for job descriptions and contracts to include relevant responsibilities related to furthering gender equality within positions at all levels. Perhaps draw from the work of the European External Action Service (EEAS) in this regard.
- Establish a standardized process of gender quality assurance with gender experts reviewing all programs from a gender perspective. A clear process of quality review pertaining to gender equality should be established at delegation level, with adequate resources allocated. The experience of MSs, such as the Austrian Development Agency and Swedish International Development Agency could prove informative.
- Consider establishing full-time gender adviser positions in all delegations in both programming and political sections for large delegations and as a shared position for smaller delegations.
- Establish obligatory training for all staff at all levels. Allocate resources for tailored coaching for staff in gender equality related to their work.

ANNEX 1. GAP II INDICATORS NOT DISAGGREGATED BY SEX

This annex was taken directly from Annex 4 of Farnsworth and Banjska for the Kosovo Women's Network, Mind the GAP:

Several GAP II indicators do not request data that is disaggregated by sex, such as the following that relate to the EURF:

- 7.5. N# of individuals directly benefiting from Justice, Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform programmes funded by EU
- 9.6. N# of individuals directly benefiting from EU supported programmes that specifically aim to support civil and post-conflict peace building and/ or conflict prevention
- 10.4. N# of people with advance HIV infection receiving antiretroviral drugs with EU support
- 10.5. N# of 1-year olds immunised with EU support
- 12.5. N# of women of all ages, but especially at reproductive age, and children under 5 benefiting from nutrition related programmes with EU support
- 12.6. N# of food insecure people receiving assistance through social transfers supported by the EU
- 13.7 N# of children enrolled in primary education with EU support
- 13.8 N# of children enrolled in secondary education with EU support
- 13.9 N# of teachers trained with EU support
- 13.10. Ratio of female to male who have benefitted from Vocational Education and Training / Skills development and other active labour market programmes with EU support
- 16.1. Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source
- 16.7. N# of people with access to all season roads with EU support.

Additional GAP II indicators besides those related to the EURF also do not request sex-disaggregated data. Sex-disaggregated data is essential for a Gender Action Plan in order to enable accurate reporting.

ANNEX 2. HOW TO SIMPLIFY REPORTING

This annex contains several specific recommendations as to how the EU can simplify reporting on GAP II.

- Institutionalize reporting related to programming by including key indicators inside OPSYS. This will enhance accountability, decrease human error, improve the quality and accuracy of data, decrease time required for reporting, and reduce administrative burdens related to annual reporting on GAP. Data then can be withdrawn from the system in a more consistent form. More specifically, add to OPSYS the following obligatory questions that relate to GAP II:²²
 - 1) Was a gender analysis conducted to inform the design of the program? Yes/No
 - 2) If no, has it been planned to be conducted at a later date
 - 3) Were Gender Equality Mechanisms consulted in the program design? Yes/No
 - 4) Were women's rights organisations consulted in the program design? Yes/No
 - 5) Were all relevant indicators disaggregated by sex? Yes/No
 - 6) Was the program commented on by a gender expert and subsequently revised as part of quality assurance review? Yes/No
 - 7) Does it have at least one objective towards gender equality? Yes/No
 - 8) Does it have an indicator for that objective? Yes/No
 - 9) Is it a gender marker: 0/1/2 [*Note that the system should then check if "yes" was selected for questions 1, 7, and 8, and if not, an error message should appear.*]
 - 10) If gender marker 0, please provide a justification. [*This should be obligatory.*]
 - 11) Which GAP II objectives does it contribute to? [*Drop down box; select all that apply.*]
 - 12) Which GAP II indicators does it contribute to? [*Drop down box; select all that apply.*]
 - 13) What is the baseline for this objective?
 - 14) What is the target for this objective?
 - 15) Was gender included in the evaluation? Yes/No
 - 16) If yes, what were the recommendations?
- Establish a system for regularly reporting on gender equality issues raised during political dialogues that can be updated regularly rather than annually, towards decreasing memory error.
- Rather than excel sheets, utilize an online survey instrument to collect and analyse data, thereby easing individual reporting, making more efficient use of human resources, and improving the accuracy of the data.

²² Additional recommendations for OPSYS are available upon request from the Kosovo Women's Network, based on a policy brief that they developed to inform the design of OPSYS from a gender perspective. Contact: Info@womensnetwork.org.



**STRENGTHENING EU SUPPORT
TO GENDER EQUALITY
THROUGH EXTERNAL ACTION:
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE THIRD
EU GENDER ACTION PLAN**

February, 2020

**— KVINNA
— KVINNA
— KVINNA**

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Photo caption: Members of Kvinna till Kvinna's partner organisations in North Macedonia together with Kvinna till Kvinna's Swedish goodwill ambassador Fanna Ndow Norrby.

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ACRONYMS

COM	Communication
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DG NEAR	Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
GAP II	Gender Action Plan II
GM	Gender Marker
IPA II	Instrument for Pre-Accession
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
MTR	Mid-term Review
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
OPSYS	Operational Information Systems
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWD	Staff Working Document

Introduction

In 2015, the EU adopted the **Gender Action Plan II** (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020). The GAP II built on lessons learnt from and achievements of GAP I while expanding its scope of intervention and introducing some novelties. Firstly, it relied not just on the European Commission services but also the European External Action Service and the EU Member States for its implementation. Secondly, it covered activities not only in developing countries but also in the enlargement, neighbourhood, fragile, conflict-affected and post-conflict countries. Thirdly, it focused on shifting the way in which the EU works with gender equality within the institutions by introducing the "institutional culture shift" objectives. Finally, it set the ambitious target of having 85% of new actions scoring either OECD/DAC GM1 (gender as significant objective) or GM2 (gender as principal objective) by 2020.

The new GAP II aimed to bring about a **transformation in the way in which the EU supports gender equality in third countries**. It was built on the need to bridge institutional divides and bring various EU institutions and Member States together to work jointly towards common goals. The GAP II ensured a coherent policy approach, similar commitments and same targets in diverse partner countries including accession, developing, fragile or conflict-affected or post-conflict countries. Finally, it signaled that the "business as usual" approach to gender equality would no longer be accepted and that the EU would significantly shift and improve its working practices by introducing, among others, the consistent use of gender evidence to inform EU policy-making, programming and spending. This revised approach would allow EU institutions to meet the ambitious commitments and make a difference for women and girls in partner countries beyond rhetoric.

The **Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation** has been following the GAP II and its implementation since 2016. Its **partner organisations** in several regions reached out to EU Delegations to seek information on EU's engagement on gender equality in their country, offered their expertise and understanding of issues affecting local women and girls and preventing their full enjoyment of rights, contributed to its implementation as implementing partners through dedicated funding (both service contracts and grants). To collect facts and learnings about the implementation of GAP II, in 2018, the Kosova Women's Network carried out an evaluation of the implementation of GAP II in the Western Balkans, with support by Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, and in 2019 the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation commissioned an independent evaluation of the implementation of GAP II in Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon.

This paper aims to gather reflections and learnings on the GAP II and to put forward recommendations to feed into the upcoming consultations for the next EU Gender Action Plan for external relations. We strongly recommend **the EU to capitalise on the success stories of GAP II, reaffirm its commitments and fix some of its weaknesses** to be able to project its support into the next decade. The EU should live up to its ambition to be a principled, effective and reliable actor on gender equality in partner countries and a credible voice for women and girls on the global arena.

¹ [Mind the GAP - an Independent Evaluation of the Implementation of the GAP II in Western Balkan Countries](#)

Recommendations for DG for International Cooperation and Development, DG NEAR, EEAS and Member States

GAP III should:

Visibility, Transparency and Inclusivity

- 1) Be published as an **EU official communication** to signal the importance of the policy
- 2) Be accompanied by a **Visibility and Communication Strategy**, both inside and outside the EU
- 3) Be designed through a **transparent and inclusive process** including key stakeholders (EU institutions, EU Member States and civil society both in Europe and in partner countries)

Consultation and Involvement of Civil Society Organisations

- 4) Build a **meaningful partnership** with international and local civil society organisations, including specifically **women's and girls' rights organisations**, for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of GAP III
- 5) Introduce a **stand-alone objective on involving women's rights and girls' rights organisations** in identifying priorities, validating gender analysis and contributing to GAP III as implementing partners
- 6) Establish a **GAP III reference group in partner countries** with representatives of women's and girls' rights organisations to be consulted bi-annually by the EU Delegations for GAP III planning and implementation
- 7) **Recognise the detrimental impact of shrinking civic space** on women's and girls' rights organisations and activists in partner countries and use GAP III to build and defend their operating space

Institutional Culture Shift and Thematic Priorities

- 8) Strengthen the Institutional Culture Change Objectives by establishing **more ambitious minimum standards for GAP III** and introduce a system of **rewards and sanctions** to encourage implementation
- 9) **Require gender analysis, gender budgeting and gender impact assessments** to be at the core of all EU programming, spending and policy-making for external action
- 10) Ensure **continuity of GAP II thematic priorities/objectives** into GAP III to build on the results already achieved and to avoid disruption due to lack of alignment between policy and programming cycles

Coordination and Cross-fertilisation with other Thematic and Geographic Policies

- 11) Ensure GAP III will continue to apply to **development, accession, neighbourhood, fragile, conflict and post-conflict countries**
- 12) Ensure **GAP III informs and is complemented by other EU thematic and geographic policies**, in particular the Accession and Neighbourhood Policy, the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security, the EU Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan and the EU Engagement with Civil Society in External Relations
- 13) Include context relevant GAP objectives **in EU Partnership Priorities** with partner countries, in specific **Country Strategies** and in the **Single Support Frameworks**

Alignment of EU policy, programming and funding cycles

- 14) **Align EU policy, programming and funding cycles** to the extent possible to ensure GAP III informs programming and spending decisions over its implementation period

Human and Financial Resources

- 15) Set up and resource adequately a **Gender Facility at DG NEAR and EEAS** (similar to the one in DG for International Cooperation and Development) to provide support to staff, coordinate GAP III across the institutions and ensure coordination with other thematic and geographic policies led by DG NEAR and EEAS
- 16) Appoint **full-time Gender Experts** both in Brussels and in EU Delegations and provide them with adequate support, mandate and resources
- 17) Include **specific GAP III responsibilities in job descriptions** of all relevant staff including Directors, Heads of Units, Heads of Delegations, political and programming staff
- 18) **Earmark funding for the implementation of GAP III in the next generation** of EU external funding instruments 2021-2027, in particular in the NDICI and IPA III
- 19) Keep the target of **85% GM1** of all EU actions and introduce a target of **20% for GM2**

Monitoring and Accountability

- 20) Improve the **clarity and readability of the annual reports** and the possibility to extract useful and complete information and data on EU's support to gender equality in partner countries
- 21) Introduce **clear baselines, targets and indicators** at the right level of intervention in the monitoring framework to monitor both progress in implementation and results of EU actions
- 22) **Publish contributions of EU institutions, Delegations and Member States to annual reports** as a key transparency and accountability measure
- 23) Introduce a **simple online reporting tool** to reduce burden on reporting officers
- 24) Include **basic questions on the GAP III in OPSYS²** to allow for automatically generated data / information on programming to feed into the GAP III reports
- 25) Investigate whether the GM is used in a correct way and draw learnings
- 26) Track **how much of the EU funding for gender equality is channeled to:**
 - a. National Gender Equality Mechanisms
 - b. UN entities and other international organisations
 - c. international and local CSOs
 - d. women right's organisations specifically

² See specific recommendations developed by Kosova Women's Network on this topic.

Lessons learnt from GAP II

Visibility, transparency and inclusivity

The GAP II was adopted as a SWD and suffered from limited visibility and political clout. The nature of internal SWD, generally used to accompany EU official Communications (COM), provided the policy with limited political clout both inside and outside the EU, despite the endorsement by EU Member States in the Council Conclusions of 26 October 2015. Although the SWD included clear language on the mandatory nature of the policy, it was not perceived as such. The lack of a communication and visibility strategy for GAP II both within the EU and in partner countries (where the policy is only available in English) also contributed to its limited visibility vis-à-vis EU citizens and stakeholders in partner countries.

The awareness of GAP II and its specific commitments by EU Delegations and Member States embassies also varied considerably in partner countries, according to the two evaluations conducted by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation. Furthermore, CSOs in partner countries reported to have had limited awareness of EU commitments under the GAP II, even when they were implementing partners. Visibility and transparency of EU's engagement on gender equality through external action is key to ensure the success of the policy and uptake by responsible staff in EU institutions, EU Delegations and Member States. Transparency should also inform the process of designing the GAP III and communication around its timeline, stakeholders involved and timing for consultations with civil society.

Consultation with and involvement of civil society organisations

Consultation with and involvement of civil society organisations in partner countries has not been a clear priority for GAP II. Only one Action (4.3) called on the EU Delegations to consult with civil society organisations working on girls' and women's rights (as well as Gender Equality Mechanisms) to inform country-level programming. The findings of the two evaluations carried out by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and partner organisations indicate that women right's organisations and other civil society organisations were generally neither consulted for nor informed about the choice of thematic objectives by the EU Delegation and only in two cases were contracted / consulted for the gender analysis.³

Furthermore, it is hard to quantify civil society's involvement in the implementation of GAP II as there is no available data on the funding allocated under the GAP II to actors, including civil society organisations. Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation's evaluations found that even where civil society organisations were receiving grants from the EU in partner countries on gender equality issues they were often not aware of their role as implementing partners of GAP II.⁴ The new GAP III should foresee much stronger partnership with civil society organisations and women's organisations specifically who with their proximity to women and girls in partner countries, understanding of their needs and ability to identify key priorities, are essential to the successful implementation of the policy.

³ In the Western Balkans, two partners of the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation were awarded service contracts to carry out the gender analyses for the EU Delegation / Office and to support gender mainstreaming of the EU and national government's programmes and policies.

⁴ This was reported by Kvinna till Kvinna partners in Jordan in the course of the evaluation carried out in 2019

Women rights' organisations and Activists in GAP II – Defending and Enabling Civic Space

Women's rights organisations and activists are personally and professionally affected by multiple forms of shrinking space in a profoundly gendered way. Restrictive legislation on CSOs funding, heavy administrative procedures, public defamation and slander, travel bans, threats to women activists and their families on-line and off-line are among the most common tactics to silence and discourage activism on women's and girls' rights in many countries.⁵ **Objective 18 of GAP II was specifically introduced to defend and build the civic space for women's organisations, other CSOs and individual activists working for gender equality.** While this objective is key and should be maintained in the next GAP, the current formulation and proposed activities lack a clear reference to the importance of an active role of women's rights organisations and activists in this area, as opposed to mere recipients of EU support (be it political or financial).

EU Delegations should foresee **a direct and regular dialogue with the women's organisations in question to identify the challenges** they face and discuss priority actions by EU which could be supported under the GAP. In order to ensure that the EU delivers the right type of support to women's rights organisations and activists, the EU delegations should:

- Map out women's rights organisations and their expertise / areas of work
- Analyse specific obstacles (be it legislative, administrative, political, security) facing women's rights organisations and activists restricting their operating space
- Listen to the requests and needs of women's rights organisations and activists to ensure they can operate freely
- Ensure they directly contribute to the implementation of the GAP not just as implementing partners but also as key experts
- Simplify process of applying for EU grants and make more substantial use of sub-granting procedures to ensure small-size organisations can access EU funding

Institutional Culture Shift and Thematic Priorities

The introduction of the **Institutional Culture Shift objectives and related minimum standards**⁶ constituted one of the great novelties of the GAP II. The justification of an action marked GM 0, the consistent use of gender analysis and of sex disaggregated data to inform policy and programming, the timely use of gender expertise available and the selection of thematic objectives to report on were considered prerequisites for the EU's implementation of its gender equality priorities yet their uptake by EU institutions, Delegations and Member States has been sketchy. Actions marked GM 0 have not always been justified, the gender analysis at the correct level of intervention has often been elusive and it has not always contributed to the selection of objectives by the EUDs. However, while implementation of these objectives has been uneven, the reasoning behind their adoption remains valid and should be kept in GAP III to ensure the EU builds on the good effort that some Institutions / Delegations / Member States put into achieving them.

⁵ See Kvinna till Kvinna report [Suffocating the movement: shrinking space for women's rights](#) (2018)

⁶ In particular, the minimum standards mandated by 2016: the use of OECD/DAC Gender Marker 0 always be justified; the gender analysis for all priority sectors carried out; sex-disaggregated data used in project and programme cycle and programming; gender expertise is available and used in a timely manner in the programme cycle and programming; thematic objectives selected (by EU Institutions and Delegations) to be reported on.

Also, **GAP II thematic priorities⁷ are still relevant today**. However, both EU annual reports and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation evaluations show that the flexible system of selection of thematic objectives to report on is not widely understood and is not yielding the expected results. Not all Member States and EUDs select the objectives to report on, leading possibly to an underreporting of actions, and many are not linking the selection of objectives to the mandatory gender analysis. The Kvinna till Kvinna assessments found that, where gender analysis was not directly informing the choice of thematic objectives by EU Delegations, there was a discrepancy between the objectives selected and the priorities perceived by women rights' organisations in the partner country. Finally, the 2018 Annual Report of GAP II shows a very limited up-take of Objectives 8 (trafficking and exploitation) and 20 (women in decision-making on climate and environment)⁸ which is a cause of concern as it suggests that certain themes are not considered priorities anywhere.⁹

Coordination and Cross-fertilization with other EU Thematic and Geographic Policies

Another key novelty of GAP II consisted in the decision to **widen its geographic scope** to accession, neighbourhood, fragile, conflict and post-conflict countries in addition to development countries, thereby ensuring a coherent approach across EU partner countries. GAP II and other EU thematic and geographic policies such as the EU Neighbourhood Policy, the EU Accession/Enlargement negotiations policy and criteria, the Human Rights Country Strategies and the Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security are clearly intertwined but evidence suggests they are not consistently complementing each other.

The Western Balkans Strategy¹⁰ (with the annexed Six Flagship Initiatives) adopted in 2018, two years after the GAP II, fails to either refer or include GAP II commitments. On the contrary, the Partnership Priorities developed by the EU and Jordan include a specific reference to EU's support to gender equality through the GAP and this is reflected in the Single Support Framework for Jordan (2014-2020) which allocates 5% of funding through the Civil Society provision for targeted support to the implementation of the GAP II. As the GAP II did not have an allocated budget, limited or no references to its commitments in other country- and region-specific policies and bilateral agreements between the EU and partner countries may translate in the lack of funding for gender equality priorities. For this reason, there should be greater uptake of GAP II commitments in other EU thematic and geographic policies linked to specific funding allocations and in bilateral agreements such as the Partnership Priorities.

Alignment of Policy, Funding and Programming Cycles

EU policy, programming and funding cycles in partner countries are not aligned. This has a considerable impact on the implementation of a 5-year policy as there is at least a two-year interval between a decision on programming and the beginning of its implementation. This means that, as the GAP II draws to a close in 2020, programmes which may have been funded under it would have just started implementation. Results of programmes and projects developed and funded during GAP II will, therefore, only be observed after the official implementation period of GAP II has ended. This creates a visible gap between policy-making and programming / funding cycles which needs to be fixed.

⁷ B: ensuring women's and girl's physical and psychological integrity; C: promoting social and economic rights / empowerment of women and girls; D: strengthening women's and girls' voices and participation.

⁸ See the full list of objectives in Annex 1.

⁹ See figure 6, page 23, 2018 Annual Report on GAP II.

¹⁰ [A Credible Enlargement Perspective for an enhanced EU Engagement in the Western Balkans](#) (2018)

Human and Financial Resources

In-house human resources to support implementation of GAP III should be **commensurate to the level of EU's ambition**. While GAP II included ambitious objectives, the human resources dedicated to achieving them have been scarce. Full-time Gender Experts both in Brussels and EU Delegations are crucial to ensure adequate implementation of the policy and should be adequately empowered. Evaluations by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundations found that they are often double-hatted, over-stretched and insufficiently supported by their hierarchy. Furthermore, the 2018 Annual Report of GAP II indicates that only 10% of Gender Focal Persons thought that their functions were reflected in their job descriptions. The successor of GAP II should ensure that job descriptions of staff at all levels including Director, Head of Unit and Head of Delegation level, be revised to include clear responsibilities to implement gender equality commitments.

GAP II prescribed a target of 85% of EU actions which consider either gender equality as a principal objective (GM1) or as a significant objective (GM2) to be achieved by 2020. This target focuses on the number of actions marked and not on the amount of funds committed. Although the Gender Marker is an important tool, it is insufficient to capture EU actual allocations and expenditures for gender equality in partner countries. **In fact, it is still impossible to determine how much is committed to gender mainstreaming and how much is committed to specific actions intended to contribute to gender equality in partner countries.** Also, both the EU Annual Reports and the Kvinna till Kvinna evaluations suggest that the GM has not always been used correctly, possibly leading to misrepresentation in the amount of actions marked GM1. Finally, the close to zero percentage of actions marked GM2 in 2018¹¹ show that, for an increase in actions having gender as a principal objective, there needs to be a specific target for actions marked GM2.

In addition, the MTR of the external funding instruments of the EU carried out in 2017 offered some insights on the extent to which EU external funding instruments mainstreamed gender equality but no indication of whether results for women and girls were achieved in partner countries and how they could be improved, as mandated by the GAP II. The MTR evaluation of the **Instrument for Pre-Accession** found that there was a “lack of comprehensive horizontal issues (Roma, gender, child rights, disability aspects, climate action, security issues) in policy papers and programming”.¹² The evaluators recommended that “the integration of horizontal themes should be increased (e.g. for gender: gender analyses, gender disaggregated data for all sectors, gender responsive budgeting, alignment of IPA II with the GAP II)”.¹³

Monitoring and Accountability

Reporting and monitoring of GAP II has been **challenging** according to both EU and Member States staff. Four clusters of issues emerged from the EU annual reports and from the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation's evaluations. First, the absence of agreed baselines and clear targets for each indicator made it hard to report on progress towards achieving each objective. Second, the qualitative and quantitative indicators were not always set at the right level of the intervention logic (be it at output, outcome or impact level) resulting in the collection of information and data which did not necessarily spoke to the related objective. Third, the incorrect use of the Gender Marker may have resulted in misrepresentation of EU actions. Fourth, reporting officers found the reporting mechanism burdensome (where data had to be manually entered in an excel file), confusing (in particular with regards to the Gender Marker) and time-consuming.

¹¹ According to the 2018 Annual Report, in 2018 for the Southern Neighbourhood 0,3%, for the Eastern Neighbourhood 2,6% and Enlargement countries 0,6% of actions were marked GM2.

¹² Page 37, Evaluation of the Instrument for Pre-Accession (2017).

¹³ Ibid. page 37.

Much can be done to improve the monitoring framework of the GAP and ensure that relevant data is captured and shared annually. GAP III indicators should be closely aligned to SDG indicators and include indicators from the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security. Also, to generate data automatically GAP III indicators should be included in OPSYS, the EU platform designed to manage the EU external relations programmes and projects, which allows for aggregation of results and it is also accessible to implementing partners and the general public. A **simplified online tool**, such as a survey with multiple choice answers, should replace the current excel files and allow for a more intuitive, time-saving and user-friendly process. An improved monitoring framework should also be coupled with an annual report more geared towards sharing **clear and understandable data on EU's contribution to gender equality in partner countries**, including summaries of EU actions and spending contributing to GAP objectives in each country. This would in turn strengthen the EU's accountability to both EU citizens and beneficiaries of EU actions, including specifically women and girls in partner countries.

Annex I

GAP II Thematic Priorities and Objectives

A. Thematic Priority: Institutional Culture Shift

1. Increased coherence and coordination amongst EU institutions and with Member States
2. Dedicated leadership on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment established in EU institutions and Member States
3. Sufficient resources allocated by EU institutions and Member States to deliver on EU gender policy commitments
4. Robust gender evidence used to inform all EU external spending, programming and policy making
5. Results for women and girls measured and resources allocated to systematically track progress
6. Partnership fostered between EU and stakeholders to build national capacity for gender equality

B. Thematic Priority: Physical and psychological Integrity

7. Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and private sphere
8. Trafficking of girls and women for all forms of exploitation eliminated
9. Protection for all women and men of all ages from sexual and gender-based violence in crisis situations; through EU supported operations
10. Equal access to quality preventive, curative and rehabilitative physical and mental health care services for women and girls
11. Promoted, protected and fulfilled right of every individual to have full control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence
12. Healthy nutrition levels for girls and women and throughout their life cycle

C. Thematic Priority: Economic Social and Cultural Rights

13. Equal access for all girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination
14. Access to decent work for women of all ages
15. Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship
16. Equal access and control over water, energy, transport, infrastructure and equitable engagement in their management, enjoyed by girls and women

D. Thematic Priority: Political Rights and Participation

17. Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels
18. Women's organisations and other CSOs and Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights freely able to work and protected by the law
19. Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes
20. Equal rights enjoyed by women to participate in and influence decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues

Lumos' Recommendations to the third Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations

1. Introduction

Lumos is an international NGO founded by author J.K. Rowling, working to end the institutionalisation of children worldwide by 2050. For more information about the institutionalisation of children, please visit our website.¹

2. The gender-based dimension of the institutionalisation of children around the world

Gender-based discrimination as a driver of institutionalisation

Discrimination is one of the drivers of the institutionalisation of children.² Over 2,5 billion women and girls around the world are affected by discriminatory laws and the lack of legal protections.³ Those discriminatory laws make it more difficult for families, and in particular single-mother households, to raise a child. Research has shown that mothers that raise children on their own experience higher rates of poverty compared to dual-parent households.⁴ This makes it more likely for these women to leave a child in an institution, as they might feel they cannot adequately care for the child. It also happens that single mothers see themselves forced to migrate in order to find a job, and consequently children are left in institutional care.⁵ Moreover, policies originally designed to sustain, protect and support families are not always sufficiently adapted to the families of today such as single parent households, which are mostly led by women (84.3%).⁶

Also, as we can tell from our professional experience with children with a history of institutional care and their families, there are cases where single mothers abandon their children at birth because of discriminatory attitudes within the community or society towards them. Violence against women within families can be another reason why children eventually end up in institutions, and so can be unwanted teenage pregnancies.

The overrepresentation of girls in institutions

Some parents still prefer the birth of a boy over a girl, which can result in prenatal sex selection (in Georgia 112 boys are being born to every 100 girls⁷), but also in rejection of girls at birth, which can lead to a disproportionate number of girls in institutions.⁸

Increased risks for girls in institutions

The gender gap is even larger when gender inequality intersects with other forms of exclusion.⁹ Growing up in a segregated institution, deprived of the right to family life, is a form of exclusion as well. Apart from the risks of institutionalisation that account for all children, girls in institution often face a higher risk of sexual abuse.¹⁰ Furthermore, girls with disabilities face a greater risk of being victims of forced sterilisation when living in institutions.¹¹

¹ <https://wearelumos.org>

² Csáky, C. (2009) Keeping children out of harmful institutions: why we should be investing in family-based care, *Save the Children*, p. vii; Chiwaula, L. et al. (2014). Drumming together for change: A child's right to quality care in Sub-Saharan Africa. *The Centre for Excellence for looked after children in Scotland (CELCIS)*.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Rense Nieuwenhuis and Laurie C. Maldonado, Eds. *The triple bind of singleparent families. Resources, employment and policies to improve well-being*. Policy Press 2018.

⁵ Julie Turkewitz (2020), "Nearly a Million Children Left Behind in Venezuela as Parents Migrate", *The New York Times*.

⁶ Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, "Gender-based discrimination as a driver of the institutionalization of children", In: *A Goal Within Reach: Ending the Institutionalization of children to ensure no one is left behind* (2019), p. 43

⁷ Preventing Gender-biased sex selection in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, UNFPA, Issue Brief 4, 2015

⁸ The Guardian, 'From India with Love', 2007, cited in Csaky, C., *Keeping Children out of Harmful Institutions*, Save the Children, 2009.

⁹ Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020. *SWD(2015) 182 final*, p. 3.

¹⁰ Research on child sexual abuse in both foster care settings and residential institutions in the Netherlands shows that in 95% of the reported cases the victims were girls. Euser, S., Alink, L. R. A., Tharner, A., van IJendoorn, M. H., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (2013). The Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse in Out-of-Home Care: A Comparison Between Abuse in Residential and in Foster Care. *Child Maltreatment*, 18(4), 221–231. 8

¹¹ United Nations General Assembly (2006) Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence Against Children. A/61/299 P.16.

Also in migration transit sites and accommodation centres the risk of sexual violence and abuse is extremely high for women and girls, which has to do with a lack of clear information and ability to access (female) interpreters, a lack of sex segregated facilities such as restrooms, a lack of designated spaces for women and children within shelters, and overcrowding.¹²

3. Lumos' recommendations to the third Action Plan on Gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations

Following the EU's and international acknowledgement of the harm caused by institutionalisation and commitment to supporting the shift from institutional to family- and community-based care in both its internal and external action, as well as the EU's commitment to promote gender equality in external relations, **Lumos recommends that the next Action Plan:**

- 1. Highlights the relation between gender-based discrimination and institutionalisation of children, and includes activities which contribute to a gender-responsive social protection system.** Lumos welcomes the fact that the current gender Action Plan (GAP II) addresses gender-based discrimination, which is a driver of the institutionalisation of children, and promotes access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights. Moreover, Lumos is encouraged to see that GAP II acknowledges that girls and women facing poverty have even less control over decisions that affect them and over resources at all levels.¹³ However, in order to improve policies that sustain families, it is of high importance to specifically highlight the relation between gender-based discrimination and the institutionalisation of children, as well as the current lack of services in many countries to support different types of families, such as single-parent households.
- 2. Addresses girls' vulnerable position when they are not protected by a family or family-based environment, specifically by acknowledging the high risks girls face when placed in residential settings, and by introducing actions to reduce those risks.** Lumos welcomes that one of the three thematic pillars in GAP II is "ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity". However, due to the overrepresentation of girls in institutions, as well as the increased risk of violence and abuse girls face in residential settings (this can be a children's institution as well as a migrant reception centre) Lumos would like to see their situation specifically addressed in the next Action Plan. This could be done by encouraging actions which reduce the risk of abuse in residential settings, such as sex-segregated facilities and training of staff, as well as the development of special care leaver programmes for girls.
- 3. Includes indicators and activities targeting children in institutions in its monitoring and evaluation framework, and encourages EU actors to deliver sex-disaggregated data on children outside of households when reporting on the different indicators.** Lumos encourages the European Commission to continue its monitoring and evaluation efforts as laid down in GAP II in the forthcoming Action Plan. However, too often, children outside of households are not counted in monitoring frameworks. To get an accurate picture of the progress being made on the several objectives regarding gender equality in external relations in the forthcoming Gender Action Plan, it is crucial to include children outside of households in the monitoring framework, especially as girls in institutional settings are likely to face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020. *SWD (2015) 182 final*, p. 7 and 10.

People in Need - GAP III Position Paper

How to maximize GAP III Impact

The European Union has to ensure that all relevant staff within the European Commission/EEAS and Delegations have sufficient resources (expertise, institutional and financial) for mainstreaming gender within the EU external action. It should also make compulsory the preparation of gender analyses to inform all EU external spending, programming and policy-making. Most importantly, gender analysis should be required at programme or project formulation stage. For instance, when publishing its Calls for Proposals, the European Commission should constantly ask the applicants to carry out such an analysis and use it for the programme/project design and implementation. It has to stress furthermore that key gender considerations should not only be mentioned at the design stage, but also be assessed throughout and at the end of the implementation process (using M&E tools). The use of gender specific indicators has therefore to become mandatory in order to ensure that progress and results in the field of gender equality are measured.

Moreover, a successful GAP III will ensure that budgets from partners and NGOs allocate a significant portion to gender mainstreaming within their projects. Since the work to change gender stereotypes and build meaningful interventions entails a long-term intervention, the part of the budget for gender issues must be a permanent resource throughout the years, and not be limited to a one-time initiative.

A successful GAP III implementation needs gender expertise within its partners (NGOs, CSOs, etc.) GAP III should focus on supporting a pool of local experts (gender focal points, gender experts, gender advisors, etc) to create awareness on gender issues, cascade knowledge to the teams and partners (via trainings and ToTs), and mainstream gender in the response, including policies and strategies.

Additionally, GAP III would benefit from a flexibilization of the association and partnership policies of the EASS, considering the growing emergence of social movements and self-summoned groups, which are not part of the traditional NGO models. There must be more flexibility to accept different groups for partnership and take advantage for new expertise in many aspects, such as gender.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality must be at the core of the Gender Action Plan III, functioning as a backbone allowing us to analyse gender from a broader perspective, in order to address all experiences of discrimination and oppression that leave most people on the margins.

Without an intersectional lens, all efforts to confront inequalities and injustice towards women are likely to just end up perpetuating systems of inequalities. The “woman” concept is not a full category that alone defines all relationships to power, but there are other faces of identity and circumstances such as race, class, different gender identities, sexual orientation,



physical ability, mental health, migration status, etc, which are crucial to analyse while working on women's rights issues. The work towards women's rights must be intersectional. Gender actions that will purely represent the experiences of white, middle class, able-bodied, heterosexual etc. women will fail to achieve equality for all.

In this regard, GAP III should not only focus on women issues, but also consider non-binary categories, including LGBTIQ (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, intersexuals, queer) agenda. Keeping in mind that gender problematics concern not only girls and women, but also people with different sexualities/sexual identities, who can suffer from gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms, lack of sexual and reproductive rights, as well as from gender-based violence and harassment. Advancing social rights for LGBTIQ is essential to achieve gender equality. Therefore, the gender analysis conducted before implementation must be intersectional as well, going beyond the binary opposition "male/female", and defining gender issues, including multiple discrimination as a key point for GAP III implementation.

Social and Economic Rights

The social and economic recognition of the unpaid household and care work, mostly carried out by women, is one of the key points to achieve gender equality. Thus, with its new GAP, the EU should re-evaluate care work within the EEAS interventions and within the projects implemented by partners (including NGOs), in order to contribute to decreasing sexist dynamics, as well as labour and social inequalities.

Regarding women labour rights, an inclusive GAP III will also advocate for sex-workers' social and economic rights by promoting a decent work agenda, labour rights and working conditions, inclusive and non-discriminatory social protection, access to basic services, healthcare, contraception, etc. It's crucial to work on preventing and addressing violence and harassment in the world of sex-work, promote safe and secure working environments for migrant sex-workers, and support information and awareness-rising campaigns for sex-workers' rights, develop data collection and research on sex-work issues.

Women political participation

Although political parties are one of the pillars of democratic systems, and therefore have the responsibility to ensure that their internal structures are inclusive and representative, in many regions of the world they are small microcosms where gender inequalities are heavily reproduced. Experience has shown that the adoption of gender quotas was insufficient to ensure meaningful participation of women and other traditionally marginalised groups, who are still not enough (or not at all) represented in parliaments and governments, especially in leadership roles.

Thus, a successful GAP III has to promote the integration of women's voices in all policies areas, especially those in which women are less likely to be represented, such as finance, defence and security. Interesting measures could be focused on providing direct support to women through training sessions and mentoring, supporting political parties to conduct gender audits and promoting the creation of spaces for women (and other marginalized groups) within the political parties to reinvent structures and functioning dynamics.



PLAN INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO EU GENDER ACTION PLAN III CONSULTATION

As the EU and its Member States are renewing their commitment to gender equality and setting their vision for the successor of the [Gender Action Plan II](#) (GAP), we observe simultaneously unprecedented opportunities for women and girls and a backlash against their rights. **The GAP III is an opportunity for the EU to take a stand for girls and young women in all their diversity around the world** and to promote the achievement of SDG5 on gender equality, building on the priorities of the GAP II and strengthening its gender transformative approach. This paper aims to provide recommendations to strengthen key areas of the future GAP III, focusing on the main areas of work of Plan International.¹

Plan International welcomed the approach of the GAP II which recognises social norms, gender-based discrimination, intersectionality, and structural inequalities as significant factors that affect girls and women's economic, social and political life, and the necessity to support their agency in all areas. Plan International stresses the need to apply a **cross-cutting gender transformative approach** in all GAP actions. Implementing a gender transformative approach means:

- identifying and addressing social and gender norms throughout the life course;
- strengthening girls' agency, including through knowledge and equal access to resources;
- working with boys and men to embrace positive masculinities and promote gender equality;
- considering girls, boys, young women and young men in all their diversity when identifying and responding to their needs, including those with disabilities or who identify as LGTBQ+;
- seeking to improve the social position (value or status) of girls and young women in society;
- fostering enabling policy, budgetary and institutional frameworks to support girls, boys, young women and young men towards gender equality.

In addition, as an organisation working with and for children and youth with a focus on girls, we believe that it is essential to consider age as well as gender in all interventions and efforts targeting girls. Girls have specific needs that are distinct from those of adult women, yet when they are seen as part of wider groups such as 'children' or 'women of all ages', there is often a failure to recognise the unique challenges they face. **A life-cycle approach should be better integrated into all pillars and actions of the future GAP.** This goes beyond simply adding "girls" where "women" are mentioned: whenever referring to girls, the barriers and challenges they face as well as the proposed actions to overcome them should be made explicit. Moreover, **the GAP III should integrate and reflect in its actions the principle of intersectionality:** girls and women are not a homogeneous group and the inequality and discrimination they experience differ according to the combination of gender, age and other factors.

Themes and priorities

In addition to the three cross-cutting elements outlined above, for the GAP III to truly unlock the potential of girls and young women, we recommend the EU to focus on the following:

1) Ensure that girls thrive and grow up equally valued and cared for, free from discrimination, violence and fear: Challenging discriminatory social norms and unequal power dynamics between girls and boys and women and men is critical to ending all forms of gender-based violence in both development and emergency settings. The age factor is also critical: objectives and activities related to ending discrimination and violence against girls (including access to justice and the strengthening of child protection systems) need to respect the principles and rights contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, specific contexts or places where girls may be subject to violence, such as online, at school and in the city (in public transportation) should receive attention. This can improve girls' mobility and their opportunities and have a positive impact on their freedom of expression, their participation and their education. In conflicts and emergency settings, sexual and gender-based violence increases due to the breakdown of protection structures within communities. Girls and women can become systematic targets in conflict situations. Concerns regarding their safety can restrict their social roles and their free movement, create further barriers to accessing services and rights, and can lead displaced communities to resort to negative coping mechanisms such as child, early and forced marriage and child labour.

2) Ensure the right of all girls and young women to make their own free and informed choices and to have control over their sexual and reproductive health and lives, free from coercion, violence, discrimination and abuse. This covers different topics, such as the discrimination girls and women face from menstruation

¹ Plan International is an international development and humanitarian NGO. The EU hub strives to advance children's rights and gender equality for girls in the EU's external action. This paper was written with inputs from 11 national offices and the collaboration of [Equal Measures 2030](#)

taboos, adolescent pregnancy, information about and access to sexual and reproductive services, and fighting female genital mutilation/cutting and child, early and forced marriage.

3) Continue working on quality, inclusive education at all levels. Quality, inclusive education with a crosscutting gender transformative approach should aim to eradicate gender stereotypes and generate positive references for girls that inspire them to access technical careers and management positions. Moreover, education is a fundamental right that must be guaranteed in times of conflict and disaster.

4) Better reflect the life-cycle approach in actions supporting social and economic rights and empowerment. In childhood and adolescence this entails equal access to inheritance, birth registration, a reduced burden of unpaid care work through the promotion of shared responsibilities and investment in care services, access to financial and digital literacy, to technical and vocational education and training, and protection from child labour and all forms of exploitation. In young adulthood (age 18-24), young women need access to financial assets and services; skills for business and entrepreneurship; and access to decent work and labour standards, including most recent standards from the International Labour Organisation on sexual harassment in the world of work. In addition, the GAP III needs challenge gender norms and expectations about girls and young women's future role in the world of work, including by encouraging and enabling them to learn Science, Technology, Engineering and Math and Information, Communication and Technology skills.

5) For everyone to equally benefit from the digital transformation, it is important to recognise and address the digital gender gap. Actions may include developing digital skills and challenging discriminatory norms about girls' access to and use of the internet. Moreover, girls and young women use digital technology and online platforms to express themselves, including as a form of political participation. Online abuse and harassment, which predominantly affects girls and women, silences them and makes them withdraw from these spaces. Digital literacy and skills, as well as protection from online violence and harassment are key to support their empowerment and their participation in a digitalised world.

6) The next GAP III should seek, in collaboration with partner countries, to better reach out to girls and young women in all their diversity and support their agency, as well as their role as active drivers of change in formal processes, in order to successfully promote their political empowerment on the long term. Recognising that nowadays girls and young women are increasingly involved in informal structures and forms of political participation, it is important to support movements and activism in addition to youth organisation working on gender equality. Equally, the GAP III should collaborate with partner countries to promote and strengthen formal mechanisms for girls and young women's participation in decision-making processes, and continue supporting the engagement of youth-led, grassroots organisations as well as girls human rights defenders, taking into account their specific vulnerabilities being both young and female. In line with an intersectional approach, the EU should also take into consideration that participation is far from equal for girls and young women living in poor and vulnerable contexts, in rural and remote areas, with lower levels of education, who are less engaged in any form of participation. Finally, the next GAP should support the EU's Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024. In particular, it should recognise and facilitate the key role and added-value of girls and young women, by ensuring conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives include strategies to build their capacity in fragile and conflict-affected States, and by addressing the distinct barriers to their participation in formal and informal decision-making processes in these contexts. This will also contribute to ensure that the challenges and rights-violations they face in crises and conflicts are recognised.

7) Reaffirm the commitment of 85% of new programmes having gender equality as a principal or significant objective (scores G-1 and G-2 on the OECD-DAC Gender marker). Within this target, 20% of programmes should have gender equality as a principal objective, to ensure that specific actions are properly resourced, complementing gender mainstreaming. It is crucial that these commitments are included in the Neighbourhood, International and Development Cooperation Instrument under Heading 6 of the proposed MFF 2021-2027. As highlighted in [Council Conclusions on the GAP II](#), the commitment of financial resources to gender equality is essential for the effective implementation of the GAP. In addition, Plan International calls for accurate tracking of all spending on gender-related activities, with indicators to assess the impact.

8) Invest in human resources and technical expertise to lead and support the implementation of the GAP III. EU Delegations need adequate support and gender focal points who are trained and equipped with the authority and tools to lead on implementing the GAP as a key priority, and to advise their colleagues on how to better incorporate gender transformative actions in other areas of the Delegation's work.

9) Strengthen data collection, indicators, monitoring and evaluation. Significant data gaps remain on the issues highlighted above. Gender data collection should be considered a cross-cutting strategy throughout the EU GAP III, recognising that concerted effort and investment are still needed to be able to analyse and act on the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by girls and women. Moreover, the GAP III should contain clear, measurable, time-bound indicators, in line with the SDGs and including an allocation of responsibility for different actors – such as the European Commission and Member States. In order to integrate an evidence-based life-cycle approach, we recommend adding specific indicators on girls and to collect data disaggregated by age, not only by sex, in initiatives and programmes implemented by the EU.

Saferworld position paper on the third EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III)

April 2020

In the past years, the EU has promoted gender equality and women's rights through global initiatives, gender sensitive programming and strengthening its institutional expertise on gender issues. We encourage the EU to continue its efforts through a comprehensive GAP III that places emphasis on mainstreaming gender analysis and meaningful engagement with and support to local women, girls and women's rights organisations in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

This position paper complements our responses to the questionnaire of the consultation, with a particular focus on the need to address implementation gaps of GAP II and incorporate the EU Strategic Approach on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) into GAP III.

Women, Peace and Security as a standalone thematic priority and mainstreamed throughout GAP III

The situation of women, girls and sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) in conflict-affected countries continues to be particularly complicated and gender inequalities exacerbated. Since GAP II, EU Member States have adopted in 2018 the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security, which reaffirmed the EU's commitment to uphold the rights, agency, and protection of women and girls throughout conflict cycles, as recommended in UNSC resolution 1325. These policies should be **incorporated in the GAP III both as a standalone thematic priority as well as mainstreamed in other priorities.**

Conflict brings a change in gender roles that affect both men and women, as women take on new roles traditionally limited to men. These changes, only if well addressed, represent an opportunity of transformation towards gender equality. The integration of the EU's WPS framework into GAP III presents an opportunity to adopt an approach that not only addresses the situation of women, girls and SGMs in emergencies, but **applies political strategies for gender sensitive transitions to peace.** We recommend:

- Introducing the **WPS agenda as a thematic pillar in GAP III**, with objectives on conflict and gender analysis, gender mainstreaming in EU security interventions, localisation, meaningful participation and protection.
- **Mainstreaming the intersectional approach** of the EU WPS Strategic Approach across GAP III
- Updating the language of GAP III to reflect the WPS Strategic Approach's language on harmful gender norms and stereotypes, gender drivers of conflict, and engagement with and support to local women's rights organisations in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

Gender analysis is a prerequisite for gender sensitive programmes and addressing gender drivers of conflict

GAP II has made laudable progress in making EU external action more gender sensitive through the mandatory **gender analysis** it introduced. However, it is important that GAP III addresses the implementation gaps of GAP II, to reaffirm the EU's commitment to ensuring that all spending, programming and policymaking are designed and implemented in accordance to the findings of gender analysis, as the main tool to understand root causes of gender inequalities and develop effective responses.

Gender sensitivity needs to be systematically integrated into all EU actions, including responses to crisis and emergencies, humanitarian aid, development programmes, and peacebuilding efforts (including mediation), but also security interventions, including CT and CVE programmes¹, CSDP missions and military assistance in conflict-affected and post-conflict contexts.

In conflict-affected countries, gender analysis needs to not only shed light into gendered impacts, but also into **gender drivers of conflict**², including harmful masculinities³. We welcome the WPS Strategic Approach's commitment to increase the EU's understanding on how gender norms, roles and identities feed into conflict. Gender analysis is a first and essential

¹ https://koff.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/1_Publikationen/KOFF-Publikationen/20190827reportnap1325_1_.pdf and <https://gaps-uk.org/prioritise-peace-challenging-approaches-to-pcve-from-a-wps-perspective/>

² <https://www.whatworks.co.za/resources/reports/item/465-intersections-of-violence-against-women-and-girls-with-state-building-and-peace-building-lessons-from-nepal-sierra-leone-and-south-sudan>

³ <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/862-masculinities-conflict-and-peacebuilding-perspectives-on-men-through-a-gender-lens>

step to address gender norms, including harmful masculinities, as root causes of gender injustice. The WPS Strategic Approach called for promoting positive, gender-equitable and non-violent masculinity as an essential step towards fostering peaceful and inclusive societies. We recommend the GAP III to:

- Expand the **definition of gender analysis in GAP III** to include analysis not only on the gendered impacts of interventions and conflict dynamics, but also on the gendered drivers of conflict.
- Encourage **links between gender advisors and officials working on conflict analysis**, and build the capacity of staff on analysing the gendered drivers of conflict. Efforts to include gender specialists in all teams (across EU institutions, delegations and CSDP missions) should be continued.
- **Gender analysis should be conducted in a participatory way**, drawing from the knowledge, needs and experiences of local women, girls, men, and boys as well as sexual and gender minorities, to ensure interventions effectively address their concerns.
- EU funding, programming and policies should aim at facilitating changing gender norms to reach gender equality.

A localisation approach: Meaningful participation and consultation of, and support for women's rights organisations

The particular challenges women, girls, men and boys vary by the context and can change dramatically as a result of conflict. Local civil society organisations and women's rights organisations have been fighting long for their rights to be respected and their voices heard, and are best placed to ensure gender equality is sustainable and integral to all aspects of society⁴. The EU should ensure that their participation is not tokenistic, but meaningful and beneficial for women, girls and SGMs.

Supporting and empowering civil society and particularly women's rights organisations is an essential step in the struggle for sustainable gender equality, informed by local perspectives and conducted by grassroots actors, particularly women, girls and sexual and gender minorities which in many place already constitutes a challenge to traditional gender norms. This is particularly the case in conflict-affected countries, as conflict and violence exacerbate gender inequalities and shrink public participation and political representation for women and girls. It is imperative that the funding is flexible and respects the women's rights organisations agenda, to ensure that they are not instrumentalised in favour of causes that are not related and might be detrimental to gender equality, which is particularly the case in many counterterrorism and CVE programmes. Therefore in GAP III, we encourage the EU to commit to:

- Allocating **flexible and direct funding** to local women's rights organisations.
- Facilitating **meaningful consultations and participation** of women, girls, sexual and gender minorities and women's rights organisations as experts and partners, both in EU funding, programming and policymaking, in all phases from design to implementation and in all programmes, not only those with a gender focus.
- Supporting women, girls and SGM's **meaningful participation at local, regional, national and international levels** and facilitate their meaningful engagement as decision-makers in all phases of social, political and peace processes, both formal and informal, from design to implementation and in all matters, not only those directly related to gender-related issues.

Addressing the gaps in GAP II: security interventions

Security-related initiatives have been identified as an area of action where challenges remain in the implementation of GAP II, and special efforts should be made to ensure these gaps are closed⁵. As the EU is increasingly engaging in security-related initiatives, including migration containment, counterterrorism and CVE programmes and training and equipping third country security forces, particular attention must be paid on integrating gender perspectives into these policies and programmes and analysing their gendered impact. We therefore recommend:

- In line with the WPS Strategic Approach's commitment, GAP III should **restate the EU's commitment for a systematic integration of a gender perspective into all EU action** that aims to support non-EU countries' defence capabilities, security/justice sector reform, transitional justice, DDR, stabilisation, state building, civil protection, counterterrorism and P/CVE, arms trade, responses to migration, asylum and displacement, addressing trafficking in human beings, humanitarian work, and trade in/with conflict-affected situations and/or where there are serious violations of human rights and International humanitarian law.
- Ensuring that **all EU institutions, delegations and common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions and operations** deployed in fragile and conflict-affected situations and in humanitarian emergencies include sufficient capacity and resources to integrate a gender perspective, through accountability processes and the inclusion and adequate resourcing of gender expertise in the form of gender advisors and gender focal points.

⁴ <https://beyondconsultations.org/>

⁵ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-gender/documents/2018-annual-implementation-report-gap-ii>



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Building on GAP II Building on GAP II

The EU GAP II is a good and ambitious basis for the GAP III and roadmap. The concrete objectives, the three-pronged approach, the indicators and financial targets of GAP II were strong and effective.

The fact that the GAP II was incompletely implemented is a reason for the EU to build on the structure, objectives and indicators of GAP II and expand it in GAP III.

One of the essential targets of GAP II was to aim for 85% of all funding to have an OECD DAC Gender Marker 1 or 2 by 2020 (see indicator 5.3.2), meaning that one of the sub-objectives of the action or the main objective of the action should be to help improve gender-equality.

Even though this target was not achieved, it needs to remain as a key target for GAP III. Additionally, an increase of the number of programmes that have gender equality as a main objective (Gender Marker 2) should be set as a target (ideally 20%) under GAP III.

New emerging issues: feminist organisations, ecofeminism and intersectionality

We suggest that GAP II is extended with new emerging areas of action, and push for further implementation and related funding for this implementation.

We are pleased to see that the GAP III tries to bring a more intersectional focus. We would like to see stronger commitments to an intersectional and ecofeminist analysis and approach. We see it as essential that the roadmap and the new GAP III uses inclusive language, such as “women in all their diversity”.

1) Engage women’s rights and feminist organisations

- The roadmap should allow time for consultation with local feminist and women’s rights organisations in partner countries. Many EU delegations have not yet consulted local women’s rights and feminist organisation.
- Women’s rights and feminist organisations should be included throughout the development of the roadmap and the design and implementation as well as the monitoring of the GAP III. A stand-alone goal on the engagement of these organisations should be introduced.

2) Take an ecofeminist and intersectional approach/analysis

- GAP II called for the participation of women in environmental decision-making (e.g. regarding climate change), however it lacked a thorough ecofeminist approach on environmental and natural resources protection. Throughout the

roadmap and the GAP III an ecofeminist approach and analysis has to be taken, such as making the link between gender-based violence and climate action.

- The intersectional approach is weak and has to be expanded to natural resources; more commitment is needed in terms of transformation of economies to be circular and gender-just.
- Fiscal policies must give the right incentives, i.e. subsidies not be given to extractive industries and fiscal havens, but must give incentives to local cooperatives as well as social and gender just initiatives.

3) Cultural shift and policy coherence

- GAP III needs to address the role of men as feminists changing attributed gender roles as well as barriers created by toxic masculinities. This can be reached by the use of non-sexist, non-gender-stereotyped (or positive intersectional) language in all EU external policies and programmes.
- GAP III has to deliver on the objective of GAP II to strengthen the EU and EEAS internal institutional capacities: it is crucial that the political leadership presents the intersectional, ecofeminist and gender approach inside and outside of its institutions.
- GAP III should be included into other EU policies and its relevant objectives have to be made part of EU Partnership Priorities with partner countries and specific country strategies.

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**POSITION PAPER
ON
GENDER ACTION PLAN (GAP) III - 2021-2025 CONSULTATIONS**

Introduction

The management and board of Women Environmental Programme (WEP) is grateful for the opportunity availed by the European Commission to make inputs into the Gender Action Plan (GAP) III 2021-2025. WEP is an organization that works towards ensuring gender equality in all that she does. Our vision is of a world where the lives of women and youth around the globe are positively transformed.

Gender inequality is a global challenge faced by many countries of the world especially developing countries and it is one of the factors impeding development. It is impossible to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) without achieving gender equality. To have a peaceful and just world, women's rights, which is part of human rights must be realized.

With 10 years left to the expiration of the 2030 Agenda and with the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the European Commission's Gender Action Plan III is timely.

Our submission

We propose that the European Commission consider the following as **priority areas** for the GAP III in the context of Africa or Nigeria that we are from:

- Dismantling traditional patriarchal norms militating against realization of women's rights
- Promoting participation in public leadership through formulation of policies and laws that encourage this. This is very important in the sense that once you have more women in leadership positions, they can dismantle traditional patriarchal norms and will be empowered to take several decisions that will address several challenges affecting the realization of women's rights.
- Education of girl-child: Education is a critical foundation for public leadership and economic emancipation: Compulsory and free primary and secondary education for a girlchild will lead to economically empowerment and a foundation for social transformation.
- Digital and entrepreneurship skills for women and girls
- Prevention of violence against women: Development of legal frameworks that criminalizes and punishes violence against women will drastically reduce perpetration of violence against women.

On the implementation of the GAP III, we propose that the following strategy be adopted:

- Set a minimum gender-sensitive criteria for partnering countries and civil society organizations that will be involved in implementing projects and actions to realize the goal of the GAP III. The minimum criteria for government should be for them to have at least the percentage of women specified by the Affirmative Action of the Beijing Declaration in their national cabinets and work towards improving it. For civil society organization, they should be expected to have a particular percentage of women in their management or board to qualify to implement actions on the GAP III. Doing this will contribute to realizing the goal and objectives of GAP III.

Conclusion

Gender equality is a human right which ought to be upheld as it is entry point to achieving the world we want; a just world, an economic prosperous world, a sustainable world, where no one is left behind.



A New EU-Africa Partnership through Women in Africa

The EU Strategy for Africa, which seeks to intensify cooperation through partnerships to foster sustainable, inclusive growth, aims to strengthen both the EU and Africa. The focus of Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) should be to mainstream women across the trade and other actions outlined in the strategy. Given shifts to the geopolitical order, partnering with women in Africa will enable the EU to build strong crosscutting ties across economies, politics and society at a time when state to state ties face stiffer competition.

Relationships nurtured with women leaders in business, decision-making and civil society would enable the EU to increase relevance in Africa without compromising the high governance standards set out in the EU policy frameworks. Further, banking on and investing in the success of women in the economy would also parlay into more inclusive growth, which would dampen uncontrolled migration. This position paper sets out four ways that GAP III can achieve the proposed mainstreaming of women in Africa.

1. Using innovative financing methods, the EU can overcome barriers to accelerating women's entrepreneurship development.

Nowhere is the remarkable potential of the female economy more visible than in the continent of Africa, with 26% of women working as entrepreneurs. This is good news for Europe, given that, as women invest more of their earnings in their communities, their success will increase collective prosperity and create more jobs. However, one of the main barriers is accessing finance. According to the Africa Development Bank, the financing gap for African women entrepreneurs is estimated at \$20 billion. Lack of credit hinders the ability of women entrepreneurs to grow their businesses, with 90% of startups failing within the first five years.

It is essential that the EU go beyond traditional financing if it is to reach women entrepreneurs. Most available funds such as Alithea Capital, the CDC Group, PROPARCO, KfW or traditional banking institutions often focus on established entrepreneurs who have achieved scale and are less risky while startups rely on their savings, or families and local networks. However, there is a missing middle: medium scale enterprises across the continent who cannot access financing even though they have the most potential to drive inclusive growth. Capital for medium-scale enterprises, provided along with some technical assistance, will ensure that more women entrepreneurs grow to occupy the middle stratum of the economy.

Europe has considerable experience of funding and supporting inclusive entrepreneurship, including women's entrepreneurship. At EU level this is through the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and its upcoming successor, InvestEU, and at Member State level there are a range of major support programmes. These provide a solid basis for the EU to support African efforts to develop women's entrepreneurship.

Supporting funds with a focus on women entrepreneurs is one way to ensure that small and medium scaled enterprises that are often too risky for traditional financiers get the capital they require to expand. As well as traditional loans, it is possible to reach greater numbers of the targeted beneficiaries (such as women) with limited funding by use of financial instruments, especially loan guarantees, to incentivise banks and financial intermediaries to include vulnerable groups as a bigger proportion of their beneficiaries by lowering the risk.



2. Skill Up with a focus on the digital economy and e-governance

The development of African economies relies on the digital and telecom sectors, sectors to which women have limited access and, therefore, face an increasing risk of exclusion in the future. It is important to prepare girls for opportunities in these sectors. In the run-up to the fourth industrial revolution, African girls must learn to code.

Training young girls in STEM education, with special attention on the language of coding, and providing intergenerational mentoring and internships opportunities that connect the students to women entrepreneurs and those working on e-governance, will ensure that women entrepreneurs are not left out of the digital economy and that girls get enough practical experience to lead in the new economy.

3. Organizing women so they have decision-making power

Knitting regional and continent-wide hubs around the key areas of interest in the EU- Africa strategy will allow ecosystems to emerge as organizing units for women entrepreneurs.

To take advantage of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement, it is important to build ecosystems that connect countries. Such ecosystems, made up of small and medium scale players with linkages to critical industries, will lower the cost of doing business, one of the biggest challenges entrepreneurs face when operating in African markets.

Hubs can act as meeting points where African women in the formal economy can connect with those in the informal economy, which are as large as 90% of the economy in some countries. Unlocking the potential of Africa's economies requires forging links between women with access and those in the real economy by creating practical, relevant projects that enable the two groups to work together and create value.

Summits, masterclasses, labs, webinars will lead to projects to identify solutions to challenges impeding intra Africa trade and policy recommendations to be put before governments. Working together across borders will enable women to use the power of peer pressure among countries to secure progress on priority needs.

4. Tackle gender inequality and violence against women and girls through male champions

Keeping women from achieving their full potential and trapping them in unequal arrangements within families, communities and countries are laws, custom and social tolerance of violence against women and girls. Discriminatory laws that deny women the right to own land even though they are the principal food farmers and custom that compel women and girls to shoulder the bulk of household tasks with no compensation translate into financial and time poverty. Social acceptance of and tolerance for violence against women and girls ensures that few try to escape their circumstances. If women are to play an equal role in leadership and in the economy, this issue has to be addressed head on.

While most programmes that seek to address this huge issue focus on women, the key to changing norms is to engage men. To identify and highlight men who support women's rights and to engage men and boys to champion gender equality and women's empowerment.

Special attention has to be given to the implications of Climate Change on women in Africa. Even without this issue, the sharing of domestic tasks needs to be addressed. However, when climate change impacts are causing women to walk further to fetch water and firewood for cooking, leading to more time poverty, failing to address gender roles may lead to greater poverty for women, less schooling for girls and increasing violence.



About Women in Africa (WIA): Established in 2017 by French entrepreneur, Aude de Thuin, the founder of the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society, WIA has quickly become the foremost economic platform for the continent's women leaders and those of high potential. Our focus on the economy and the importance of strengthening women actors in that domain has parlayed into unprecedented access to the continent's leaders with the King of Morocco conferring his high patronage at the last two summits held in 2018 and 2019. 44 Ambassadors¹ across Africa, 800 partner organization in all five regions, 2000 members and 8000 entrepreneurs in all 54 countries, give us a continent-wide view that is both bottom-up and top-down.

To find out more about WIA, please visit our website² and have a look at the links below:

- **WIA Presentation:** <https://wia-initiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WIA-PRESENTATION-2020-ENG.pdf>
- **WIA 54 2020:** <https://wia-initiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WIA54-2020-ENG.pdf>
- **WIA 2020 RESULTS:** <https://wia-initiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WIA54-2020-FICHE-ENG-2.pdf>
- **About WIA:** <https://wia-initiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WIA-ABOUT-ENG.pdf>

¹ <https://wia-initiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WIA-AMBASSADORS-3.pdf>

² www.wia-initiative.com

PRESENTATION DE WILDAF/FEDDAF/BENIN

WiLDAF/FeDDAF-BÉNIN/FEDDAF (Women in Law And Development in Africa/ Femmes, Droits et Développement en Afrique) est un réseau panafricain pour la promotion et la défense des droits de la femme en Afrique, officiellement établi en 1990 suite à l'initiative des femmes activistes ayant participé au Forum des ONG à Nairobi au Kenya en 1985 pour marquer la fin de la décennie des Nations Unies pour les femmes.

Le bureau sous régional Afrique de l'ouest coiffe les sections nationales de la sous-région dont la section béninoise, WiLDAF/FeDDAF-BÉNIN, installée le 18 juin 1999 à l'issue d'une Assemblée Générale Constitutive.

WiLDAF/FeDDAF-BÉNIN compte trente-cinq (35) membres individuels et trente (30) organisations membres. Deux organes essentiels conduisent les activités du Réseau, à savoir :

- ↳ L'**Assemblée Générale (AG)**, l'organe suprême du Réseau, composée de tous les membres individuels et des ONG / Associations membres.
- ↳ La **Coordination Nationale**, l'organe opérationnel de mise en œuvre des décisions entre deux AG, composée de sept (07) membres dont un homme, coiffée par une Coordonnatrice Nationale.

Le réseau WiLDAF/Bénin soutient le GAPIII de l'UE car cadre bien avec sa vision, sa mission et ses orientations stratégiques (**cf. Le synoptique de son plan stratégique ci-dessous**). Il est prêt à collaborer à tous les niveaux (conception, mise en œuvre et suivi évaluation du GAPIII).

Vision reformulée

Un Bénin où toutes les femmes connaissent leurs droits civils, politiques, économiques, sociaux et culturels et en jouissent effectivement pour un développement équitable et durable d'ici à 2023

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Œuvrer pour la promotion des droits des femmes au Bénin et en Afrique à travers le plaidoyer et le lobbying pour l'adoption, la vulgarisation, l'application des textes de loi qui promeuvent et améliorent le statut de la femme ainsi que la prise en charge des victimes au Bénin</i>
<i>Enjeux</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>↳ Relance organisationnelle et repositionnement de l'institution dans sa mission traditionnelle et les nouveaux défis</i><i>↳ Ouverture et renforcement du champ d'action de WiLDAF/FeDDAF-BÉNIN pour être plus proche de la base et des victimes dans la jouissance de leurs droits et l'assurance de leur autonomisation</i>
<i>Orientations Stratégiques</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>↳ Orientation Stratégique 1 : Faire de WiLDAF/FeDDAF-BÉNIN un réseau de référence confirmé au plan national et international en matière de promotion et de défense des droits des filles, adolescent-e-s, jeunes, femmes et des personnes à besoins pour un développement durable et inclusif ;</i><i>↳ Orientation Stratégique 2 : Satisfaire davantage les filles, adolescent-e-s, jeunes, femmes et les personnes à besoins, bénéficiaires directs des actions de WiLDAF/FeDDAF – BÉNIN.</i>
<i>Domaines d'intervention</i>	<p><i>Durant les cinq (05) prochaines années, WiLDAF/FeDDAF-BÉNIN poursuivra ses interventions pour informer les populations, former les acteurs, renforcer les capacités des femmes, influencer les gouvernants et leurs partenaire aux fins de l'enracinement d'un cadre socio-culturel, législatif, réglementaire et institutionnel favorable à une jouissance effective de leurs droits sur les thématiques ci-après :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>✓ lutte contre les toutes les formes de discriminations basées sur le genre et les pratiques traditionnelles néfastes en général, y compris la violence à l'égard des femmes et des filles en particulier (mariage forcé, mariage d'enfants, mutilations génitales féminines, violence basée sur le genre en milieu scolaire...);</i><i>✓ santé sexuelle et de la reproduction ;</i><i>✓ promotion et sécurisation des droits fonciers des femmes et sécurité alimentaire ;</i><i>✓ promotion du leadership féminin et autonomisation des femmes ;</i><i>✓ participation des femmes à la vie publique et politique.</i>
<i>Couverture de l'intervention</i>	<i>A travers ce nouveau Plan Stratégique, WiLDAF/FeDDAF-BÉNIN interviendra sur toute l'étendue du territoire national soit les douze (12) départements</i>

2. Position papers submitted by EU Member States' Institutions

1. France
2. Germany
3. Ireland
4. Sweden and France: Joint non-paper



Paris, le 4 mai 2020

A/s : Recommandations de la France pour le Gender Action Plan III (GAP III)

Dossier suivi par : SOPHIE CHASSOT

I. Une approche élargie et renforcée de l'égalité femmes/hommes dans l'action extérieure de l'Union Européenne

Le GAP II de l'Union Européenne a permis de poser des bases solides pour une meilleure intégration des enjeux d'égalité dans toute l'action extérieure de l'Union Européenne. Il est essentiel que le GAP III poursuive ce travail de transversalisation du genre dans l'ensemble de l'action extérieure et continue de traiter, **non seulement des enjeux de développement, mais aussi de l'ensemble des autres enjeux, notamment dans les politiques commerciales, énergétiques ou encore agricoles par exemple.** L'intégration d'un critère genre obligatoire dans les cahiers des charges cadrant les politiques publiques de l'UE permettrait également d'accroître la prise en compte de l'égalité femmes-hommes dans l'action extérieure de l'UE.

La France recommande également que le GAP III fasse l'objet d'une Communication officielle (*official Communication*) plutôt que d'être un Document de travail (*Staff Working Document*). **L'appropriation politique du GAP III par l'ensemble des acteurs, y compris par les équipes dirigeantes, est essentielle** pour que les enjeux d'égalité soient réellement transversalisés dans l'ensemble de l'action extérieure de l'Union Européenne.

Le GAP III doit également permettre une inclusion plus systématique des enjeux d'égalité femmes-hommes dans le dialogue politique mené par l'Union Européenne avec ses pays partenaires. Au-delà de son action multilatérale en faveur des enjeux d'égalité, l'Union Européenne doit travailler au renforcement de son action bilatérale en la matière.

II. Les priorités stratégiques du GAP III

Les priorités stratégiques présentées et mises en œuvre dans le cadre du GAP II, notamment au travers des quatre domaines d'action prioritaires identifiés¹, doivent rester centrales dans le GAP III. La France se félicite également de l'approche globale et transformative promue dans le GAP II, qui tient compte des structures inégales de pouvoir entre femmes et hommes, des discriminations basées sur le genre et des normes sociales genrées. Cette approche doit perdurer dans le GAP III tout en continuant à promouvoir un rôle central pour les femmes et les filles dans la perspective du renforcement de leurs droits et de leur autonomisation. Un focus spécifique dans le GAP III pourrait également être fait sur les femmes et les filles les plus vulnérables et faisant face à de multiples discriminations (femmes issues des milieux les plus pauvres ou de minorités, femmes porteuses de handicap, femmes migrantes, etc.)

Pour autant, le GAP III doit permettre d'aller plus loin dans cette approche stratégique et renforcer la

¹ Les quatre domaines prioritaires du GAP II sont : Ensuring girls'and women's physical and psychological integrity, Promoting the economic and social rights / empowerment of girls and women, Strengthening girls'and women's voice and participation and Shifting the Commission services'and the EEAS'institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments

cohérence et l'action de l'Union Européenne sur différents enjeux.

Il conviendrait tout d'abord **d'améliorer l'articulation et la coordination des travaux des différents groupes de travail du Conseil sur l'égalité femmes-hommes** : l'absence de coordination entre la taskforce « Femmes, paix et sécurité » et le groupe de travail « égalité femmes-hommes » qui élabore notamment le GAP III doit être corrigée pour assurer une meilleure transversalité des discussions au sein du Conseil.

Les enjeux humanitaires, qui sont très peu traités dans le GAP II, doivent également être davantage intégrés dans le GAP III. Il est indispensable que l'aide humanitaire intègre davantage les questions d'égalité et que les femmes et les filles soient reconnues comme étant des actrices à part entière de la réponse humanitaire.

Le GAP III pourrait également permettre à l'Union Européenne de réaffirmer et d'intensifier son dialogue avec la société civile féministe et œuvrant pour les droits des femmes et des filles. Les organisations de la société civile doivent être associées à l'élaboration, au suivi, à la mise en œuvre et à l'évaluation du GAP III que ce soit dans les délégations de l'Union Européenne ou à Bruxelles.

Enfin, dans le GAP III et dans le cadre du nouveau Cadre Financier Pluriannuel, **la Commission Européenne doit également intensifier ses efforts pour augmenter la part de son aide publique au développement intégrant le genre.** L'objectif ambitieux de 85% des nouveaux programmes intégrant le genre (marqueur 1 et 2 de l'OCDE) doit être réitéré et il est important que le GAP III permette d'établir un objectif spécifique pour les projets dédiés spécifiquement aux enjeux d'égalité (marqueur 2), afin d'augmenter significativement leur part dans l'aide publique au développement de l'Union Européenne. Au sein de ces objectifs financiers, la France recommande également qu'une attention particulière soit apportée à l'aide publique au développement transitant directement par les organisations féministes.

III. Des mécanismes de suivi et de redevabilités renforcés

Le GAP III devra être assorti d'indicateurs de succès clairs, mesurables et définis dans le temps afin de s'assurer d'un reporting efficace de l'action de l'Union Européenne sur les enjeux d'égalité. Il ne s'agit pas de multiplier les cadres de résultats, mais d'aligner cet exercice sur celui réalisé autour de l'ODD 5, conduisant à une meilleure collecte et l'analyse de données désagrégées par l'UE.

En outre, **pour s'assurer du suivi renforcé du GAP III, son appropriation par les agents est un élément clef**, qui pourrait s'appuyer sur des sessions de formation spécifiques, en particulier pour les agents ne disposant pas d'une expertise/expérience significative sur le genre. L'appropriation est à la fois essentielle pour les agents travaillant au siège des institutions, et ceux exerçant dans les délégations de l'UE dans le monde, afin d'assurer la mise en œuvre du GAP sur le terrain. A cet égard, il pourrait être suggéré que des actions concrètes contribuant à sa mise en œuvre soient intégrées dans les plans d'action des Ambassadeurs de l'UE et que des points focaux « genre » soient nommés dans chaque délégation de l'UE pour coordonner la mise en œuvre locale de la stratégie. En partenariat avec les ambassades des Etats membres de l'UE, les délégations de l'UE pourraient coordonner une action spécifique sur les questions d'égalité femmes-hommes, comme c'est déjà le cas dans certains pays, en menant un dialogue sur ce sujet avec les autorités politiques et avec la société civile, et en valorisant les bonnes pratiques de l'UE, de ses Etats membres et des pays partenaires en matière d'égalité femmes-hommes.

Ensuite, un travail de redevabilité concret, au niveau politique, permettrait d'accroître l'appropriation de la prise en compte du genre dans l'action extérieure de l'UE et sa visibilité auprès du grand public. La mise en place d'un exercice de redevabilité politique annuel, en lien avec le Parlement européen par exemple, permettrait d'assurer un meilleur suivi et un engagement politique accru sur la mise en œuvre de ce plan d'action. La mise en place d'un dispositif de concertation régulière avec la société civile permettrait également d'assurer la transparence requise dans les actions entreprises et de s'assurer de la pertinence des actions envisagées dans le plan d'action avec les défis identifiés par la société civile elle-même./.

Gender Equality in the External Action of the EU – Maximising Impact

Joint non-paper by Sweden and France

Human rights, peace, security and sustainable development cannot be achieved if half the world's population is repeatedly left out and discriminated against. Still, decades after the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, no country in the world has reached gender equality and hard-won gains are being challenged, including in relation to the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) by all. This calls for concerted action and the EU has to be at the forefront. Human rights and gender equality are fundamental objectives for the EU and core values of the Union. Sweden and France therefore urge the new Commission and the EEAS to further maximize its external action for gender equality by enhancing the necessary governance, guidance, ownership and resources.

Governance

- Develop a horizontal system for regular and formal discussions on EU external action for gender equality, across policy areas.
- Ensure that any chosen system constitutes a strategic platform where EU Member States and services can develop the EU's comprehensive external work for gender equality as well as foster targeted work and mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all other relevant formats and structures.
- Secure that such a system has clear links to all formats of the FAC.

Guidance

- Continue to enhance the implementation of the GAP II in all external relations and secure that GAP III constitutes an over-arching instrument for formal, horizontal and strategic guidance for gender equality, with clear links to other relevant policies such as the Strategic Approach on Women Peace and Security and the EU Global Strategy.
- Develop and facilitate the reporting, monitoring and follow-up of the EU's work for gender equality and consider linking any indicators more closely to the indicators for the SDGs and their targets, in particular SDG 5.
- Secure that all instruments guiding the EU's external relations include a gender perspective and, whenever relevant, targeted actions.
- Develop routines and tools for hands-on integration of a gender perspective in analyses, planning, budgeting and every day work, i.a. by using sex and age disaggregated data, throughout the system and all policy areas, including CSDP and WPS, trade, human rights, climate action, development assistance, humanitarian aid, health, enlargement etc.

Ownership

- Strengthen the work towards a significant institutional culture shift by i.a. securing dedicated ownership for gender equality at all levels and across Commission services and within the EEAS, at headquarters as well as at the level of EU-delegations, EUSRs and CSDP missions and operations, through guidelines, awareness campaigns and trainings on gender equality, and by ensuring a safe working environment, free of gender based violence and harassment. This also applies to implementing partners.
- Enhance the focus on leadership for gender equality in the work descriptions and guidance for managers in the institutions, as well as in the evaluation of their work.
- Ensure gender equal representation in EU external action at all levels.

Resources

- Increase gender equality expertise throughout the system and ensure that this expertise is always positioned in the most strategic way.
- Ensure that the EU's new MFF places a significant emphasis on gender equality, including through targeted support in the external instruments and programmes, and that gender mainstreaming is an integral part of all instruments and programmes within the new MFF.
- Ensure robust monitoring and follow up so that funding is allocated in a gender equal way.



Gender Equality in light of the Covid-19 crisis – a new Gender Action Plan for EU External Action

While we all struggle with the immediate effects of the COVID-19 crisis, we do not yet know the dimension and scope of the long term effects. But we have clear indications from previous crises that women will be hit hardest. Women are the vast majority of staff in the health care system and providing care work, both paid and unpaid. Likewise, COVID-19 has tremendous effects on women's access to primary health care, especially with regards to sexual and reproductive health. Cuts in social security systems are likely to occur as a consequence which will affect women disproportionately. Worldwide, we already hear worrying reports of an increase in violence against women and children due to the lockdown. In addition, women, who often work in the informal sector, are at greater risk of losing their jobs. Where they are entrepreneurs, they often own smaller businesses with fewer savings and reserves and are thus at a higher risk of insolvency.

The new EU Commission's Gender Action Plan (GAP III) comes thus at the right time to respond to Covid-19 with a gender lens. As part of its council presidency, Germany will support the commission in its effort to draft an ambitious plan. In our view, this should be encompassing the following:

Content of GAP III:

- We encourage the commission to keep the existing four pivotal areas of the GAP II (physical and psychological integrity, promoting the social and economic rights, strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation, shifting the institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments), as we have seen them as a comprehensive approach over the last four years, and build on the achievements and lessons learned.
- As mentioned above, we propose to mainstream a response to Covid-19 as part of all three thematic areas. We see strong links to physical and mental well-being, especially violence against women and girls and in particular intimate partner violence, but also health including maternal health, access to WASH incl. menstrual hygiene management, care work, as well as women's and girls' integrity in the context of flight and migration. Equally, economic empowerment of women will be particularly needed to rebuild the economy after the immediate phase of the crisis. Not least, women's participation will be particularly important in finding answers to the crisis and in decision-making.
- We welcome the clear commitment to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU Gender Strategy and would like to see an equally strong statement to promote SRHR and advocate for comprehensive sexual education as part of the GAP III.

- We see an opportunity to upgrade climate change to a priority topic and mainstream it throughout the three thematic areas. This should acknowledge the disproportionate impact on women and girls and include women's role as change agents in adaptation as well as in mitigation. In addition, we would like to include a commitment to foster women's participation in global decision making processes. We encourage the commission to coherently include gender equality in its climate change responses, including the Green Deal.
- We welcome the EU's commitment to continue to actively promote gender equality through its trade policy and propose to include this as part of the GAP III. This should encompass a clear link to sustainable international supply chains. Women's rights need to be strengthened with regards to the ILO Core Labour standards, as well as the UN and OECD guiding principles, especially at the beginning of global supply chains. We opt for a smart mix of voluntary actions and binding regulations.
- We welcome the clear commitment on women's human rights, to women's human rights defenders as well as the reference to intersectionality. We support the challenging of discriminatory gender stereotypes in the new commissions Gender Equality Strategy. We encourage the commission to use this clear language for GAP III.

Structure and Reporting Mechanism:

- We advocate for a lighter, easier reporting mechanism with a limited number of measurable indicators. These should build on SDG indicators and their targets, in particular SDG 5. We ask the commission to share data they collect with the corresponding member state, so that member states can use these data for their own reporting.
- We welcome the commitment to retain the 85% target for G1 and G2 projects. We propose to also add one stand-alone target for G2 projects of at least 5%.
- We propose to include an invitation to all member states to subscribe to the objectives of GAP III as their own commitment. We will be happy to aim to incorporate this in the subsequent council conclusions. With the GAP II, ambiguity remained as to how far the GAP applied to member states, as they reported on its implementation. With GAP III, we are envisaging clear responsibilities.
- We encourage the commission to take up a stronger coordinating role with regards to gender equality programs and mainstreaming, both in partner countries and at headquarter level. This could include the collection and dissemination of best practices as well as gender analyses, peer-to-peer learning and closer coordination of priorities.



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

- We recommend to aim at gender-transformative approaches (e.g. fighting stereotypical roles, removing structural barriers etc.) in all EU external action and international cooperation, especially for G2 projects in the medium term.

Ireland's Position Paper on the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III 2021 – 2025

Ireland welcomes the opportunity to participate in the targeted consultation on the development of the EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III 2021-2025. Ireland remains firmly committed to advancing gender equality in EU development policy and will continue to champion women and girls' rights in all EU external action.

Since the adoption of the EU External Action (GAP) II 2016-2020, Ireland has adopted a new international development policy, [A Better World](#), launched in 2019. Building on Ireland's track record in delivering for the poorest and most vulnerable, *A Better World* seeks to realise the transformational pledge of the Sustainable Development Goals – reaching the furthest behind first. It signals a deepening and intensification of Ireland's international efforts and commits to scaling up resources and capacity across four policy priorities: **Gender equality; Reducing humanitarian need; Climate action; and strengthening governance.**

While gender equality has been a longstanding priority focus for Ireland's international development cooperation, *A Better World* establishes gender equality as a core policy priority. Our new policy framework commits that Ireland will have an overarching focus on women and girls in all our partnerships and interventions. *A Better World* adopts a twin track approach in establishing gender equality as a core policy priority – by scaling up our engagement to integrate gender equality across all our development cooperation and in our wider foreign policy; and by increasing allocations to interventions directly dedicated to achieving gender equality. In 2019, the Irish Government also launched [Ireland's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions.

Key recommendations for consideration in the development of the GAP III include:

Ensure continuity with GAP II by:

- Ensure a level of continuity with the GAP II and build on existing priorities and activities. The EU must remain a global leader on gender equality and women's right, including at the UN and across other multilateral settings.
- Include a continued focus on the horizontal priority relating to ensuring the institutional and cultural shift to effectively deliver on gender equality commitments and to the 3-pronged approach, where the EU uses political dialogue, targeted activities and gender mainstreaming to bring about the transformation of gender relations.
- GAP II should focus on all EU external action. In addition to targeted interventions addressing gender equality, gender should be mainstreamed in all sectors including non-social sectors. Lessons learned with respect to mainstreaming efforts in GAP II should be used to inform the development of GAP III.
- The GAP III should further emphasize the gender transformative approach outlined in GAP II and ensure that GAP III adopts a gender transformative approach that seeks to address structural inequalities and unequal gender dynamic and norms and supports the individual and collective agency of women and girls. A gender transformative approach should be outlined across the thematic priorities of GAP III and should be reflected in the results and indicators.

Strengthen the work of the GAP II by:

- In supporting the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2030, the GAP III should increasingly focus on a commitment to reaching the furthest behind first. While all women are in some ways subject to gender discrimination, other factors including race, disability, sexual identity, religion,

socio-economic class, geographic location, combine to determine one's social location. GAP III should seek to further adopt an intersectional approach to understanding and responding to ways in which gender intersects with other identities and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of deprivation and exclusion.

- The GAP III should include a consistent inclusion of the needs of girls as well as women throughout. This should include a specific understanding and responses to the specific needs of adolescent girls including with respect to access to quality education and essential health services and protection from violence and exploitation.
- The GAP III should seek to further strengthen the promotion of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Ireland's takes an integrated approach to the policy commitments on gender equality in our International Development Policy and our NAP on WPS and recommends that the GAP III should be specifically aligned to and integrated with the EU's Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security.
- The GAP III provides an opportunity for increased focus on women and girl's economic empowerment as an area of critical importance for the realisation of rights for women and girls. Gender budgeting should become the norm.
- It is recommended that both the consultation process and the drafting and implementation of the GAP III includes a focus on involving and supporting women's rights organisations at local, national and international levels. Consideration should be given to including an indicator on support for women's rights and movements within GAP III.
- There is increased scope within GAP III for ensuring actions on a gender responsive approach to humanitarian action is included across the thematic priorities.
- Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate change, the GAP III should include a strengthened approach to ensuring that efforts to support voice and agency for women and girls in addressing climate change and make clear reference to international frameworks to address climate change.
- The GAP III should adopt a COVID-19 gender lens and address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women and girls. GAP III should seek to ensure that gender equality is the centre of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.
- The Commission should consider the publication of GAP III as an official communication

Improve monitoring and reporting of the GAP II by:

- The GAP should be accompanied by clear, measurable, time-bound indicators (that in so far as is possible are aligned with the SDG results framework) for monitoring progress with a clear indication of reporting responsibility for different actors (e.g. that can be tailored for the European Commission and Member States).
- Indicators should be more ambitious in nature and allow for qualitative as well as quantitative reporting and should be aligned with means of verification that are available to Member States.
- To support annual reporting of financial expenditure related to the GAP it should be aligned with existing reporting processes and timeframe for reporting data to the OECD DAC.

- While the specificity of indicators for the GAP are an essential component of the reporting mechanism, indicators should be reflective of more broad, open-ended themes, which would allow member-states to discuss in detail their individual approaches to achieving gender equality within a specific area.

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Joint non-paper by Sweden and France

Human rights, peace, security and sustainable development cannot be achieved if half the world's population is repeatedly left out and discriminated against. Still, decades after the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, no country in the world has reached gender equality and hard-won gains are being challenged, including in relation to the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) by all. This calls for concerted action and the EU has to be at the forefront. Human rights and gender equality are fundamental objectives for the EU and core values of the Union. Sweden and France therefore urge the new Commission and the EEAS to further maximize its external action for gender equality by enhancing the necessary governance, guidance, ownership and resources.

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- Ensure that any chosen system constitutes a strategic platform where EU Member States and services can develop the EU's comprehensive external work for gender equality as well as foster targeted work and mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all other relevant formats and structures.
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Guidance

- Continue to enhance the implementation of the GAP II in all external relations and secure that GAP III constitutes an over-arching instrument for formal, horizontal and strategic guidance for gender equality, with clear links to other relevant policies such as the Strategic Approach on Women Peace and Security and the EU Global Strategy.
- Develop and facilitate the reporting, monitoring and follow-up of the EU's work for gender equality and consider linking any indicators more closely to the indicators for the SDGs and their targets, in particular SDG 5.
- Secure that all instruments guiding the EU's external relations include a gender perspective and, whenever relevant, targeted actions.
- Develop routines and tools for hands-on integration of a gender perspective in analyses, planning, budgeting and every day work, i.a. by using sex and age disaggregated data, throughout the system and all policy areas, including CSDP and WPS, trade, human rights, climate action, development assistance, humanitarian aid, health, enlargement etc.

Ownership

- Strengthen the work towards a significant institutional culture shift by i.a. securing dedicated ownership for gender equality at all levels and across Commission services and within the EEAS, at headquarters as well as at the level of EU-delegations, EUSRs and CSDP missions and operations, through guidelines, awareness campaigns and trainings on gender equality, and by ensuring a safe working environment, free of gender based violence and harassment. This also applies to implementing partners.
- Enhance the focus on leadership for gender equality in the work descriptions and guidance for managers in the institutions, as well as in the evaluation of their work.
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Resources

- Increase gender equality expertise throughout the system and ensure that this expertise is always positioned in the most strategic way.
- Ensure that the EU's new MFF places a significant emphasis on gender equality, including through targeted support in the external instruments and programmes, and that gender mainstreaming is an integral part of all instruments and programmes within the new MFF.
- Ensure robust monitoring and follow up so that funding is allocated in a gender equal way.

3. Position papers submitted by International Organisations

1. Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)
2. International Labour Organisation (ILO)
3. The Red Cross - EU Office
4. United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
6. United Nations Brussels (Joint submission: FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNCDF, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCT, UNODC, UN Women)

FAO position paper - April 2020

Contribution to the global consultation on the EU Gender Action Plan - GAP III

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) appreciates the opportunity to support the formulation of the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III). FAO leads international efforts to defeat hunger and achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. FAO recognizes that persisting inequalities between women and men are a major obstacle to agriculture and rural development, and that eliminating these disparities is a priority to achieve sustainable and inclusive food systems as well as resilient and peaceful societies. Based on its work and experience, FAO proposes that the following priority areas be included in the EU GAP III.

1. Gender transformative approaches

To achieve substantive gender equality and effectively dismantle negative gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms, actions under all the priority areas need to be underpinned by gender transformative approaches. Proposed priority actions:

- Formulation and implementation of gender-transformative policies and laws and enforcement mechanisms.
- Institutional/organizational change through transforming individuals' attitudes, behaviour and capacities as well as institutional culture so that they advance gender equality.
- Community-based initiatives, involving schools and ICTs, to promote gender-equitable social norms and practices.

2. Gender equal food systems for healthy diets and improved nutrition

In every continent the prevalence of food insecurity is higher for women than for men. The level of food insecurity for both men and women is the highest in Africa. Obesity disproportionately affects women in all regions. Addressing poor nutrition and obesity requires action along the whole food chain, from farm to fork. Securing sustainable urban and rural food systems is only possible if women are empowered and their rights recognized and respected along the food supply chains both at the supply and the demand side. Proposed priority actions:

- Develop gender-sensitive value chains to enhance the full productive and entrepreneurial potential of women in agri-food systems, while increasing their access to higher-value, more remunerative markets and decent employment opportunities;
- Enhance the capacity of public institutions and service providers in value chains to provide gender-sensitive services.

3. Gender, climate change and biodiversity

Due to differences in socially constructed gender roles and social status, women and men experience the impacts of climate change differently, women often being more exposed than men to climate variability and extremes. Threats and pressures on the environment and its resources amplify gender inequality and power imbalances in communities and households. Proposed priority actions:

- Gender responsive adaptation including climate-smart agriculture, low-carbon and circular economy, disaster risk reduction and resilience, water scarcity reduction, conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem within the context of the gender action plans of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and their financial mechanism (GEF, GCF, Adaptation Fund) and supporting national level implementation of these action plans.

4. Digital technology and gender equality

ICT skills are fundamental for participation in today's information society, and correlate positively with social well-being and agricultural productivity. Accessing internet especially through mobile phones can provide important market, price, weather and diet related information to farmers. Still, in low and middle income countries, there is an important gender gap in the ownership and use of digital technology. The current Covid-19 pandemic has shed

light on the importance of digital technology both for food commercialization and for accessing food. Gender equal access to ICTs and digital knowledge will therefore be increasingly important for ensuring food security and nutrition of the populations of both rural and urban areas. Proposed priority actions:

- Ensure equal and non-discriminatory access to digital technologies, in particular in rural areas, taking into consideration the different needs of girls and women and boys and men by age and economic status.
- Invest in the improvement of girls and women's digital skills.

5. Women's economic rights

In many low and middle-income countries, agriculture is the main employment activity for the majority of rural women and men. Still, women are significantly disadvantaged relative to men with regard to their rights to productive assets, services and other resources, including land, water, inputs and information, advisory and financial services and decent employment. Globally women spend significantly more time on unpaid domestic and care work, negatively affecting their opportunities to engage in education, leisure, or income-generating activities. Proposed priority actions:

- Legal, policy and institutional reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, in particular access to and control over land and other forms of property, other natural resources, especially water, and financial and extension services.
- Ensure the availability of quality and affordable infrastructure and services and labour saving technologies in order to reduce women's time spent on unpaid care and domestic work.
- Develop and implement gender-responsive social protection policies, programmes and schemes.
- Develop gender-responsive employment policies and strategies, which recognize the specific challenges faced by different groups of women, to contrast discriminatory practices in rural labour markets.

6. Women's participation and leadership

Women often remain excluded from participation and leadership roles in formal and informal rural organizations, decision-making processes and services due to existing gender norms and the multiple constraints they face. Proposed priority actions:

- Remove the barriers to women's participation – both as members and as leaders – in rural producer organizations, cooperatives, community organizations and local administrative systems, from the local through to the national level.
- Support to community level participatory approaches to boost the self-esteem, confidence and leadership skills of rural women.

7. Gender and migration

Male outmigration from rural areas significantly impacts on the livelihood of women who remain on the farm. Women's role in agriculture may expand and their responsibilities may increase, which can have positive but also negative consequences for their lives, which can limit women's opportunities to engage in productive or income-generating activities and thus their capacity to realize their economic rights and autonomy. Proposed priority actions:

- Support household members who are left behind, especially women and children, who may take over additional productive and care responsibilities, by facilitating access to land, training, labour-saving technologies, financial services and markets as well as employment, entrepreneurial opportunities and social protection.

8. Emergencies (disasters, conflict, crisis) and resilience building

Crisis and disasters in developing countries can have devastating effects on small-scale farmers, herders, fishers and forest-dependent communities. It is imperative to build the resilience of women and men to allow them to respond to emergencies and threats and recover from shocks more quickly. Proposed priority actions:

- Support the formulation of gender-responsive policies and programmes to prepare for and respond to shocks and crises, such as risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection.

- Promote gender-sensitive emergency preparedness and response including the use of gender-sensitive needs assessments.

9. Gender and statistics

Large gender data gap exists especially in the agriculture and rural sectors. Up-to-date sex-disaggregated data (SDDs) and gender-sensitive statistics are imperative for evidence-based policy and decision-making. Priority actions should include:

- Capacity development for the collection, analysis and use of high quality SDDs and gender-sensitive statistics for food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture development as well as on women's work, empowerment and welfare to allow identifying the determinants and consequences of migration from a gender perspective.

10. Mitigating impacts of Covid-19 and rural women's empowerment

COVID-19 containment measures pose new challenges to rural women as regards their roles as guardians of household food security, agricultural producers, farm managers, processors, traders, wage workers and entrepreneurs. Rural women's capacity to deal with the COVID-19 effects on their livelihoods is hindered by their limited access to inputs, services, markets and financial resources as well as the nature of their employment (often informal, seasonal or part-time) increased burden of unpaid care work.

Proposed priority actions:

- Support the design of gender-responsive social protection interventions (e.g. cash transfers and in-kind assistance).
- Promote measures and strategies to enhance rural women's access to income generation, finance, and market participation.
- Invest in women's leadership and support to their formal and organization to contribute to the COVID-19 response.
- Promote positive changes in gender relations, social norms and behavioral patterns, using various gender-transformative approaches, to reduce gender-based conflict as a driver of gender-based violence.

ILO contribution to the targeted consultation on the EU External Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025

The ILO fully endorses the joint UN contribution to the GAP III consultation. With this brief note, the ILO further elaborates on priority areas that would contribute to advance gender equality in the world of work. These are **1) Promoting a world of work free from discrimination, gender stereotypes, and violence and harassment; 2) Designing and financing sustainable infrastructure, social protection and public care services and policies; 3) Engaging and supporting women through work transitions, and 4) Promoting women’s voices and representation.** GAP III should adapt its interventions in these areas depending on a country’s particular level of development and the structure of its economy.

1) Promoting a world of work free from discrimination, gender stereotypes, and violence and harassment

GAP III should strongly support policies and interventions that promote the respect for and enjoyment of equal rights. Actions should include promoting equality and non-discrimination in opportunities and treatment in employment and occupations in line with the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No.111). GAP III should work with partner countries to remove discriminatory legal provisions restricting women’s access to certain sectors and occupations, including gender-based discrimination based on civil or marital status and family situation prior to entry into the labour market. GAP III should also promote the full application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in law and practice in line with the ILO Convention Equal Remuneration, 1951 (No.100). In this regard, GAP III should consider supporting countries to join the [Equal Pay International Coalition](#) led by ILO, UNWOMEN and OECD. Drawing from existing good practices,¹ GAP III should promote actions to prevent and address violence and harassment in the world of work and support the ratification and implementation of ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and its supplementing Recommendation (No. 206). Attention should be given to women in vulnerable situations, such as migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, women with disabilities and living with HIV, ethnic minorities, indigenous and tribal women and LGBTIQ. ILO standards pertaining to the abovementioned groups provide useful guidance for policy measures and actions.

2) Designing and financing sustainable infrastructure, social protection and public care services and policies

In the current organization of societies everywhere, women and girls still perform the greatest share of unpaid care work. Addressing women’s time poverty is therefore a priority for any development cooperation intervention. As also highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis, care infrastructure and social protection are of utmost importance for societies and economies to survive and thrive. Women paid and unpaid roles in the functioning of such systems are essential. Gap III should therefore support the **availability and access to infrastructure and services for women.** In low-income countries, basic infrastructure and services, such as clean water, safe cooking fuel, electricity, and secure transportation, day-care, schools, health facilities and ICT have an enormous impact on addressing women’s time poverty and their possibility to engage in paid work, by redistributing unpaid care work. Investing in infrastructure and services is also **a source of decent jobs for women and men, and contributes to environmental sustainability.**

To further ease the care burden on women and girls and promote a fairer distribution of unpaid care work, the GAP III could draw inspiration from the ILO’s “**5R Framework for Decent Care Work**”.² This framework promotes a mix of possible legislative and policy measures to achieve decent work in the care economy. Its key components include **Recognizing, Reducing and Redistributing unpaid care work; Rewarding paid care work; and ensuring Representation, social dialogue and collective**

¹ See for instance ILO-IFC Better work programme in [the garment industry](#).

² [ILO, Care Work and Care Jobs](#) (2018), p.289.

bargaining for care workers. Each group of policy recommendations is matched with a set of policy measures based on ILO labour standards and intended to achieve the SDGs. Within this framework, it would be particularly crucial that GAP III **promotes gender-responsive social protection systems**, including **social protection floors** that are **universal, fair and inclusive**, in line with the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation 202. Efforts towards the development and implementation of transformative **maternity protection provisions, family leave and care leave policies**, with particular attention to children, elderly and people with disabilities and living with HIV, should be further supported both in the formal and informal economy. ILO relevant standards, such as Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, (No. 156) and Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189), could provide useful guidance. Particular attention should be devoted to women in the informal economy, with a view to ensuring their inclusion in social protection provisions and in national plans towards transitioning to formal economy in line with ILO Transition from Informal to Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). In order to finance such infrastructure, social protection and public care services and policies, GAP III should promote gender-responsive macroeconomic policies that will identify and address the needs of diverse groups of women as well as care deficits. Within this framework, gender-responsive and social budgeting is an important tool for prioritizing more effectively gender equality in the overall set of national policies.

3) Engaging and supporting women through work transitions

GAP III action plan should support activities aimed at **facilitating the return to work** for women and men either after childbirth, following a period of parental leave, or as a result of long-term unemployment due to unpaid family care responsibilities or violence and harassment. Closing the **digital gender divide** should also be a focus of gender responsive **lifelong learning initiatives**. GAP III should support proactive measures encouraging young women to engage in STEM studies and related occupational trajectories. GAP III should also contribute to creating an enabling environment for **women entrepreneurs** and **support actions helping women workers moving from the informal to the formal economy**. Cooperatives and social and solidarity enterprises can provide a way forward towards formalization.

4) Promoting women's voices and representation

Given the weak participation and representation of women in decision-making processes, industrial relations, social dialogue and collective bargaining processes, it is essential for GAP III to strengthen **ways of organising women and to build their negotiation and leadership skills**. In developing countries, awareness raising has played a key role in helping women understand the benefits of unionizing. GAP III could support initiatives aimed at **leveraging the capacities of employers' and workers' organisations, as well as women's organizations and women's self-groups**, particularly those operating in the informal economy, to effectively respond to the needs of women in vulnerable situations. Workers across diverse workplaces and countries can be organized through digital means and engage in new forms of collective action. Organizing migrant workers, including through bilateral agreements, has been a means of giving migrant care workers a voice.

Reliable data is important to design policies and monitor their impact. GAP III should strengthen efforts towards **improving statistical capacity** at national level to collect and publish data, as well as towards mainstreaming gender statistics within statistical systems.

It is of outmost importance that GAP III promotes these four areas of intervention in an integrated manner to ensure policy coherence as well as effective and sustainable gender equality outcomes.

This note is based on: ILO, *A quantum leap for gender equality: for a better future of work for all* (2019); ILO, *Care Work and Care Jobs* (2018).

Red Cross - Key Messages Gender Action Plan III Consultation

1. The new Gender Action Plan (GAP) should be an Official Communication from the EU, rather than a Staff Working Document (such as the current Gender Action Plan), and ensure a greater level of commitment to the achievement of SDG number 5 throughout EU institutions and EU delegations in all partnering countries.
2. The new GAP should place a greater emphasis in the achievement of equal gender representation in positions of power, politics and decision-making roles. When possible, projects implemented through EU funding should include provisions to ensure a greater representation of women in decision-making positions.
3. The new GAP should strongly encourage partnering countries to adopt legally-binding frameworks and measures, such as the ones reflected in the Istanbul Convention, and effectively enforce them as a key tool to eradicate violence against women. It should establish and improve systems for recording and monitoring SGBV prevention and response activities conducted by partner organizations.
4. The new GAP should place a stronger focus on impact for women and girls on the ground. EU funded programmes should be based on an analysis of the situation of women and girls, and the identification of priority areas of intervention in consultation with CSOs and women's rights groups that are linked to GAP III indicators.
5. The new GAP should understand and use the term gender as a term that refers to the social attributes and differences associated with being female, male or transgendered and does not replace the term 'sex' which refers exclusively to biological differences. It should not make the assumption that gender is fixed and acknowledges that some people express or experience gender in different ways and that gender may change altogether
6. Women and COVID19: Women are the majority of front-line health workforce and caregivers. Cultural factors may restrict women's access to information and services. Some women may be particularly affected, e.g. older women living alone, migrant women in an irregular situation. Isolation may lead to an increased risk of violence in the home. This is particularly relevant in developing countries. Therefore, we ask the Commission to include the following provisions in the new GAP in reference to COVID-19 and other epidemics:
 - Provide specific support for women caring for children and others in isolation or quarantine.
 - Ensure communications, treatment, support and services are culturally and gender sensitive to ensure access for women. Where possible ensure that medical teams are gender-balanced.
 - Contribute to improving working conditions and pay for front-line workforce and caregivers in fields that are essential and employ a majority of women.
 - Ensure measures are in place to mitigate risks of sexual and gender-based violence against women in quarantine facilities, isolation processes and procedures.
 - Develop communication materials for pregnant women on basic hygiene practices, infection precautions, danger signs and how and where to seek care.
 - Scale up maternal health care services where possible.
 - Provide continuous support to SGBV prevention, response, and risk mitigation, as all SGBV interventions are lifesaving and critical, especially during a pandemic.
7. The new GAP should include:
 - Capacity strengthening in gender and diversity mainstreaming as part of institutional development programs with special attention to staff training on gender and diversity analysis skills.
 - Ensure community engagement and accountability to acknowledge people's self-determined priorities, especially focusing on the most vulnerable to discrimination, exclusion and violence.

- Integrate measures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (including sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian actors) in all programmes and operations.
 - Ensure that personnel with specialized training in protection, gender and inclusion issues technically supervise programmes and operations, and that all staff and volunteers hold core competencies in protection, gender and inclusion and the “do no harm” principle.
 - Seek opportunities to share knowledge about gender, diversity and intersectionality with each other and collaborate to develop better ways to promote equality, embrace diversity, understand intersectionality and strengthen participation and access to equal opportunities for those discriminated, neglected or marginalized.
 - Undertake specific programmes and activities to promote diversity inclusion, equality, open-minded attitudes towards gender and diversity and to develop interpersonal skills such as critical thinking, non-violent communication, empathetic listening and mediation.
 - Engage in advocacy to support people's dignity, access, participation and safety and ensure that the voices of people with diverse identities are heard and that their specific needs and rights are met. This includes incorporating gender and diversity perspectives in developing humanitarian diplomacy initiatives on other topics.
8. The new GAP should include mandatory and measurable actions on prevention and response to sexual exploitation abuse (PSEA) of people affected. It should strengthen the guidance and required actions on PSEA and link them clearly to the need to ensure that safe SGBV assistance pathways for SGBV are accessible for SEA survivors.
9. The new GAP should address the need for disaster law and policy to provide for prevention and response to SGBV, increase the proportion of women in such law-making fora and institutions and enhance global networking and accountability on this issue. IFRC has published research with key findings and recommendations: <https://redcross.eu/positions-publications/effective-law-and-policy-on-gender-equality-and-protection-from-sgbv-in-disasters-new-research-from-ifrc>
10. The new GAP should reaffirm the EU's commitment to the Call to Action GBV Accountability Framework as a way to operationalize the Call to Action Roadmap.



Unlocking Public and Private
Finance for the Poor

UNCDF response to EU GAP consultation

EU prioritization of digital and artificial intelligence is critical, as part of building inclusive digital economies that leave no one behind. Without careful planning, market facilitation and interventions the rise of digital economies, can accelerate further the digital divide. Most of the 3.9 billion people who are offline and without energy access are in rural areas, poorer, less educated and tend to be women and girls. Therefore, the prime focus of this priority area should be creating *universal, affordable* access to mobile phones, internet, and energy access – through ownership, affordability and digital literacy. Digital skill building with girls and women will have a domino effect in their ability to use digital tools for empowerment. A critical factor here is also an inclusion of **e-commerce platforms**. Increasingly these platforms are critical to economies and women owned/focused SMEs may find a variety of constraints to connect to them.

Under **Economic Rights**, increasingly we are finding a major market constraint to advancing women's rights is *they are unequal under the law, especially access to property and financial services*. According to the World Bank, close to 40 percent of the world's economies have at least one legal constraint on women's rights to property, limiting their ability to own, manage, and inherit land (thereby limiting access to credit). This also includes access to identification, financial and other critical services. Currently, 1 billion women are financially excluded. We also believe in this section that all women and girls should have the right for financial education and access to financial services, especially credit. Credit is critically important for the advancement of women entrepreneurs, as is skill building and business development tools/services.

Increasing local financing for women's economic empowerment:

GAP III will need to focus on a holistic approach that includes active engagement of local institutions, private sector and women's groups. Concrete actions proposed include:

A. Gender responsive Planning and Services:

EU's support will be critical to promote gender responsive planning and services including support to local governments through annual planning and budgeting processes and identify sectors and programmes, which benefit women and girls directly such as investment in infrastructure which reduces women's unpaid care work and increases their access to employment and markets.

B. Financing, Capacity Building and Leadership

Providing direct financing to local governments and women SMEs through innovative financing mechanism including blended financing tools will be key to address gender inequality more effectively. More efforts are required for developing women led local institutions that play a critical role locally and strengthening CSO led local structures that are critical to make local governments accountable to deliver on committed priorities. Increasing local women's access to information related to government plans and budgets to promote transparency and accountability is another important area that needs to be prioritized.



Unlocking Public and Private
Finance for the Poor

Environmental Protection, And Climate Adaptation and Mitigation:

It is widely recognized that women and men can be affected in different ways by climate change, as well as the importance of their particular contributions to solutions. In fact, because women – especially those living in rural areas and/or poor settlements – are responsible for household care and rely on ecosystem products for their livelihoods, they are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts. It is, therefore, important that GAP III prioritizes a gender-sensitive approach to climate change adaptation and bring the planning and budgeting process for climate change adaptation closer to those who need it. Participation of local women and vulnerable groups is integral to successfully planning and implementing adaptation at the local level.

Under **Migration**, it should be considered that almost half of all remittances that are sent in the world are sent by women, 100 million women in total. Women are also often recipients of remittances. Women senders and receivers of remittances face challenges in *financial literacy, and poorly designed products that do not address their needs or challenges*. This impacts their ability to support their households and communities, as “their money doesn’t work for them”.

Lastly, on the mitigation the **gender-differentiated impact of COVID-19 global pandemic**, we believe there should be an emphasis of *women to be part of the response and recovery*. We believe the EU/EC should emphasize women integration into the DNA of the rebuilding of the economy, as part of government payment digitization, including social protection programs, but much more. This is likely to make these economies more resilient to economic and health shocks. Increasing women’s participation in the economy should be vital to the rebuilding of economies in terms of financial literacy, digital skill building, *women owned SME support*, engagement and financing, as well as increasing the number of women engaged in policy and private sector actions in rebuilding. This should also lead to the building of a more *inclusive care economy that works for everyone, addressing the inequities of unpaid care work*.

Promote local institutions in the COVID-19 recovery and response initiatives to build local response systems that will address special needs of women and girls including vulnerable groups such as those affected by domestic violence and abuse. Channel additional finance from central to local governments for timely provision of essential services for women and girls in affected areas. Support development of a bottom-up gender responsive need-based strategy and action plan for COVID-19 recovery, utilizing existing tools such as gender responsive local economic assessments (LEA).



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNODC Position Paper on the EU External Action Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025)

Exploring areas of future EU-UNODC collaboration

I. Introduction

Gender equality is a universally agreed objective. It is derived from the Charter of the United Nations and is confirmed in a number of international commitments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the systematic mainstreaming of gender are crucial for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Gender equality is one of the major cross-cutting priorities of the European Commission, as outlined in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and other policy documents that reiterate mutual reinforcement between internal and external actions.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) supports Member States in making the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism and promotes security and justice for all. These areas have substantive gender implications. Equal access to rights, justice systems, resources and opportunities is at the very core of UNODC's mandate. UNODC is committed to enhance the implementation of its mandate through the systematic integration of gender aspects. The successful attainment of these ambitious goals can only be achieved by strengthening cooperation with all actors, including the EU.

II. EU commitments and future objectives

Building on past achievements and lessons learned, the GAP III should continue to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into all its external actions and partnership frameworks such as the new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement and Eastern Partnership, while contributing to the realization of all SDGs. Addressing gender inequality in a balanced and comprehensive manner through gender-sensitive and rights-based criminal justice responses is essential. The momentum and attention gained through the UN-EU Spotlight Initiative on violence against women and girls should be sustained.

UNODC concurs with EU priorities and encourages their strengthening especially in regard to emerging threats at global and regional level. Particular attention should be placed on mitigating the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls and reducing structural gender inequality.

➤ *Cybercrime and digitalization*

Aside from their limited access to online spaces, women are disproportionately subjected to various forms of online abuse. Cybercriminals use the darknet to perpetrate not only sexual exploitation but also human trafficking and migrant smuggling, which especially affect women and children. Moreover, the disproportionate amount of trolling and cyber-bullying that women and girls are subjected to may represent a push factor toward unsafe behaviours online and offline. Not reflected in previous strategic documents of the EU, these transnational trends should be addressed in the GAP III and tackled by increasing law enforcement capabilities to shore up gaps in developing countries and enhancing international cooperation between governments, International Organizations, CSOs and the private sector.¹

The current steep increase in crimes perpetrated online, involving corona-related frauds, cybercrimes as

¹ https://www.unodc.org/westandcentralafrica/en/2018_04_24_oped-on-cybercrime.html



well as sexual abuse and harassment is one of the main consequences of COVID-19 confinement. **Empowering law enforcement and police authorities in EU Member States and partner countries by strengthening their detection and prosecution skills, improving cross-border access to electronic evidence, and exchanging information with relevant actors including the private sector is of foremost importance.**

➤ ***Gender-based violence against women and girls (GBVAWG)***

UN Women estimates that 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner at some point in their lives. Over half of women murdered are murdered at the hands of an intimate partner or family member. This is worsened by existing lack of funding, access, coordination and quality of essential police, justice, social and health services. **Greater attention should be placed on crime prevention and criminal justice responses to GBVAWG, including strengthened legal and institutional frameworks to eliminate discriminatory laws and procedures, increased resource allocation, staffing, capacity development and coordination among criminal justice and other relevant institutions, as well as evidence-based data analyses on victimization and gender-related killing.** Specialization of the police, prosecution and legal aid services and the judiciary is also central. Future initiatives should include responses facilitating reporting and ensuring continuity of effective risk assessment, safety planning and judicial protection measures, as well as the allocation of necessary resources to reduce the backlog of criminal cases and protection procedures.

The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women and girls is demonstrated by the increase in GBVAWG brought on by lockdown policies and other confinement measures and the reduced access to and use of essential services. This gender implication should be duly tackled by law enforcement and police forces.

➤ ***Access to justice***

Many women and girls experience discriminatory justice systems which limit their access to justice and curtail their protection, which leads to impunity and a cyclical pattern of further violations². Fostering effective, fair, humane and accountable crime prevention and criminal justice strategies and reforms that are gender-responsive, respectful of the rule of law and based on human rights laws and principles, should be a key priority of the new GAP. In this sense, **increased women's participation in the judicial system at various levels and roles, including in law enforcement agencies, as well as enhanced protection of women victims and witnesses involved in judicial processes should be prioritized.**

Moreover, women's access to justice is often considered only in relation to girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity (as is the case of GAP II), and rarely as a fundamental right. Specific attention is needed to address gender-based discrimination in the criminal justice system and ensure equal access to legal aid for women, whether as victims, witnesses, alleged offenders or prisoners. Gender-responsive prison management and non-custodial measures are of key importance, particularly considering the gender implication of COVID-19 and other emergencies on prisons and other overcrowded settings. Future cooperation should also address equal access to digital justice services for women.

➤ ***Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants.***

Trafficking in persons is a highly gendered crime. Situations of instability and conflict, often exploited by criminal groups, exacerbate women's vulnerabilities to trafficking and its severity. Despite the inclusion of the issue in the previous strategy, the EU needs to consider specific and separated targets that should

² Please consult the UN Women, UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR Practitioner's Toolkit on Women's Access to Justice at: https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/WA2J_Consolidated.pdf



include transregional cooperation to break the chain of trafficking by ensuring the protection of victims and countering the culture of impunity by perpetrators. Building on the Women, Peace and Security Action Plan, **the EU should continue to strengthen its efforts to enhance the capabilities of professionals interacting with persons forcibly displaced, to identify victims or persons vulnerable to trafficking and to promote the implementation of the international standards³ in fighting human trafficking while promoting the comparative advantage of each organization and actors involved** (i.e. peacekeeping operations, JHA agencies, CSOs and IOs).

Concerning smuggling of migrants, the next strategy should incorporate better shaped policy recommendations and interventions addressing the drivers and the consequences of migrant smuggling based on the comprehensive understanding of the array of human rights abuses experienced by migrants, including GBVAWG, as well as the *modi operandi* through which women are recruited, coerced, and employed in smuggling operations. The links and differences between migration, trafficking and smuggling should be considered to enable targeted action that substantively protects women's rights, and empowers them to access safe, low-cost, legal migration channels. Furthermore, **GAP III should promote specific actions, information and analysis on the way in which women are currently participating in efforts, especially as law enforcement officers and legal practitioners, to combat and reduce smuggling and trafficking.**

Concerning the COVID-19, there are fears that the pandemic will dramatically raise the level of unemployment and reductions in income especially for low-wage and informal sector workers, resulting in an overall increase of vulnerability and precarious conditions for the most vulnerable that may lead to high risks of exploitation, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling.

➤ ***Environmental crime and green transition***

In the green transition women play a substantial role. However, socio-economic barriers and discriminatory behaviors hinder their access to natural resources and restrict their participation in decision-making on environmental and climate change issues, which in themselves present challenging gender implications. Environmental threats and natural disasters disproportionately affect women and girls. The insecurity and instability repercussions may contribute to the flourishing of organised crime and illicit activities.

An increased focus on the link between gender dimension and environmental protection should be incorporated in GAP III. This will be accomplished by increasing women's engagement in decision-making processes at all levels and in the development of relevant actions and projects and by mainstreaming gender perspectives in all environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

➤ ***Terrorism prevention***

Aside from being possible victims of acts of terrorism, women are particularly targeted by terrorist groups as a means of achieving tactical, strategic and ideological aims. Women may also face gender-specific difficulties when attempting to access justice and seeking remedies as victims of terrorism. When women support terrorist groups, the circumstances of their involvement, the roles they fulfil in these groups and the levels of violence with which they engage, are often based on gender roles and stereotypes.⁴ **Special attention should be given to those women who become associated with these groups through coercion or abduction and may commit terrorism-related offences. Women's rights and gender dimensions need to be duly included when developing counterterrorism and criminal justice**

³ For instance, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

⁴ https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/17-08887_HB_Gender_Criminal_Justice_E_ebook.pdf
Making the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism



responses to terrorism as well as recognizing women's contribution to activities focusing on terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism prevention. In this respect, there is dire need for gender inclusive evidence-based data and analyses⁵.

Another area of focus where a gendered approach is crucial is in the reduction of small arms proliferation. Research shows that there is a link between the prevalence of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and women's safety. **Future actions should explore this link by developing evidence-based research and mainstreaming gender perspective at policy and operational levels.**

➤ ***Access to health, drug treatment and poverty reduction***

Women are more likely to suffer from food insecurity, lack of income, access and control over economic resources and have less access to healthcare. As women play a critical role in increasing the impact of poverty reduction measures, **the next GAP III and related EU external actions should include alternative development programmes targeting women empowerment, allowing access to necessary resources, and ensuring sexual and reproductive health, and other health services through an integrated people-centred approach that is gender responsive and youth friendly.**

Discriminatory practices and stigma, unequal opportunities in the health, economic and law enforcement sectors, and social and structural barriers continue to restrict the access for women to treatment for drug abuse.⁶ The GAP III objectives should aim at further mainstreaming a gender perspective into EU drugs policies and programmes to meet the specific needs of women with drug use disorders. Addressing the social, structural and economic factors preventing women from accessing evidence-based drug treatment services and other health services, including for HIV prevention, treatment and care, as well as promoting their active involvement and participation in drug-related policies and programmes are of paramount importance. The promotion of reproductive and sexual health, mental health care, treatment for substance abuse and counselling for survivors of physical and sexual abuse should be particularly enhanced in prison settings.

In relation to COVID-19, women, especially pregnant women and/or victims of drugs abuse, face conspicuous challenges to access to services, due to the negative implications stemming from the restrictions and confinement measures worsening the existing socio-economic barriers and stereotypical and discriminatory behaviours.

➤ ***Corruption***

Corruption disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, especially women. In society, gender roles and stereotypes commonly delineate division of labour, control over resources and decision-making, from the domestic sphere up to the top echelons of government. Gender inequality undermines people's equal access and ability to participate in decision-making processes⁷. Therefore, **the GAP III must foster the inclusion of the women's empowerment component into anti-corruption agendas. Further research is necessary to analyse the impacts of corruption and anti-corruption programmes on women as well as to explore the existing corruption schemes limiting women access to justice and often implicating sextortion, sexual violence and human trafficking.** Future initiatives must foster the inclusion of the women's empowerment component into anti-corruption agendas, programmes and policies as women

⁵ https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/17-08887_HB_Gender_Criminal_Justice_E_ebook.pdf (p.13)

⁶ Please consult the UNODC position paper to the European Commission Public Consultation on the Evaluation of the EU Drug Strategy (2013-2020) and the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2017-2020) - February 2020

⁷ https://www.unodc.org/lpo-brazil/en/frontpage/2019/12/corruption-and-gender_-_women-and-men-affected-differently-by-corruption--but-no-evidence-women-or-men-are-less-corruptible.html



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can be positive agents for change.

III. Conclusion

Gender equality and women's empowerment with their cross-cutting aspects provide a strategic arena for UNODC and EU for innovation and new initiatives to strengthen collaboration and mutual support. The EU Gender Action Plan III should be framed around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its targets paying specific attention to the cross-cutting Goal 16 on access to justice and based on relevant international legal and policy framework. The comparative advantage of each partners should be taken in account.

Making the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism

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EU EXTERNAL GENDER ACTION PLAN III CONSULTATION

JOINT SUBMISSION - UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Agencies: FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNCDF, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCT, UNODC, UN Women

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B. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a universally agreed objective deriving from the Charter of the United Nations and confirmed in several international commitments *inter alia*, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the 2030 Agenda. The EU Gender Action Plan III should align with existing international norms and standards and foster their implementation. Given the universality of the 2030 Agenda and in line with the EU's commitment, it is crucial to fully align once again the EU external gender equality priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals and its indicators (in particular SDG5), and where relevant set more ambitious targets. Keeping in mind the need of a holistic approach that is not only gender-responsive but also addresses intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination¹, it is important to fully comply with the *leave no one behind* principle.

Also, it would be important to build on the momentum of the 25th anniversary both of the International Conference on Population and Development and Beijing Declaration and their related plans of action, the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 as well as the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child² while clearly defining priorities stemming from those international standards, including on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In the context of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action³ and the engagement of the European Union in the Generation Equality Forum, the United Nations also recommends that the GAP III refers to the upcoming Action Coalitions⁴. Each Action Coalition will launch a targeted set of concrete, ambitious and immediate actions within the period of 2020-2025 to deliver tangible impact on gender equality and girls' and women's human rights.

The United Nations welcomes the existing policy documents and the interlinkages with these documents, *inter alia*, the recently adopted EU Gender Equality Strategy, the EU Strategic Approach on Women Peace and Security and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. Moreover, as the European Green Deal and the digital agenda are being developed and discussed, it is of crucial importance to have exchanges and consultations as those topics will interact.

Regarding funding, while the United Nations welcomes overall the dual approach of mainstreaming gender in all programming as well as specific and substantial targeted interventions including flagship programmes, the United Nations also calls to fully implement gender-responsive budgeting across the EU budget. In line with OECD DAC gender marker and as called for by the G7 2019 Gender Equality Advisory Council, it is proposed that 20% of the funding allocation for all EU external Actions should mark as Gender Marker 2 (principal) and the United Nations would propose to increase the current target of 85% to 90% for Gender Marker 1 (relevant).

The ongoing discussions on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) are essential to give the means of implementation of the Gender Action Plan III. Priorities of GAP III shall be reflected in the budget allocations under the new MFF, across the different Instruments. This shall include ensuring annual tracking and reporting on allocations and expenditures for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment on the basis of the indicative programming documents - across the EU external budget. The United Nations have called for ensuring gender responsive budgeting in the new MFF in a letter of 29 May 2018 to the European Commission.

¹ UN Women, [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot](#), 2019.

² "Support for the Girl Child- Recommitment during the 30th anniversary on the Convention on the Rights of the Child to promoting non-discrimination, support for the best interests of the child, ensuring the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child.

³ UN Women, [Gender equality: Women's rights in review 25 years after Beijing](#), 2020

⁴ More on the Action Coalitions of the Generation Equality Forum [here](#).

The GAP III also provides the opportunity to further build on the achievements on GAP II and shed light on new relevant areas. In this context, it would be important to consider adjusting the language to include when relevant “girls”, as in “women and girls” throughout the action plan.

Finally, the United Nations strongly encourages that this Gender Action Plan be adopted as an official Communication rather than a Staff Working Document, as this would reflect the EU’s commitment at the highest level to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and in particular on SDG5 and all gender-related targets. This decision would engage further all relevant stakeholders and allow stronger implementation. The GAP III also provides the opportunity to push further the crucial work on the cultural shift initiated in the context of GAP II. Furthermore, the UN recommends introducing an approach which would help moving away from the “menu type” selection process of focus areas at country level to a more structured approach which would possibly also help the reporting/impact assessments.

C. AREAS FOR ACTION

1. FIGHT AGAINST GENDER STEREOTYPES AND DISCRIMINATORY SOCIAL NORMS

Discrimination based on sex ‘has evolved considerably to cover not only physiological characteristics but also the social construction of gender stereotypes, prejudices and expected roles’⁵ creating obstacles to the equal fulfilment of rights. The Social Norms Index constructed by the Human Development Report has found that almost half of the global population are biased against gender equality with a view that men make better political leaders and business executives than women. Bias against gender inequality is found greater in the areas that most challenge power relations.⁶

Several treaties contain obligations concerning harmful stereotypes and wrongful stereotyping⁷ and/or prohibit discrimination based on ‘other status’ which has increasingly been recognized to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Discriminatory gender stereotypes and norms affect development outcomes across all sectors, each requiring a tailored response.

In addressing gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms, multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential: engaging men and boys (for instance through the #HeforShe campaign⁸ or other promising practices and initiatives⁹), civil society organisations, religious and community leaders, the media, private sector, educators, parents, law enforcement and justice officers, parliamentarians as well as Governments. Moreover, as each stakeholder is a key agent of socialization at different scales, the United Nations recommends working closely with these change agents across the life course of individuals– from birth to adulthood – to create evidence-based and context-specific interventions, which are key to eliminating unconscious bias and changing negative gender norms and positively enabling the next generation of children, youth and adults. Gender-responsive early childhood education and development, the promotion of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girls and boys¹⁰, the integration of gender equality content into *curricula* at all levels of education¹¹ are also key strategies to fight against gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms.

⁵ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General comment No. 20 on Non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights, para 20 (E/C.12/GC/20), 2009.

⁶ UNDP, Human Development Report 2019, Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century, 2019.

⁷ For instance: CEDAW (Art. 5 and 10) and the CRPD (Art. 8.1.b)

⁸ HeforShe website: www.heforshe.org

⁹ OHCHR, ‘Review of promising practices and lessons learned, existing strategies and United Nations and other initiatives to engage men and boys in promoting and achieving gender equality, in the context of eliminating violence against women’ (A/HRC/38/24), 2018

¹⁰ OHCHR, ‘Realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl’, A/HRC/35/11, 2017

¹¹ OHCHR, Fourth phase (2020-2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, 2018

The private sector is also one of the most influential change agents in socialization processes. Businesses tend to, unconsciously or deliberately, contribute to the perpetuation of discriminatory gender norms through media, advertising, product design and as employers. The United Nations recommends partnerships with private sector companies, industry associations and rule setting bodies to leverage their resources, influence, reach and expertise to challenge gender stereotypes. Initiatives, such as the [Unstereotype Alliance](#) which recognizes the power of partnerships to accelerate progress towards gender equality, should be promoted. This industry-led initiative also partnering with UN agencies and public organizations, unites leaders across business, technology and creative industries to tackle the widespread prevalence of stereotypes that are often perpetuated through advertising and content.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should include *inter alia*:

- Working with the media and advertising industry and social influencers to break down stereotypes and challenge traditional roles, through the Unstereotype Alliance for instance.
- Considering the life course of individuals– from birth to adulthood – to create evidence-based and context-specific interventions to tackle stereotypes.
- Supporting disaggregated data collection and analysis on the prevalence and impact of stereotypes and discriminatory social norms to better inform policies and strategies.
- Supporting governments to enact laws, policies and programs that can change mindsets and address these deep-seated biases, prejudices and social norms against gender equality, such as tackling adverse social norms that impact women’s and girls’ confidence, positive identity and motivation, and increasing government support for community-based women’s rights organizations, which historically played a critical part in shifting social norms.
- Broadening the scope of activities listed under *objective 19 (norms and stereotypes) of the GAP II*.

2. WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

SDG 5 aims to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, social, economic and public life¹².

However, women remain significantly under-represented as voters, as well as in leading positions, whether in elected office, as candidates and within executive governments, the civil service, the private sector or academia. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally in democratic governance. A combination of institutional and structural constraints, as well as cultural and attitudinal barriers that suggest women should not have a role in public life, result in their leadership being challenged in the home, the community and in the public realm.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Support the development and implementation of robust legal frameworks and administrative arrangements, including relevant reforms to constitutions, laws, regulations, and policy actions; support the establishment of numerical targets for women in leadership positions with temporary special measures (TSMs) and reforming party statutes; ensure systematic inclusion of specific results on gender equality on all legal reforms programmes supported by the EU.
- ✓ Expand and diversify the pool of qualified and capable women to run for election, including through initiating programmes that boost women’s confidence and capacity to lead, enhancing their campaign strategies and techniques and promoting linkages with supportive

¹² Including sectors such as the justice sector.

civil society organizations and ensuring similar approaches in all EU-funded electoral assistance programmes.

- ✓ Transform gender norms so that women are accepted as legitimate and effective leaders, including through developing campaigns that sensitize the media and electorate on the need for women in public life at all levels, and by working with men and male champions¹³.
- ✓ Support women leaders in gender-sensitive political institutions, including parliament, political parties and Election Management Bodies (EMBs), to create opportunities for women to work at different levels of government. Attract, promote and retain women leaders, and highlight the constructive contribution they make to decision-making, to help create role models.
- ✓ Support and reflect recommendations related to leadership and governance expected from the UN Report of the 20th anniversary of UNSCR1325.¹⁴
- ✓ Support community level participatory approaches to boost the confidence and leadership skills of rural women and remove the barrier for women's participation (as both member and leaders) in rural producer organizations as well as in national and local institutions and governance mechanisms.
- ✓ Ensure the inclusion of the needs and realities of migrant women and girls to design a rights-based, strategic, comprehensive approach to migration governance as well as ensuring the mainstreaming of migration and gender into sector policies; ensuring the inclusion of migrant women and girls' views and opinions in decisions affecting their lives.
- ✓ Support women workers organizations including through social dialogue; drawing on good practices to promote also the organization of informal women workers, in unions, cooperatives or associations, including through digital means¹⁵, in order to increase their collective and representative voice and allow them to negotiate decent working conditions, better remuneration and to redefine social norms.
- ✓ Engage girls and young women to participate in decision-making about themselves and their communities, in order to raise future women leaders. Actions to raise a generation of young activists and leaders include:
 - Promote a safe and enabling environment - in person and online - in which all adolescent girls and young women can actively engage in public life at all levels without fear of physical, emotional, or online violence and harassment.
 - Support mobilizing and building the capacity of girls - building their self-esteem, voice and agency- so that they can participate both individually and collectively in social, economic, public life.
 - Scale up efforts aimed at ending discriminative gender norms and stereotypes, including through media and advertising, the gaming industry, and community-based programmes.
 - Support adolescent girls, including those from vulnerable groups and minorities to be at the forefront of change through mentoring by champions and women leaders.
 - Make girls visible in leadership and decision-making roles at all levels and all settings- including humanitarian (e.g. at student councils, local governments, community groups, boardrooms and media).
 - Invest in digital platforms that allow meaningful engagement and movements of adolescent girls and other young people toward gender equality change.

¹³ Cross-reference to Area 1, on gender stereotypes.

¹⁴ Cross-reference with Area 9 on Women, Peace and Security.

¹⁵ See e.g. King-Dejardin, A. 2019. *The social construction of migrant care work: At the intersection of care, migration and gender* (Geneva, ILO).

- ✓ Support the inclusion of the women's empowerment component into anti-corruption agendas, programmes and policies and support further research on the gender-differentiated impact of corruption and of anti-corruption programmes.

3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Ease the burden of care work on women and girls

Care work ensures the complex and life-sustaining web on which our very existence depends. Women shoulder a disproportionate share of unpaid work around the world, and gender imbalances in the distribution of care work constitute a root cause of women's economic and social disempowerment¹⁶. For GAP III to contribute to achieving women empowerment and gender equality, it must ease the care burden on women and girls and promote a fairer distribution of care work.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Draw inspiration from the "5R Framework for Decent Care Work": its key components include Recognizing, Reducing and Redistributing unpaid care work; Rewarding paid care work; and ensuring Representation, social dialogue and collective bargaining for care workers. Each group of policy recommendations is matched by a set of policy measures based on ILO labour standards and intended to achieve the SDGs¹⁷.
- ✓ Support the implementation of family friendly policies, including equal parental leave, childcare, breastfeeding breaks and subsidies/family grants.
- ✓ Recognize long-term care as a burning policy issue in low- and middle-income countries. Even where the long-term care has been on the public agenda for some time, it is rarely discussed in gendered terms. Instead, debates are dominated by concerns over its fiscal implications. Currently, the societal costs of policy inaction in both developed and developing countries are borne disproportionately by women: the elderly women who do not receive the care that they deserve, and the women of all ages who are overrepresented among those who provide care under inadequate and exploitative conditions¹⁸.
- ✓ Ensure that unpaid care work and domestic work is counted in EU Member States' statistics.
- ✓ Prioritize investments in infrastructure to reduce the drudgery of unpaid work¹⁹.
- ✓ Reduce unpaid domestic and care work by investing in the development of culturally appropriate, accessible, affordable, gender-responsive time and energy-saving infrastructure, technology and housing.²⁰

Ensure access to basic infrastructure and services and social protection

In low-income countries, basic infrastructure and services, such as clean water, safe cooking fuel, electricity, and secure transportation, day-care, schools, health facilities and ICT have an enormous impact on women's time to dedicate to work while also being a source of decent jobs for women and contributing to environmental sustainability²¹. Addressing women's time poverty, not only in low- but also medium and high-income countries, is an essential element to enable a redistribution of responsibilities together with the promotion of gender-responsive social protection systems, including social protection floors that are universal, fair and inclusive. Such systems should ensure that informal women workers have access to- and take account of the fact that women with interrupted employment careers and low earnings benefit from- the system in place²².

¹⁶ UN Women, *Issue Paper Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment: Recognizing And Investing In The Care Economy*, 2018.

¹⁷ ILO, *Care Work and Care Jobs Report*, 2018. – p.289 for an overview of the 5R Framework on Decent Care Work.

¹⁸ UN Women, *Policy Brief Long-term care for older people: A new global gender priority*, 2017

¹⁹ UN Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2019–2020: Families in a Changing World*, 2019.

²⁰ Recommendations from the Gender Equality Advisory Council for Canada's G7 Presidency, Charlevoix 2018

²¹ UN Women, *Initiating women's empowerment; Social Protection, Infrastructure & Public Services, 2018*.

²² ILO, *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality*, 2019, - p.84 discussion on social protection models and effects on women.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Support access to basic infrastructure and services for women, including gender-responsive social protection systems and funds. In particular, increased investments in gender responsive infrastructure are needed specially in less developed regions. Support the development of social protection floors with the multi-dimensional poverty index, the expansion of social protection programs to women and to social groups, and the increase of reach of the programs through the improvements of communication channels (including digital), local services and local infrastructure.
- ✓ Reduce market and legal constraints in women's rights to access property, in particular access to and control over land, and financial services, especially in LDCs and last mile context.
- ✓ Currently 1 billion women are financially excluded. Provide financial, digital and fintech education and training for all women and girls. Enhance credit along with business development services for advancement of women entrepreneurs in both urban and rural contexts²³.
- ✓ Incorporates monitoring and evaluation to assess the progress and propose improvements accordingly.

Promote gender responsive macroeconomic policies

Public investment in infrastructure, social protection and care services to address care deficits are required to close gender gaps in the labour market. Currently these areas are often under-funded. Furthermore, fiscal, trade, monetary or exchange rate policies have an impact on gender equality²⁴ and are key determinants of decent employment for women²⁵.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Pre-assess the impact of such policies and include women in their design.
- ✓ Support gender-responsive budgeting and gender smarting investing as important tools for prioritizing more effectively gender equality in the overall set of national policies and investment strategies.
- ✓ Create enabling policy environments and strengthening local systems especially in LDCs such as gender responsive fiscal decentralization models and public expenditure management systems to address gender inequalities in economic rights.
- ✓ Ensure the EU international trade and investment agreements are not gender-blind but ensure greater promotion and protection of women's economic empowerment and equal rights²⁶, including in terms of land tenure and housing, livelihoods, employment and social protection.

Respect and afford equal labour rights

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Support policies and actions that promote the respect for both women and men's labour rights.

²³ See more on UNCDF work on Financial Inclusion and Digital Finance

²⁴ ILO, *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality*, 2019, p 86. and UN Women *Policy Brief, Why macroeconomic policy matters for gender equality*, 2015.

²⁵ *Idem*.

²⁶ OHCHR, 'Gender dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights', 2019. And (A/HRC/41/43); *General Comment No. 24 (2017) on State Obligations under ICESCR in the Context of Business Activities*(E/C.12/GC/24)

- ✓ Promote the ratification and implementation of international conventions related to women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and ILO fundamental conventions²⁷ and in particular C190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work and Convention 189 on Domestic Workers.
- ✓ Drawing on good practices, promote actions to prevent and protect against violence and harassment in the world of work²⁸.
- ✓ Promote the full application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in law and practices enshrined in ILO Convention 100 such as wage transparency at company level; low-cost and user-friendly tools to trace & measure unequal pay, and work with partner countries to remove discriminatory legal provisions restricting women's access to certain sectors and occupations and with companies to design and implement equal pay for work of equal value policies and practices.²⁹ GAP III could support countries to join the [Equal Pay international Coalition](#)³⁰.

Working with the private sector

The purpose of a corporation is to promote an economy that serves everyone – both women and men whether they are customers, employees, suppliers, members of communities or shareholders. The business community has a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment in the changing world of work. The [Women's Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\)](#) are a set of principles offering guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Established by UN Global Compact and UN Women, the WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and constitute a primary vehicle for corporate delivery on gender equality dimensions of the 2030 agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. By joining the WEPs community, the CEO signals commitment to this agenda at the highest levels of the company and to work collaboratively in multistakeholder networks to foster business practices that empower women. These include equal pay for work of equal value, gender-responsive supply chain practices and zero tolerance against sexual harassment in the workplace.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Advance women's economic empowerment through engaging and incentivizing the private sector to implement the WEPs and transparently report on results on gender equality and women's empowerment, the [Gender Equality Seal](#) for companies, and gender-responsive local economic development and investments.
- ✓ Scale up public and private funding especially in last mile context considering gaps in investment to women's economic empowerment. In particular, enhance financing business models supporting locally designed gender equitable investments and revenue-generating capital investment projects³¹ and promote gender smart investing practices.
- ✓ Encourage financial stakeholders to leverage the power of capital markets and movements of resources to steer responsible business conduct and foster inclusive corporate cultures and invest in programmes that advance gender equality.
- ✓ Build on the EU supported "WE EMPOWER Programmes" that advocate for responsible business conduct and for adoption of targets on WEPs implementation by all private sector organisations partnering with the European Union in the implementation of all EU external aid, including through the EU External Investment Plan. This is even more important during

²⁷ These include C111 on non-discrimination in employment and C100 on equal pay for work of equal value.

²⁸ UN Women and ILO, [HANDBOOK Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work](#), 2019. See good practices/lessons learnt e.g. by ILO/IFC Better work programme in [the garment industry](#).

²⁹ WE EMPOWER G7, [Guidance note on "Closing Gender Pay Gaps to Achieve Gender Equality at Work](#), 2020.

³⁰ [Equal Pay International Coalition](#), Initiative led by ILO, UNWOMEN and OECD.

³¹ UNCDF, UN Women, UNDP, joint programme '[Inclusive and Equitable Local Development](#)'.

crisis situations, such as COVID-19, as it ensures a strong and gender-sensitive crisis response so that no woman or girl is left further behind.

- ✓ Develop stronger linkages and collaboration between such sectors, as trade, investment, procurement and development policies, including the announced Commission's proposal for a regulatory framework on human rights due diligence for European business actors through their supply chains in 2021.
- ✓ Call on the private sector to incorporate a gender perspective into their response, including during crisis times, such as during COVID-19, ensuring that gender expertise is proactively built into response teams and gender dimensions are embedded within response and recovery plans³².

Promote women's entrepreneurship and inclusive supply chains

Estimates suggest that there are seven women entrepreneurs for every 10 men entrepreneurs³³. Equal participation in the economy could see significant increases in the global GDP. Yet, many women entrepreneurs remain constrained by systemic barriers, such as unequal and undervalued care responsibilities, limited access to capital, access to professional and sector networks, and constrained market, customer and business development opportunities. To realize the full economic contributions of women entrepreneurs, it imperative that the public and private sector stakeholders must enhance supports for women entrepreneurs. Investing in entrepreneurship and women-owned businesses and including them into corporate supply chains is "smart economics" and good for business.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Develop women entrepreneurship strategies, with adequate funding at the national and local levels.
- ✓ Provide targeted support to women-owned SMEs, including through enhanced access to capital, professional and sector networks, and business development opportunities.

Engage and support women through work transitions

For successful results, women and girls need to participate equally with men and boys in STEM/ICT education, training, research and employment, particularly digital technology and artificial intelligence. This will require a multistakeholder approach. It is predicted that between 40 million and 160 million women globally may need to transition between occupations by 2030³⁴, often associated with new or higher skilled positions. Women and girls will need to acquire all mobile and digital skills, to move forward and professionally grow in the new world of work order.

- ✓ Support activities aimed at harnessing technology for gender equality.
- ✓ Promote lifelong learning (including STEM/ICT skills for women and girls).
- ✓ Create an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs and support in particular women in work transitions including helping them to move from the informal to the formal economy³⁵.
- ✓ Support women moving from the informal to the formal economy (e.g. cooperatives, social enterprises, tax incentives can provide a way forward).

³² UN Women, COVID-19 and Gender Equality: *A Call to Action for the Private Sector*, 2020.

<https://www.weps.org/resource/covid-19-and-gender-equality-call-action-private-sector>

³³ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018/2019 Global Report. Available at: www.gemconsortium.org/report

³⁴ McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) report, The future of women at work: Transitions in the age of automation

³⁵ ILO, COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges, 7 May 2020 and [The Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation \(No. 204\)](#).

Globally, 22 per cent of youth aged 15–24 years are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET), 68 per cent of which are adolescent girls and young women (per ILO estimates, 2019). Therefore, the GAP III should also include action/results targeting young girls in transition, such as:

- ✓ Create and enforce legislation, policies, plans, and budgets that promote gender equality in and through education at all levels, including legislation for universal access to safe, gender-responsive quality education, technical and vocational learning etc.
- ✓ Ensure that gender equality is front and centre of the education response and invest and support investment by traditional (government, grant funding) and non-traditional (investors) partners toward scalable and sustainable programming ensuring universal access and offering adolescent girls and young women the skills fit for the 21st Century (STEM, including technical and digital skills), entrepreneurship skills, spirit, ecosystems), that includes internships, apprenticeships, mentoring programs, and other opportunities.
- ✓ Create pipelines of learning and sisterhood between adolescent girls' skills and women's economic empowerment ecosystem- including regional economic networks (e.g., ASEAN, SAARC), women in tech, blended finance and other innovative financing models and movements, local women entrepreneurship networks etc.
- ✓ Work with communities, educators and teachers to promote inclusive learning methods, continued investments in girls' learning and mitigate the impact of the digital divide in virtual learning.
- ✓ Make technologies (such as AI, robotics, blockchain etc.) innovations and connectivity: (1) affordable - to allow scalable impact; (2) universal - reaching most population of a national territory; and (3) reliable - providing sufficient capacity to deliver vast amounts of information at speeds that do not hinder their effective use. Make available safe and secured digital platforms avoiding and preventing disinformation and misinformation.

4. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Women's sexual and reproductive health is related to multiple human rights, including the rights to life, to be free from torture and ill-treatment, to health, to privacy, to education, and the prohibition of discrimination. In its General comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health³⁶, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has clarified that obligations on States parties to the Covenant include ensuring that all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including those dealing with intellectual property or trade and investment, are consistent with the protection of the right to sexual and reproductive health and do not impede access to medicines, diagnostics or related technologies required for the prevention or treatment of any disease related to sexual and reproductive health. Since the 1994 Cairo Conference, and the 1995 Beijing Conference, the global community has made a concerted and largely effective effort to advance the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of women and girls. The proportion of women dying from complications of pregnancy or childbirth has been halved. Tens of millions more women have access to modern methods of family planning. Harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage are declining. Yet, 25 years on and while the SDGs explicitly recognize sexual and reproductive health as essential to health, development and women's empowerment, many women and girls are still left behind. Pregnancy complications and harmful traditional practices remain leading causes of death, disability and economic and social disempowerment for women in the developing world.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

³⁶ UN, *General comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health (article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)*.

- ✓ Support access to safe, voluntary family planning, as it is a human right. Family planning is central to gender equality and women's empowerment, and it is a key factor in reducing poverty. Yet in developing regions, an estimated 232 million³⁷ women who want to avoid pregnancy are not using safe and effective family planning methods, for reasons ranging from lack of access to information or services to lack of support from their partners or communities.
- ✓ To support ending harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child marriage, which are still prevalent.
- ✓ To support women to make their own decisions regarding their SRHR through policies and programmes to address women's autonomy.
- ✓ To promote accessibility and equitable access to migrant-friendly, comprehensive, regular healthcare systems, mindful of the needs of migrant women and girls.
- ✓ To strengthen knowledge on SRHR of migrants via research and information dissemination to ensure evidence-based programming and policy development.
- ✓ To develop and strengthen multi-sectoral partnerships and coordination among member states, stakeholders and migrants' communities to ensure the highest attainable standard of SRHR for migrant women and girls.
- ✓ To tackle discriminatory practices and unequal opportunities in the health and law enforcement sectors which hinder the empowerment of women and their right to health, including access of women to treatment for drug use (evidence-based drug treatment services and other health services, including for HIV prevention, treatment and care).
- ✓ To promote and ensure access to maternal health and nutrition, HIV prevention, care and support and adolescent girls' health and well-being including cervical cancer prevention and mental health, menstrual health and hygiene.
- ✓ To support access for transgender women to general non-discriminatory and holistic health gender affirming care, and adequate health insurance coverage for such services³⁸.
- ✓ To support civil society working to defend SRHR and use the EU's leverage to support dialogue on these issues – including in relation to law reform.

In addition:

- ✓ To further mainstreaming a gender perspective into EU drugs policies and programmes, such as the new EU Drug Strategy and Action Plan post-2020, including its related external actions and budgeting, to meet the specific needs of women who use drugs and with drug use disorders, as well as promote the active involvement and participation of women into drug-related policies and programmes³⁹.

5. ALL FORMS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

All forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual harassment (SGBV-SH) undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomous mobility of its victims/survivors, yet it is persistent and shrouded in a culture of silence. Victims of violence can suffer from psychological, physical, sexual and reproductive health consequences, including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, traumatic fistula, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and even death. It negatively affects women and girl's general well-being and prevents them from fully participating in society (e.g. work, education, access to services, political participation, recreation, etc.). Violence not only has negative consequences for women and girls but also their families, the community and the country at large. It has tremendous costs, from greater health care and legal expenses and losses in productivity, including impacting on national food security and nutrition, national budgets and overall development.

³⁷ UNFPA, *State of World Population Report*, 2019.

³⁸ WHO, *Ensuring an inclusive global health agenda for transgender people*, 2016.

³⁹ UNODC, *INCB Drug Report - Women and Drugs*, 2016.

UNSCR 2242 (2015) specifically recognized the differentiated impact of terrorism and violent extremism on the human rights of women and girls; the use of SGBV as strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups; and sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism and an instrument to increase their power. Further evidence demonstrates that hostile sexist attitudes toward women and support for violence against women are the factors most strongly associated with support for violent extremism⁴⁰. The rising threat of terrorism⁴¹ seems to be mostly motivated by misogynist beliefs. The GAP II included a commendable focus on preventing and combating Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), which could be enhanced by an additional element relating to counterterrorism (CT) and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE).

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Create awareness of the issue through campaigns and advocacy combined with community mobilization activities to prevent and respond to SGBV-SH,, including through safe city and safe public spaces with women and girls' programmes, as well as the #WithHer campaign of the Spotlight Initiative and promote the right of all women and girls to live free of violence and abuse.
- ✓ Strengthen and continue the work on the joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative and to expand the Initiative to other regions in consultation with DG NEAR.
- ✓ Build the capacities of health care providers and ensure medical treatment and psychosocial support for survivors of gender-based violence.
- ✓ Take a life-cycle approach to violence prevention and response. Often violence programmes ignore either age-related difference in incidence and experience and response to violence; or treat violence against girls in the same manner as violence against women.
- ✓ Tackle SGBV-SH in humanitarian settings where the risk of gender-based violence is further aggravated in humanitarian situations.
- ✓ Address social norms to prevent SGBV-SH, including toxic masculinities and gender stereotypes which are key in countering and preventing violent extremism and terrorism; and include in the prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls an additional element relating to counter-terrorism (CT) and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE).
- ✓ Adapt and/or strengthen existing support services on GBV to be inclusive of the needs of migrants who are GBV survivors and build capacity of professionals who work with migrants. Empower and inform migrant communities of GBV services available.
- ✓ Ensure women, particularly those facing multiple forms of discrimination, have enhanced capacity to access criminal justice systems and address unequal access to digital justice services for women, especially in developing and fragile countries. Access to justice⁴² for women is often considered only in relation to girls and women physical and psychological integrity (as the case of GAP II), and rarely as a fundamental right.
- ✓ Take into account the risks of SGBV-SH exacerbated by environmental degradation and resource scarcity, exposing women and girls to new forms of violence in public and private spaces and also reflect the fact that gender-based violence undermines women's capacity to perform their critical roles in natural resource management, further limiting households' and communities' capacity to cope with climate-related shocks.
- ✓ Ensure gender-based violence and harassment are tackled in workplace settings in line with ILO Convention 190.
- ✓ Promote targeted measures, such as ensuring women and girls have access to resources (land, seeds, tools, networks) as well as empowerment through education in order to gain knowledge and skills that can strengthen their livelihoods and enable elimination of SGBV.
- ✓ Stay committed to the "Call to Action Gender Based Violence in Emergencies", which aims at

⁴⁰ Monash University and UN Women, '[Misogyny & Violent Extremism: Implications for Preventing Violent Extremism](#)', 2019.

⁴¹ Alex DiBranco, 'Male Supremacist Terrorism as a Rising Threat', ICCT Journal, February 2020.

⁴² UN Women, UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR, '[Practitioner's Toolkit on Women's Access to Justice](#)', 2018.

driving change and fostering accountability from the humanitarian community to address GBV from the earliest phases of a crisis. The term of the initiative is due in December 2020. As a successful and strong leader between June 2017 and December 2018, the EU may consider inspiring and supporting the future of this initiative beyond 2020.

6. MIGRATION AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT FROM A PERSPECTIVE OF GEWE

Migration, mobility and forced displacement will continue to be a defining feature of the landscape in Europe and the world in the foreseeable future. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs recognize good migration governance as an enabler of sustainable development^{43 44}. Female migration can advance gender equality by empowering migrant women, but can also increase vulnerabilities and put migrant women and girls at risk of discrimination and violence, in particular those who are undocumented⁴⁵, as well as those working in informal and unregulated sectors of the economy, such as domestic work. Forcibly displaced women and girls are equally at risk of higher exposure to mistreatment, violence and exploitation, and should therefore receive the specific attention, support and protection they need. There is also a need for more attention, support and protection of the rights of LGBTI migrants.

Gender influences reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available at destinations, and relations with the country of origin⁴⁶. Risks, vulnerabilities and needs are also shaped in large part by one's gender, and often vary drastically for different groups. The roles, expectations, relationships and power dynamics associated with being a woman, man, boy or girl, transgender or whether one identifies with a specific gender, and/or with a specific sexual orientation, significantly affect all aspects of the migration process, and can also be affected in new ways by migration. Also, trafficking in persons⁴⁷ is a highly gendered crime and criminal networks thrive in situations of instability, migration and forced displacement while conflict exacerbates vulnerability to trafficking and its severity.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Support activities aimed to recognize the contribution of migrant women and girls into the development of States, and a greater understanding and analysis of migration as a phenomenon with gender implications.
- ✓ Ensure women are active participants in the design of migrant, refugee/forced displacement work initiatives as well as their implementation and ensure the gender-based perspective at all stages.
- ✓ Support the development of regular migration pathways adapted to migrant women and girls, including from the LGBTI groups and ensure fair recruitment mechanisms, in a way that facilitates labour mobility, and decent work while at the same time promoting integration, social cohesion and fighting discrimination based on migration and gender.
- ✓ Enable conditions to facilitate the recognition of skills and qualifications of women and girls, including from the LGBTI groups, who have migrated and allow access to education and vocational training.
- ✓ Include cross-cultural support mechanisms and initiatives to better enable access to social, health and economic rights, justice and protection of migrant women and girls.⁴⁸
- ✓ Enable conditions for rural women and girls whose partner or family members have migrated, to improve their access to land, remittances, training, financial literacy, labour-saving

⁴³ IOM: [Migration in the 2030 Agenda: Achieving gender equality through migration governance, 2017](#).

⁴⁴ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants: '[The impact of migration on migrant women and girls: a gender perspective](#)', 2019 (A/HRC/41/38).

⁴⁵ General comment No. 2 (2013) on the rights of migrant workers in an irregular situation and members of their families, (CMW/C/GC/2)

⁴⁶ According to IOM's [World Migration Report of 2020](#), it is estimated 272 million people living in a country other than their countries of birth, of which 52% of international migrants are male and 48% are female.

⁴⁷ ICAT, [Issue Brief: the Gender Dimensions of Human Trafficking, 2017](#).

⁴⁸ UN Women, [Policy Brief Leaving no one behind: Access to social protection for all migrant women, 2020](#).

technologies, financial services and entrepreneurial opportunities, especially for those who remained in countries of origin as head of household with additional care and productive responsibilities.

- ✓ In line with the EU 2016 Integration Action Plan of Third-Country Nationals⁴⁹, strengthen support to **pre-departure orientation training and information programs** in third countries, specifically tailored for women.
- ✓ Ensure returns are carried out in safety and dignity, with particular attention to the specific needs of women and girls and in accordance with international human rights laws.
- ✓ Identify and promote alternatives to detention of women migrants – including girls -- who are unauthorized to remain in the host state, such as open accommodations in the community for beneficiaries who have registered with a return programme.
- ✓ Ensure the protection of the rights of migrant women (who often work as domestic workers) and refugees, which are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and support ways of organizing them to make their voice heard⁵⁰.
- ✓ Enable conditions to protect women and girls of the risks inherent to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons⁵¹.
- ✓ Address trafficking in persons⁵² as a highly gendered crime and support transregional cooperation to break the chain of trafficking and ensure the protection of victims.
- ✓ Building on the achievement of the WPS Action Plan, enhance the capabilities of professionals interacting with migrants and persons forcibly displaced to identify survivors or persons vulnerable to trafficking and to promote the implementation of the distinctive international legal framework in fighting trafficking in persons⁵³ and smuggling of migrants⁵⁴.
- ✓ Support ratification and/or implementation of international UN rights treaties, such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families.
- ✓ Support the inclusion of the protection of the rights of migrant women and girls on the agenda of intergovernmental dialogues on migration-related issues at the global, regional and bilateral levels.
- ✓ In line with the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, contribute to solutions that will durably enable woman and girls who have been forced to leave their home and country to rebuild their life in security and dignity. The EU may concretely consider (i) working with refugee women and girls to enhance their autonomy and self-reliance capacity, (ii) supporting the social systems of host countries to guarantee equal access for all to quality education, health and other basic services; (iii) increasing resettlement places for the refugee women and girls most at risk; and (iv) supporting returns to home country, with all the necessary protection, assistance and guarantees against violence and exploitation.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & CLIMATE CHANGE, ADAPTATION & MITIGATION

Gender-and-environment approaches are necessary for sustainable, equitable and just management of the planet's natural resources and ecosystems and adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Climate change is not gender neutral – it acts as a multiplier of existing inequalities, especially in fragile settings. Transition to climate neutrality should go hand in hand with promoting women's role as agents of change to drive and benefit from climate investment. Women's empowerment is essential

⁴⁹ EU- [Integration Action Plan of Third-Country Nationals](#), launched in 2016.

⁵⁰ ILO, [A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality](#), 2019, p. 92.

⁵¹ ICAT, [Submission to CEDAW's General Recommendation on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration](#)

⁵² ICAT, [Issue Brief: the Gender Dimensions of Human Trafficking](#), 2017.

⁵³ UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

⁵⁴ UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

to build resilience and adapt to climate change. The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation affect women, men, girls and boys in distinct ways. Women and girls play key roles in the production and provision of water, food and energy, but in many settings are marginalized from decision-making, disadvantaged economically, and threatened for defending rights to their land.

In addition, more evidence, rigorous research and costing approaches to demonstrate not only the effectiveness but also the efficiency and co-benefits of gender responsive climate change action are needed. While some knowledge on gender-environment linkages is already available, it is rather scattered and represents diverse sectors, geographic scales and periods of time.

Currently, women comprise only 20-25% of the workforce in the renewable energy sector. Investing in women in the transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient society can reap rich dividends. There are untapped opportunities to promote gender equality in the sector- by way of inclusive policies, access to technology, information, training and equitable investments in women's entrepreneurship. Gender mainstreaming in the waste sector is an opportunity for governments to meet their gender equality commitments and can unlock economic benefits. Strengthening the participation of women in the waste sector can lead to more efficient and effective waste management operations.

Women can also play effective roles in formal forest protection forces, including combating illegal wildlife poaching and logging. However, in many countries, violence against women environmental activists and "defenders" of environmental rights has unfortunately become a well-documented trend. As climate change fuels renewed waves of environmental activism, global trends show that taking action to protect natural resources and defend environmental rights is becoming ever more dangerous for women and girls, who face specific risks.

The adverse effects on the 'effective enjoyment of the rights of women require urgent, rights-based, gender-responsive climate action that will respect, protect and fulfil the rights of women and ensure their empowerment as agents of change', including at the bilateral and multilateral levels.⁵⁵

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Include the following priority issues for advancing gender equality in environmental management: rights to land, natural resources and biodiversity, access to food, energy, water and sanitation, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, and health.
- ✓ Close the gender gap in access to and control over resources such as land and production inputs, and in access to information and technology, to increase agricultural productivity and therefore reduce poverty and hunger.
- ✓ Include, engage and empower women and girls to design effective approaches to climate mitigation, adaptation, environmental management, and sustainable development that set the foundation for long-term, inclusive peace, and ensure their equal access to services and productive resources, such as climate-smart agriculture, and including gender responsive adaptation policies, including circular economy, disaster risk reduction and resilience as well as sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity, in the framework of gender action plans of Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
- ✓ Support gender-responsive climate finance mechanisms, such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) or the Green Climate Fund (GFC), together with global alliances on gender equality and climate change, so that financing for climate action systematically integrate women's human rights and gender equality into governance structures, project approval, implementation processes, and public participation mechanisms.
- ✓ Mainstream gender in climate policy and action, climate approaches, including in the European Green Deal, to be more efficient, effective, and equitable by providing broader and shared benefits to address the needs of women and men.

⁵⁵ OHCHR, [Analytical study on gender-responsive climate action for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women](#), Report to the Human Rights Council, 2019 (A/HRC/41/26).

- ✓ Cost gender equality, as it is an important tool to translate political commitments into effective and transformative actions: putting a price on gender equality makes the issue more visible and allocating budget for it increases the chances of having concrete action.
- ✓ Support the development of comprehensive regional and global insights on efficiency and co-benefits of gender responsive climate change action
- ✓ Recognize explicitly and address gender-based differences in the development, transfer and diffusion of technologies for climate change adaptation and mitigation, including in the identification and prioritization of technology needs.
- ✓ Promote resilient communities and economies with active engagement of women and girls by increasing financing for and investment in climate change adaptation at the local level in LDCs. Promote effective gender responsive climate change planning and action especially at the local government levels in LDCs, who are at the forefront of servicing the needs of local communities including women and girls.
- ✓ Help unlock private and public finance for gender-smart, sustainable approaches in the energy sector, especially in LDCs. Enhance women's full participation, as consumers and providers, in sustainable energy solutions at every level⁵⁶.
- ✓ Support the role of ordinary citizens in environmental protection through more gender responsive approach to working with, supporting and protecting female environmental defenders.
- ✓ Take into account the potential impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on migration and displacement of women and girls.
- ✓ Enhance knowledge, understanding and coordination in this area, through integrating climate/environmental migration and displacement in migration research, data collection and monitoring mechanisms.
- ✓ Mainstream gender perspective in all environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes deployed on the ground for environmental, natural resources and wildlife protection actions and projects.

8. GENDER PERSPECTIVE AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE DIGITAL AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FIELD

Artificial intelligence and digitalization

The December 2019 UN Secretary General's review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action⁵⁷ addresses the digital revolution as one of the major shifts that have taken place since 1995. It recognizes that technological advances, including artificial intelligence (AI), automation and robotics, are having profound effects on gender equality and women's rights in all spheres of life and argues that while technological advances, such as AI, can be harnessed to advance gender equality, without proper regulation, they might simply replicate inequalities of the past or even exacerbate them. Gender-integrated solutions are needed to address digital divide and promote new public policies and it is important that States and business enterprises ensure that the development and deployment of digital technologies, including data-driven technologies, is guided and regulated by international human rights law, including principles of gender equality, in order to facilitate the realization of human rights for women and avoid adverse impacts.⁵⁸ Priorities should be placed on adapting economies and equipping women and men for the future of labour markets and future of work. In fact, COVID-19 is not only driving to a deep economic and fiscal crisis, but is also accelerating automation and digitalization, and creating a new economic landscape (re-defined

⁵⁶ UNCDF, 'LoCAL final report period of global expansion 2014-2018'.

⁵⁷ 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, CSW64: <https://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2020/3>

⁵⁸ OHCHR, 'Promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet: ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective', (A/HRC/35/9), 2017

demands and markets, new ways of working, reshaped value chains). As such, the response to closing the digital gap and to advance women's economic empowerment needs to be accelerated and reshaped. There is evidence, for example, that the use of artificial intelligence in the automation of life-changing decisions about social protection benefits and other forms of support that individuals gain access to often lacks transparency, infringes on data protection rights and can lead to discrimination through gender, social and racial profiling as well as mis-use for criminal purposes. Because women are more likely to live in poverty and be responsible for the care of others, they are more likely to feel the impact of those trends even more acutely than men. Women who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are likely to be particularly affected.⁵⁹

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Invest in innovative, tech-based solutions for gender equality, particularly focused on youth activism, adolescent girls' safety, and skills development to prepare adolescent girls' as entrepreneurs and employees in a 21st century world of work.
- ✓ Support new design thinking, new partners to broaden the profile of role-models (e.g., women in tech, inventors, social impact movements), and the investment circle (e.g., innovative blended-financing vehicles such as impact bonds).
- ✓ Develop, from a young age, positive action measures to attract more women to STEM fields and particularly to AI. Further awareness of the flexibility, working conditions and possibilities for reconciliation of work and family life in this sector is required targeting girls and women.
- ✓ Incorporate humanities, ethics and gender equality research into STEM fields of study and in AI vocational and academic programmes to raise awareness and more importantly guarantee a multidisciplinary approach.
- ✓ Aim to close the digital gender divide and raise awareness among stakeholders on the need to have a more gender balanced AI and technology sector by attracting and incentivising more women to work in this field at all levels, i.e. by organising expert meetings, transparency of policy and quantitative research into the needs of the labour market.
- ✓ Carry out further studies on the impact of AI on gender equality and support a multi-disciplinary approach to AI research where humanities, social sciences and gender research are incorporated with the aim of preventing gender biases finding their way into algorithms.
- ✓ Take an intersectional perspective concerning the interplay of AI and gender.
- ✓ Promote universal, affordable gender-equal access to mobile phones, internet, and energy access – through ownership, affordability and digital literacy, with a special focus to LDCs and rural areas. Develop inclusive e-commerce platforms⁶⁰ to reduce constraints for women businesses/producers to connect and benefit from such services.
- ✓ Refer to the recommendations of the report on Privacy and Gender of the UN Special Rapporteur on right to privacy with several recommendations and findings on digitalization and AI⁶¹.

Cyberviolence – online criminality

Although women have benefited from outstanding possibilities on the internet in terms of power, such as ensuring safe/cross-border spaces to collectively organise when these spaces may be very few or limited offline, internet and technologies has also enabled violence to be meted out against women through new tools. Research shows that women and girls are also under threat and attack in the digital world⁶². New technologies have not only reinforced or facilitated existing forms of violence against women and girls (for example sexual harassment), but have also created new tools that inflict harm,

⁵⁹ Philip Alston's report on *Digital welfare states and human rights*, and Virginia Eubanks, *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 2018.

⁶⁰ Such as the UN Women "[Buy from Women](#)" e-platform a data-driven, enterprise platform that combines an open source end-to-end cloud-based, and mobile enabled supply chain system to connect women farmers to information, finance and markets.

⁶¹ Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, [Part II: A Gender Perspective](#), 2020.

⁶² European Institute for Gender Equality, "Cyber violence against women and girls", 2017.

such as GPS/tracking, Bluetooth devices, video security systems etc. Indeed, research shows that online violence disproportionately affects women and girls⁶³. Female public figures are also often targeted for being visible and vocal, challenging norms or upholding/expressing their intersecting identities. Online violence targeting women and girls, involving sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse, has increasingly become a worrisome especially when linked to other forms of crimes. Cybercriminals often use the darknet as a platform to perpetrate illicit trafficking of persons and smuggling of migrants, especially affecting women. The current steep increase in crimes perpetrated online, involving corona-related frauds, cybercrimes as well as sexual abuse and harassment are an important consequence of COVID-19 confinement.

Online spaces have also a significant impact on recruitment and engagement of both women and men in terrorism through gendered approaches to messaging and recruitment methods, e.g. through reinforcement of notions of masculinity and submissive notions of womanhood through messaging adapted to specific contexts, as well as exploring opportunities provided by the digital space for the engagement of women through online recruitment methods.⁶⁴ The lack of a global legal framework for dealing with cybercrime is an impediment to both CT and P/CVE and gender challenges.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Ensure that the development and deployment of digital technologies, including data-driven technologies, is guided and regulated by international human rights law which provides that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online.
- ✓ Build up capabilities of law enforcement, to shore up gaps, particularly in developing countries and strengthening international cooperation and dialogue between governments, IOs, CSOs and private sectors to combat online crime, especially affecting women and girls.⁶⁵
- ✓ Mainstream gender across future digital policies, programs and actions, including the ambitious digital agenda promoted by the European Commission, by highlighting the importance of fighting all forms of cybercrime, as sexual exploitation, cyberviolence, cyberbullying, sextortion, blackmails, and frauds, that disproportionately affect women and children mental and physical wellbeing and development.
- ✓ Produce more statistics on the prevalence, forms and harms of online violence, as well as on the effectiveness of interventions.
- ✓ Use the opportunity of GAP III to serve as an important regional model as the Security Council and General Assembly endeavour to modernize the global AI/digital frameworks including those dealing with cybercrime.
- ✓ Address the cross-border online criminality of human trafficking, especially affecting women.
- ✓ Increase data collection and promote more comprehensive studies, favour methodological plurality, as the solely quantitative nature of most surveys generally results in online violence and gender-based violence, not to mention their intersection, being under-reported.
- ✓ Implement awareness-raising programs and provide training to improve protection and support of victims, including awareness campaigns directed at children and youth.

9. WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

The European Union is a global leader in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security, (WPS) agenda and important commitments taken at the European level continue to galvanize the international community. The United Nations recommends that the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) builds on and strengthens the synergies with the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security and its Action Plan (2019-2024). GAP III should also reflect the main points of the latest reviews of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as key aspects of UN Security Council Resolutions 2493

⁶³ Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women,, 2018, A/HRC/38/47

⁶⁴ UN Women, *Empowerment or Subjugation: An analysis of ISIL's gendered messaging*, 2018.

⁶⁵ *Op-Ed by Yury Fedotov on cybercrime*, Executive Director of the UNODC, 2018.

(2019) and 2242 (2015). Security Council Resolution 2493 (2019) calls for greater recognition, support and protection of women human rights defenders and peacebuilders given the threat of non-state militant groups and the increasing threat for women peacebuilders and human rights defenders⁶⁶, due to rising security measures in a growing number of countries, shrinking space for civil society, as well as CT and CVE agendas, including the impact of related laws on material support for terrorism. These contribute to shutting down civil society organizations.⁶⁷

In addition, women are not adequately integrated in conflict-resolution processes; their rights are insufficiently reflected in agreements; and their representation in decision-making positions within post-conflict societies is weak. Women also continue to be disproportionately affected by conflict-related sexual violence and other human rights violations with impunity, including higher risk of trafficking⁶⁸. Grassroots women organizations that do fundamental life-saving work in conflict and humanitarian situations lack adequate support. In this regard, the EU should pursue the implementation of the WPS in a holistic fashion, including through attention to traditionally more neglected aspects, such as support for defenders.

Women are also increasingly found on the frontlines of linked environmental, economic and security crises. Coping and adaptation strategies can lead to new vulnerabilities, but also new opportunities for women's participation and leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ In view of the EU's intention to expand the scope and types of allowed EU support to non-EU regional or national security actors under the European Peace Facility, include proportionate safeguards in the form of compliance/due diligence frameworks, in particular human rights due diligence and its gender dimensions.
- ✓ As climate change accelerates, support interventions that empower women in the sustainable use and inclusive governance of natural resources, as well as strengthen their roles in local conflict resolution mechanisms as that can provide a strong entry point to leverage these opportunities.
- ✓ Ensure that humanitarian responses address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls as well as the uninterrupted access to essential sexual and reproductive health services.
- ✓ Integrate gender-based violence risk mitigation and support for victims and survivors and for persons promoting and defending their rights, throughout humanitarian response interventions and in post-conflict situations to achieve sustainable peace.
- ✓ Support transitional justice while promoting a gender perspective to criminal justice response to terrorism⁶⁹, to help the relevant mechanisms ensure victims' participation in all relevant stages, so that their rights and perspectives are properly reflected, and adequate remedies provided.
- ✓ Include a regional and sub-regional security focus, including on counterterrorism, migration and preventing and countering violent extremism (including radicalization of women and their engagement (voluntary or forced) in extremism).
- ✓ Support women and girls in conflict-affected and fragile settings, to ensure their full participation in political, economic, security and social life - a prerequisite of sustainable development and peace. Foster the emergence of leader women and reinforcing their capacity to actively take part in conflict-resolution processes.
- ✓ Support high-level bilateral and multilateral political dialogue and diplomacy on UN SCR 1325, WPS, and other relevant resolutions.

⁶⁶ Secretary-General 2019 Report on Women, Peace and Security. S/219/800

⁶⁷ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism. 2019. A/HRC/40/52

⁶⁸ 2018 Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children (A/73/171)

⁶⁹ UNODC, Handbook on GENDER DIMENSIONS of criminal justice responses to terrorism, 2019.

- ✓ Promote multi-stakeholder partnerships for joint actions on WPS policy-making and budgetary allocations, including support networking of women peace activities for joint actions
- ✓ Leverage on UN Women's wide-ranging presence and vast networks of grass-roots women, civil society, youth groups, gender machineries and core partners on gender equality and women's empowerment.

In the context of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 20th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security, GAP III presents an important opportunity for the EU to take bold steps to strengthen institutional synergies and coherence in gender equality implementation and that of the EU Strategic Approach to WPS and its Action Plan.

In this context, actions/results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- Be concretely informed by the EU Strategic Approach to WPS and its Action Plan, including through streamlined monitoring, accountability and reporting processes and the promotion of a comprehensive financial and programming approach to WPS in EU Member States, partner countries, missions and operations.
- Integrate the 2018 EU Council conclusions on Women, Peace and Security, especially in relation to CT and P/CVE, which are not broached in GAP II. The fifth and sixth review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy emphasized the important role of women's contributions to the implementation of the Strategy, the need to take into account gender perspectives in the implementation of PCVE/CT, including undertaking gender analysis for programming, as well as to consider the impact of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women organizations and the importance of seeking enhanced consultations with women and women organizations when developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.⁷⁰
- Emphasize strategies and interventions to address the differentiated social and economic impacts of new and emerging crisis on women, including those brought about by climate change, environmental degradation and health pandemics. Focus should be directed at women in vulnerable situations, including women living in conflict zones and refugee and internally displaced camps.
- Highlight the need to nominate and support the appointment of women as mediators and negotiators participating in all formal peace processes, ensure inclusive delegations and consistently demand the increased, direct and meaningful participation of women in monitoring and the implementation of peace agreements.
- Promote increased synergies between national action plans and strategies on gender equality, violence against women, and women, peace and security. These instruments should be impact-driven, inclusive, well-resourced and with robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms that meet the needs of women and girls at both national and local levels.
- Highlight the importance of providing dedicated, flexible and easily accessible financing to women's peace networks, organizations and movements, particularly those that are locally driven. Support should be extended to dismantling discriminatory laws and practices that prevent women from property and land ownership and control.

10. MITIGATE THE GENDER-DIFFERENTIATED IMPACT OF GLOBAL CRISIS NOTABLY AFFECTING HEALTH SUCH AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

⁷⁰ A/RES/70/291; A/RES/72/284

As outlined in the *UN Secretary-General's policy brief: The impact of COVID-19 on women*⁷¹ published in April 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities and affected women in a disproportionate manner⁷². Women comprise 70% of health workers on the frontlines⁷³ and are otherwise overrepresented in low-paid jobs, in informal⁷⁴, temporary or precarious forms of employment, and in undervalued and often unpaid caregiving roles. COVID-19 response and post-crisis recovery plans need to promote women's economic empowerment and address gender inequalities in employment, livelihood and social protection systems. Rates of domestic violence have been increasing in light of lockdown measures, with women as the predominant victims, and women's access to essential sexual and reproductive health services and information has been jeopardized in many places. Governments must ensure women's equal and meaningful participation in the formulation of such plans and in decision-making. Targeted strategies are also needed to mitigate the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on specific groups of women and girls in vulnerable situations, including older women, women and girls with disabilities, rural women, migrant, refugee and internally displaced women and girls, those belonging to indigenous and other minorities, women and girls in detention, as well as adolescent girls and pregnant and nursing women and girls. Due to stigma and discrimination, LGBTI people also face heightened risks during the pandemic, with regard to health, violence and social protection in particular⁷⁵. They are also more likely to work in the informal sector and have higher rates of unemployment and poverty.

Specific measures should be incorporated into the response plans to address these impacts along the following topics. *Kindly note that all related publications are listed in the bibliography:*

1. Women are at the forefront of all public health crises as nurses, midwives, community health workers, yet their role is frequently overlooked and underpaid. Women and girls also tend to carry out most of the care for sick relatives, household chores and childcare responsibilities. Women and children, especially in female-headed households, as migrant workers or recipients of remittances, will also be incredibly vulnerable to the impacts. We need to provide adequate support, including childcare, health services and other social protections for vital frontline workers.
2. With private and public sector partners⁷⁶, it is vital that **family-friendly policies**⁷⁷ are implemented to protect employees, reduce stress, and support improved child and family well-being. Targeted social protection strategies, including cash transfer programmes, should be developed to mitigate the impact of the outbreak, recover and build resilience for future shocks. Provisions establishing that women and men have equal rights in the world of work and equal access to social protection should, always represent a basic floor for demanding and achieving equality in practice in all countries. Women disproportionately work in insecure labour markets and are harder hit by the economic impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic is driving. Older women may be particularly affected because fewer of them are part of social security systems, as a result of having been excluded from the labour market or engaged in the informal economy and unpaid care work. Intersecting discrimination on the basis of age, disability and socio-economic status may be compounded by the pandemic. Advocate for gender-responsive social protection interventions (ex. cash transfers and in-kind assistance), gender equal access to ICTS and digital technologies, and improving rural women's capacity to deal with the COVID-19 effects on their livelihoods facilitating their access to inputs,

⁷¹ UN Secretary-General's policy brief: [The impact of COVID-19 on women](#), 2020.

⁷² Cf. CEDAW: and [here](#) and [here](#); UN Human Rights and UN Secretary General Policy briefs and [here](#).

⁷³ ILO news, [COVID-19: Are there enough health workers?](#), 2020.

⁷⁴ Among informal economy workers significantly impacted by the crisis, women are overrepresented in high-risk sectors: 42 per cent of women workers are working in those sectors, compared to 32 per cent of men. [ILO Monitor COVID-19 and the World of Work – 3rd edition](#)

⁷⁵ UN Policy Brief, [COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together](#), 2020.

⁷⁶ UN Women, [COVID-19 and Gender Equality: A Call to Action for the Private Sector](#), 2020

⁷⁷ ILO- UNICEF- UN Women: [Family-Friendly Policies and Other Good Workplace Practices in the Context of COVID-19: Key Steps Employers Can Take](#), 2020.

services, markets, and financial resources. Women should finally be involved in the decision-making processes for outbreak preparedness.

3. **Gender-based violence (GBV)**, including online sexual exploitation and violence targeting women and children, is increasing during the COVID-19 outbreak⁷⁸. As an immediate measure, communications of existing GBV hotlines and other support mechanisms must be increased to let women and adolescent girls know where they can get emergency services. First responders must be trained on how to handle disclosure of GBV⁷⁹, including the unique approaches for and with adolescent girls. All levels of health care facilities and health workers, especially at the community level, must prepare to take on the task shifting responsibilities related to the caseload of GBV survivors. *Ad hoc* protocol should be developed with health workers, and law enforcement and the judiciary to enable victims to access relevant justice services and report violence to national authorities.
4. Maintaining core **health and education services and systems**: evidence from past epidemics, including Ebola and Zika, indicate that efforts to contain outbreaks often interrupt education services and divert resources from routine health services including maternal and child health care services and the clinical management of rape. The pandemic is also disrupting access to life- saving sexual and reproductive health services. Moreover, women, adolescent girls, and all children living with HIV/AIDS are particularly vulnerable as their continuity of care can be acutely compromised, potentially increasing morbidity, mortality and transmission of HIV. Need to ensure the continuity of core and quality education and health services- including alternative delivery structures- while also maintaining long-term support for strong education and health systems to meet the holistic needs of women, and girls and boys across the age continuum.
5. Women should be integral in the **rebuilding of the economy** as part of government social protection programmes, which can benefit from government payment digitalization and other services. Include gender-responsive economic and fiscal policies such as economic stimulus, relief and wage subsidies to women-led SMEs and female-dominated industries, active labour market policies including reskilling, support to women entrepreneurs, and engage the private sector for gender-equitable recovery⁸⁰ Prioritize support mechanisms to protect women-owned businesses, female entrepreneurs and informal workers affected by COVID-19 with direct financing, technical support and other services. Create special assistance fund to support women businesses and entrepreneurs, both formal and informal, to access unemployment benefits, which could be made more efficient through digitalization. Promote local institutions in the COVID-19 recovery and response initiatives to build local response systems that will address special needs of women and girls including vulnerable groups such as those affected by domestic violence and abuse. Channel additional finance from central to local governments for timely provision of essential services for women and girls in affected areas. Support development of a bottom-up gender responsive need-based strategy and action plan for COVID-19 recovery, utilizing existing tools such as gender responsive local economic assessments⁸¹.
6. Supporting existing **women's networks and youth rights groups**. Women and girls' voices matter and their meaningful participation in all decision-making processes and sharing of key communications- including GBV hotlines and other services and support mechanisms should be promoted. This can be done via digital platforms such as [U-Report](#)⁸², activating standby

⁷⁸ UN Women, [COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls](#); UNFPA, [COVID-19: A Gender Lens : Protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights, and promoting gender equality](#) ; UNODC, [Thematic Brief on gender-based violence against women and girls in COVID19](#) and much more - see list of resources.

⁷⁹ For instance: [UNICEF GBV Pocket Guide](#). NB: Please refer to the list of resources for additional tools.

⁸⁰ For instance through the global business platform for gender equality of UNDP's Gender Equality Seal for the private sector.

⁸¹ UNCDF [Response to COVID-19](#)

⁸² U-Report is a mobile messaging programme that empowers young people to engage with and speak out on issues that matter to them. It works by gathering opinions and information from young people on topics they care about – ranging from employment to discrimination and child marriage. U-Report is now active in 60 countries, benefiting 8 million users all over the world.

and existing partnership arrangements with women's and youth rights organisations, and providing space for dialogue with these important partners to provide insights and joint solutions.

7. This year's Global Report on Food Crises⁸³ estimates that 135 million people around the world faced acute levels of hunger in 2019. Around 183 million people were classified at risk of slipping into this same category.⁸⁴ The COVID-19 outbreak will likely increase the global number of acute food insecurity due to its health and socio-economic effects and increase the burden of women in the households. Additionally, in countries already experiencing **food insecurity** due to **climate change** impacts and/or conflict, the added shock of COVID-19 will compound risks associated with existing crises. In many cases, government regulations to curb the spread of the virus will impact both local access to markets and the distribution of food to the most vulnerable populations, including refugees, internally displaced persons and the rural poor. These impacts may have a disproportionate impact on women, who play a vital role in the production and provision of food, water, and energy at local levels and rely on secure access markets for purchasing inputs and selling goods.
8. **Sex, age and disability data disaggregation**, as well as other key indicators, must be prioritized in all data collection, analyses and reporting- including surveys that analyze across the COVID19 impact curve of public health, social and economic outcomes. As part of the UN Women #WomenCount hub, UN Women and WHO are joining forces to bridge the gender data gap and provide latest available data on COVID-19 cases by sex and age⁸⁵.

NB – a consolidated list of all COVID-19 and gender-related resources from UN entities is available [here](#).

D. MEANS OF ACTION

Intersectionality: At country-level, identifying the population groups will require multidimensional and multisector data disaggregation and targeted analysis. Data and statistics for each of the sub-groups should be accompanied by analysis to understand root causes and the 'why' for the inequalities or discrimination observed. Only after assessing the full effects of intersectional discrimination can policies be tailored to meet the needs of the target population. Single level disaggregation analysis often fails to adequately reflect the characteristics of those who experience intersectional discrimination or disadvantage^{86 87}. Inclusive and accessible consultation, strengthening dialogue mechanisms and the voice of marginalised groups are also key components in improving the understanding of intersectionality.

Actions/Results listed under the GAP III should *inter alia*:

- ✓ Engage and use opportunities presented by social media, major news networks, print media, entertainment platforms and regional and national events to raise awareness on the importance of an intersectional analysis of gender equality laws, policies and practices as well as the impacts of intersectional discrimination and disadvantage
- ✓ Ensure meaningful consultation and dialogue with civil society organisations. Consultation processes should be targeted and accessible to marginalized groups and civil society organisations that represent such groups.
- ✓ Improve availability of data, including support for the design of statistical strategies (including multidimensional and multi-disaggregated approaches to data analysis) and targeted data collection instruments. The latter would adequately capture the realities of disadvantaged groups and the intersection of different grounds of discrimination, including hidden or hard-

⁸³ FSIN, [Global Report for Food Crisis](#), 2020

⁸⁴ Idem.

⁸⁵ UN Women #WomenCount hub - website: [COVID-19: Emerging gender data and why it matters](#).

⁸⁶ UN Women, [Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), 2018.

⁸⁷ UN Women, [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2019](#), 2019.

to-reach groups—while ensuring ethical standards. This will make it possible to inform and develop policies and programmes that respond to these realities.

Maximizing impact of GAP III at country/local level:

- ✓ In order to maximize the impact of the GAP III, further cooperation at country-level should be encouraged with all key stakeholders, including from the UN system. This could include local stakeholders' consultations, joint advocacy, joint policy dialogue.
- ✓ Strategically align local priorities to national priorities, including those identified by the international organizations and partners to maximize the impact.
- ✓ Prioritize long-term partnerships for sustainable results.
- ✓ Ensure that while interventions are tailored to the specific needs of the country, certain actions of the GAP III are compulsory and implemented in all contexts by EU Delegations (e.g. actions related to cultural shift, internal capacity building, stakeholders dialogue and transparent and inclusive monitoring exercises).

Better reporting and communication on GAP III:

- ✓ Annual stakeholders review exercises should be conducted inclusive of the United Nations and all other external actors, both at country-level and global-level.
- ✓ Communication on the GAP III should be further developed to ensure an easy access to the final document (visibility and accessibility on the EU's website).
- ✓ Systematic presentation and communication on the GAP III to key-stakeholders at country-level.

E. OTHER MEANS TO ACCELERATE GEWE

The United Nations agree with the necessity of all the means listed in the questionnaire (also listed here below) to accelerate GEWE. Certain points are further detailed below.

- ✓ *High-level bilateral and multilateral political dialogue and diplomacy*
- ✓ *Regular exchanges at operational level with partners*
- ✓ *Integration of GAP III priorities and objectives in the joint programming exercise with EU Member States*
- ✓ *Multi-stakeholder partnerships for joint actions*
- ✓ *Close dialogue and engagement with civil society, including girls and women's organisations, as well as Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women empowerment*
- ✓ *Close dialogue and engagement with youth organisations*
- ✓ *Communication and campaigns*
- ✓ *Implementation of gender budgeting*
- ✓ *Gender responsive leadership among EU political leaders and management*
- ✓ *Gender transformative projects/ flagships*
- ✓ *Support the accountability on gender equality and women's empowerment (e.g. parliamentary scrutiny, CSO monitoring, etc)*

On gender-responsive planning and budgeting: In line with European commitments as well as international commitments, the Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the future action plan should again include gender-responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring at both national and local level. It will be important that the action plan provide detailed targets to ensure strong gender mainstreaming across all EU external action, including target actions, and introduces gender-responsive budgeting for external funding. This also could include specific targets in terms of funding allocations for all EU external funding. In line with OECD DAC gender marker and, as called for by the

G7 2019 Gender Equality Advisory Council⁸⁸, it is proposed that 20% of the funding allocation for all EU external Actions should mark as Gender Marker 2 (principal) and 90% Gender Marker 1 (relevant).

On capacity building: More significant efforts should be focused on systematizing gender mainstreaming across all EU external action areas as well as on capacity development, with a view to ensure that the future EU gender equality strategy/strategic engagement is effectively implemented and that meaningful change is achieved. This includes enhanced and permanent capacity development and mandatory trainings for all EU professional staff at all levels, including high-level decision makers from in EU-Delegations as well as an increased number of gender equality experts to ensure the effective implementation and constant monitoring of gender mainstreaming in all EU policies, as well as in EU-funded projects and programmes.

On gender-responsive data collection: Improve statistical capacity at national level to collect and publish more robust sex, age and disability disaggregated data e.g. on paid work, unpaid care work, take-up rates for paternity and paternal leave for fathers, gross enrolment ratios in early childhood education and development, in line with the latest statistical standards. The UN Women flagship programme #WomenCount⁸⁹ has the goal to create a radical shift in how gender statistics are used, created, shared and accessed 1) by promoting a supportive policy environment to address institutional and financial constraints and to strengthen policies and practices governing the production and use of gender statistics ; 2) by supporting efforts to improve the regular production of gender statistics, including building the technical capacity of the national statistical systems and providing financial support to improve data collection so that we can better monitor the SDGs 3) and by improving access to data to inform policy advocacy through solutions such as open access, dissemination tools, and user-producer dialogues, so that data users are better able to use gender statistics in policy, programmes and advocacy.

On close dialogue and engagement with Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women empowerment – Women and LGBTI human rights defenders are subject to the same types of risks as any human rights defender, but as women or LGBTI or because of their work to advance gender equality, they are often not recognized, excluded, under-resourced and also targeted for or exposed to gender-specific threats and gender-specific violence⁹⁰. Beyond dialogue and engagement, it is crucial to continue to *support* the defenders in development, humanitarian and security contexts, and pay attention to the particular obstacles, challenges and violations they face, including health workers, grassroots and community-based activists, environmental defenders, trade unionists and journalists. Such support includes public support, engagement in programs, flexible funding arrangements, as well as protection work. The GAP III should refer to the full range of measures under the EU guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, and on Violence Against Women, and include support for the EU Delegations to improve in their implementation which remains uneven.

⁸⁸ Biarritz Partnership For Gender Equality, [Recommendations of the Gender Equality Advisory Council for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women and Call to Action](#), 2019.

⁸⁹ UN Women Flagship programme : <https://data.unwomen.org/women-count>

⁹⁰ Situation of women human rights defenders - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders', [A/HRC/40/60](#), 2019; [See also UN General Assembly resolution 68/181 \(2013\)](#).

4. Position papers submitted by entities classified as “Other” meaning public-private partnerships, local associations of public entities, mixed coalitions, etc

1. EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age
2. PLATFORMA Local and regional international action

Position Paper – Developing a gender inclusive strategy to close the gender digital divide in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

EU external action Gender Action Plan (GAP) III 2021 - 2025

Objective

EQUALS aims to bridge the gender digital divide through a uniquely coordinated and accelerated path, by working with government, private sector and civil society partners to develop a national gender digital inclusive strategy.

Problem

Tackling the gender digital divide at the country level is complex and requires coordinated action from a wide range of stakeholders.

The challenges that women and girls face in the digital age (**gaps in digital access, skills and leadership**) are the challenges targeted by the EQUALS partnership. Internet use has exploded since its inception – over half the world's population is now online. It is becoming ever more essential to the way we live our lives. Increasingly, getting a job, accessing essential services, and participating socially and politically depends on the ability to connect to the Internet. However, there is a large and growing gap between women's and men's ability to connect, use and benefit from the Internet and ICTs more broadly – women and girls have less **access** to the Internet, weaker ICT **skills**, and are less likely to hold **leadership** positions in the technology sector.

Solution

The EQUALS partnership counts with over 100 partners working together to accelerate the closure of the gender digital divide. EQUALS is planning to lead a multi-stakeholder consultative process for developing a national digital gender inclusion strategy along with different country governments, private sector, education institutions and civil society organizations to identify and prioritise key barriers to digital gender inclusion in the country. These will include barriers around **access, skills, leadership** and **knowledge**. Based on these priorities for action, EQUALS will develop a national strategy for closing the gender digital divide, setting out solutions, roles and responsibilities, and a costed implementation roadmap.

Importance of closing the gender digital gap in 4 action areas

- **Improving Access for women**

Closing the access gap between men and women is essential to enable women to benefit from the Internet. This benefits society, the economy, as well as individual women and families. Initiatives to increase women's access to the Internet need to be holistic, taking into account all the barriers around access.

- **Building Women's Skills**

In order for women and girls to take advantage of the innumerable benefits technology has to offer while staying alert to technology risks, they must have an opportunity to acquire and develop digital skills.

Evidence shows that the skills divide can be overcome through targeted modifications to education, ICT and gender policies as well as to teaching practices.

- **Promoting Women's leadership in Tech**

Increasing gender equality in technology leadership is a powerful way to exert more profound change across the whole technology sector. EQUALS is helping to create a balanced and diverse work environment where everyone, regardless of gender, has a chance to nurture their talents and shine. This generates a virtuous circle, creating greater numbers of female role models in technology who will in turn inspire the next generation of girls to pursue technology leadership.

- **Generating knowledge – Practitioners have the intelligence they need to make informed decisions**

It is important to promote evidence-based policymaking and empirically driven decision-making in governance. Therefore, EQUALS facilitate collaboration between researchers and other stakeholders, including industry, government, and civil society. It provides an international hub for conducting research, securing grants, and partnering with knowledge creation institutions. It also facilitates sharing data on digital gender equality to foster social change.

Moreover, supporting policy makers by disseminating good practices that promote sustainable development efforts across multiple sectors is one of the steppingstones to bridge the digital divide. We can also help to strengthen knowledge-driven institutions and support the implementation of innovative policies for promoting digital gender equality.

Such research-driven and inclusive innovation eco-systems would enable least developed countries to leapfrog existing systems of inequality from the bottom up and ensure more ethical and sustainable pathways for monetizing new technologies.

The Approach

1. **Assess** - Drawing on existing data sources, EQUALS will assess the current status of the gender digital divide across access, skills, and leadership, providing an overview of where women are most behind.
2. **Validate & Prioritise** - Through consultations with key stakeholders in government, the private sector, and civil society, EQUALS will validate the findings of the assessment and identify the critical barriers preventing greater gender digital inclusion. The consultations will begin as individual and focus group discussions, culminating in a final national validation workshop bringing together the different stakeholders. At the workshop, stakeholders will prioritise the areas for intervention, focusing on interventions that are achievable and will deliver the greatest benefit to women and girls.
3. **Develop Strategy** - Based on these priorities, EQUALS will work with the relevant stakeholders (government, private sector and others) to develop a strategy and a costed implementation roadmap, setting out the long-term vision for achieving gender digital equality, the proposed solutions, actions, and roles and responsibilities.
4. **Implement** - EQUALS partners will work with national stakeholders to deliver the implementation priorities set out in the strategy. Drawing on its extensive partner network enables EQUALS to deploy the most appropriate mix of skills and expertise to deliver on these priorities.

Gender Equality & women's empowerment in #EU external relations cannot happen without local governments & regions!

The contributions of local and regional governments (LRGs) are crucial for socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development. In their democratic functions, as service providers and employers they are pivotal to achieving all of the global agendas, including the 2030 Agenda and the Beijing Platform for Action.

The partners of the PLATFORMA network have identified the following **priority themes** for the EU's external action in coming years: **equal representation in decision-making/politics; economic empowerment and decent work; efficient and accessible public services; gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting; and eliminating gender-based violence**. These should be pursued through the three "R" method: Representation, Rights Resources, while taking into account the diversity of women and the intersections of their identities.

These aims can be realised through **decentralised cooperation** activities of LRGs: **peer-to-peer learning, networking and exchange of best practice** examples and experience between the municipalities, cities and regions of the EU and partner countries.

In their role of administration **closest to citizens** and civil society, including women's movements, LRGs should lead in the development of feminist policies and measures that foster women and girls' empowerment. Thanks to their particular competences, **the local level of government can be a strong lever to achieve a more gender-equal society**. National associations of LRGs are also central actors in promoting gender equality and should be considered as key enablers.

-LRGs and civil society organisations are in a position to ensure that awareness-raising efforts and advocacy reach all age groups and social backgrounds in order to achieve lasting results.

-LRGs, together with civil society organisations, foster a bottom-up approach to projects as actors who are familiar with the specific needs of their population from a gender perspective.

If the EU wants **to seriously promote SDG 5 through GAP III**, then it has to:

- ✓ **Recognise the essential role of LRGs as levers for action** and promotion of equality between women and men, based on the content of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life
- ✓ **Promote LRG inclusion at all stages** and consider LRGs as **key development policy actors in their own right**
- ✓ **Further promote the equal representation and influence of women within decision-making roles**, especially in all spheres of government, from the local through the national level.
- ✓ **Establish** a multi-stakeholder group with the participation of LRGs and LRGAs within GAP III
- ✓ **Develop and encourage a culture of gender audits** by including a "Gender Audit Check-list" as an annex in all of the projects.
- ✓ **Include local stakeholders in the design of indicators and evaluations**

In order to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all girls and women (SDG5), and more broadly, the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the PLATFORMA network calls for specific funding lines within GAP III dedicated to:

- ✓ Include specific funding lines for:
 - **Localisation of SDG 5** by LRGs and their associations, including **raising awareness and building capacity** through training, technical support and opportunities for peer exchange

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- **Signatories of the European Charter for Equality in EaP countries to draft and implement equality action plans**
- **Networking, exchange, mentoring and sponsorship for women elected representatives**
- **Strengthening gender mainstreaming capacity of LRGs**

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