

Equality at All Levels

Strengthening the role of faith-based actors in promoting the Beijing +25 agenda

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Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. We are a global movement of people, churches and local organisations who passionately champion dignity, equality and justice worldwide. We are the changemakers, the peacemakers, the mighty of heart.

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List of acronyms

BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DWD	discrimination based on work and descent
FGM	female genital mutilation
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	gender-based violence
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	non-governmental organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Commission for Europe
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution

Foreword

**Patrick Watt, Director of Policy, Public Affairs and Campaigns,
Christian Aid**

Twenty-five years ago, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – a visionary agenda for gender equality – was adopted by 189 governments. The 12 critical areas concerned women and poverty; education and training; health; violence; armed conflict; economy; power and decision making; institutional mechanisms; human rights; media; environment; and the girl child.

At Christian Aid, we believe that all 12 Beijing Platform for Action areas are interlocking, and that we have a responsibility to ensure that they all receive the same attention, resources and political will.

Since our founding 75 years ago, we have worked towards gender justice with both religious and secular actors. But we recognise that our work with religious actors has not always been straightforward. We acknowledge that religious institutions have, at times, been shaped by patriarchal structures, and recognise the disservice that this has done to women and girls throughout history. Our recognition of this compels us to work persistently towards basing all our work on gender justice and equality.

As a faith-based actor, we believe that we must always promote progressive gender norms, challenge harmful practices, and amplify the voices of women from minority groups to address their multiple inequalities. This report aims to call on all faith-based actors to ‘get their own house in order’; to fight against religious fundamentalism; to promote comprehensive approaches to gender justice; and to push for a holistic implementation of all human rights.



Executive summary

Agenda 2030 promises to ‘realize human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls’.¹ But what exactly does this mean, and how does it connect with previous human rights commitments?²

In this report, we argue that implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) is key to the successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Without BPfA, there is no Agenda 2030.

The SDGs are strongly grounded in human rights: ‘They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.’^{3,4} In this sense, while progress on SDG 5 (gender equality) will be critical, it cannot be the sole focus of gender-responsive implementation, monitoring and accountability. This means that the SDGs are intrinsically linked to the BPfA, and that the implementation of all 17 SDGs requires a gender perspective.

As well as addressing gender inequality across all goals and targets, a focus on how gender inequality is compounded by other intersecting inequalities is also needed.⁵ Furthermore, the most marginalised groups must be identified and prioritised, and their specific challenges and vulnerabilities better understood and acted upon.

This report is intended for faith-based actors and feminist activists working on the implementation of human rights instruments and global commitments, such as the BPfA and the SDGs. It draws on evidence gathered by Christian Aid’s partners at global, regional and national levels, and on semi-structured interviews with staff of faith-based organisations. This expertise makes an important contribution to UN Women’s review of the BPfA after 25 years (Beijing +25), which calls on governments and other development stakeholders to chart ways to tackle the unfinished business of the BPfA.

Christian Aid always works in partnership. By presenting accounts of how we and our partner faith-based organisations have positively contributed to equality, the fight for gender justice and the implementation of the BPfA, we are also setting out our common approach to gender justice.

Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action: achievements and obstacles

Although some gender equality indicators show improvements, the lack of progress in other areas, such as legal discrimination, patriarchal social norms and power imbalances, is undermining overall progress of the SDGs. Public finance for women’s rights, the need for better gender data, and the climate emergency are also substantial challenges.⁶ We must accelerate delivery of the ‘leave no one behind’ promise enshrined in Agenda 2030, and implement the SDGs so that they are aligned with core human rights commitments, such as the BPfA.

If we read Agenda 2030 in conjunction with the BPfA, we come up with a more robust picture of what we need to do to ensure that the SDGs are met. The SDGs must tackle the 12 critical areas of concern of the BPfA: women and: poverty; education and training; health; violence; armed conflict; economy; power and decision making; institutional mechanisms; human rights; media; environment; and the girl child.⁷

This report discusses progress in the BPfA's 12 critical areas of concern by matching them to UN Women's six SDG clusters.⁸ Mapping the BPfA areas onto the SDG clusters highlights the importance of holistic and joined-up development solutions, as we outline here.

Cluster 1: Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

This section illustrates the impact of gender and intersecting inequalities on employment, prosperity and women's and girls' self-empowerment. We argue that unless the structures responsible for keeping women and girls in subordinate positions are changed, we will not be able to achieve full equality and empowerment of women and girls.

Cluster 2: Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

Human rights, in particular women's human rights, are a core component of the BPfA. In order to eradicate poverty, we must fix our broken economic system, which corrodes solidarity structures, social protection and social services. We need a new economic model that prioritises the realisation of human rights. In this section, we highlight the most problematic components of our current economic model and point towards some possible alternatives.

Cluster 3: Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

Faith actors are crucial on the path towards full equality and therefore must play a key role on delivering the BPfA. We map out how faith-based actors can challenge stigma and stereotypes that affect women's and girl's access to key services, such as health and education.

Cluster 4: Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Although some faith traditions have been responsible for maintaining unequal power structures, many faith leaders are progressively realising that to stay true to the ethical underpinnings of scriptures, they must read them from a gender justice angle. We consider how, with the full participation of women, faith-based actors can design, implement and monitor effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive activities that can then have a positive influence on development policies and programmes.

Cluster 5: Peaceful and inclusive societies

There are a myriad of ‘stories of change’ that demonstrate the transformative potential of faith. In this section of the report, we demonstrate how Christian Aid’s work has been instrumental in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Women, Peace and Security commitments, which are essential in achieving the strategic objectives of the BfPA and the SDGs and ensuring the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Cluster 6: Environmental conservation, protection and resilience building

In order to enhance the potential of faith-based actors, we must stay true to God’s call for justice, dignity and equality; recognise that there is a plurality of faith voices that must be heard; and foster partnerships that enable a human rights-centred model of development which serves those most marginalised and at risk of being left behind. In this section, we show the value of human rights-centred partnerships in the development of environmental conservation, protection and resilience-building strategies. Human rights are key in ensuring that environment-related policies and programmes do not leave women behind.

Actions and initiatives to overcome obstacles and implement the Beijing Platform for Action

The main impediments to the full implementation of the BPfA are structural. As a religious actor that is part of many networks of secular and faith-based organisations, Christian Aid is called by the ethical underpinnings of our faith to work together with other development actors in the midst of global changes, such as rising nationalism, shrinking civil society space and a widening implementation gap, as well as political, cultural and religious conflicts related to gender equality and justice. Faith actors must stay true to God’s calling of justice by reasserting our unequivocal commitment to human rights.

In spite of the many challenges presented by the settings in which we operate, we will not remain silent in face of threats to the progress we have already made, and those achievements yet to be won. Throughout the Beijing +25 process, we will focus on critical areas where faith actors are making a contribution. For instance, by:

- Recognising the diversity of families.
- Ending all forms of violence against women and girls, including structural violence.
- Respecting the rule of law through justice-oriented approaches that guarantee the implementation of human rights at different levels.

We advocate for the positive role of religious actors in advancing gender justice, lament the fact that human rights are being undermined, and call for greater resources for strategic alliances between faith and secular actors.

Calls for action

UN Women is leading Beijing +25 with a campaign – Generation Equality: Realizing Women’s Rights for an Equal Future – which calls on governments and other development stakeholders to chart ways to tackle the unfinished business of the BPfA.

Based on the evidence in this report:

- Christian Aid calls on churches and faith organisations to put their own houses in order on gender justice, and to promote and support gender equality and human rights through their communities. This should challenge socially constructed norms, and tackle the root causes of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV).
- Christian Aid calls on governments to adopt robust accountability mechanisms for gender equality, and ensure that all laws, policies, taxation and public spending promote gender equality and inclusion. This should promote new fair and equitable economic models centred on women’s rights.

Introduction

The situation of women has improved in most societies and a great deal has been achieved over the past decades. Several legal cornerstones have been developed, setting out the roadmap for further improvement, including many United Nations (UN) instruments adopted in the 20th century. According to the World Bank, there have been 274 reforms to laws and regulations at national level in the last decade, leading to an increase in gender equality in 131 countries.⁹ This includes 35 countries that have implemented laws on workplace sexual harassment, protecting nearly 2 billion women.

Despite all the progress, we are still far from securing equal rights for women and fully achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – by 2030.¹⁰ There has been progress, but it is partial and contradictory. There are many good policies on women's rights and gender equality, but these are frequently not resourced or the institutional mechanisms have not been established for their implementation. This not only links to the need for gender-responsive fiscal policy and budgeting, but also to a lack of political will.

Globally, there are 122 women aged 25–34 living in extreme poverty for every 100 men of the same age group.¹¹ Up to 30% of income inequality is due to inequality within households, including between women and men. Women are also more likely than men to live below 50% of the median income.¹² In 18 countries, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working; in 39 countries, daughters and sons do not have equal inheritance rights; and 49 countries lack laws protecting women from domestic violence.¹³ Most countries only give women three-quarters of the rights given to men.¹⁴ These issues become even more acute when we intersect these social markers with the different level of vulnerabilities people experience, such as race, ethnicity, cast, social class, disability, sexuality and geographical location.

Gender parity may actually be shifting into reverse, according to the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Reports*.¹⁵ The 2016 report found that progress peaked in 2013 and key gender equality indicators have declined since then, particularly those related to economic participation and opportunities.¹⁶ Projections based on the 2015 report suggested that the economic gap could be closed within 118 years, ie, in 2133, which was outrageous in itself.¹⁷ However, this target seems even more elusive by the year.¹⁸ The 2020 report estimates it will take 257 years to close the economic participation and opportunity gap.¹⁹

We are seeing a global economic system that is hardwired to increase inequality and injustice, where discriminatory practices are widespread, and social and political intolerance are rising, reducing the opportunities and agency of many and increasing gender inequality.²⁰ For example, women's insertion into the economy is too often predicated on their exploitation.²¹ According to UN Women, more than 95% of women in South Asia are in informal employment, 89% in sub-Saharan Africa and 59% in Latin America and the Caribbean.²² The informal nature of work and absence of adequate social protection combine with a reduction in investment into small-scale farming, which increases dependence on migrant remittances,

and neoliberal orthodoxy, which leads to austerity policies and cuts to public services.²³

Violence against women and girls is rising globally.²⁴ UN Women estimates that, in 2017, 58% of all female victims of intentional homicide were killed by a member of their own family, amounting to 137 women killed each day.²⁵ Worldwide, 17.8% of women aged 15–49 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the last 12 months.²⁶ There are 650 million women and girls who were married before age 18.²⁷ At least 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM).²⁸

These trends have strong intergenerational and youth impacts. They are also linked to the increase of informal labour within the formal economy, which also has implications for decent work for young women. These trends are a symptom of, and are exacerbated by, structural violence (ie, social, economic and political inequality).

The setbacks in gender equality can be explained by the lack of progress related to challenges in the implementation of equality laws in countries where there are pre-existing deeply entrenched discriminatory practices. But there are also other factors. These reversals have occurred alongside a wave of ultra-conservative responses, translated in the last decade not only into the election of ultra-right-wing governments in different countries, but also in social behaviour of different parts of society, including churches. These have created an ideological fight against ‘gender ideology’, where social practices, discourses and patriarchal cultural patterns undermine the goals of gender justice.²⁹ This has led to toxic narratives filled with hatred that incite violence and a backward ideal of masculinity based on men’s power over women.³⁰

Many civil society actors and movements are pushing back. Feminist strikes and movements have been rising since October 2016 using slogans such as #NosotrasParamos, #WeStrike, #VivasNosQueremos, #NiUnaMenos, #TimesUp, #MeToo and #Feminism4the99.³¹ Their demands vary, but at the core of all of these movements is the attempt to reclaim the roots of struggles for worker’s rights and social justice.³² These liberation movements deal with three core obstacles: religious backlashes, patriarchal domination and predatory capitalism.³³ Faith-based actors have an unequivocal commitment to the ethical dimensions of equality and justice and are vital stakeholders to surmount these obstacles. By working with women’s rights groups, faith-based actors have the potential to strengthen movements for gender justice and demonstrate that religious voices can, and must, uphold women’s rights.

It is true that many analyses point to the role of the anti-rights religious actors in the systematic delegitimation of human rights, the creation of narratives that damage gender justice initiatives and the implementation of international human rights instruments.³⁴ Advances in access to and participation in rights do not hide the persistence of discriminatory, sexist and racist sociocultural patterns that continue to reproduce inequality and violence.³⁵

Theologians and political scientists mapping out this phenomenon argue that there is an unholy alliance between religious, social and economic fundamentalists, leading to the erosion of the social

‘Theologians and political scientists mapping out this phenomenon argue that there is an unholy alliance between religious, social and economic fundamentalists, leading to the erosion of the social welfare estate and the social fabric that can promote collective solutions to discriminatory practices’

welfare estate and the social fabric that can promote collective solutions to discriminatory practices.³⁶

Progressive faith actors must not stand still in the face of these injustices. A myriad of religious practices within and beyond Christianity become silenced and invisible in the face of rising fundamentalisms. We must bring those practices, teachings and theologies to the forefront in order to make sure faith is always used as a transformative force for gender justice.

Religion plays a key role in the lives of many people worldwide, with 84% of the world's population associating with a faith.³⁷ Faith leaders are an important and often influential factor in the lives of their followers. In addition, many faith leaders have the skills and the platform to speak out and deliver key messages to their congregations. In many countries, faith-based organisations are delivering essential health services to communities that previously lacked access to healthcare. The majority of these are implemented independently from public health systems, albeit with the government's blessing. For example, in Rwanda 30% of all national health services are delivered through Catholic-funded and managed clinics.³⁸ Working with faith leaders offers a key opportunity to reach many people quickly and easily, with messages delivered by those who are already greatly respected in their communities.³⁹

Most religions operate a complex, yet functional, organogram, with robust structures in place from national to grassroots level. Working with faith leaders and within these organisational structures would potentially ensure high-impact interventions, providing ownership is with the most senior of the faith leaders.⁴⁰

In certain contexts, religious leaders can also overstate the extent to which discriminatory practices against women are rooted in, and legitimised by, formal religious teaching. Often, a more complex web of social and cultural norms, attitudes and behaviours are at work – heavily shaped by economic factors – even where religious justification is used in support. This is why the development community must also strengthen other faith-based actors, such as feminist theologians and youth leaders, as a way to challenge patriarchal and hierarchical inequalities by engaging faith communities below the leadership level.

In our 2014 report *Of the Same Flesh: Exploring a theology of gender*, we stated that the experience of gender may be shaped by oppression or by justice.⁴¹ There is a profound source of hope in Christian theology for gender to be lived with justice and joy. Such hope has power to change human lives when it is given voice and leads to action.

During the Generation Equality roadmap, we want to raise those voices and bring them to the forefront. We want to use a theology of gender justice to shape the implementation of the Beijing +25 agenda and push against the setbacks to gender equality set into motion by anti-rights religious organisations and networks, as well as tackle the challenges that many face in countries where economic, political and social challenges exist in the full and effective implementation of equality policies and laws.

'2020 is an important year in terms of gender equality and women's rights. It's not enough to have hope, we need decisive actions. We need to change mindsets and traditional behaviour. Now we are at a new stage'

Atynai Omurbekova, Deputy Prime Minister, Kyrgyz Republic, at the UNECE Beijing +25 Summit

Achievements and obstacles in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action

'Women's rights are a development issue. If we don't achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality, no other Sustainable Development Goal will be achieved by 2030. Change is in our hands'

Pascale Baeriswyl, State Secretary, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland, at the UNECE Beijing +25 Summit

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, approached from an intersectional feminist perspective, provided an improved and strategic framework whereby women's rights were placed front and centre to enforce CEDAW.⁴² It identified 12 priority areas for changing the situation of the world's women, establishing the methods by which all actors are to eradicate the persistent and increasing burdens of gender discrimination and poverty on women by addressing many of its structural causes, ensuring equal rights for all.

The 25th anniversary of this platform in 2020 provides us with the opportunity to strengthen its goals, push against setbacks and identify ways to address areas that are lagging behind. The Beijing Platform of Action (BPfA) stated that: 'Religion, thought, conscience and belief may, and can, contribute to fulfilling women's and men's moral, ethical and spiritual needs and to realizing their full potential in society.'⁴³

We believe we must use the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the BPfA to establish mechanisms of equality of outcomes at all levels, across all sectors and with the commitment of all stakeholders, in particular by developing inward-looking strategies that hold faith-based actors to account.

In the following sections, we highlight the role of faith-based actors in contributing to the advancement of Beijing +25 through UN Women's six SDG clusters:

1. Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work (SDGs 2, 4 and 5);
2. Poverty eradication, social protection and social services (SDGs 1, 5 and 10).
3. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes (SDG 5 and 16).
4. Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions (SDGs 5, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 17).
5. Peaceful and inclusive societies (SDGs 5 and 16).
6. Environmental conservation, protection and resilience building (SDGs 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 15).

Critical areas of concern

1. The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women (SDG cluster 2).
2. Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training (SDG cluster 2).
3. Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to healthcare and related services (SDG cluster 4).
4. Violence against women (SDG cluster 3).
5. The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation (SDG cluster 5).
6. Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources (SDG cluster 1).
7. Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels (SDG cluster 4).
8. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women (SDG cluster 4).
9. Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women (SDG cluster 4).
10. Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media (SDG cluster 3).
11. Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment (SDG cluster 6).
12. Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child (SDG cluster 3).

Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Implementing the BPfA is key to the successful achievement of the SDGs – without Beijing, there is no Agenda 2030. In this section, we illustrate how gender and intersecting inequalities impact upon employment, prosperity, and women’s and girls’ self-empowerment. We argue that unless structures responsible for keeping women and girls in subordinate positions are changed, we will not be able to achieve full equality and empowerment of women and girls.

In contrast to previous international human rights law commitments, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on gender equality – MDG 3 (women’s empowerment) and MDG 5 (maternal mortality) – were silent in terms of all but one (education) of the 12 critical areas of the BPfA.⁴⁴ In response, women’s rights activists worked hard to ensure that the 12 critical areas of the BPfA and the norms of CEDAW were appropriately reflected in the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁵ The commitment to gender equality is now prominent and comprehensive across all the SDGs.⁴⁶ In fact, many of the SDG 5 targets reflect the content of corresponding human rights standards and international agreements, including CEDAW and BPfA.⁴⁷ Agenda 2030 recognises the indivisibility and interdependence of rights, the interlinkages between gender equality and the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social), and the need for an integrated approach to implementation.⁴⁸ This means that while progress on SDG 5 will be critical, it cannot be the sole focus of gender-responsive implementation, monitoring and accountability. We need integrated, multisectoral strategies.

The Beijing Declaration affirms that the ‘eradication of poverty based on sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice requires the involvement of women in economic and social development, equal opportunities and the full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of people-centred sustainable development’.⁴⁹ Similarly, Agenda 2030 aims to ‘realize human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.’⁵⁰

Agenda 2030 states that the SDGs must be implemented to ensure ‘no one will be left behind’ and that we are ‘reaching the furthest behind first’.⁵¹ SDGs 2 (zero hunger), 3 (health and wellbeing) and 4 (education) are excellent entry points to ensure inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work takes the BPfA into account. This is of particular importance when we are looking at tackling exclusionary practices, such as discrimination based on work and descent.

While often much is done to address economic inequalities and exclusion (through a liberal lens), the need to address social exclusion and marginalisation is often ignored, partly because the issues are context-specific and because attitudinal change takes time. Modern slavery is one example of how gender and intersecting inequalities impacts employment and abuse of women – and how the recommendations on women’s empowerment are applicable elsewhere (see box overleaf).

‘A quarter of a century after Beijing, not a single country has achieved gender equality. Beijing +25 and the global drive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals provide us a unique opportunity to accelerate efforts, strengthen our partnerships and mobilise all of society, including all generations, to fulfil the longstanding commitments to women and girls’

Åsa Regnér, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, at the UNECE Beijing +25 Summit

Modern slavery

Women's rights are deeply affected by discrimination based on work and descent (DWD), which encompasses caste and other forms of social exclusion and hierarchy based on people's ancestry and the work they do. These forms of discrimination increase women's vulnerability to slavery and trafficking.

A report by UK-based INGOs has highlighted that DWD happens in at least 20 countries, reproducing poverty and inequality across all aspects of development, with serious implications for the rights of women and girls.⁵² In South Asia, where DWD is most prevalent and where Christian Aid has the most experience of it, similar forms of discrimination and social exclusion are also faced by indigenous groups, although these do not involve the stigma of 'untouchability' experienced by Dalits (the most excluded in caste hierarchies), which is one of the most extreme rights violations associated with DWD. The impacts on women are nevertheless profound and often manifest in very high levels of deprivation, which has intergenerational impacts, such as stunting of children and a high risk of violence. DWD limits women's freedoms, dignity and choices, often combining with and reinforcing other systems of oppression and exclusion they face.⁵³ Christian Aid has called for more attention to women who face intersecting barriers of gender and identity, particularly women facing caste and other forms of DWD and ethnicity-based discrimination, in actions towards attainment of women's rights and the SDGs.⁵⁴

DWD entrenches relationships of dependency and indebtedness that contribute to slavery and to trapping affected groups in exploitative, degrading and dangerous work. An estimated 80% of those working in bonded labour in Nepal, Pakistan and India are Dalits or Adivasis (indigenous people).⁵⁵

'The division of a society by DWD or caste is a global phenomenon not exclusively practised within any particular religion or belief system. In South Asia, caste discrimination is traditionally rooted in Hinduism, according to which Dalits are considered "outcasts". Caste systems and the ensuing discrimination have spread into Christian, Buddhist, Muslim and Sikh communities. They are also found in Africa, other parts of Asia, the Middle East, the Pacific and in Diaspora communities.'

International Dalit Solidarity Network⁵⁶

Unmarried women and girls, who may be regarded as an economic burden by their families, are particularly vulnerable to forced labour or sexual exploitation. Examples include the Sumangali system, in which tens of thousands of young women in Tamil Nadu, India, sign up to work in garments factories on the false promise of decent income; and Nepal's Kamalari system, in which girls are forced to do domestic work for landowning households (see overleaf). These practices persist, in part, because of the benefits they bring to more privileged groups. Legislating against them is important, but those affected may have few other options in life and therefore also need sustained support to break free and claim their rights.

Changes in markets, manufacture of goods and land use have led to some traditional forms of employment associated with DWD becoming less widespread among Dalit communities, but Dalits remain concentrated in the most dangerous, low-paid and vulnerable forms of employment, such as the construction industry and the manual cleaning of toilets and sewers. DWD remains a factor contributing to high levels of labour market segregation; this in turn has an impact on women's employment, much of which is concentrated in low-growth, low wage sectors.⁵⁷

The need to tackle unequal power relationships is often overlooked in approaches to poverty reduction. This is particularly important for women affected by caste and other forms of DWD. Social protection provisions are critical for reducing the risk that women will be forced into exploitative labour, but the discrimination they face can be a barrier, both to accessing entitlements or to finding decent work.

Ensuring social protection reaches the most marginalised women is just a start. Designing provisions in such a way as to help transform gender and identity-based inequalities so that socially excluded groups can claim the full range of rights and entitlements is also necessary.⁵⁸ Christian Aid was instrumental in delivering the Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme (2009–2016) in India, funded by the UK's Department for International Development. This offered some valuable lessons on the importance of approaches that ensure marginalised women can independently access rights and entitlements, such as in education, health and nutrition programmes, and other forms of social protection; mechanisms for participation and feedback; and access to livelihoods resources, including non-discriminatory access to land and forest rights.⁵⁹

Continued overleaf

Story of change



'It was brutal. I was six years old when my father forced me to go work for one of the landlords whom he owed money to. I did not have any choice,' says Shanti, aged 32.* That work came in the form of harassment, sexual exploitation and starvation. In 2013, Shanti heard the government in Nepal had abolished the Kamalari system.

'The radio said we were free,' she remembers. 'But I was gripped with fear. Where will I go now? Where would I stay? I still remember my mother's stoic face when she said that my family was poor, and they couldn't take me in.'

Shanti went to work on an Indian construction site, where she met her husband. 'We could both relate to each other's suffering, as he too was a former bonded labourer like me,' she says.

They lived in a government site for rehabilitation of former bonded labourers, but her husband became an alcoholic and started abusing her. 'I had nowhere to go, I didn't know who to go to for help,' says Shanti.

Christian Aid partner Kamaiya Pratha Unmulan Samaj, an organisation working with former bonded labourers, invited Shanti to a safe space to talk with others in her situation. 'It was a way to self-heal and regain my self-esteem,' she says. The organisation spoke to her husband and told him that what he was doing was wrong and a criminal offence. 'He still drinks, but then he doesn't abuse me anymore,' Shanti says.

Shanti now belongs to a group engaging with local authorities about issues such as violence against women and girls, which has secured a commitment to strengthen police patrolling and to set up helplines for violence survivors.

With a small grant, Shanti has started mushroom farming. She says: 'I am looking forward to a violence-free life. If the mushroom farming goes well, then I will also live an independent life.'

'They freed us, but then they didn't tell us how to break the chains'

Shanti Devi Chaudhary, former Kamalari

*name changed

Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

Human rights, in particular women's human rights, are a core component of BPfA. In order to eradicate poverty, we must fix our broken economic system, which corrodes solidarity structures, social protection and social services. We need a new economic model that puts women's rights front and centre. In this section, we highlight the most problematic components of our current economic model and point towards some possible alternatives.

The Beijing Declaration affirms that all countries must: 'Promote women's economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes of poverty through changes in economic structures, ensuring equal access for all women, including those in rural areas, as vital development agents, to productive resources, opportunities and public services.'⁶⁰

These elements of the Beijing Declaration are enshrined in SDGs 1 (end poverty), 5 (gender equality and empowerment) and 10 (reduced inequalities among and within countries). These SDGs try to analyse and address the interconnected nature of poverty and inequality.

Despite all the important progress, women continue to be left behind by both residual (or pre-existing) and new challenges, such as the impact on health, wellbeing and household income from environmental degradation and increasing dependence on migration.

Multinational corporations and the globalisation of capital are having a growing impact on women's lives, but are not yet recognised as duty bearers under international human rights law.⁶¹ While governments have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the BPfA, actors that also have an impact on implementation, including international financial institutions and multinationals. These actors cannot currently be held accountable in the same way as governments. For example, private sector actors are not signatories to international human rights laws or international agreements.

The influence of non-governmental actors has become more acute in countries that suffer from high national debt, the atrocious effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes and other austerity measures.⁶² Globally, the unpaid care burden remains very unequally distributed, as women do 4.4 hours of unpaid work per day, while men do only 1.7 hours.⁶³ There are many good policies on women's rights and gender equality, but these are frequently not resourced or the institutional mechanisms established for their implementation.

Women often enter the economy at the bottom of the global value chain.⁶⁴ Too often, the outcome is the use and exploitation of women as cheap or undervalued labour.

Austerity policies have hit hard since 2013. Cuts in public services have had a direct impact on gender equality because reduced access to childcare, healthcare and education impacts women more than men.⁶⁵ This situation is worsened by the unequal position of women in society and the fact their rights are rarely fairly represented through equal participation in politics, unionised labour or adequate justice systems. The growth-based model often traps women and other marginalised individuals in poverty, because they are more likely to be affected by cuts in public services, unequal power relations and threats of abuse and violence.⁶⁶

More importantly, global economic power is held in unrepresentative and neoliberal institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The decisions made by these bodies (often by wealthy men from the global North who dominate these institutions) have imposed austerity measures that have had devastating impacts on governments' efforts to address poverty and provide social services. These institutions are not sufficiently addressing inequality in their approaches. In contrast to many faith-based organisations, they use a narrow definition of what constitutes economic success that does not necessarily place wellbeing or justice at the centre.⁶⁷ As a result, economic power is not distributed to the global South or to institutions where women are likely to participate in an equal manner.

A Christian Aid report argues that we need a new model of development that puts gender equality and all other human rights front and centre to transform the current macro-economic model.⁶⁸ We need everyone, especially governments, to work with feminist and women's rights groups and to participate and use the BPfA tools

Story of change



Faith-based actors use concepts such as the 'economy of life', 'economy of communion' or 'economy of *francesco*' as an ethical alternative to the current economic model. They are a way to align the economy with human rights and sustainable development. These systems are based around values, including the primacy of life, which in the theological meaning is the sign of creation, rather than the primacy of production, growth or capital accumulation by asset owners.

Emprendemos Paz is a programme run by Christian Aid partner CREAS. It is designed to strengthen youth leadership in churches across Latin America. *Emprender Ecológico* is an ecological project set up by young people from a church group in Honduras. Their store offers products to help consumers reduce plastic usage and switch to alternative products.

Assistance from *Emprendemos Paz* helped increase the social impact of *Emprender Ecológico*. The group encourages the local community to consider a new economy, which seeks the redistribution of natural, social and financial capital in order to generate benefits for economic development, social equity and environmental protection. It reflects a paradigm shift towards a holistic approach, where nature and the environment, human wellbeing and economic development are valued.

of gender-based analysis and budgeting to achieve full mainstreaming of gender equality in all laws, policies and practices.

Corporate actors have differentiated and disproportionate gendered impacts on the local populations in the areas where these companies operate. These interlocking forms of discrimination include gender discrimination in pay and access to opportunities and representation, high risks of GBV, erosion of women's control over resources and productive assets, and the impact of and irresponsible corporate practices that pose serious human rights risks.

ACT Alliance states that in order to ensure respect for human rights, in particular gender equality, we need binding rules at all levels. These include respect for human rights, mandatory gender-responsive human rights due diligence checks (which include gender impact assessments and adequate reporting), and access to remedies for rights holders affected by gender discrimination and other human rights abuses.⁶⁹

A 2014 Christian Aid report affirms that tax and fiscal policies have an important role to play in rebalancing gender inequalities.⁷⁰ A 'fiscal revolution' is needed in both raising and redistributing revenue, ensuring that the burden of taxation is equitably shared, while allocating budgets in order to effectively tackle gender and other intersecting inequalities.⁷¹ While there has been some progress in reducing discrimination against women in tax laws and policies, evidence from South Africa shows that implementing more equitable fiscal policies to increase social spending and redistribute income and wealth is essential.⁷²

Gender-responsive public spending is essential to provide goods and services that reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work disproportionately borne by women; and to provide social protection, which is particularly important for women who tend to have shorter paid working lives, in more informal work, than men. Progressive taxation is also needed; for example, by taxing wealth more and avoiding consumption taxes, such as value added tax, which tend to place a disproportionate burden on women who are primarily responsible for household provisioning, and on people on low incomes, who spend a greater proportion of their income on essentials. Countries in the global South are heavily dependent on these regressive taxes, due to pressure from those with high incomes, investors and international financial institutions to reduce, flatten or eliminate personal and corporate income and wealth taxes, and the theory that those revenues can be 'efficiently' replaced with consumption taxes. Faith-based actors can be instrumental in challenging our broken economic system.⁷³

'Our aim is to grow into a visible Christian movement that is relevant, effective and consistent in [implementing] our vision to see "girls' lives transformed and God's world enriched". There is a high percentage of the world where they have not heard of the Gospel of Hope, where girls are still marginalised with no access to education and basic social needs. Our voice needs to be louder, to reach more girls and women and give them hope'

Priscilla Penny, President of Girls' Brigade International

Story of change



The Girls' Brigade Nigeria celebrated International Day of the Girl 2019 by demonstrating the worth and value of girls through organising rallies in communities, presentations, school visits and radio interviews. These initiatives put the spotlight on campaigns that the Girls' Brigade has been involved in, such as keeping girls in school, preventing child marriage, ending FGM and GBV, and child protection.

Similar activities and theological reflections led religious leaders to tackle FGM in Ethiopia, where the national prevalence of FGM in women aged 15–49 is 65% and 16% in girls under 14. This work is led by Norwegian Church Aid and helps the Ethiopian Government enhance legal instruments to end FGM. Accordingly, 68 theology colleges and Bible schools have integrated FGM in their curriculums. Anti-FGM messages are disseminated through regular sermons, women's groups, Sunday school and youth teaching, faith media, faith-owned health facilities and schools.

Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

Faith actors are crucial in the path towards full equality and must play a key role in delivering Beijing +25. In this section, we map out how faith-based actors can challenge stigma and stereotypes that affect women's and girls' access to key services, such as health and education. Faith-based organisations also have a key role in peacebuilding and ending violence.

The BPfA states that governments must create 'an educational and social environment, in which women and men, girls and boys, are treated equally and encouraged to achieve their full potential, respecting their freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, and where educational resources promote non-stereotyped images of women and men, would be effective in the elimination of the causes of discrimination against women and inequalities between women and men'.⁷⁴ This is reinforced in the SDGs.⁷⁵

Christian Aid is part of the Faith in Beijing +25 Coalition.⁷⁶ Our aim is to strengthen and amplify our prophetic voice for gender justice, contributing to the Beijing +25 process, and playing a distinctive role in coordinating multi-faith actors to stand together in international, regional and national spaces. This is vital to ensuring our advocacy at the UN is informed by the lived realities, and impressive work, of faith actors on the ground.

As we show in the case studies throughout this report, the members of the coalition have an impressive track record in working with faith leaders to end violence, stigma and stereotypes that push women and girls into subordinate positions and unequal power relations. These relationships give faith actors, such as Christian Aid, an opportunity to be stronger by advocating together, sharing fellowship, and amplifying the voices of those who are most marginalised in these spaces.

Christian Aid's approach in bringing faith-based organisations and leaders in this journey to strengthen the Beijing +25 agenda starts with the premises that:

- We were all created equal and therefore we must be awarded with equal opportunities and tools to ensure that these opportunities are translated into equal outcomes.
- Faith leaders are already creating spaces to discuss and interpret religious scriptures with a gender justice lens, as well as understanding lived experiences of gender injustice. This includes reflecting on the importance of diversity and love for one another.
- We need more faith-based female leaders and feminist theologians who connect with the lived experience of women and provide a more nuanced analysis of the role of religion on promoting gender equality.
- We need true prophets who are strong enough to inspire hope. That is, we need prophets to bring a new vision, a new morality and changed action.

Expert witness

Lotifa Begum

Global Advocacy Manager, Muslim Aid

'We work in about 14 different countries... focusing around the empowerment of women. In particular, in Somalia... we are providing a sort of a 'one stop shop' referral centre where women suffering from GBV can come and learn about their rights, both about human rights and also from a faith-based [angle on] the rights that they have. A lot of them are survivors of domestic violence. We have done this project in partnership with the UN Population Fund.

'It provides a lot of awareness raising around family planning issues as well. We have found that a lot of the same women who have come to this project have found it very beneficial. It's based at the hospitals, so it's safer for them.

'The project itself tackled a lot of cultural taboos around the issue of GBV. So, that I think it's a good example of how we have been able to work with some of the local faith actors to try to promote the message of gender equality.

'One of the key things that we saw which was positive was that a lot of the women who were coming to this referral centre... felt that there was a true understanding and a sensitive approach that we took which was really important. Within the Somali community, GBV-related issues are not commonly talked and talking about these kinds of issues with their families is very difficult.

'Having local imams come in to support the women... has been very positive, and all the women who have gone through this one-stop referral centre say that they've got a safe space now to come and talk about these issues that they are facing.'

'We want to look at positive images of being a man, and negative images of being a man which are found in the Bible. How can we change our cultural understanding of manhood and bring in one which is life-affirming? Jesus Christ presents us a positive masculinity for men to emulate'

Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, World Council of Churches

Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Although some faith traditions have been responsible for maintaining unequal power structures, many faith leaders are realising that to stay true to the ethical underpinnings of scriptures, they must read them from a gender justice angle. In this section, we outline how faith-based actors can introduce gender-sensitive activities.

The Beijing Declaration is clear: 'It is essential to design, implement and monitor, with the full participation of women, effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programmes, including development policies and programmes, at all levels that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women.'⁷⁷ Women's full and effective participation is reinforced in several SDGs.⁷⁸

Religious leaders play a key role in shaping people's values.⁷⁹ Eighty-four per cent of the world's population self-identify as members of a faith group. Religious leaders and people of faith have a potentially transformative role in tackling the root causes of gender inequality and speaking out against gender injustice. However, the role of faith actors in raising gender injustice as a political and moral concern is not always fully utilised.

As Dr Azza Karam, Senior and Cultural Development Advisor to the UN Population Fund, argues: 'Few people in the human rights world would acknowledge that religion is a feature of women's empowerment.'⁸⁰

While it must be acknowledged that religious and traditional leaders can be part of the problem of gender injustice, maintaining patriarchal structures and perpetuating social norms, they can be – and are increasingly seen – as part of the solution.

During the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, many pastors, priests and imams shared key messages on prevention and mobilised their communities to do the same.⁸¹

INERELA+ is the inter-faith network of religious leaders living with or affected by HIV. It demonstrates how faith actors can help eliminate stigma and discrimination within their congregations and communities.⁸² Religious leaders, as trusted and respected members of a community, can be agents of change. When people experience an injustice, such as gender-based violence, it is often religious leaders who are the 'first responders'.

One of the key challenges of working with ordained faith leaders is that they are often men. With a few exceptions, such as those found in African religions like Camdomblé, women seldom play a pivotal

Story of change



Latin America and the Caribbean is currently facing a wave of ultra-right-wing governments which are part of an 'unholy alliance' between three types of fundamentalisms: social (patriarchy), economic (neoliberalism) and religious (anti-rights religious movements and churches). This foments polarisation and encourages violent language and expressions that further marginalise women, particularly women of colour and historically excluded groups.

At Christian Aid, we believe it is imperative that we engage with faith groups to challenge this trend. It is important that there is a concerted response from progressive movements to act jointly against anti-rights movements and promote women's rights.

Working to break down these barriers, Christian Aid works with feminist theologians to strengthen the role they play in supporting progressive faith-based organisations resisting backlashes to gender equality in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Through a project called Re-building the Collective: The Role of Faith-Based Organisations and Gender Equality, Christian Aid not only facilitates difficult discussions touching on the theology related to struggles, such as access to land and climate justice, but also acknowledges the leadership role of feminist theologians, who are otherwise marginalised by mainstream thinking.

role in political mobilisation and strategising when it comes to religious institutions.⁸³ Female theologians are an example of a historically marginalised community within faith circles.⁸⁴ Although feminist theologians have quietly contributed to religious institutions that are gender just, these contributions have not been met with equal recognition and power.⁸⁵ Similarly, many unordained women play pivotal roles in religious organisations, for example, by leading national Christian councils. This failure to adequately and efficiently address the gender gap in leadership positions in religious institutions is in direct violation of the BPfA and CEDAW.

'Not everything in the Bible is prescriptive. Not everything in the Bible is normative. The instrumentalisation of the Bible betrays God's will'

Dr Ganoune Diop, Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, Seventh Day Adventist Church

Peaceful and inclusive societies

There are a myriad of 'stories of change' that demonstrate the transformative potential of faith. In this section, we demonstrate how the work of Christian Aid has been instrumental in implementing CEDAW and the Women, Peace and Security commitments, which are essential in achieving Beijing's strategic objectives and the SDGs, and ensuring peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Beijing Declaration says that: 'Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.'⁸⁶ SDGs 5 and 16 should be read in conjunction with the Beijing Declaration to ensure all forms of violence, including structural violence, are tackled to create peace.

Despite advances made by women's human rights organisations in many areas of gender justice, GBV remains a scourge in all corners of the world. While some of the most devastating forms of GBV are particularly prevalent in humanitarian emergencies and contexts affected by conflict and violence, GBV is rooted in deeper societal norms of gender inequality, driven by factors such as traditional and religious norms, conflict, insecurity and poverty.

Today, 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not outlawed and more than 2.6 billion live in countries where rape within marriage is not considered a crime.⁸⁷ At least 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone FGM.⁸⁸ Adult women account for 51% of all human trafficking victims detected globally. Women and girls together account for 71%, with girls representing nearly three out of every four child trafficking victims. Nearly three out of every four trafficked women and girls are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.⁸⁹ Gauging the true prevalence of GBV is difficult, particularly in times of conflict and displacement but in many crisis settings, GBV is estimated to affect over 70% of women, who in turn may be affected by the after-effects of stigma and shame, often associated with being a victim of such violence.⁹⁰

Expert witness

Mandy Marshall

Co-director and Founder, Restored

'Restored is an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and imbalance against women. We were founded in 2010 [because] the church was patchy in its response to violence against women. Two questions prompted Restored's foundation: where is the church and where are the men when it comes to violence against women?

'Abuse is epidemiographic and cuts across rich and poor, young and old, black white, any religion. [We] wanted to raise awareness and... engage the church in ending violence against women, and really challenge the church itself, saying we need to wake up and respond appropriately and effectively where abuse is close.

'We did some research with the Universities of Coventry and Leicester last year and found that one in four churches across Cumbria [UK] was suffering or experiencing domestic abuse. Close to 42% weren't taking previous relationships into consideration and six women were living in fear of death. It was hard evidence that domestic abuse happened in churches too and that we needed to respond.

'We provide toolkits to churches. We've recently launched our survivors' handbook. We work with survivors online and give them a safe space to share their stories. We have a men's campaign called First Man Standing, which gets men to sign a white ribbon pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about abuse, but to make a stand against violence against women and join in with women in that response. We advocate to governments and to institutional church networks to take violence against women seriously.'

Women suffer from multiple types and forms of violence, as CEDAW describes: ‘Violence takes multiple forms, including acts or omissions intended or likely to cause or result in death or physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, threats of such acts, harassment, coercion and arbitrary deprivation of liberty.’⁹¹

The eradication of GBV is a major and urgent challenge of our times. There is a growing recognition that violence against women cannot be tackled unless the systemic inequalities which keep women vulnerable are also recognised and work is done to reduce those inequalities.

To further the implementation of the BPfA and other human rights instruments, the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women Peace and Security created additional legal commitments to eliminate GBV and reduce the effects of conflict and post-conflict situations on women and girls.⁹² As part of the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, the UN identified six priority action areas to accelerate progress in the lead-up to October 2020:

- Make leadership accountable for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, through improved data and gender analysis.
- Ensure women’s meaningful participation in peace processes, the implementation of peace agreements and related decision making.
- Protect women’s human rights defenders and women’s organisations.
- Ensure women’s participation in economic decision making in post-conflict situations.
- Increase the number of women in uniformed services in peacekeeping missions and national security services.
- Finance the women, peace and security agenda and invest in women peacebuilders.⁹³

The pervasive nature of violence against women, whether resulting from armed conflict committed by state actors, structural violence by economic actors or by individuals, all with high levels of impunity, demonstrates how far we have to go before true gender equality is achieved. The world’s women will never be equal while vulnerable to such high levels of violence. This is why it is important to guarantee that SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies considers the BPfA and UNSCR 1325.

Women face consistently unequal treatment, discrimination and denial of their human rights globally. Social norms and factors, such as racial, ethnic and class discrimination, make some women even more vulnerable to violence. This violence manifests in the home, society, and legal, political and economic systems, and is exacerbated within conflict and violence-enabling contexts. This comes at a time of increasing impunity for the prosecution of sexual violence in many countries (including the UK), a global rollback on women’s rights, such as reproductive health, under-funding of women’s organisations and increasing militarisation and securitisation by states in response to conflict, exposing women to further violence and undermining peacebuilding efforts. Increased conflict means more women experience violence.

Story of change



In Afghanistan, decades of war, insecurity and civil unrest, lack of good governance, weakness in state institutions and corruption have pushed people further into poverty and contribute to a rising sense of frustration. Women are still considered to be lesser humans in Afghan society, denied access to basic services and rights. Almost one in nine Afghan women face physical, sexual or psychological violence, or are forced into marriage. Lack of security remains a primary concern – 2016 saw the highest number of civilian casualties in a single year and 2017 was one of the most violent years on record. With the growing presence of various armed groups in Afghanistan, the complexity has further increased.

For three decades, Christian Aid has been supporting organisations in Afghanistan that work to empower, liberate and rehabilitate women, to raise awareness about GBV, human rights and provide access to social justice.

Bibi Aisha is a 25-year-old widow who was displaced due to the conflict and drought from Bala Morghab district of Badghis province. When she and her daughters fled to a camp for internally displaced people, they lost everything.

‘I know nothing about the rights of women. I don’t believe in double standards. We should be treated equally’

Bibi Aisha, Afghanistan

A contributory factor to this is militarisation. In 2018, global military spending was \$1,822 billion, its highest level since 1988, illustrating how many nations continue to rely on military and hard security tools to manage conflict.⁹⁴ Women globally highlight how the militarisation of society breeds new levels of violence and how impunity for these crimes becomes endemic.⁹⁵ The gendered impacts of conflict are amplified, including displacement of women, the justification for violent action of 'saving women', the recruitment of women to armed groups, diminished access to healthcare, exclusion from peace processes and increased rates of GBV.⁹⁶ In South Sudan, for example, rates of sexual violence related to the conflicts raging since 2013 have been extraordinarily high, skyrocketing to double the global average.⁹⁷

Underpinning all of this is patriarchy and neoliberalism, that increase the levels of vulnerability and intersecting inequalities to which different individuals and groups are exposed. UN Women affirms that: 'Patriarchy in its wider definition means "the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general".'⁹⁸ Patriarchy 'has been inscribed in laws and social norms across large swathes of the world during periods of state-building and Western colonization.'⁹⁹

Environmental conservation, protections and resilience building

In order to enhance the potential of faith-based actors, we must stay true to God's calling for justice, dignity and equality; recognise that there is a plurality of faith voices that must be made visible; and foster partnerships which enable a human rights-centred model of development that serves those most marginalised and at risk of being left behind. In this section, we show the value of human rights-centred partnerships in the development of environmental conservation, protection and resilience-building strategies. Human rights are key in ensuring that environment-related policies and programmes do not leave women behind.

The BPfA recognised that: 'Women remain largely absent at all levels of policy formulation and decision-making in natural resource and environmental management, conservation, protection and rehabilitation, and their experience and skills in advocacy for and monitoring of proper natural resource management too often remain marginalized in policy-making and decision-making bodies, as well as in educational institutions and environment-related agencies at the managerial level.'¹⁰⁰ The SDGs recognise the importance of addressing these gaps and set targets that have a potential of narrowing or eliminating them.

Climate change is the biggest threat to the life on Earth, according to overwhelming scientific consensus. The impact is severe and the hazards are diverse. Massive floods, intense hurricanes, decadal droughts, geographical expansion of pests and diseases, and desertification are already directly damaging livelihoods and ecosystems. They are also driving long-term economic consequences that translate into deeper existing inequalities and large migration processes. Pathways to avert the dangerous

Expert witness

Elsebeth Gravgard

Senior Policy Advisor – Gender Equality and Active Citizenship, Dan Church Aid

'We need to integrate work on positive faith narratives in most of the more specific gender equality work we are doing; not only to address regressive faith voices but also to ensure that we give sufficient attention to the positive faith actions. [That means] having faith actors involved from a more gender just perspective is important when we are combating GBV and harmful practices.'

'This is also needed when, for instance, we are looking at women's economic empowerment. We see – whether it is in humanitarian work or long-term development work – when we empower women so they get cash in hand, a lot of those who are in male-headed households cannot control the cash because male partners will expect to have that control and the gender norms prohibit women from taking control.'

'I've talked to a lot of women who have been empowered to participate in political processes, for instance been elected in local government, who give up after one or two terms because of the gender norms.'

'I think addressing the faith narrative around expectations of what men can do and women can do, and looking for positive transformative faith narratives needs to be cross-cutting. As faith-based organisations, we are well placed to do that. I think that we have the most and best-documented examples of doing exactly that around harmful practices and other forms of GBV. We need to engage with faith actors because they are often have a big role in setting norms and practices and, therefore, also are the ones that can change these.'

threshold of a global temperature increase of 1.5°C are based invariably on a diversity of solutions for the sources of greenhouse gases that must be halved within a decade. The biggest endeavour in this transformational change is the rapid substitution of fossil fuels with renewable energy, while also ensuring energy access for the most vulnerable communities. The solution to this equation is not always clear.

Social and economic inequalities are the major drivers that shape the impacts of climate change on people, because there are many severe consequences for livelihoods linked to natural systems. But it tackling the climate crisis also requires resources and economic capacity, which has a clear connection with power holders. Addressing the differentiated impacts that climate change has on women must be a priority for action at all levels.

The evidence on how climate change is affecting women more severely is manifold, depending on the socio-environmental context.¹⁰¹ The tasks that are normally accomplished by rural women in many poor countries are being dramatically affected by climate change, including fetching wood, agricultural tasks and water provision. Women are the ones who have the heaviest domestic burden in the kitchen when the available fuel to cook is wood or coal, because pollution will harm their health. And they are thoroughly excluded from power and decision making in any space.

This exclusion does not occur only at the local level. In any international forum related to climate and energy, women are systematically underrepresented. The majority of national plans related to climate plans or biodiversity management do not mention gender specificities. This fact is crucial, as it means that women lose their voice with respect to incomes and management, access and distribution of resources.

The United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) started a working plan in 2014 to address the gender inequalities by implementing a Gender Action Plan (GAP) that ensures full and balanced participation of women in the global climate action framework. The UNFCCC also urges countries to incorporate national action plans in individual climate strategies to enforce the gender perspective.

At present, the UNFCCC is not only trying to deliver the GAP, but also to include gender approaches in each of the mechanisms under the UN framework. The implementation of UNFCCC's GAP is crucial to achieving the SDGs and the BPfA. The GAP was renewed for a new mandate in 2019.

Story of change



Christian Aid is conducting the Breaking the Barriers project with women in three African countries (Malawi, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso) and Honduras. This project aims to promote women entrepreneurship in the renewable energy sector and has targeted more than 500 women groups and 6,000 individual women so far. The project has engaged financial service providers, such as commercial banks, to enhance access to financial services for women.

Project beneficiaries have been able to set up a large number of women-led sustainable energy enterprises. These have received capacity-building resources and loans for starting the renewable energy projects. Business plans are already in place in many of the women-led enterprises.

Many others have already started to produce diverse sustainable energy technologies, including solar kitchens and ovens, photovoltaic solar panels, driers and food processors.

Breaking the Barriers benefits from an important faith-based partnership. The Christian Organisation for Integrated Development in Honduras has fronted all the mobilisation and capacity-building activities in the country. These have strengthened women's capacity to promote a policy and regulatory environment for women and sustainable energy.

Actions and initiatives to achieve the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

The main impediments to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are structural.

Christian Aid is a religious actor and a member of many networks of secular and faith-based organisations. Therefore, we are called to work together in the midst of global changes, such as rising nationalism, the shrinking space for civil society, the enhancement of pre-existing conditions responsible for the implementation gap, as well as political, cultural and religious conflicts related to gender equality and justice.

This is also true for the SDGs. The world is not on track to achieve the SDGs. Instead, it faces a triple emergency of poverty, climate and nature, driven by an economic system that places profit before the planet, widens inequality and encourages high levels of unsustainable consumption by a privileged few. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encapsulates this emergency. Human rights instruments are key tools in guaranteeing this emergency is met with an appropriate, timely, systematic and robust response.

Christian Aid will not remain silent when the rollback on gender equality threatens the progress we have already made, and those achievements yet to be won. Throughout the Beijing +25 process, we will focus on critical areas where we as faith actors are making a contribution by, for instance:

- Recognising the diversity of families.
- Ending all forms of violence against women and girls including structural violence.
- Respecting the rule of law through justice-oriented approaches that guarantee the full interconnected, interrelated and interdependent implementation of human rights at all levels.

We advocate for the positive role of religious actors in advancing gender justice, lament the fact that human rights are being undermined, and call for greater resources and strategic alliances with faith and secular actors.

As faith actors, our scriptures inspire us to stand up for justice and defend human rights. We work to address not only the needs of the body, but also those of the mind and spirit, honouring the fullness of humanity. We acknowledge that religious institutions, customs, and practices have created, reinforced and been shaped by patriarchal structures and recognise the disservice that has been done to humankind throughout history. The role of religious leaders in combating these unjust systems of oppression has never been more important. This demands that we work both within our respective faith structures and more widely, reaching out and joining forces with secular movements for rights and gender justice.

We also recognise that a few faith-based actors are working for global gender equality, self-empowerment, human rights-based development, and humanitarian responses in emergencies. Some of us have built programs, developed theologies, designed curricula,

Story of change



ACT Alliance is a coalition of more than 155 churches and church-related organisations working together in more than 125 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, race or nationality, and in keeping with the highest international codes and standards. ACT Alliance is faith-motivated, rights-based, impact focused, committed to working ecumenically and inter-religiously, with the communities we seek to serve and accompany at the centre of our work.

For ACT Alliance, as a Christian faith-based organisation working with an ecumenical and interfaith perspective, there is a mandate to build a collective process. This entails working with theologians and theological institutions to collect, connect or produce resources on feminist and gender transformative perspectives to be used in capacity building. This process will counter the regressive voices and backlash against gender justice.

ACT's Gender Justice Programme has four main outcomes for the next four years:

- 'Walking the talk', ie, ensuring members have coherent mechanisms and tools to implement gender justice.
- Influencing programming design and mainstreaming gender justice in all activities developed by the membership.
- Advocating for gender justice, ie, engaging in discussions about legislation and frameworks to promote gender.
- Building capacity and mutual learning.

created movements, and implemented strong measures and policies to work towards gender justice within our institutions and communities.

To support this work, many tools and training modules have been developed to build the capacity of faith actors to advance gender justice. For example, in 2019, the Lutheran World Federation launched the Waking the Giant initiative, endorsed by the UN, for faith actors to contribute effectively to Agenda 2030.¹⁰² Channels of Hope, led by World Vision with Islamic Relief, also mobilises and builds on the existing competencies of community leaders, especially faith leaders and their congregations, to respond to some of the most difficult issues affecting their communities.¹⁰³

Christian Aid strongly reaffirms its commitment to the principles of human rights and to the commitments expressed in international law, as codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other treaties. We were part of ecumenical movements that made significant contributions to the articulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through the early work of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. The concept of justice as an equitable fulfilment of rights and responsibilities is reaffirmed in new institutional policies and declarations, such as the pioneering Islamic Gender Justice Declaration and ACT Alliance Gender Justice Policy.¹⁰⁴

We are fostering some very difficult conversations about issues that are contentious among faith actors, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights.¹⁰⁵ Christian Aid's family planning policy affirms that we 'know that our churches care deeply about the poverty, powerlessness and inequalities that are faced by women and men across the globe' and, therefore, we urge all faith-based actors to promote 'the inherent worth of every person, and believe that all are made "in the image of God"'.¹⁰⁶ For us, the Christian faith inspires and grounds the language of rights. We believe that supporting women and men in making free and informed choices about their reproductive health is crucial in order for everyone to live a life full of dignity, and to see an end to poverty.¹⁰⁷

Christian Aid works with feminist organisations. We are working with the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness in the implementation of a project called Bridging the Gap, which is about the importance of fiscal justice for achieving women and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights. This project aims to guarantee the implementation of CEDAW and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights – two human rights instruments which highlight the duty of the state to progressively realise human rights by mobilising the maximum of its available resources. The project also advocates for countries to abide by the Abuja Declaration, in which countries of the African Union pledged to allocate at least 15% of their annual budgets to health. Bridging the Gap uses sexual and reproductive health as an example of a gender-responsive approach to healthcare in its campaigning in Sierra Leone, Malawi, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Kenya.

As the SDGs are anchored in international human rights law, we believe that Agenda 2030 is critical to ensuring that no one is left behind. Our commitment to human rights is not an arbitrary cultural or ideological preference; it is rooted in religious convictions. There

Expert witness

Elaine Neuenfeldt

Gender Programme Manager, ACT Alliance

'Faith actors, among them, theologians who are using a feminist and gender-just perspective, are key actors in building analytical frames bridging faith and sustainable development. Faith cannot be used or manipulated to justify violence and hate or punish differences or diversities. Faith actors, specifically those dealing with the interpretation of sacred texts, have the task to identify what kind of religious understanding is giving ground to traditional and unequal gender roles.

'There is a conceptual capital in the way religious texts are interpreted, as critical and transformative elements to build sustainable development. Justice is a fundamental concept at the very heart of Christian faith – it is building community, as it guides relationship and life: love your neighbour and do justice. Justice is a biblical and theological concept grounding [the] ethical value of conviviality in a community. If gender roles are defined to limit and restrict full humanity for women and those non-conforming to the normative patriarchal norms and values – then this system is not fair, not based on justice.

'A faith community is not a place for the perfect and already saved. The notion of the people of faith coming together is remembered in biblical texts and in the tradition, as a place of debate, expressing contradictions, struggling to live out God's mandate of loving each other. This community/communitarian life is a learning place, open to all experiences and expressions.'

can be no justice where God-given human rights are violated or where duty bearers fail to discharge their responsibilities. We recognise and lament the fact that in many parts of the world today the legitimacy of the principles and obligations expressed in international human rights law are being dismissed, undermined and/or attacked as never before.

We see how forms of oppression are interrelated and recognise gender injustice as an intersectional issue; therefore, we are pivotal partners in addressing them. If we are to successfully implement gender-just policies and programmes, intersectional approaches to development and struggles for gender justice around the world must be sufficiently resourced. Capacity is important to the sustainability of projects. An enabling environment and increased resources are required in order to better ensure women's rights organisations, religious actors and faith-based organisations develop their own capacity and work effectively together as part of the growing global partnership for Agenda 2030. This means we need to:

- Challenge the current economic model that relies on women's exploitation for their existence (through its increased focus on private finance, loan conditionality and austerity in the public sector which take a heavy human rights toll and its differentiated impact on the poorest and most disadvantaged groups, including women).¹⁰⁸
- Push for better models and methods of financing for development (through a radically different and rebalanced financial system which ensures that the very poorest are included and actively supported to thrive).¹⁰⁹

In short, we must ensure the work that is done to address gender inequality uses a systematic approach which drives away from conventional, orthodox macroeconomic policy advice that severely undermines gender equality and women's rights.

Gender injustice continues to be a controversial issue in many religious and political spaces, with fundamental beliefs creating polarisation in local, regional and global levels. There is also a shrinking of civic space, which is likely to halt or reverse progress towards reducing inequality, ensuring inclusion, and improving sustainability, because it is often precisely those who are marginalised who are at the greatest risk of being 'left behind by development'.¹¹⁰

Gender injustice is deep-rooted in social norms. Religion and culture have a strong influence on the definition of social norms, including those relating to gender.¹¹¹ SDG 5 will not be achieved by simply changing laws, reducing poverty or improving education. While these are all important steps in Agenda 2030, there is a need to change social norms that de-value women.

For example, in Zimbabwe, the Gender and Faith Network, mobilised hundreds of faith actors to collectively launch a campaign to speak out against sexual violence and GBV. Leadership from the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations has ensured that this campaign is integrated into long-term efforts to tackle gender injustice, including a series of Bible studies and awareness-raising actions.

Story of change



In 2015, Christian Aid, sister agencies and religious leaders initiated the Side by Side global faith movement for gender justice. Side by Side has more than 45 faith-based members, and operates in 15 countries. It is mobilising thousands of faith-based gender champions to tackle gender injustice at local, national and global levels.

Members are united by a belief that each person has intrinsic value and dignity; and has equal rights in the distribution of power, knowledge and resources. Side by Side's goals are to see a world where:

- Gender inequality is no longer considered acceptable.
- Behaviours and practices no longer condone, promote or model gender injustice.
- Social, political and economic development outcomes are gender equitable, as set out in the SDGs.
- Power relations between women and men are equitable. All people, regardless of their sex or gender, exercise agency and autonomy over their own lives.
- GBV is eliminated and no longer tolerated.

A collective faith voice for gender justice that affirms human rights is powerful.

'If we keep thinking it's about them, not knowing it's about us, there is no way out'

Revd John Joseph Hayab, Christian Association of Nigeria's Kaduna State Office, Side by Side Nigeria

Theology of change

Scriptural resources that support gender equality

Examples from Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu and Baha'i scriptures.

'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.' (Romans 12:2)

'For I the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing.' (Isaiah 61:8)

'For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.' (Isaiah 62:1)

'I will appoint Peace as your overseer and Righteousness as your taskmaster. Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise. The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night, but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, or your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land for ever. They are the shoot that I planted, the work of my hands, so that I might be glorified. The least of them shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the Lord; in its time I will accomplish it swiftly.' (Isaiah 60:17-22)

'But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.' (Amos 5:24)

'We have honoured the children of Adam... and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation.' (Quran 17:70)

'Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.' (Quran 16:97)

'Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.' (Quran 16:90)

'Bhishma said, "The son is even as one's own self, and the daughter is like unto the son. How, therefore, can another take the wealth when one lives in one's own self in the form of one's daughter?"' (Section XLV, Mahabharata Anusasana Parva)

'There is the daughter of the nāga king Sāgara who is only eight years old. She is wise; her faculties are sharp; and she also well knows all the faculties and deeds of sentient beings. She has attained the power of recollection. She preserves all the profound secret treasures of the Buddhas, enters deep in meditation, and is well capable of discerning all dharmas. She instantly produced the thought of enlightenment and has attained the stage of nonretrogression. She has unhindered eloquence and thinks of sentient beings with as much compassion as if they were her own children. Her virtues are perfect. Her thoughts and explanations are subtle and extensive, merciful, and compassionate. She has a harmonious mind and has attained enlightenment.'

(Lotus Sūtra 12. This affirms that girls have the same power of reaching enlightenment as boys and men.)

'The world of humanity has two wings – one is women and the other men... Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly. Should one wing remain weak, flight is impossible.' (Abdu'l-Bahá)

Similarly, Side by Side mobilises and supports faith actors to advocate for gender justice in law, as well as for greater implementation. For example, in Kenya, failure by parliament to implement the constitution's 'two-thirds gender rule' was challenged by faith leaders in a joint public forum. This collaboration of faith leaders, which amplified a collective faith voice, led to #FaithForGenderJustice to start trending in Kenya, with more than 3.2 million hits. This is a reflection of the public's continued interest and the influence that faith leaders have in championing gender justice.

'We are diverse in our cultural background and understanding of society. Nevertheless, we are united by a common desire to see all forms of injustices overcome and people from every background treated with dignity, respect and justice regardless of gender'

Faustina Nillan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania,
Side by Side Tanzania

Conclusion

The SDGs have a strong grounding on human rights, as UN Women rightly mentions.¹¹² 'They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.'¹¹³ This means that their implementation entails the incorporation of a gender perspective into all 17 goals, but also means that these goals are intrinsically linked to the Beijing Platform for Action. The implications of this are clear – gender inequality must be addressed across all relevant goals and targets, with a focus on how it is compounded by other intersecting inequalities.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, the most marginalised groups must be identified and prioritised, and their specific challenges and vulnerabilities better understood and acted upon.

Although some gender equality indicators show improvements, a lack of progress in some areas, such as legal discrimination, patriarchal social norms and power imbalances, is undermining overall progress. Public finance, the need for better gender data, and the climate emergency also remain key challenges.¹¹⁵ We must ensure we leave no one behind while implementing the SDGs. The SDGs must tackle the 12 critical areas of concern in the BPfA: women and poverty; education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women and armed conflict; women and the economy; women in power and decision making; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women and the media; women and the environment; and the girl child.¹¹⁶

At Christian Aid, we believe these areas of concern are interlocking and we have a responsibility to ensure that all 12 are met with matching attention, resources and political will.

Throughout the last 75 years, we have harnessed experience working with religious and secular actors towards gender justice. However, we recognise that this has not always been clear cut. We acknowledge that religious institutions, at times, have been shaped by patriarchal structures, and recognise that this has been a disservice to women and girls throughout history. It is because we recognise these challenges that we feel compelled to ensure that gender justice and equality are the basis on which we conduct our work. We believe faith-based actors must promote more progressive gender norms, challenge harmful practices, amplify the voices of minorities and address multiple inequalities.

Additionally, governments must take continued and additional steps to achieve the goals of the BPfA, recognise that all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social, including the right to development – are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and are essential for realising gender equality, development and peace in the 21st century. This means tackling the implementation gap and the pre-existing obstacles preventing the achievement of gender equal outcomes; pushing back against backlashes against human rights and gender equality; and appropriately resourcing civil society organisations, as well as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and recognising its role in the implementation of the BPfA.¹¹⁷

‘For the first time, the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action can be linked to a time-bound framework – that of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Let’s work together to turn the goal of gender equality into a reality by 2030’

Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary, at the UNECE Beijing +25 Summit

Commitments as a faith actor and calling on faith actors to commit

We commit ourselves to taking urgent and accelerated action to fully implement the BPfA, and all other existing agreements and commitments for gender equality and the protection of women’s rights, with no regression or exception. We also invite other faith-based actors to commit to this action.

There are very practical measures churches can put in place directly to get their own house in order, and to deliver gender justice in their own communities:

- During 2020, celebrate the anniversaries of the gender equality key cornerstones with congregations. These are CEDAW (40th anniversary), Beijing Declaration (25th), UNSCR 1325 (10th) and the SDGs (5th).
- During 2020, transform the structures of power within churches in order to abide by the 12 area of concern of the BPfA. In particular, ensure female leaders rise to positions of power and are able to sustain those positions; address unequal access to education and training within church structures; support and deliver action to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls within churches; and promote and protect the human rights of women through sermons and theological interpretations.
- Progressively and in a timely manner, resource and/or implement intersectional approaches to development which recognise the diversity of life and protect and advance women’s and girls’ equal rights to safety; a healthy environment; economic advancement; freedom from exploitation, violence and discrimination; education and health; equal participation in social, political and spiritual life; and decision making.
- Make themselves accountable for all human rights commitments and finance, and call on all other stakeholders to do this. Promote and/or deliver human rights literacy training to congregations and external stakeholders.
- Engage in dialogue based on love, trust and transparency with networks, partner organisations and churches. Strive towards a change in societal norms and harmful attitudes related to gender roles, including negative masculinity, reproductive choices, human sexuality, child marriage and stigmatisation of HIV/AIDS. Work together for mutual learning and better realisation of gender justice and sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Encourage and accompany the creation and implementation of protocols for the prevention, detection and attention to sexual

violence and GBV inside churches and faith-based organisations.

- Promote and strengthen strategies for pastoral and community actions, in coordination with different stakeholders, to reduce maternal and child mortality.
- Work on theological and faith understandings which are critical to deconstructing the gender stereotypes that limit women's rights and agency. Build narratives that contribute to equality and justice for all genders.
- Promote awareness and information strategies for overcoming existing taboos and resistance in churches in addressing comprehensive sexuality education and other issues, such as ending discrimination on the basis of caste, race, religion, ethnicity and other social markers.
- Guarantee an increase in female faith leaders and feminist theologians who have power and connect with the lived experience of women and provide a more nuanced analysis of the role of religion on promoting gender equality.
- Better reflect the diversity of communities that church hierarchies serve. Recognise that spiritual violence, ie, using religious grounds and distorted interpretations of religious texts to persecute a particular person or group of people, is a direct violation of the BPfA and CEDAW.
- Collect transparent and gender-disaggregated data. For example, consider if congregations could systematise the information they have in terms of female/male leadership and publish it online, in order to help track progress towards gender parity.

Recommendations to governments

We call on all governments to commit to delivering BPfA:

- During 2020, guarantee commitment at all levels to the political declaration presented at CSW this year. Support the creation of adequate roadmaps for the next five years of the implementation of BPfA. Ensure these take into account the urgency of the 12 critical areas and are approved by the UN General Assembly; and the work delivered by UN Women and CSW on the Beijing +25 Review. Chart ways to tackle the unfinished business of the BPfA by supporting and financing all action coalitions and strategies at national, regional and global levels.
- During 2020, address the issue of late payments and under-budgeting of the UN system, which puts at risk the delivery of the BPfA and the interconnected actions related to the SDGs.
- During 2020, leverage the 12 critical areas of the BPfA and the six SDGs cluster areas that highlight the importance of holistic and joined-up development solutions to bring younger and older generations together as collective change makers and gender champions.
- Systematically access and implement mechanisms and laws to address the rising violence occurring in diverse ways across the course of women's and girls' lives, which affects them in their multiple identities and roles.

- Ensure that, beyond mechanisms and laws, better facilities are put in place for the protection of women. Improve training for those with a duty to deliver protection services.
- Promote a new model of development that keeps gender equality and all human rights front and centre, including a UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights.
- Develop and adopt mandatory laws capable of eradicating gender discrimination of all forms in business practices.
- Support gender-sensitive financing and budgeting models that take into account the full range of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Create robust and progressive tax regimes nationally that support gender justice. Support international laws and institutions with international rules on multinational corporations, wealth, trade and investment, to produce gender-equal outcomes.
- Provide gender-disaggregated data that accurately documents the gender impact of all forms of fiscal policies. Refine comparative and longitudinal indicators and data on gender equality in domestic laws and transnational and international tax abuses.
- Provide access to renewable and sustainable energy, including at household level, in order to reduce dependence on wood for fuel, with its associated health and labour burdens on women and girls. Remedy the ecological and environmental damage associated with fossil fuel production and consumption, and the disproportionate burden it places on women and girls.
- Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution in decision making. Protect women living in conflict situations or under foreign occupation. Progress the realisation of UNSCR 1325 through the creation, implementation and financing of national action plans.

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