

Swedish Foreign Service action plan  
for feminist foreign policy 2015–2018  
including focus areas for 2017



# Summary

More people are living better lives than ever before. But gender equality is still a vision, not a reality.

Sweden's feminist government wants to make this vision a reality. Gender equality is a goal in itself. But it is also essential for the achievement of the Government's other overall objectives, such as peace, security and sustainable development.

This is why gender equality and human rights efforts must continue unabated. But we are also going one step further.

Sweden is the first country in the world to pursue a feminist foreign policy.

Just over twenty years after the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the commitments are far from being fulfilled. Countless women and girls still experience a blatant lack of rights, representation and resources.

Feminist foreign policy will help to achieve concrete results that enhance both gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.

This will be done by implementing systematic gender mainstreaming, based on knowledge and analysis, throughout the foreign policy agenda, not least in peace and security efforts.

This action plan sets the direction of feminist foreign policy action to be taken by the Swedish Foreign Service, guided by six long-term objectives. These are broad objectives to match broad challenges, cover the entire global agenda and bring the whole gamut of foreign policy tools into play. This will enable the Foreign Service to promote the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, including by combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their freedom of action.

The plan specifies approaches, starting points, tools and actors. It also notes the importance of involving men and boys in the process of advancing gender equality.

The action plan is part of the Foreign Service operational plan, which means that it is updated and followed up every year. In this way we will facilitate the implementation and ensure results in foreign, security, development, and trade and promotion policy, as well as in the achievement of the sustainable development goals. This annual follow-up will enable us to learn from experience and new data, benefit from ongoing consultations, and cast light on more challenges.

In 2017, there will be a special focus on strengthening the human rights of women and girls who are refugees or migrants, working towards non-discriminatory legislation in the economic area, and combating violence in close relations. The potential of women and girls as actors will also be highlighted within the framework of conflict prevention and efforts to combat the shrinking democratic space. The Foreign Service will continue to be a driving force for sexual and reproductive health and rights and in 2017 intensify efforts to guarantee the sexual and reproductive rights of all people. In addition to this, work on the focus areas for 2016 will continue, as will other processes that contribute to the overarching objectives. Moreover, an objective for the Foreign Service's internal work on supporting and manifesting the feminist foreign policy will be incorporated.

By applying this broader, deeper and more systematic approach, feminist foreign policy will develop to achieve results that strengthen the rights, representation and resources of all women and girls.

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## Foreword

Sweden's feminist government aims to ensure that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives. This is a goal in itself. But it is also essential for the achievement of the Government's other overall objectives, which in foreign policy are peace, security and sustainable development.

Around the world, gender equality has improved. The proportion of women in parliaments is increasing. More girls go to school. But we can also see clear examples of setbacks that further undermine the commitments from the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The result is that violence, oppression and systematic subordination still mar the daily lives of countless women and girls.

Sweden wants this discrimination to end.

We are going about this by being a leading advocate for gender equality and human rights.

And by making Sweden the first country in the world to pursue a feminist foreign policy.

Our feminist foreign policy takes us one step further. Throughout our foreign policy, including in peace and security efforts, we will apply a systematic gender perspective. In so doing, we can contribute to real progress. And in so doing, we will become the strongest global voice for gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.

A cornerstone of our efforts is knowledge. We therefore need to collect accurate data and conduct analyses that shed light on gender equality and power. These analyses will be intersectional to take into account that women and girls are not homogeneous groups – their identities, participation, living conditions and needs differ.

This action plan sets out the direction of our feminist foreign policy agenda. Objectives and focus areas specify **what** we will do. But we also provide instructions on **how** we will work, including how to enhance the visibility of women and girls as actors and push for their rights and opportunities to organise and exert an influence. Membership of the UN Security Council provides us with an additional platform for this work. The action plan is part of the Foreign Service operational plan. In this way we will facilitate the implementation and achievement of results in foreign, security, development, and trade and promotion policy.

Experiences from the first year of the action plan were very positive and are a testament to the major impact it has had on the working methods of the Foreign Service. This provides us with a solid basis for continuing this work. With this year's focus areas we are further building on these experiences and on consultations with both Swedish and international stakeholders. At the same time, we are deepening the implementation of last year's focus areas, continuing broad work on the objectives and adding a new objective for internal work.

By applying this deeper, broader and more systematic approach, we continue to develop our feminist foreign policy and achieve results that strengthen the rights, resources and representation of women and girls.



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## 1. Objectives for 2015–2018 and focus of work in 2017

The objectives below set out the direction of Sweden’s feminist foreign policy for 2015–2018. These are broad objectives to match broad challenges and enable us to work holistically, using coordinated foreign policy instruments. Action must therefore be taken in line with our Policy for Global Development, the 2030 Agenda and other national and international commitments. As of this year, an internally oriented objective has also been added. Work on the objectives must be carried out in line with sections 2–5 on starting points, stakeholders, tools and governance, and with help from the focus areas that stress particularly important problems. The focus areas for 2017 are stated below and are followed in the rest of the section by a selection of indicative measures for work on the focus areas and the new internal objective.

A. The Swedish Foreign Service will contribute to all women’s and girls’:

### 1. Full enjoyment of human rights

*Focus 2017:* Strengthening the human rights of women and girls who are refugees or migrants

### 2. Freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence

*Focus 2017:* Combating violence against women and girls in close relationships

### 3. Participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding

*Focus 2017:* Promoting the role of women and girls in preventing conflict

### 4. Political participation and influence in all areas of society

*Focus 2017:* Promoting women’s and girls’ participation as a strategy against the shrinking democratic space and the double vulnerability of women and girls

### 5. Economic rights and empowerment

*Focus 2017:* Strengthening women’s and girls’ economic empowerment and influence, including by working towards non-discriminatory legislation

### 6. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

*Focus 2017:* Intensifying work for the sexual and reproductive rights of all people

B. The Swedish Foreign Service’s internal work must support and manifest the policy

A. Indicative measures for work on the focus areas

*Focus 1:* Strengthening the human rights of women and girls who are refugees or migrants

- The Swedish Foreign Service will work to ensure that relevant stakeholders can **prevent and address** human rights abuses and violations of humanitarian law in a way that takes account of women’s and girls’ right to protection.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that the commitments from the **summits** on migration, refugee and humanitarian issues, as well as the **Call to Action** on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, help women and girls who are refugees or migrants to enjoy their human rights.
- The Foreign Service will **draw attention to the risk** of women and girls who are refugees or migrants being subjected to sexual and gender-based violence, becoming the victims of **human trafficking** for sexual purposes, and being pushed into child marriages and forced marriages, and prostitution.
- The Foreign Service will promote the production and use of **statistics disaggregated by gender and age** that are important for measures to help people who are refugees or migrants.
- The Foreign Service will promote **economic empowerment** and access to **health care, water, sanitation and hygiene** for women and girls who are refugees or migrants.
- The Foreign Service will highlight the individual as a right holder and the importance of **registering children**.

*Focus 2:* Combating violence against women and girls in close relationships

- The Foreign Service will **combat impunity** for violence in close relationships, strengthen the role of the judicial sector and increase women’s and girls’ access to the judicial system.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that all States accede to and implement the **Istanbul Convention**.
- The Foreign Service will combat **norms** that link masculinity and violence, and involve men and boys in efforts to combat violence against women and girls in close relationships.
- The Foreign Service will highlight the correlation between the spread of **small arms and light weapons** and violence against women and girls in close relationships, and assist in the implementation of the commitments of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (**ATT**).
- The Foreign Service will stress the need to **rehabilitate soldiers** to prevent post-conflict phases leading to increased violence against women and girls in close relationships.
- The Foreign Service will **draw attention to violence**, including in connection with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and within the framework of the European Commission’s special 2017 initiative to combat violence against women and girls.

### Focus 3: Promoting the role of women and girls in preventing conflict

- During Sweden's membership of the **UN Security Council**, the Foreign Service will pursue conflict prevention work and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security.
- The Foreign Service will help to ensure that women and girls are included and that their experiences are taken into account in the design of **early conflict warning** mechanisms and systems, and in conflict analyses. The gender equality perspective will also be included in preventive measures against conflict, radicalisation and violent extremism.
- The Foreign Service will work to include a gender equality perspective in the **area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control**. Women stakeholders will be given scope in discussions, negotiations and the drawing up of relevant resolutions and key documents, as well as in their interpretation and implementation.
- The Foreign Service will contribute to the capacity development of local authorities and institutions that work on conflict prevention and support the drawing up and implementation of **national action plans** for women, peace and security.
- The Foreign Service will support women's organisations and other **civil society organisations** that work on conflict prevention, dialogue and confidence-building measures.
- The Foreign Service will support programmes for **economic recovery** that strengthen women's economic empowerment in conflict and post-conflict countries.

### Focus 4: Promoting women's and girls' participation as a strategy against the shrinking democratic space and the double vulnerability of women and girls

- The Foreign Service will promote women's and girls' participation and influence in **democratic political institutions** and processes.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that States' **legislation** takes account of the particular vulnerability of women human rights defenders, for example in relation to internet freedom. Legislation and other measures that limit civil society organisations' freedom of action will be actively combated.
- The Foreign Service will make visible, support and strengthen **women human rights defenders**, women's organisations and other stakeholders that defend women's and girls' human rights.
- The Foreign Service will continue to advance **freedom of expression and freedom of opinion** by working to strengthen security and protection for women journalists, human rights defenders, environmentalists, politicians and cultural workers, as well as stakeholders that defend women's and girls' human rights.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that the **EU's guidelines** are utilised to draw attention to and defend women human rights defenders.
- The Foreign Service will actively follow up the **remit of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)** concerning the shrinking space for civil society organisations, journalists and cultural workers.

### Focus 5: Strengthening women's and girls' economic empowerment and influence, including by working towards non-discriminatory legislation

- The Foreign Service will increase knowledge of how discriminatory **legislation** affects women's economic empowerment.
- Within the framework of **Global Deal** the Foreign Service will work to strengthen the role and rights of women in the labour market and for women's participation in the design of these rights.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that the regulatory framework within the **EU internal market** contributes to women's economic empowerment and influence.
- The Foreign Service will continue to stress the importance of gender equality analyses in the EU's negotiations on **free trade agreements** with third countries.
- The Foreign Service will promote the production and consideration of studies, evaluations and impact assessments on **the effects of trade** for women's economic empowerment.
- The Foreign Service will promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable **public procurement** as a policy lever in work towards economic gender equality.

### Focus 6: Intensifying work for the sexual and reproductive rights of all people

- The Foreign Service will defend **sexual rights** by combating child marriages and forced marriages, preventing sexual harassment and promoting the rights of LGBTQ people.
- The Foreign Service will promote sexual and **reproductive rights** through increased access to sex and relationship education, contraceptives and advice, legal and safe abortions, tests and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, and water, sanitation and hygiene.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that the **EU and its Member States** stand up for sexual and reproductive rights and agreed Council conclusions in the area.
- The Foreign Service will intensify work for **strategic partnerships** on sexual and reproductive rights.
- The Foreign Service will counteract **norms and attitudes** that make it difficult for people to enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights. Men and boys will be included in this work.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure **broader financial support** for activities that strengthen and defend the sexual and reproductive rights of all people.

## B. Indicative measures for the Swedish Foreign Service's internal work

- The Foreign Service will continue to develop **operational plans and operational dialogue** in a way that facilitates governance and follow-up of work on the feminist foreign policy.
- The Foreign Service will continue the systematic gender mainstreaming of **guidelines and templates** and review the need for new tools to support the policy and the action plan.
- The Foreign Service will continue to strengthen the gender equality perspective in its work on **appointments**, both in Stockholm and in the field, including with regard to locally employed staff. This includes increasing the proportion of women among the honorary consuls. Trade Commissioners are another group that will be given additional focus.
- The Foreign Service will continue to develop the gender equality perspective in its work on **nominations** of Swedes for international posts and in general increase experience exchange on representation issues.
- The Foreign Service will spread, use and follow up the online course that supports work on the feminist foreign policy and the systematic gender mainstreaming of its other **training programmes**.
- The Foreign Service will continue the gender mainstreaming of its **security work**, both in Stockholm and the organisation abroad.
- The Foreign Service will continue the gender mainstreaming of work on the **real estate** of the organisation abroad.

## 2. Starting points and approach

### 2.1 General overview

Our feminist foreign policy is based on international law and other agreements, some of which are listed below. It is also based on national policy objectives and on a Foreign Service approach.

Existing instructions and policy documents that align with this will continue to be used.

### 2.2 International and EU starting points

- The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent human rights instruments including:
  - the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
  - the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
  - the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
  - the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
  - the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and
  - the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.
- The declarations and action plans of the UN Conference on Women in Beijing and the Population Conference in Cairo and follow-up conferences.
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and subsequent resolutions.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the agreements made at the Conferences on Financing for Development.
- The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Istanbul Convention on combating violence against women.
- The Geneva Conventions of 1949 on protection of war victims and their Additional Protocols.
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- The 1951 Refugee Convention and its Additional Protocol of 1967.
- The Treaty on European Union, the EU Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through EU external relations 2016–2020, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015–2019, the Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015 and its successor, and relevant guidelines, Council conclusions, and other documents.

## 2.3 National starting points

Feminist foreign policy also forms part of the Government's gender equality work and thereby contributes to the achievement of the overall gender equality policy objective: "Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives." Based on this overall objective, the Government's work is guided by six underlying objectives:

- an even distribution of power and influence;
- economic equality between women and men;
- gender-equitable education;
- an even division of unpaid housework and care work;
- gender-equal health; and
- an end to men's violence against women.

Other national starting points are the Policy for Global Development, the national action plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women, the policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid, and the communications on human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law in Swedish foreign policy.

## 2.4 Approach and core of our feminist foreign policy

Our feminist foreign policy is also an approach to the work of our Foreign Service, and as such requires that all activities are gender mainstreamed. The approach can be summarised under the following three 'Rs':

- **Rights**  
The Foreign Service will promote the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, including by combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their freedom of action.
- **Representation**  
The Foreign Service will promote women's participation and influence in decision-making at all levels and in all areas, and seek dialogue with women representatives at all levels, including in civil society.
- **Resources**  
The Foreign Service will work to ensure that resources are allocated to promote gender equality and equal opportunities for all women and girls to enjoy human rights. The Foreign Service will also promote targeted measures for different target groups.

A fourth 'R' is to ensure that action is always based on reality checks and analysis, as further explained in section 4.

## 3. Stakeholders

### 3.1 General overview

The action plan for Sweden's feminist foreign policy is to be implemented by the entire Foreign Service.

The Foreign Service will promote broad partnerships and alliances in the implementation of the action plan and international gender equality commitments.

The Foreign Service will include men and boys in the change process to advance gender equality. This is crucial to bring about real and sustainable change required to achieve both gender equality and new power relations. Opportunities for people to achieve their full potential and contribute to positive social development are hindered by discriminatory gender norms.

### 3.2 Sweden

The policy and the action plan will be implemented in cooperation with the rest of the Government Offices.

Work will also be carried out in collaboration with government agencies. As part of this work, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will continue to review its agencies' policy documents (including instructions, appropriation directions, thematic/regional/bilateral strategies, and other policy documents) to ensure that management and monitoring are in line with Sweden's feminist foreign policy. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will also ensure that all new policy documents, including strategy proposals, are consistent with the new policy direction. In conjunction with the revision of development cooperation strategies, the need for a specific strategy for gender equality in development cooperation will be reviewed.

Moreover, this work will be pursued in dialogue with a wide range of other actors in Swedish society, including women's, youth and human rights organisations, religious communities, business, trade union organisations and universities.

### 3.3 The EU and the Nordic countries

The EU's common foreign policy is a key instrument for implementing Sweden's feminist foreign policy. The Foreign Service will continuously ensure that the EU's gender equality objectives inform the EU's work across the board. This will be achieved through cooperation with EU Member States at both national and capital city level, collaboration with EU institutions and delegations, and strategic advocacy and negotiation in Brussels. As part of this work, the Foreign Service will cooperate with the European Parliament and other EU institutions with particular responsibility for pursuing gender equality issues, such as the EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender and UNSC Resolution 1325, and other relevant functions, institutions and key actors.

Cooperation between the Nordic countries is another platform for actively pursuing a feminist foreign policy dialogue inside and outside the EU and the UN. At present, this applies not least to the area of disarmament and in the context of sexual and reproductive health and rights work.

### 3.4 Our neighbourhood, other groups of countries and globally

Implementation of Sweden's feminist foreign policy agenda will involve dialogue and cooperation with countries and groups of countries in our neighbourhood, regionally and globally. In this context Sweden will act using its own tools and through the EU.

In our neighbourhood, the Foreign Service will, for example, actively pursue gender equality issues within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership, as well as in enlargement policy in relation to both current and potential candidate countries.

In the rest of the world, dialogue and collaboration will take place with associations of states and regions. These include the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union (AU), the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Arab League.

### 3.5 Multilateral and global actors

The feminist foreign policy agenda will be implemented through, and in cooperation with, multilateral organisations and actors of which Sweden is a member or partner, or where Sweden acts through the EU.

These organisations and actors include the UN and its funds, programmes and bodies, as well as the UN Security Council, of which Sweden is a member during the period 2017–2018. The actors also include the World Bank, the regional development banks, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding and others.

Where possible and appropriate, the Foreign Service will also collaborate with other actors with global reach and the ability to strengthen gender equality efforts. These include private individuals as well as philanthropic organisations and international companies (including Swedish companies), and others. They also include forums aimed at creating a global culture marked by dialogue, respect and universal values, such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

### 3.6 Bilateral actors

Our feminist foreign policy will be implemented in cooperation and dialogue with bilateral actors at local, regional and national level. The bilateral setting encompasses a plethora of actors, including representatives of governments, political parties, trade union organisations, industry, universities, civil society organisations and religious communities.

Each specific context will determine which actors are most important to interact with to achieve the feminist foreign policy objectives. In general, however, the Foreign Service will also increase contact with women's rights defenders, women elected representatives, trade unions, political movements and civil society organisations to enhance the visibility of women as political actors and support women's rights and opportunities to organise and exercise political power and influence.

The Foreign Service will also give more visibility to women and strengthen them as economic actors by increasing its contact with women entrepreneurs and women's business networks, and with legal actors working to strengthen women's economic rights.

## 4. Instruments and methods

### 4.1 General overview

Sweden's feminist foreign policy requires the Foreign Service to apply a systematic rights and gender equality perspective:

- in its ongoing operations, from analysis to monitoring and new analysis; and
- throughout the entire breadth of its operations, i.e. in foreign and security policy, and development, trade and promotion policy.

The Foreign Service will use its own existing and extensive knowledge and that of other Swedish government agencies to move its gender equality efforts forward. The same applies to existing knowledge and analysis in the multilateral organisations.

The Swedish Foreign Service also has an online training course at its disposal as support. Further details are included in section 5.3.

### 4.2 Analysis and data collection

The Foreign Service will constantly consider how operations can help to increase gender equality and enhance the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls. This may take place through gender equality analyses in relevant action plans and strategies.

To be accurate, these analyses will take account of the fact that women and girls are not homogeneous groups, but have differing identities, needs, influence and living conditions. The analysis must therefore consider other factors besides sex, such as age, place of residence, socioeconomic status, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, level of education, belief and religion.

The Foreign Service will also make use of gender equality analyses, including sex and age disaggregated statistics, in reporting and ongoing operations. As a part of this, the Foreign Service will seek to obtain this kind of data if it is not available from bilateral or multilateral actors or civil society organisations.

In addition to collecting quantitative data, the Foreign Service will also take into account qualitative reporting from multilateral, bilateral and other sources (including the EU).

Research on the importance of gender equality in foreign policy-related areas is growing very fast. It is crucial to find ways of incorporating this research when implementing the plan.

The patterns that emerge in the analysis and data collection processes will be set against the feminist foreign policy objectives and used to develop gender equality work.

### 4.3 Accountability efforts

The Foreign Service will actively demand accountability from the EU, bilateral, multilateral and international actors and institutions by working to ensure that they:

- have legislative and policy documents based on international law and international agreements, and consistently comply with them;
- apply an intersectional perspective to gender equality analyses and other work;
- produce sex-disaggregated statistics;
- enhance their expertise in the area of gender equality and the rights of women and girls;
- enhance their expertise and strengthen their prevention efforts to combat discriminatory rules, norms and stereotypes surrounding gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation;
- pursue active organisational and human resources policies that create non-discriminatory organisational structures and promote gender equality, including more women in leadership positions; and
- allocate resources to promote gender equality and the rights of women, girls and LGBTQ people, including human resources and expertise for action on gender equality.

As part of this work, the Foreign Service will make active use of existing accountability mechanisms and work to ensure concrete progress for all women and girls.

The Foreign Service will cooperate with multilateral actors and use Sweden's board assignments, ownership, membership, partnerships and other instruments to promote normative and operational work for gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls. The Foreign Service's multi-agency strategies will be used to emphasise and monitor the actors' gender equality efforts, focusing on requirements for concrete results.

### 4.4 Agenda-setting, functions, delegations and visits

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will identify a number of meetings, conferences and side events every year where gender issues and change agents for gender equality can be highlighted. Missions abroad will do the same in their respective areas and contexts.

The Foreign Service will gender mainstream the activities that Sweden takes part in, organises or supports financially, both bilaterally and multilaterally. It will use this type of platform to enhance the visibility of, and thereby strengthen, women, girls and LGBTQ people as actors, and ensure the use of available expertise.

The Foreign Service will continuously review the composition of its visiting delegations and negotiating teams to ensure, as far as possible, that they are gender-mainstreamed.

It will also review its visit programmes so that they help to give visibility to women, girls and LGBTQ people as actors.

### 4.5 Alliance-building, platforms, groups of friends

The Foreign Service will build alliances and platforms for implementation of the international commitments on gender equality and the rights of all women and girls. Using these alliances and platforms, it will create a broad partnership for gender equality.

One such platform is the *High-Level Group for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*, which gives Sweden opportunities to pursue gender equality issues and the rights of all women and girls, including sexual and reproductive rights. Global Deal is another platform that can promote gender equality by promoting decent and productive employment for women. At bilateral level, networks and alliances can take many forms (EU constellations, CSO consultations, individual informal dialogue partners, lunch gatherings that can be used as an ongoing sounding board and convened in conjunction with visits, etc.).

### 4.6 Dialogue for influence and data collection

Gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, including sexual and reproductive rights, will continually be addressed in dialogue with official representatives of states, the EU, multilateral organisations and other relevant actors. These issues will be central, integrated and mutually reinforcing elements of the dialogue, whether it is a matter of foreign, security, development, trade or promotion policy. Dialogue with political, military, religious and economic decision-makers, both women and men, is central.

Although progress has been significant, efforts to promote the rights of women, girls and LGBTQ people often meet with resistance and in certain contexts increasingly active resistance. The Foreign Service will respond to this resistance by standing up for Sweden's values and presenting strong practical arguments and sound analysis. The significance of knowledge, statistics and comparable data cannot be underestimated in influencing and creating opinion. At the same time, the feminist foreign policy agenda will contribute to dialogue and be implemented to achieve the greatest possible impact. In some situations, discussing Swedish and international experiences, challenges and solutions may be a way forward. Another might be to highlight good practices of both countries and organisations. In addition to the rights perspective, yet another way could be to emphasise the efficiency and sustainability of investing in gender equality, increasing employment rates and strengthening the human capital of entire societies.

Dialogue with international, national and local women's and peace organisations, and with other human rights and civil society organisations, is essential to support them and make them visible. It is also essential to consider the problem analysis and proposals of these actors with a view to creating conditions for sustainable solutions.

### 4.7 Promotion and skills development

The Foreign Service will use its Sweden promotion activities to advance gender equality and the rights of women and girls, both as a separate agenda and when promoting the image of Sweden abroad. As part of this, the work on promotion plans will be used to map gender equality promotion by the missions abroad.

The Foreign Service and its missions should be able to provide targeted skills development, for example to ensure that potential change agents in leadership positions receive training on gender equality and women's and girls' rights.

#### 4.8 Negotiations, monitoring mechanisms and reviews

The Foreign Service will use negotiations, review conferences and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the rights and participation of women and girls are strengthened. This will apply to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, negotiations in the Human Rights Council, and the EU's enlargement policy. The EU's internal gender equality work, the EU Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through EU external relations, and the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014–2020 are also central.

In this context, regional agreements and reviews can play a key role in moving gender equality issues forward. The relevant regional agreements include the Maputo Protocol (the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa) and the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

In the EU, the Foreign Service will act consistently to ensure that the Council of the European Union adopts conclusions and other policy documents that strengthen the EU's gender equality work, both internally and in external policy. The EU's new Gender Action Plan will guide gender equality efforts in the EU's external policy.

#### 4.9 Routines for grant management, meetings, reporting, etc.

The Foreign Service must ensure that its grant management processes comply with gender mainstreaming requirements. Greater emphasis should be given to gender equality in grant allocation decisions. Gender and power analyses will be included in the preparation phase. Existing templates were reviewed and adjusted for this purpose in 2016. The international development cooperation and security policy appropriations available to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will be used more strategically to promote gender equality and the rights of women and girls.

The Foreign Service will continue work to ensure that templates and procedures help to integrate a gender equality perspective in operations.

The Foreign Service will reinforce the emphasis on women's and girls' living conditions and rights, including SRHR, in its human rights reports, and also consider a gender equality perspective in other reports.

#### 4.10 Positions in international organisations, institutions and peace operations

The Foreign Service and its seconding agencies will use secondment programmes as an instrument for promoting gender equality. This will be done by actively nominating Swedish women to international positions and ensuring that the representatives and officials Sweden appoints and sends are equipped with gender knowledge and expertise. This will also be done by identifying strategic positions whose level or duties can help advance international gender equality work, and by nominating Swedish experts for these positions. The Foreign Service will also work to ensure that multilateral actors and international institutions pursue active organisational and human resources policies that create non-discriminatory organisational structures and promote gender equality, as well as more women in leadership positions.

### 5. Division of responsibilities, management and support for the work of the Foreign Service

#### 5.1 Division of responsibilities and management

Managerial leadership and accountability are central to the impact of the feminist foreign policy agenda on our activities and to its implementation through this action plan. Responsibility lies with managers at both political and official level and includes everything from organising activities in accordance with the plan to creating opportunities for themselves and their staff to engage in the skills development, analysis and monitoring that are part of the action plan and policy development.

The action plan is incorporated into the Foreign Service operational plan. Accordingly, the action plan and feminist foreign policy efforts, including budget allocations, will be integrated into the regular operational planning, management and monitoring, and the regular dialogue between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the missions abroad. In this dialogue, the Foreign Service should consider the many good proposals from both the missions abroad and the departments on how to continue to move our feminist foreign policy forward in different contexts.

Monitoring and analysis are central to the preparation of the next action plan and to achieving tangible progress. The reason for an annual action plan is precisely to enable the Foreign Service to use its experiences, dialogues and data collection in the further development of this work. It also enables others to follow the work being done and provides for accountability and proposals from external parties.

An internal advisory group consisting of staff responsible for coordinating gender issues at each department has been formed and contributes to develop work on the feminist foreign policy. The Gender Equality Ambassador leads this group. Managerial involvement and support for this group are crucial.

The Gender Equality Ambassador also represents the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the inter-ministry working group on gender equality led by the Division for Gender Equality at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

#### 5.2 Communication activities

The Foreign Service will communicate the feminist foreign policy both internally and externally. The Communications Department and relevant departments produce information material to support this work.

In 2017, external communication mainly focuses on two tracks. One track takes its main cue from the fact that gender equality is effective. A communications platform will be made available and cover knowledge, facts and arguments on how gender equality creates social benefit. The format will be flexible so that it allows both a broad, general impact and enables national and regional context adaptation. The other track aims to highlight the work on the feminist foreign policy from the perspective of the Foreign Service, both at multilateral and bilateral level and digitally. The common denominator for both of these tracks is a positive narrative where the benefits of women's and girl's equal rights, representation and resources are central.

A communication plan including more information will be made available to the Foreign Service. In parallel with this, information on both [government.se](http://government.se) and Klaranätet's thematic pages will be developed.

### 5.3 Guidance, skills development and internal exchange of experience

The Government has decided that the Government Offices will incorporate a gender equality perspective into all its operations during 2016–2020 (S2016/01917/JÄM, S2016/04472/JÄM). Undertakings by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs can be seen in this annual action plan.

Gender mainstreaming means that a gender perspective is to be incorporated into all decision-making, at all levels and at all stages of the process, and that this is to be done by the actors normally involved in decision-making. The Minister for Gender Equality is responsible for coordinating the Government's gender equality policy and the Government's gender mainstreaming efforts at the Government Offices, assisting ministries in their development work and their monitoring and evaluating of the results achieved.

The Government Offices decision 'Gender mainstreaming at the Government Offices 2016–2020 (FA2016/00907/PROT)' sets out how gender mainstreaming is to be conducted at the Government Offices.

Guidance is also available on how to facilitate effective dialogue on SRHR (Dialogue for Change: Material to support policy dialogue on SRHR) This guidance document is available on the Government website, [government.se](http://government.se).

The Government Offices' existing guidance for gender equality work will be used actively.

In parallel to this, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will strengthen its dialogue with relevant agencies to broaden its knowledge base and develop information materials, exhibitions, seminars and articles on gender equality within the scope of Sweden promotion activities and public diplomacy.

Gender equality and diversity are a priority in the Foreign Service skills plan for 2015–2018. In line with this, an online training course to support the implementation of the feminist foreign policy has been produced. Training and discussions on gender equality and human rights for all women and girls will also be included in training programmes for managers and new staff (including the Diplomatic Training Programme), and in the annual meetings of Swedish ambassadors, regional meetings and other forums. Managers in key positions also receive support to mainstream gender into their operations through a Gender Coach Programme. In addition, a special initiative is being implemented to enhance the Foreign Service's skills in handling LGBTQ issues.

The internal exchange of experience and knowledge to support work on the feminist foreign policy is being made possible in various ways.