

Swedish Foreign Service action plan for
feminist foreign policy 2015–2018,
including indicative measures for 2018



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Summary

Global gender equality is still a vision – not a reality.

Sweden's feminist government wants to make this vision a reality. Gender equality is an objective 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, and we have also gone a step further. Since 2014 Sweden has been the first country in the world to pursue a feminist foreign policy.

Countless women and girls still experience a glaring 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.

The focus is on strengthening women's and girls' rights, representation and resources.

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. The Swedish Foreign Service will contribute to all women's and girls': 1. full enjoyment of human rights; 2. freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence; 3. participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding, 4. political participation and influence in all areas of society; 5. economic rights and empowerment; and 6. sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). These are broad objectives to match broad challenges, cover the entire global agenda and bring the whole range 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 for pursuing these efforts. It also stresses the importance of involving men and boys in the process of advancing gender equality.

This action plan is part of the Foreign Service operational and resource planning process, which means that it is updated and followed up every year. In this way we will facilitate implementation and ensure results in foreign, security, development, and trade and promotion policy, as well as in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the global development goals. This annual follow-up will enable us to learn from experience and new data, benefit from ongoing consultations, and make more challenges visible.

In 2018 work will continue in the areas that have been in focus in 2016–2017 but will also be extended to more areas. In addition to this, work will continue on the other processes that contribute to the overarching objectives, including through the Foreign Service's internal work on supporting and manifesting the implementation of feminist foreign policy.

With this broad, deep and systematic approach, our feminist foreign policy will continue to develop and to achieve results that contribute to gender equality and strengthen all women's and girls' rights, representation and resources.

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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 foreign policy objectives of peace, security, human rights and sustainable development. This is why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy.

The world is making progress regarding gender equality. The proportion of women in parliaments is increasing. More girls are going to school. But we also see clear examples of setbacks. The result is that violence, oppression and systematic subordination still mark the daily lives of countless women and girls.

Sweden wants to put a stop to this. We are going to do so by being a leading actor for of 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 means applying a systematic gender perspective throughout foreign policy. We will act to promote girls' and women's representation, rights and resources in all parts of this policy.

Knowledge is a cornerstone of our efforts. We therefore need accurate statistics disaggregated by gender and age and analyses that cast light on the state of gender equality.

This action plan sets out the direction of our feminist foreign policy agenda. The objectives make clear *what* we will do. But there are also instructions about *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.

As part of these efforts to achieve an impact and exercise influence we are holding an international conference in Stockholm on 15–17 April 2018 with participants from the whole of the world.

The first three years of this policy have been successful. Our policy has had an impact at multilateral, regional and bilateral level and in relation to all objectives in the action plan. We have contributed to concrete progress in political, social and economic areas. And we have become the strongest global voice for gender equality and for all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights.



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1. Objectives in 2015–2018 and indicative measures for work in 2018

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 2017, there is also an internally oriented objective. Work on the objectives must be carried out in line with sections 2–5 on starting points, actors, instruments and governance, and with help from the indicative measures stated in the rest of section 1.

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

1. full enjoyment of human rights
2. freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence
3. participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding
4. political participation and influence in all areas of society
5. economic rights and empowerment
6. sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

B. The Swedish Foreign Service’s internal work will support and manifest this policy

Objective 1: Women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights

- The Foreign Service will work for all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights **multilaterally, regionally, in the EU and bilaterally**. This will, for instance, be done in the context of negotiations and through dialogue, cooperation and support and with the aim of highlighting the individual as a rights holder and countering discriminatory legislation.
- The Foreign Service will press to ensure that women and girls enjoy human rights **in humanitarian situations and as refugees and migrants**. This will, for instance, be done through involvement in the processes to establish two global frameworks, one for refugees and one about migration, that are to be adopted in autumn 2018 and the initiative known as *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies*.
- The Foreign Service will counter women and girls becoming the victims of prostitution and **human trafficking** for sexual purposes, including by seeking to exert influence and spreading information about **Swedish legislation on the purchase of sexual services**.
- The Foreign Service will continue to particularly highlight gender equality and women's and girls' rights in the ongoing updating of the Foreign Service's **reports on human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law** and to use, at country level, both **bilateral dialogue** and the **EU's political dialogue** as tools in order to promote all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights.
- The Foreign Service will push for the adoption and use of **statistics disaggregated by gender and age** by both countries and other actors.
- The Foreign Service will produce a **new global strategy for gender equality and the rights of women and girls** in development cooperation with indicative funding on SEK 800 million to 1.2 billion in the period 2018–2022 and contribute to targeted gender equality action and continued gender mainstreaming of all development cooperation.
- The Foreign Service and the Swedish Institute will, in spring 2018, host an **international conference** to contribute to action for global gender equality. Missions abroad are encouraged to reflect and deepen this initiative through local dialogues and/or events.

Objective 2: Women's and girls' freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence

- The Foreign Service will contribute to preventing and combating violence against women and girls both **normatively and operationally**, including by attacking the primary causes of the violence. Men and boys will be involved and norms that link masculinity and violence will be countered.
- The Foreign Service will draw attention to violence against women and girls in close relationships and encourage more states accede to, and implement, the **Istanbul Convention**.
- The Foreign Service will collaborate with all the relevant actors to combat gender-related and sexual violence in **conflict and post-conflict situations**. Membership of the UN Security Council in 2018 and involvement in humanitarian organisations will be used as platforms for this work.
- The Foreign Service will combat the gender-related and sexual violence of terrorist groups by pushing these issues in international antiterrorism forums and by supporting actors, including civil society organisations, that are working to address **violent extremism**, radicalisation, recruitment and destructive masculinities.
- The Foreign Service will stress the link between the spread of **arms and weapons** and gender-related violence. This will be done by, for instance, pushing a gender equality perspective at the third Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and by strengthening and financing the implementation of the commitments of state parties under the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)
- The Foreign Service will counter **impunity** for gender-related and sexual violence, strengthen the role of the judicial sector and increase women's and girls' access to the judicial system. Sweden will, for instance, collaborate with the International Criminal Court (ICC) and with other states in accordance with the 'principle of complementarity' in order to increase national capacity to investigate and take legal proceedings against violence that may be a breach of the ICC Statute.

Objective 3: Promote women's' and girls' participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding

- The Foreign Service will use Sweden's membership of the **UN Security Council** to push for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security by systematically pursuing the question in the country situations on the agenda of the Security Council, further developing work in the Security Council's informal working group in the area, spreading knowledge to new Security Council members about the women, peace and security agenda, promoting a deepening of the work of UN operations and working for ever better reporting and statistical input for Security Council discussions and decisions, as well as adequate resourcing of this work in the UN.
- The Foreign Service will promote the participation of women and girls as actors in **peace processes** in conflict countries, including by encouraging parallels to the Swedish network for women mediators and supporting local women leaders, women's rights activists, women's organisations and other civil society organisations that are pressing in various ways for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions.
- The Foreign Service will contribute to ensuring that women and girls are included and that their experience is taken into account in the design of mechanisms and systems for **early conflict warning** 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 ensure that the EU, the UN; NATO and the OSCE adopt a gender equality perspective in all of their **peace support operations**. It is of particular importance that the mandates of these operations contain an instruction on implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 and that this task is given sufficient resources and is also included in reporting, monitoring and evaluation. The intention is for Sweden to second more gender equality advisers to peace-support operations and to work for a more even gender distribution at all levels of these operations.
- The Foreign Service will work to include a gender equality perspective in the **area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control** and for women actors to participate in negotiations and the drawing up of key documents, as well as in their implementation.
- The Foreign Service will follow up **Sweden's national action plan** for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in cooperation with the relevant ministries and government agencies and through its missions abroad. The Foreign Service will also **encourage and support other countries** in their production and implementation of national action plans for women, peace and security.

Objective 4: Women's and girls' political participation and influence in all areas of society

- The Foreign Service will promote women's and girls' **representation**, participation and influence in institutions, organisations and processes at multilateral, regional and bilateral level.
- The Foreign Service will make visible and support women **human rights defenders**, women's organisations and other actors that defend women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. Legislation and other measures that restrict their freedom of action will be countered actively and attention will be drawn to the special vulnerability of women human rights defenders.
- The Foreign Service will push for **freedom of expression and freedom of opinion**, including by working to strengthen security and protection for women journalists, environmentalists and cultural workers. Threats and hate on the internet will be countered.
- The Foreign Service will follow up the implementation by Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) of the **strategy** for Sweden's development cooperation regarding work on human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law in 2018–2022, of which women's and girls' rights make up a part.
- The Foreign Service will work for the inclusion of a gender equality perspective and for women's representation in the **structures and external work of the UN and EU**, including with the assistance of reform work in the UN.
- The Foreign Service will push for progress in gender equality work in the multilateral **environmental and climate funds** and in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. This may involve working to secure strategic recruitments and women's and girls' participation in the design and implementation of projects.

Objective 5: Women's and girls' economic rights and empowerment

- The Foreign Service will work for gender mainstreaming in **trade policy**. This will include working to have the EU include gender equality in work in the WTO and the EU's free trade agreements and in the sustainability analyses done ahead of the negotiations.
- The Foreign Service will work for women's actorship and rights in the labour market by supporting their access to **decent and productive work**, promoting social security systems, acting through the Global Deal and enhancing, supporting and raising the visibility of **women's entrepreneurship** and women's business networks.
- The Foreign Service will use its **promotion work** to achieve positive effects on gender equality and on women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights, not least through relevant government agencies and strategies.
- The Foreign Service will press for **sustainable entrepreneurship** so that more and more companies do more and more to contribute to gender equality and women's economic rights.
- The Foreign Service will support women's and girls' access to lifelong **education** of good quality.
- The Foreign Service will counter **legislation** that restricts women's and girls' rights to land, inheritance and ownership and their possibilities of choosing an occupation, for example through bilateral contacts and active participation in the UN's Universal Periodic Review.
- The Foreign Service will conduct and promote **sustainable procurement** and the production and consideration of studies, evaluations and impact analyses of women's economic rights and empowerment.

Objective 6: Women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

- The Foreign Service will deepen its work for **sexual health and sexual rights** by, for instance, preventing sexual harassment, defending everyone's right to decide over their own body and sexuality without discrimination, violence, and compulsion and combating forced, early and child marriage.
- The Foreign Service will promote access to **reproductive health and reproductive rights** by working to increase 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 for everyone's access to SRHR in all the relevant foreign policy forums, including the **UN** and its funds and programmes, as well as in all contexts, including **humanitarian crises**.
- The Foreign Service will press to advance work for SRHR in the **EU** by working to get the EU to strengthen its position, common understanding and funding in the area.
- The Foreign Service will broaden its strategic bilateral, regional and global **partnerships** for SRHR so as to further increase the effectiveness of this cooperation, preserve and strengthen international agreements in the area and broaden the sharing of responsibility for financial support.
- The Foreign Service will counter **norms** that make it difficult for women and girls and LGBTQ people to enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights. This will be done by working both with men and boys and with women and girls, who are all central actors in influencing these norms.

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

- The Foreign Service will continue to develop its **results-based management** in order to facilitate the planning, governance, resource allocation and improve the results of feminist foreign policy.
- The Foreign Service will apply **gender equality budgeting** and gender mainstream the Ministry's internal resource allocation, thereby contributing to the governance and follow-up of feminist foreign policy.
- The Foreign Service will continue its systematic gender mainstreaming of internal documents such as **guidelines and templates** and review the need for new tools to support the implementation of the policy and the action plan, including with regard to the development of methods for and the collection and performance monitoring of gender- and age-disaggregated statistics.
- All parts of the Foreign Service will further intensify their **communication activities** concerning feminist foreign policy and its methods and results.
- The Foreign Service will continue its work on the gender mainstreaming of **grant management** and see what more can be done to strengthen the chain from gender equality analysis and grant payment to reporting and results.
- The Foreign Service will seek to achieve gender equality in **recruitment and appointments** at all levels, both in the MFA and at missions abroad, including regarding locally employed staff, honorary consuls and trade commissioners.
- The Foreign Service will continue its internal work to **prevent, investigate and deal with sexual harassment**.
- The Foreign Service will seek to achieve gender equality in **nominations** of Swedes to international posts and in general increase the exchange of experience on, and sharpen the coordination of, representation issues.
- The Foreign Service will further develop and strengthen the gender equality perspective in all **skills development** and continue to invest in targeted and specialised gender equality training courses and programmes.

The Foreign Service will continue to strengthen the gender equality perspective in **consular work**, especially regarding women, children and young adults. Improvements will be made, through greater specialisation, further resources and increased cooperation with relevant actors, to both preventive measures and concrete assistance to people who risk being, or are subjected to, forced marriages, genital mutilation or threats and violence in a close relationships (when travelling abroad).

- The Foreign Service will continue to gender mainstream the Service's **security work** and continue to gender mainstream work with the **properties** of the organisation abroad.

The Foreign Service will ensure that **future action plans** are designed in a way that makes it possible to retain efficiency as well as sustainability and coherence with the rest of the Government Offices.

2. Starting points and approach

2.1 General overview

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

2.2 International and EU starting points

- The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and conventions such as:
 - 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 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
 - the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; 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, as well as the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention).
- 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 and relevant guidelines, Council conclusions, and other documents.

2.3 National starting points

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

- an even division of power and influence
- economic equality
- gender-equitable education
- an even division of unpaid housework and care work
- gender-equal health
- 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, as well as the Communication on human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law in Swedish foreign policy and the Government's Strategy for national efforts with human rights.

2.4 Gender mainstreaming in the Government Offices

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 in the area 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 has a coordinating responsibility for the Government's gender equality policy and is also responsible for coordinating the Government's gender mainstreaming efforts at the Government Offices and assisting ministries in their development work and their monitoring and evaluating of the results achieved.

The Government Office decision 'Gender mainstreaming at the Government Offices 2016-2020 (FA2016/00907/PROT)' sets out how work on gender mainstreaming will be conducted in the Government Offices.

2.5 Approach in and core of our feminist foreign policy

Our feminist foreign policy is also an approach that requires the gender mainstreaming of all work of the Foreign Service. 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 countering 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. Actors

3.1 General overview

The action plan for Sweden's feminist foreign policy will be implemented by the whole of the 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 in order 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 action plan will be implemented in cooperation with the rest of the Government Offices. This work will also be carried out in collaboration with government agencies. (OBS!) As part of this work, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will continue to review governance documents for its agencies (including instructions, appropriation directions, thematic/regional/bilateral strategies, and other such documents) to ensure that governance and monitoring are in line with Sweden's feminist foreign policy. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will also ensure that all new policy documents are consistent with this new policy direction.

A thematic strategy in development cooperation for global gender equality and women's and girls' rights will be drawn up in 2018–2022.

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 capital city and national level, collaboration with EU institutions and delegations, and strategic influence and negotiation in Brussels. As part of this work, the Foreign Service will cooperate with the European Parliament and with other parts of the EU system that have particular responsibility for pursuing gender equality issues, such as the EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender and UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, 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. In 2018, Sweden will hold the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The priorities of the Swedish Presidency include a strong focus on the gender mainstreaming of all activities in the Nordic Council of Ministers. Themes that will be raised during the Presidency include gender equality in the labour market and men and gender equality.

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.

Gender equality is a clear and consistent priority of the Swedish Presidency of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, 2017–2019, and of the CBSS, 1 July 2017–30 June 2018.

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. Among many others, these include the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union (AU), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League.

3.5 Multilateral and global actors

Our 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 specialised agencies, 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.

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).

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 environment contains a profusion of actors, including representatives of governments, political parties, trade union organisations, industry, universities, the media, 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 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
- in all policy areas.

The Foreign Service will use its own existing and extensive knowledge and that of other Swedish government agencies to press 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. See section 5.3 for further information.

4.2 Analysis and information gathering

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

To be accurate, these analyses have to take account of the fact that women and girls, and men and boys, 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 and gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, functional variation, level of education, belief and religion.

The Foreign Service will also make use of gender equality analyses based on 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 since gender equality analyses cannot be done without it.

In addition to collecting quantitative data, the Foreign Service will also take account of and seek to obtain 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 information gathering processes will be related to the objectives of feminist foreign policy and used to develop gender equality work.

4.3 Accountability and influence

The Foreign Service will work actively to ensure that the EU and bilateral, multilateral and international actors and institutions:

- 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- and age-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 identity;
- 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 human 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 collaborate actively with existing accountability mechanisms and work to ensure concrete progress for all women and girls.

The Foreign Service will collaborate with multilateral actors and use Sweden's board assignments, ownership, membership, partnerships and other instruments to promote both normative and operational work for gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls. Foreign Service 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, events, delegations and visits

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will highlight gender equality issues and agents of change for gender equality and women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights at relevant meetings, conferences and side events. 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. As part of this, the Foreign Service will use these types of platforms to give visibility to, and therefore strengthen, women, girls and LGBTQ people as actors and ensure that use is made of the expertise available. The Foreign Service will continuously review the composition of its visiting programmes and delegations and negotiating teams to ensure, as far as possible, that they are gender-mainstreamed and contribute to giving visibility to women, girls and LGBTQ people as actors. Clear expectations concerning sustainable enterprise will be applied to companies when they take part in promotion trips abroad, and these will also include expectations that they will promote gender equality when doing business abroad.

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.

Global Deal is an example of a platform that promotes gender equality by working for better and productive employment for women. At bilateral level, networks and alliances can take innumerable 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 information gathering

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 and security policy, development policy or trade and 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 are often met 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 of central importance to support them and make them visible. It is also essential to consider the knowledge, 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 agents of change in leadership positions receive knowledge about 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 applies, for instance, 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 2016–2020 and the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014–2020 are also central.

In this context, regional agreements and reviews can be of great importance in moving gender equality issues forward.

The Foreign Service will contribute to the adoption by the Council of the European Union of conclusions and other policy documents that strengthen the EU's gender equality work, both internally and in external policy. The EU's action plan for gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations 2016-2020 guides gender equality efforts in the EU's external policy.

4.9 Procedures for grant management, procedures, reporting, etc.

The Foreign Service will ensure that its grant management process complies with gender mainstreaming decisions of the Government and the Government Offices. Greater emphasis will be given to gender mainstreaming in grant allocation decisions. Gender analyses will be included in the preparation phase and principles concerning gender budgeting will be applied. Funds in the appropriation items 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 continue to particularly highlight gender equality and women's and girls' rights, including SRHR, in its ongoing updating of the Foreign Service's reports on human rights, democracy and principles of the rule of law. The Foreign Service will also integrate the gender equality perspective in other reporting.

4.10 Positions in international organisations, institutions and peace support 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 seeking to achieve gender equality in nominations to international positions and also ensuring that the representatives and officials Sweden appoints and sends are equipped with knowledge and expertise regarding gender equality. 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, including more women in leadership positions.

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

5.1 Division of responsibilities and governance

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.

This action plan is part of the Foreign Service's operational planning and resource process. 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 in work to achieve tangible progress. The reason for an annual action plan is precisely to enable the Foreign Service to use its experiences, dialogues and fact gathering 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 consultative group consisting of staff responsible for coordinating gender issues at each department has been formed and contributes to developing work on the feminist foreign policy. The Gender Equality Ambassador heads the group. Managerial involvement and support for this group are crucial.

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. This includes additional initiatives as part of #EqualityMakesSense och #MoreWomenMorePeace.

In 2018, communication is mainly focusing on two main events. One is a drive on 8 March, the International Women's Day, to run edit-a-thons so as to increase the representation of women on Wikipedia. The other major communication activity during the year will take place in connection with the gender equality conference, *Shaping New Realities – The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality*, that the Swedish Institute (SI) and the MFA are hosting in Stockholm in spring 2018. This conference will contribute to exchanges of experience, methods and tools that can strengthen gender equality work and contribute to common solutions to global challenges. Missions abroad are encouraged to reflect the conference through local dialogues and/or events.

In addition the Foreign Service's intranet will be updated continuously to be a living website; the same applies to the theme page on regeringen.se. The recurring descriptions that highlight politics in practice will also continue on swemfa.se/feministforeignpolicy.

5.3 Skills development, support and internal exchange of experience

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 all women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights are also 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. Some managers in key positions are also able to receive support to mainstream gender into their operations through a Gender Coach Programme.

Extensive material is available on the Foreign Service intranet and on the theme page on regeringen.se to support the implementation of the feminist foreign policy. Another example of this support is material posted on regeringen.se that is intended to facilitate the conduct of an effective dialogue about SRHR (*Dialogue for change: Material to support a policy dialogue on SRHR*). In addition, a special initiative is being implemented to enhance the Foreign Service's expertise in LGBTQ issues.

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.