

The Swedish Foreign Service action  
plan for feminist foreign policy  
2019–2022, including direction and  
measures for 2021

## Foreword

The year 2020 was meant to be a milestone year for gender equality. Instead, progress has reversed. COVID-19 affected everyone, but it particularly impacted already discriminated-against groups, still predominantly women and girls. One of the most serious consequences was that gender-based violence became a shadow pandemic. But the crisis has also resulted in the drastic deterioration of the situation for women and girls in other ways, including their economic empowerment. In addition, the climate crisis continues to particularly affect women, girls and marginalised groups, who have contributed the least to the crisis and are often overlooked in the political debate. We also see how resistance to gender equality and women's and girls' rights continues to grow and interact with the shrinking democratic space.

In these times it is more important than ever to pursue feminist foreign policy to advance global gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. Sweden required a gender and rights perspective in the COVID-19 response at an early stage and, as a major donor of core support, it has been able to contribute to organisational transition and has also increased its own gender equality support. One important element has been support to promote women's and girls' agency and influence, including through civil society organisations, including women's rights organisations, feminist movements and trade union organisations.

Women have played, and continue to play, a crucial societal role in this crisis. Their role in health care and social sectors is of vital importance. Similarly, women's rights organisations, feminist movements and women leaders have once again demonstrated their ability to find solutions that work. It is essential that they can continue their work and that the crisis becomes a lever for gender equality.

Sweden must continue to be a frontrunner. In 2021, we will push forward action on gender equality issues in our role as Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and a co-leader of the global Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights, part of the UN Women's Generation Equality campaign. We will continue to develop our broad, rights-based efforts in line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda, focusing particularly on sexual and reproductive health and rights, women, peace and security, women's economic empowerment, and feminist trade policy. As part of this, we will continue to strengthen the EU's gender equality work with a view to achieving tangible results prior to, during and beyond Sweden's Presidency in 2023. Sweden will also continue to tirelessly push for action on the climate emergency and its adverse impacts on gender equality through integrated action for a sustainable future. We will also continue to combat the deeply worrying trend of undermining agreed language on gender equality.

Cooperation is vital. We therefore welcome the growing number of countries pursuing feminist foreign policy and strengthening their focus on gender equality. Together we can build back better.

Ann Linde



Minister for Foreign Affairs

Per Olsson Fridh



Minister for International  
Development Cooperation

Anna Hallberg



Minister for Foreign Trade

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## Introduction

This action plan sets out the direction of feminist foreign policy work for the current electoral period, focusing on 2021.

Sweden's feminist government aims to ensure that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives. Gender equality is a goal in itself, but it is also essential for achieving the Government's foreign policy objectives of peace, security and sustainable development.

Our feminist foreign policy will inform all Swedish Foreign Service activities and contribute to global gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls. Work is organised around three Rs: rights, representation and resources.

The work of the last six years has been successful and has had an impact at multilateral, regional, national and local level, and in the EU. The Foreign Service will now continue to build on the results and experience. This action plan sets out the direction, objectives and measures.

The objectives require the Foreign Service to contribute to all women's and girls' **i)** full enjoyment of human rights, **ii)** freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence, **iii)** participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding, **iv)** political participation and influence in all areas of society, **v)** economic rights and empowerment, and **vi)** sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). These are broad objectives to bring the whole range of foreign policy tools into play, cover the global agenda and respond to both old and new challenges, including pandemics such as COVID-19.

In addition, the Foreign Service's internal work will support and highlight this policy.

This action plan sets out not only what should be done but also how, and specifies the tools and actors that should be involved. The annex outlines key approaches and foundations for this work.

This action plan is part of the Foreign Service operational and resource planning process. This facilitates implementation in all foreign policy areas. Yearly follow-up and planning enable us to incorporate lessons learned, benefit from ongoing consultations and make new challenges visible.

In 2021, activities to achieve the objectives of this action plan will be deepened and further developed. All departments of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm and missions abroad will contribute to its implementation. Activities continue to include everything from targeted initiatives to long-term change efforts with a bearing on the three policy areas of the Foreign Service. This integrated approach will also continue to develop, as will collaboration between trade, development cooperation and promotion.

This broad, deep and systematic approach will allow our feminist foreign policy to continue to develop and achieve results that will make a difference for people all around the world.

## **1. Objectives for 2019–2022 and direction of work in 2021**

The objectives below set out the direction of Sweden’s feminist foreign policy. The objectives are broad to match the challenges and enable us to work holistically, using coordinated foreign policy instruments and aligning with our Policy for Global Development, the 2030 Agenda and other national and international commitments. The objectives and action plan are based on consultations with the entire Swedish Foreign Service and national and international partners.

### **A. The Swedish Foreign Service will contribute to gender equality and 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 highlight this policy**

## Objective 1. Gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights

- The Foreign Service will promote gender equality and all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights in **all contexts and forums**. COVID-19 has worsened the baseline dramatically, creating a new demand for work that is both innovative and strategic. It is essential to continue to highlight the individual as a rights holder, and combat discriminatory norms, legislation, measures and behaviour and reach the people most affected by gender inequality by, for example, taking an intersectional, rights-based perspective and considering the entire life cycle. In 2021, the focus will be on continuing to pursue a gender and rights perspective in the pandemic response and recovery to ensure that commitments and initiatives, as well as core support to multilateral organisations and the development banks, contribute both to immediate help and to building back better with a view to sustainable progress and increased resilience for discriminated-against groups, predominantly women and girls, who have been most affected. Important facets of the work are coordinating demands and messages with like-minded countries and donors, emphasising countries' responsibilities in relation to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda, and supporting women's and girls' opportunities to exert influence. While Sweden is Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the ambition to strengthen women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights will be an important part of efforts to uphold the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, which focuses on human rights and democracy.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that the **EU** strengthens its gender equality efforts. As part of this, the Foreign Service will continue to monitor the initiative taken by Sweden and France at the EU foreign ministers' meeting in December 2019, which focuses on EU governance, ownership, working methods and resources for gender equality. In 2021, the focus will be on supporting the launch of the EU's new and broader Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III), which is in line with many of the proposals Sweden has pushed for. To achieve this, Sweden intends to take steps to ensure that a group of Member States takes greater responsibility to support GAP III and to mainstream gender equality in all aspects of the EU's external relations.
- The Foreign Service will develop and support **alliances, initiatives and platforms** that bring actors together for strategic exchange and innovative cooperation to promote gender equality, and that take account of the increased challenges posed by COVID-19. In 2021, the Generation Equality Forum will be held in Mexico and Paris to draw attention to the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Sweden will be active in these forums, including as a continuation of the 2018 Stockholm Forum and the 2019 Tunis Forum. Sweden will also promote the continuation of these forums and, in conjunction with other countries and actors, push for the Gender Equality Forum's operational work on critical challenges, where Sweden is a co-leader of the global Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights.

- The Foreign Service will work to promote the mainstreaming of the gender and rights perspectives in processes for a sustainable recovery that ‘builds back better and greener’. This will be done, for example, by promoting women’s and girls’ full enjoyment of human rights in **climate and environment action**, with its links to oceans, biodiversity, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and – ultimately – the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being. This approach will help ensure that women and girls in vulnerable communities are better reached by climate adaptation fund initiatives to increase resilience. An example may be developing sustainable and climate-resilient water and sanitation programmes that both strengthen resilience and reduce the adverse impact of climate change on women’s and girls’ enjoyment of human rights and their access to water and sanitation. Climate- and gender-responsive WASH programmes and SRHR will be key elements in these efforts. In 2021, this broad and rights-based approach will in part be pursued in connection with development cooperation’s increased focus on biodiversity and in dialogue with the UN system, the development banks and the climate funds. This will remain an important issue in relation to the 2030 Agenda, the European Green Deal and the follow-up of approved support, such as increased core support to the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Sweden will also work to ensure that international and national climate adaptation strategies combat discrimination against women and girls, and that the national action plans (nationally determined contributions) are prepared and implemented in dialogue with women and girls. Sweden will also continue to highlight the links between climate change, conflicts, human security, and the role of women and girls in sustainable development. In 2022, Sweden will host the high-level Stockholm+50 conference. The aim is to help redefine our relationship to nature through concrete actions, where sustainable consumption and production and nature-based solutions are used to build resilient societies and promote green recovery. To ensure success, a rights-based approach that includes women’s and girls’ perspectives as an integral part of the work and implementation is essential.
- The Foreign Service will continue to push to ensure respect for the human rights, including SRHR, of women and girls in **humanitarian situations**, and of women and girl **refugees and migrants**, and ensure a gender perspective in humanitarian operations. In 2021, the focus will be on continuing to strengthen this approach with the help of the government-adopted strategy for Sweden’s humanitarian assistance provided through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for 2021–2025. The focus of the strategy is on gender mainstreaming needs analyses, response strategies and monitoring, and ensuring women’s and girls’ agency by including them in consultation and decision-making processes. Sweden also intends to promote a stronger gender perspective in humanitarian crises through active efforts within the framework of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies. Sweden will also continue to ensure that the rights of women and girls are taken into account in the implementation of the global compacts on migration and refugees and in the follow-up of the 2019 Global Forum on Migration and Development. This

includes making sure that refugee girls and boys receive access to education within three months. Sweden will also continue to highlight the situation of women and girls within the framework of efforts to improve synergies between humanitarian assistance, long-term development cooperation and peacebuilding initiatives (triple nexus).

- The Foreign Service will combat **trafficking in human beings and prostitution**. In 2021, the focus will be on continued advocacy, especially in Europe. In this context, it is important to share the positive experiences of the Swedish legislation on the prohibition of the purchase of sexual services. Cooperation will be sought with countries that have a similar model, including through the diplomatic offensive launched by Sweden and France in March 2019. Collaboration with civil society organisations that fight trafficking in human beings will also be pursued.
- The Foreign Service will take particular account of the capacity of women and girls as actors, but also their vulnerability and specific needs. Equal access to education, information and services related to SRHR, and protection from violence, discrimination and harmful practices, is particularly relevant for **girls**, and this has been highlighted and amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Poor access to WASH in schools prevents girls' active participation in education on equal terms. Girls living in poverty and oppression, and refugee or migrant girls are particularly vulnerable groups. In 2021, the Foreign Service will highlight girls' rights and their situation in various global forums, in synergy with the Drive for Democracy and in the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights.



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

- COVID-19 has resulted in a further sharp and global increase in gender-based violence against women and girls. The Foreign Service has responded with initiatives at all levels. These broad efforts are directed at combating gender-based violence both **normatively and operationally**, including by addressing the root causes, focusing on prevention, promoting accountability for sexual and gender-based violence, highlighting the role and responsibility of men and boys, and supporting women's rights organisations, feminist movements and local civil society organisations that promote the long-term prevention of gender-based violence and provide support to vulnerable individuals. In 2021, efforts will continue to give visibility to and combat this increased violence – including the increased incidence of child and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation – in the shadow of COVID-19, and to pursue these issues locally, nationally and regionally, in the EU and multilaterally, including in the UN General Assembly, UN accountability mechanisms and institutions, and in the UN Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review. As part of this, the Foreign Service will draw attention to the growing problem of online violence.
- The Foreign Service will draw attention to intimate partner violence and work to ensure that more states accede to, and implement, the **Istanbul Convention**, defending it from being undermined and contested. In 2021, Sweden will continue to support both national and local initiatives to prevent violence, including in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Methods are expected to include strategic partnerships with local UN actors, political dialogue, active public diplomacy and support to local women's rights and civil society organisations.
- The Foreign Service will **combat impunity** for sexual and gender-based violence, strengthen the role of the legal sector and increase women's and girls' access to the justice system. In addition, the Foreign Service will contribute to strengthening survivors' access to justice, redress and adequate care and services. In 2021, the focus will also be on continued cooperation with the International Criminal Court in its work in the area of sexual violence.
- The Foreign Service will collaborate with all relevant actors to combat sexual and gender-based violence in **conflict and post-conflict situations** and, in particular, support prevention efforts and work to ensure an integrated analysis of root causes. Strengthening global efforts through increased accountability of perpetrators and improved mechanisms to compensate those who have been subjected to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict will be a priority in 2021.

- The Foreign Service will stress the link between the illegal or uncontrolled proliferation of **arms** and the threat of gender-based violence, and push to increase the number of states acceding to, and implementing, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In 2021, the work will focus on following up the gender equality initiatives and discussions that Sweden contributed to in connection with the 2019 meetings within the framework of the ATT and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. As part of this, Sweden will continue its support for, and dialogue with, civil society actors in the area.
- The Foreign Service will call attention to the particular vulnerability of girls and women to sexual and gender-based violence by terrorist groups by pursuing these issues in international counter-terrorism forums and by supporting actors, including civil society organisations, that work to address **violent extremism**, radicalisation, recruitment and destructive masculinities. In 2021, Sweden will continue to enable women's rights organisations and other civil society organisations to make their voices heard in the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism, focusing on the work preceding the adoption of the review resolution of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
- The Foreign Service will continue to promote the implementation and monitoring of the joint commitments that donors have made to prevent and **combat sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment** in the aid sector. In 2021, on the basis of the OECD-DAC recommendation, the Foreign Service will promote effective and concerted action with other relevant Swedish authorities and civil society, continue to strengthen internal efforts and continue to pursue the normative work in relation to, above all, the UN, the EU and the multilateral development banks.
- The Foreign Service will promote the continued updating of knowledge on the links between **gender and corruption**. As part of these efforts, the Foreign Service will continue to monitor and take part in continued discussions on 'sextortion', the abuse of power and position in exchange for sexual services.

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

- Using global, regional, national and local and EU contexts, the Foreign Service will push for the implementation of the **women, peace and security (WPS) agenda**, taking into account the additional challenges posed by COVID-19. Sweden will support implementation at national level, work to ensure that the EU action plan in the area produces concrete results and follow up its systematic work on the UN Security Council. In 2021, particular focus will be on advancing the implementation of the WPS agenda as a priority during Sweden's term as OSCE Chair. Sweden will work to integrate the WPS agenda into the OSCE's work, both in Vienna and in the field, not only in politico-military issues but also in human rights and democracy work and in environmental and economic issues, for example through highlighting the links between economic empowerment and security.
- The Foreign Service will promote **women's effective participation and influence as actors** in peacebuilding and in peace processes and sustainable peacebuilding through peace diplomacy, an integrated approach and specific support, including by contributing expertise from the Women's Mediation Network and encouraging synergies between the Swedish network and networks at regional and local level in contexts that are a priority for Sweden. Similarly, girls' perspectives and active participation in peace processes will be promoted. Sweden will also support local women leaders and women's rights activists and organisations, and other civil society actors driving the WPS agenda, including in relation to the new challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sweden's role as OSCE Chair in 2021 will be an important platform for advancing these issues.
- The Foreign Service will help to ensure that women and girls are included and that their experiences are harnessed in the design of early conflict warning mechanisms and systems, and in conflict analysis. The gender perspective will be mainstreamed in **measures to prevent** conflict, radicalisation and violent extremism, and in development of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. In 2021, Sweden will push for these issues to be systematically integrated into the UN's work, the World Bank Group's implementation of its Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020–2025, and the EU's work in conflict prevention and crisis management, and in the OSCE's work at all stages of the conflict cycle. These issues will be discussed at the 2021 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development in May, focusing on new challenges and opportunities, such as new technologies.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that the EU, the UN, NATO and the OSCE mainstream a gender perspective throughout their **peace support operations**. In its role as OSCE Chair in 2021, Sweden will have a unique opportunity to promote gender mainstreaming throughout the multilateral organisation's work, in both the short and long term. Sweden will make the most

of its role as ‘WPS champion’ within the UN’s initiative on Action for Peacekeeping to advance the WPS agenda. Sweden will also use its role as catalytic member of the new Compact for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action to promote implementation of the WPS agenda, not least in relation to the global Action Coalitions developed within the framework of the UN Women Generation Equality campaign. In 2021, the focus will also be on continuing to follow up on the commitments that Sweden pushed for in the pact for EU civilian crisis management, including gender mainstreaming in missions, increasing the proportion of women and appointing gender advisors. Sweden will continue to push for gender advisors in EU military training missions and to strengthen the focal points for gender issues in OSCE field missions. As a partner country, Sweden will also contribute to NATO’s implementation of its action plan on women, peace and security.

- The Foreign Service will continue to work to strengthen the gender perspective in the **area of disarmament and non-proliferation** and to promote the participation of women actors in negotiations and in the drafting and implementation of key documents. In 2021, the focus will be on advancing improved gender analysis, including statistics, and more gender-balanced representation at relevant international organisations, including the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and at international meetings. This is one of the Stockholm Initiative’s priorities ahead of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Sweden will also continue to pursue the issue of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and their particular impact on women and girls. Work in 2021 will also focus on continuing to strengthen the gender perspective in speeches, agreements and resolutions produced in UN commissions, committees and other forums.
- The Foreign Service will work with the relevant ministries, authorities and its missions abroad to implement **Sweden’s national action plan on women, peace and security** and continue its continuous consultation on how the work can be further developed, and report on this work. In 2021, the focus will be on continuing the review of the action plan that is under way. This means that recommendations, challenges and lessons learned, which have been identified in an external evaluation, will be analysed and included in the continued work on the next action plan. The Foreign Service will also encourage other countries to produce and implement similar action plans.

## 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 local level, taking into account the challenges posed by COVID-19 and that further underscore the importance of women being given influence over the development of their societies. In 2021, for example, several Swedish missions abroad will support and encourage women's political participation in upcoming elections and contribute to ensuring that women and girls are invited to discussions on the impacts of the pandemic and the post-COVID-19 recovery. The Foreign Service will also continue in other respects to seek continuous dialogue with women representatives at all levels, including in civil society, and continue to ensure the gender perspective is a natural part of the election observation missions that Sweden contributes to..
- In its **Drive for Democracy**, the Foreign Service will consider how Sweden can further strengthen, enhance the visibility of and harness women's and girls' representation, participation and influence, including in relation to the COVID-19 response. In 2021, the work is expected to involve continued active advocacy work and alliance-building at all levels. Within the framework of the Drive for Democracy, Sweden will increase the focus on trade union rights and human rights in working life, including women trade union representatives. During its term as OSCE Chair, Sweden will also call attention to the issue of women's and girls' participation in democratic processes.
- The Foreign Service will use both bilateral dialogue and the EU's political dialogue to promote the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, as well as their representation, participation and influence. An important tool is the production and follow-up of the Foreign Service's **reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law**. These reports will continue to be updated regionally in 2021 – focusing this time on countries in Europe.
- The Foreign Service will combat the shrinking democratic space and the additional challenges COVID-19 poses for **women human rights defenders**, women's rights organisations and other actors that defend women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights, including climate and environmental activists, and trade union representatives. This will be done by supporting and enhancing the visibility of actors, by actively opposing discriminatory legislation and other measures and restrictions that limit their freedom of action, and by highlighting the particular vulnerability of women human rights defenders. The work will continue at all levels in 2021 in collaboration with like-minded partners, using the Drive for Democracy and feminist foreign policy as vehicles of communication for maximum impact. This work is carried out through multilateral normative action and local advocacy, and through development cooperation, including in Iraq, Asia and the Pacific region, and by highlighting and in various ways strengthening girls' agency.

- The Foreign Service will push for increased respect of the right of **freedom of expression and freedom of opinion**, including by working to ensure strengthened security and protection for women human rights defenders, climate and environmental activists, trade union representatives, cultural workers, journalists and other media actors. Online threats and hate speech, as well as additional challenges linked to COVID-19, will be countered. In 2021, work can be expected to include dialogue, public diplomacy, EU collaboration and various types of communication initiatives. During its term as OSCE Chair, Sweden will also call attention to the security situation for women journalists as part of its efforts to strengthen freedom of expression and of the media.
- The Foreign Service will work to promote a gender perspective and women's representation in **EU structures and external work and in multilateral organisations**, including through UN reform efforts. In 2021, Sweden will follow up and pursue its focus on gender issues within the framework of the EU's partnership with Africa. Sweden will also follow up the Swedish-French gender equality initiative within the EU, which requires increased representation of women at all levels of EU external action.
- The Foreign Service will push for gender equality work in the **multilateral climate and environmental funds**, and in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. In 2021, Sweden will continue to promote gender mainstreaming and the participation of women and girls in climate and environmental work, and in the work on oceans and biodiversity, including through collaborations on climate-adaptive agriculture, development of renewable energy and access to and control of land and other natural resources. As part of this, Sweden will highlight women's and girls' needs and participation within the scope of various climate adaptation strategies, and work to ensure that women and girls are reached by climate adaptation fund initiatives to increase resilience.
- The Foreign Service will support women's and girls' access to quality **education** and lifelong learning, as well as the role of women in research. Development cooperation will contribute to strengthening countries' educational systems and ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all, including the most vulnerable groups. In 2021, Sweden will continue working with partners at local, national, regional and global level, including through the UN, the World Bank and other development banks, and global educational organisations and research institutions. A major challenge is combating the negative impacts of COVID-19 and ensuring that all children, not least girls, can return to school. School closures during the COVID-19 pandemic increase the risk of girls being victims of violence at home, early and unwanted pregnancies, and child and forced marriage. Women often take greater responsibility for home schooling.

## Objective 5. Women's and girls' economic rights and empowerment

- In every way possible, the Foreign Service will combat the dramatic and negative impacts COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on women's economic equality, and women's and girls' economic rights and empowerment, and thus on their ability to avoid new or increased marginalisation, vulnerability and poverty. The focus will be on building back better through broad, rights-based and intersectional action for **women's and girls' economic and social conditions throughout their entire life cycle**. Important structural barriers are discriminatory legislation, norms and attitudes, and poor access to education, equal opportunities in the labour market and employment in the formal sector, as well as poor access to resources, including agricultural land, water and other key natural resources, and technological, financial and digital resources. Other barriers are gender-based violence, a lack of SRHR and the maintenance of harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, and child and forced marriage. COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation in essentially all these areas and led to an intensive response from Sweden in the form of advocacy, alliance-building and targeted support. These efforts will continue unabated in 2021, when the focus will be on advancing these issues through Sweden's co-leadership of the global Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights within the framework of the UN Women Generation Equality campaign. During its term as OSCE Chair, Sweden will also highlight the links between economic empowerment and security. Women and girls must enjoy economic empowerment to enable the full implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Sweden will host the annual OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on the theme of women's economic empowerment.
- The Foreign Service will promote women's agency and rights in the labour market. This will be done, for instance, by supporting their access to **productive employment and decent work**, and by working towards the formalisation of the informal economy, where the majority of workers are women. In 2021, the work will continue in light of the impacts of COVID-19, focusing on promoting women's participation in processes aimed at social dialogue and working to ensure women are represented among the social partners, including through the Global Deal partnership, initiated by Sweden in collaboration with the OECD and the ILO. This work will also be carried out in the global Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights, which includes both Sweden and the OECD.
- Through political dialogue, exchange of experience and development cooperation, the Foreign Service will promote **social security systems** that include the entire life cycle, apply a gender perspective, and contribute to women's economic empowerment. The Foreign Service will also promote

gender balance in unpaid care and domestic work, and women's access to vocational training and adult education. COVID-19 has further highlighted these needs. In 2021, Sweden will advance these issues in the global Action Coalition for Economic Justice and Rights and help to spread information about Swedish reforms, efforts and experiences in the area.

- The Foreign Service will contribute to **strengthened resources for gender equality** in all contexts, including by working to ensure gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming in various policy documents, gender analyses based on sex- and age-disaggregated data and strengthened gender equality expertise in strategic positions. In 2021, Sweden will pursue these issues in its COVID-19 response and recovery. Sweden will also continue to push for increased resources to promote gender equality in international development cooperation, not least in the form of resources for women's rights organisations.
- The Foreign Service will oppose **legislation and regulatory provisions** that restrict women's and girls' economic empowerment and rights to land, inheritance and ownership, etc., including in relation to family, religious and traditional law. This is even more crucial in situations where COVID-19 has created new economic challenges that put women and girls without access to resources, such as agricultural land, at risk of increased hunger and poverty. Influencing discriminatory norms and behaviours in society is also key. In 2021, the work will be carried out through bilateral and local dialogue, cooperation with multilateral actors, advocacy work and development cooperation at global, regional and national level. Our work in the global Action Coalition for Economic Justice and Rights is yet another important tool.
- The Foreign Service will contribute to **strengthened resources for gender equality** in all contexts, including by working to ensure gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming in various policy documents, gender analyses based on sex- and age-disaggregated data and strengthened gender equality expertise in strategic positions. In 2021, Sweden will pursue these issues in its COVID-19 response and recovery. Sweden will also continue to push for increased resources to promote gender equality in international development cooperation, not least in the form of resources for women's rights organisations.
- The Foreign Service will further develop and implement Sweden's **feminist trade policy** by promoting gender mainstreaming in trade policy and international trade agreements so that international trade benefits women who are producers, entrepreneurs, employees and consumers, as much as men. In 2021, Sweden will continue to act to ensure clarity and push for the EU to include a gender perspective in its free trade agreements, impact assessments and sustainability assessments. As part of this, the Foreign Service will follow up and spread the non-paper



promoting gender equality through trade policy, sent by Sweden and nine like-minded Member States to the EU Commissioner for Trade. Sweden will also continue to work for gender equality in the World Trade Organization, Aid for Trade and the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences for developing countries, and to pursue feminist trade policy in the global Action Coalition for Economic Justice and Rights. In addition, Sweden will continue to push to simplify trade in critical goods such as medical equipment and pharmaceutical products to continue to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, which are particularly severe for women and girls.

- The Foreign Service will use its **promotion activities** to achieve positive gender equality outcomes. In 2021, the focus will also be on implementing the export and investment strategy, emphasising economic, social and environmental sustainability. Moreover, work to build back better after the crisis will continue by strengthening collaboration and developing synergies between trade, development cooperation and promotion to build broader economic relations with our partner countries, thereby further promoting women's entrepreneurship and strengthening women's economic empowerment.
- The Foreign Service will strengthen, support and raise the visibility of **women's entrepreneurship** and business networks for women. In 2021, Swedish engagement will continue, including through its collaboration with the International Trade Centre and the Swedish Institute for Standards, and through the SHE-Leads and She Entrepreneurs leadership programmes, organised by the Swedish Institute.
- The Foreign Service will push for **sustainable entrepreneurship** by continuing its work within the framework of the ILO conventions and the Decent Work Agenda so that more and more companies contribute to gender equality and women's economic rights, and see women's participation and agency as an important resource for sustainable business solutions. In 2021, work will continue with the business sector on communicating and implementing a Swedish-designed platform for international sustainable entrepreneurship, which includes gender equality. The Foreign Service will also support and pursue the issue of developing and implementing an EU legal framework in the area of sustainable global value chains and mandatory due diligence that was announced in the European Commission's 2021 work programme.

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

- The Foreign Service will continue to intensify its work to promote **everyone's right to decide over their own body and sexuality without discrimination**, violence or coercion. As part of this, the Foreign Service will promote access to SRHR for all in every relevant forum, including the EU, the UN and its funds and programmes and in global financing mechanisms, and in all contexts, including humanitarian crises. This includes efforts to reduce child and maternal mortality, and adequate health care with access to trained staff, and water, sanitation and hygiene. It also includes combating child and forced marriage, and promoting access to comprehensive sexuality education, contraception and advice, and testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.
- In 2021, the Foreign Service will continue to enhance its efforts to promote SRHR at all levels, including by pushing for a clear **rights perspective** within the activities of the **UN organisations** and other Swedish partners, particularly in the COVID-19 response but also in the new multiannual **strategic plans** that will be adopted for UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF.
- The **normative advances** that have been made in SRHR will be protected and progress will be made where possible. One goal in 2021 is to reach an agreement in the UN Commission on Population and Development. In 2021, follow-up of the SRHR commitments made in connection with the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25) will continue, as well as of the links between these commitments, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. SRHR is also an important cross-cutting issue for Sweden in its work in the global Action Coalition for Economic Justice and Rights. Sweden will also push for the UN Human Rights Council to address SRHR issues.
- The Foreign Service will monitor to ensure that **humanitarian actors** live up to their SRHR commitments. In 2021, this will be done by monitoring to ensure that measures are guided by the manual produced by the Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises. In addition, the need for SRHR will be taken into account in all humanitarian crises, in line with the government-adopted strategy for Sweden's humanitarian assistance provided through Sida for 2021–2025.
- In 2021, the Foreign Service will continue to **advance these efforts in the EU** by working to ensure that the EU has a strong and united voice on these issues, retains the agreed wording and prioritises funding for SRHR within given financial frameworks. The Foreign Service will also push for the EU to promote SRHR by addressing these issues in partnerships with third countries.

- The Foreign Service will continue to develop Sweden’s bilateral, regional and global **partnerships** with a view to preserving and strengthening international agreements in the area and increase responsibility-sharing for financial support. In 2021, Sweden will continue to cooperate strategically in various ways to create new and strong SRHR alliances. Its partners will also include civil society, youth representatives, religious communities and academia, all of whom are important players in promoting SRHR. To facilitate this work, and increase and broaden SRHR expertise, **updated dialogue material and an SRHR eTraining course** will be launched in 2021 for the Foreign Service and Sida.
- The Foreign Service will push the entire breadth of the SRHR agenda but in 2021 will particularly focus on promoting access to safe and legal **abortions**. For example, more missions abroad will conduct dialogues on and monitor legislation and legislative proposals that restrict the right to abortion, and build alliances with countries that implement reforms to strengthen the right to abortion.
- In 2021, the Foreign Service will also continue to **challenge discriminatory norms** that make it difficult for women, girls and LGBTIQ people to enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights. This will be done through cooperation with people and groups that are key to influencing these norms, including religious actors and faith communities, and through continuing to work with UNESCO to provide comprehensive sexuality education to even more people.

## B. The Swedish Foreign Service's internal work will support and highlight this policy

- The Foreign Service will continue to develop its **results-based management** to strengthen the planning, governance, resource allocation and results of policy-related work.
- The Foreign Service will apply **gender budgeting**, gender mainstream the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' internal resource allocation and strengthen gender mainstreaming in framework preparation.
- The Foreign Service will continue its systematic gender mainstreaming of internal documents such as **guidelines and templates** and review the need for new tools.
- The Foreign Service will continue to intensify its **communication activities** around Sweden's feminist foreign policy, its methods and results. In 2021, the Generation Equality Forum and our role as OSCE Chair will be used to highlight and communicate gender equality issues.
- The Foreign Service will continue to strengthen the gender mainstreaming of its **grant management**. In line with this, the Foreign Service will push for more robust gender analysis in information used in decision-making and follow-up.
- The Foreign Service will promote gender equality in **recruitment and appointments** at all levels, both at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and at the missions abroad, including of locally engaged employees, honorary consuls and trade commissioners.
- 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 enhance the strategic coordination of, representation issues.
- The Foreign Service will continue its internal work to **prevent, investigate and respond to sexual harassment**.
- The Foreign Service will further develop and strengthen the gender perspective in all its **skills development** and continue to invest in targeted gender equality training.
- The Foreign Service will continue, within the framework of its **consular activities**, to develop its work in the area of family conflict, focusing on child and forced marriages. This will involve providing more effective consular support to people affected by an 'honour'-based or patriarchal system who, when travelling, run the risk of, or are subjected to, forced marriage, genital mutilation or domestic violence and threats. In 2021, work will continue on our case management system and strengthening collaboration with authorities and other actors in Sweden and in the relevant regions.
- The Foreign Service will contribute to gender-balanced representation in delegations and meetings in connection with **incoming and outgoing visits**, and will work to ensure visit programmes promote Sweden's feminist foreign policy.
- The Foreign Service will continue to mainstream a gender perspective in its **security work** and work on its **properties** abroad. In 2021, work will continue to ensure that the Foreign Service's premises and public spaces are fit for purpose, comfortable, safe, secure and welcoming for everyone.

## 2. Actors

### 2.1 General overview

The action plan for Sweden's feminist foreign policy will be implemented by the entire Swedish Foreign Service. The Foreign Service will promote broad partnerships and alliances in the implementation of the action plan and the global commitments for gender equality.

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

### 2.2 Sweden

The policy and the 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. To this end, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will continuously review its agencies' policy documents (including instructions, appropriation directions, thematic/regional/bilateral strategies, and other policy documents) to ensure that governance and monitoring align with Sweden's feminist foreign policy. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will also ensure that all new policy documents are consistent with this policy direction.

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

### 2.3 The EU and the Nordic countries

The EU's common foreign policy is a key instrument for the implementation of 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 advocacy and negotiation in Brussels. As part of this work, the Foreign Service will cooperate with the European Parliament and other EU institutions with specific responsibility for promoting gender equality issues.

Cooperation between the Nordic countries also provides additional platforms for actively pursuing a feminist foreign policy dialogue inside and outside the EU and the UN. The Nordic Council of Ministers is one such platform whose activities should be shaped by a cross-cutting gender perspective.

## **2.4 Our neighbourhood, other groups of countries and globally**

Implementation of Sweden's feminist foreign policy 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.

The Foreign Service will actively pursue gender equality issues in the EU's neighbourhood, for example, within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership, and in enlargement policy in relation to both current and potential candidate countries. The Council of the Baltic Sea States is another important platform.

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, the African Union, the Organisation of American States, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Arab League and many others.

## **2.5 Multilateral and global actors**

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

These organisations and actors include the UN and its funds, programmes and bodies where, not least, implementation at national level is of key importance. Actors also include the World Bank, the regional development banks, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the International Criminal Court.

In 2021, Sweden's term as OSCE Chair provides a unique opportunity to mainstream a gender perspective in the multilateral organisation's work, in both the short and long term.

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, philanthropic organisations and international companies (including Swedish companies). They also include forums aimed at creating a global culture based on dialogue, respect and universal values, such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

## 2.6 Bilateral actors

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

Each specific context will determine which actors are most important to interact with to achieve our feminist foreign policy objectives. In general, however, the Foreign Service will increase engagement with women's rights defenders, women elected representatives, 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 raise the visibility of women and strengthen them as economic actors by increasing its interaction with women entrepreneurs, women's business networks and women trade union representatives, and with legal actors working to strengthen women's economic rights. Similarly, increased contact will be sought with girls and their networks to enhance the visibility of their needs and support them in their agency.

## 3. Tools and methods

### 3.1 General overview

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

- its ongoing operations, from analysis to monitoring and new analysis
- all policy areas.

The Foreign Service will use its own existing and extensive knowledge and that of other Swedish authorities to advance its gender equality efforts. The same applies to existing knowledge and analysis in multilateral organisations.

### 3.2 Analysis and information gathering

The Foreign Service will constantly review how its operations can help to increase gender equality and enhance the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls. This may be done through a gender analysis in relevant action plans and strategies.

To be accurate, the analysis must take account of the fact that women, girls, men and boys are not homogeneous groups, but rather that their identities, needs, influence and living conditions differ. 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 use gender analyses based on sex- and age-disaggregated data in reporting and in ongoing operations. As part of this approach, 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 a gender analysis 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. It is crucial to draw on this research when implementing the action plan.

The patterns that emerge in the analysis and data collection processes will be considered in relation to the feminist foreign policy objectives and used to develop this work.

### **3.3 Accountability and influence**

The Foreign Service will push for the EU and bilateral, multilateral and international actors and institutions to:

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

As part of this work, the Foreign Service will actively collaborate with existing accountability mechanisms and act to ensure concrete progress for all women and girls.

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



### **3.4 Agenda-setting, functions, 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 contexts and areas of activity.

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, it will use this type of platform to enhance the visibility of – and thereby strengthen – women, girls and LGBTIQ people as actors, and ensure that available expertise is harnessed.

The Foreign Service will continuously review the composition of its visit programmes, delegations and negotiating teams to ensure, as far as possible, that they are gender-mainstreamed and contribute to giving visibility to women, girls and LGBTIQ people as actors. Clear corporate social responsibility expectations will apply to companies taking part in promotion trips abroad. This also includes expectations that companies promote gender equality when doing business abroad.

### **3.5 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. In this way, the Foreign Service will create a broad partnership for gender equality. The Global Deal is one such platform that promotes gender equality by working for better working conditions and productive employment for women. The Generation Equality campaign and the global Action Coalitions are platforms that will have major significance at global and national level in the coming years, and where Sweden will play a catalytic and leading role. Sweden's role as OSCE Chair is another platform that will enable Sweden to promote greater gender mainstreaming in the organisation's work in both the short and long term.

At bilateral level, networks and alliances can take many forms (EU constellations, CSO consultations, advisory networks and individual informal dialogue partners). Regular meetings with these networks and alliances can be important tools of influence and provide valuable information.

### **3.6 Dialogue for influence and information gathering**

Gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, by all women and girls, will be continually 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 be on foreign, security, development or trade policy, or promotion. Dialogue with political, military, religious and economic decision-makers is essential.

Although progress has been made, efforts to promote the rights of women, girls and LGBTIQ people often meet with resistance, and in certain contexts increasingly active resistance, that also targets the very concept of gender equality. The Foreign Service will respond to this resistance to gender equality and rights by standing up for Sweden's values and presenting strong practical arguments and sound analysis. Evidence, statistics and comparable data increase the ability to exert influence and shape 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, solutions and even challenges may be a way forward. Another might be to highlight good practices from countries and organisations. In addition to the rights perspective, yet another way could be to emphasise the effectiveness and sustainability of investing in gender equality.

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

### **3.7 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. The Foreign Service and its agencies should also be able to provide targeted skills development, for example to ensure that potential change agents in leadership positions receive gender equality training.

### **3.8 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 protected and strengthened. This will apply to the follow-up of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the negotiations in the UN Human Rights Council and within EU enlargement policy.

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 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations 2021–2025 is important to implement and garner support for. Other key EU processes include the EU's internal gender equality work, follow-up of the multiannual financial framework – which in 2021–2025 has a strengthened gender perspective – and international trade negotiations and negotiations of declarations and agreements with third countries.

Regional agreements and reviews may also play a key role in driving gender equality issues.

### **3.9 Procedures for grant management, processes, reporting, etc.**

The Foreign Service will ensure that its grant management procedure complies with gender mainstreaming decisions of the Government and the Government Offices. Greater weight will be given to gender mainstreaming in grant allocation decisions. Gender analyses will be included in the preparation phase and gender budgeting principles will be applied. Funds in the appropriation items in international development cooperation, international collaboration and trade and promotion available to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, or about which it makes decisions, will be used more strategically to promote gender equality and the rights of women and girls.

The Foreign Service will continue its efforts to ensure that templates and procedures contribute to gender mainstreaming its 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 the rule of law. The Foreign Service will also mainstream a gender perspective in other reporting.

### **3.10 Positions in international organisations, institutions and peace support operations**

The Foreign Service and its seconding authorities will use secondment programmes as an instrument for promoting gender equality. This will be done by actively striving for gender equality in nominations to international positions and ensuring that the representatives and officials Sweden appoints and sends abroad 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, including more women in leadership positions.

## **4. Division of responsibilities, governance and support for the work of the Foreign Service**

### **4.1 Division of responsibilities and governance**

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

Handlingsplanen ingår i utrikesförvaltningens verksamhetsplanerings- och resursprocess. Därmed ska handlingsplanen och arbetet med den feministiska 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, governance and follow-up, and the ongoing 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 missions abroad and departments on how to continue to move our feminist foreign policy forward in different contexts.

Monitoring and analysis are key to achieving tangible progress. The reason for an annual action plan is precisely to enable the Foreign Service to use its experiences, dialogues and fact gathering to further develop its work. The annual action plan, which is public and available both internally and externally, also enables others to follow the work being done and provides for accountability and proposals from external parties.

An internal advisory group, headed by the Gender Equality Ambassador, contributes to policy development and includes focal points in both departments and missions abroad. The focal points in Stockholm gather on a regular basis for consultations led by the Gender Equality Ambassador. Managerial involvement and support to the focal points, and the ongoing consultations, are crucial.

## 4.2 Communication activities

The Foreign Service will develop communication and public diplomacy as strategic tools for feminist foreign policy action both internally and externally. The Communications Department and relevant departments will produce materials to support this.

In 2021, the Foreign Service will highlight the global Generation Equality Forum within the framework of the UN Women Generation Equality campaign that aims to highlight, accelerate and communicate gender equality action to mark the postponed 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Another opportunity to engage in gender equality communications with a global reach will be Sweden's reporting to the UN on its voluntary national review of its implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Sweden's term as OSCE Chair is also an opportunity to highlight the relevance of gender equality in every area of the OSCE's communication activities.

The Foreign Service will continue to use and develop different communication concepts that communicate, and contribute to, gender equality efforts. One example is WikiGap, which aims to increase the representation of women on Wikipedia through edit-a-thons in different places around the world. Another is #GirlsTakeover, which aims to enhance the visibility of girls' rights and agency by inviting young girls to participate in the work of a Swedish mission abroad. In addition, initiatives, meetings, campaigns and anniversaries can be the starting points for focused communication initiatives.

Stories that shine a light on policy in practice will continue to be published on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' external channels, such as the feminist foreign policy page on [www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se) (Swedish), [www.government.se](http://www.government.se) and on social media platforms. The theme pages on Klaranätet, the Government Offices intranet, will also be updated regularly.

### 4.3 Skills supply and development

Gender equality and diversity are a priority of the Foreign Service's skills supply and skills development work. In line with this, work is ongoing to promote gender equality in recruitment, promotions and appointments. Against this background, training exercises and discussions on gender equality and all women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights are 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.

The Foreign Service has an online training programme to support the implementation of Sweden's feminist foreign policy, and a training programme to support action against trafficking in human beings and prostitution. In addition, updated dialogue material, an SRHR eTraining course, and online training on sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment will be launched in 2021.

The Government Offices also offers central support for gender equality work in different formats, such as the online 'Gender mainstreaming in the Government Offices, eTraining course'. Other examples are the analytical tool JämKas and a range of guidance documents on conducting a gender analysis.

## Annex: Approaches and foundations for feminist foreign policy work

### General overview

Sweden's feminist foreign policy is based on binding commitments under international law and other agreements, some of which are listed below. It is also based on national policy objectives. The Foreign Service has also established a perspective and an approach for its work.

### Approach and core elements of Sweden's feminist foreign policy

Our feminist foreign policy is an approach that requires gender mainstreaming the 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 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.

The work should always be based on people's everyday lives and the context in which they find themselves (Reality).

### Gender mainstreaming at the Government Offices

The Government has decided that the Government Offices will gender mainstream all its operations in 2016–2020 (S2016/01917/JÄM, S2016/04472/JÄM). This decision has been extended to apply to 2021. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' commitments in this regard are presented 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, and this decision has also been extended to now apply to 2021.

## National objectives

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

- gender equality in the distribution of power and participation;
- gender equality in economic participation;
- gender equality in education;
- equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities;
- gender equality in 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 Sweden's development cooperation and humanitarian aid, the Communication on human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Swedish foreign policy and the Government's strategy for national human rights action.

## International conventions, EU treaties, etc.

- 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 reached at the Financing for Development conferences.
- The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and 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’s Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in External Relations 2021–2025, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020–2024, the Comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and relevant guidelines, Council conclusions, and other documents.
- The OECD-DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance.





