

The Swedish Foreign Service action plan
for feminist foreign policy 2019–2022,
including direction and measures for
2020



Foreword

The rights of women and girls are under intense pressure. This applies not least to the natural right of women and girls to their own bodies. Progress and agreements are being challenged. Sustainable development is being obstructed. Women are facing barriers in the economy and trade. Moreover, discrimination and marginalisation of women and girls often increases when other challenges arise, such as prolonged conflict situations and humanitarian crises, shrinking democratic space, accelerating climate change and tougher competition for natural resources – challenges that characterise today’s world to a large extent.

The many challenges make it more important than ever to pursue a broad and active feminist foreign policy. More than five years of the policy have shown that it produces tangible results, inspires others to follow, contributes to alliance building and is seen as a hope-inspiring force. We will bear this in mind as global gender equality efforts receive extra attention in 2020 as a result of the anniversaries of the agreements from the United Nations Women’s Conference in Beijing in 1995 and of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which was adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000. We will push for the rights agenda in all forums, disseminate our systematic work for women, peace and security to more actors and engage in the Generation Equality Forum that Mexico and France are organising and that builds on the forums in Stockholm in 2018 and Tunis in 2019.

The European Union plays a major role in global gender equality efforts, but it needs to do even more. This is why Sweden and France took an initiative at the foreign ministers’ meeting in December 2019, which we are now following up with a focus on the EU’s governance, ownership, guidance and resources for gender equality.

We are continuing with the methodical work that has become characteristic of our feminist foreign policy. This means that we have a clear gender perspective across the entire breadth of our activities. It also means that we work strategically and intersectionally, focusing on the entire life cycle and in dialogue with all types of agents of change, including religious actors. Cooperation with civil society and business is key, as is highlighting girls as actors in society and emphasising the responsibility of men and boys in the work to combat violence and promote gender equality.

In 2020, the Swedish Foreign Service will continue to step up its work in three areas:

- *Promotion of women’s and girls’ economic and social conditions*
- *Increased efforts for sexual and reproductive health and rights*
- *Enhanced action on the Women, Peace and Security agenda.*

Through the feminist trade policy, which was launched in the autumn of 2019, we will work for gender mainstreaming in trade policy and trade promotion. We are also developing the interplay between our Drive for Democracy and the feminist foreign policy and are continuing with the initiative to fight trafficking in human beings and prostitution, launched by Sweden and France in March 2019. As long as global gender inequality persists, and women's and girls' rights remain under pressure, we will continue to pursue a feminist foreign policy. With full force, throughout the world.

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Introduction

This action plan sets out the direction of the work on the feminist foreign policy for the current electoral period, focusing on 2020.

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.

The 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. The work is organised around three Rs: rights, representation and resources.

The first five years of this policy have been successful. Our work has had an impact at multilateral, regional and bilateral level, and in the EU. The Foreign Service now continues to build on the results and experiences. 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 match broad challenges, cover the global agenda and bring the whole range of foreign policy tools into play.

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

This action plan not only sets out *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. In this way, implementation in all foreign policy areas is facilitated. The yearly follow-up enables us to incorporate lessons learned, benefit from ongoing consultations and make more challenges visible.

In 2020, work on the objectives of this action plan will be deepened and further developed. All the departments 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 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 2020

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 manifest this policy

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

- The Foreign Service will work to ensure gender equality and all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights in **all contexts and forums**. It is essential to emphasise the individual as a rights holder, combat discriminatory legislation and behaviour, and reach the people most severely affected by gender inequality by, for example, taking an intersectional perspective and account of the entire life cycle. In 2020, global gender equality efforts celebrate a number of anniversaries, not least the Beijing Platform of Action, which is celebrating 25 years. Sweden will use these anniversaries to further push for the rights agenda.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that the **EU** strengthens its gender equality efforts. As part of this, the Foreign Service will follow up on the initiative taken by Sweden and France at the EU foreign ministers' meeting in December 2019, which focuses on the EU's governance, ownership, guidance and resources for gender equality. In 2020, focus will be placed on the EU's development of a new and broad Gender Action Plan for external gender equality work, and the EU's implementation of the action plan for the subarea of women, peace and security.
- The Foreign Service will develop and support **alliances, initiatives and platforms** that bring actors together for strategic exchange and cooperation for gender equality. In 2020, the Generation Equality Forum will be held in Mexico and Paris to mark the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and establish cooperation for tangible progress. Sweden will be active in these processes and views these forums as a continuation of the 2018 Stockholm Forum and the 2019 Tunis Forum. Sweden will also work to ensure that the series continues with a forum in 2021.
- The Foreign Service will continue to push for the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls in climate efforts. The Foreign Service will further 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 to ensure a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance. In 2020, focus will be placed on continuing to work to ensure stronger protection of women human rights defenders, including environmentalists, and continuing to exercise vigilance to ensure that the rights of women and girls are taken into account in the implementation of the global compacts on migration and refugees. This includes the goal that refugee girls and boys are to have access to education within three months.

- The Foreign Service will combat **human trafficking and prostitution**. In 2020, focus will mainly be placed on advocacy work in Europe. Here it is important to share the positive experiences of the Swedish legislation on 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 working to fight human trafficking will also be pursued.
- **Girls** are disproportionately disadvantaged as a consequence of their gender and age. Equal access to education, information and services linked to SRHR, as well as protection from violence, discrimination and harmful practices, is particularly relevant for girls. Refugee and migrant girls are a particularly vulnerable group. The Foreign Service will take particular account of the vulnerability and unique needs of girls, as well as their **capacity as actors**. In 2020, this means, for example, raising the rights and situation of girls in various global forums.

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

- The Foreign Service will combat gender-based violence against women and girls both **normatively and operationally**, including by attacking the root causes, focusing on prevention efforts, promoting accountability for sexual and gender-based violence and highlighting the role and responsibility of men and boys. In 2020, the work will continue to be conducted bilaterally, regionally, in the EU and multilaterally, including in the UN General Assembly, accountability mechanisms and institutions, as well as in the UN Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review. Particular attention will be dedicated to the prevention of child and forced marriage.
- The Foreign Service will draw attention to domestic violence and work to ensure that more states accede to, and implement, the **Istanbul Convention**. In 2020, Sweden will continue to support both national and local initiatives to prevent violence and ensure that vulnerable women receive practical, psychosocial and legal support. Methods are expected to include support to local civil society organisations, strategic partnerships with local UN actors, political dialogue and active public diplomacy.
- 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, including work to ensure an integrated analysis of root causes. In 2020, focus will be placed on contributing to stronger 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.
- 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 2020, 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 expected revision of the Council conclusions on counter-terrorism in the EU's external relations and the work preceding the adoption of the review resolution of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

- The Foreign Service will stress the link between the proliferation of **arms** and gender-based violence, and work to ensure that more states accede to, and implement, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In 2020, 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 Ottawa Treaty. As part of this, Sweden will continue its support for, and dialogue with, civil society actors in this area.
- The Foreign Service will **combat impunity** for sexual and gender-based violence, strengthen the role of the justice 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 2020, focus will be placed on efforts to strengthen national institutions focused on women's access to justice and cooperation with the International Criminal Court in its work on sexual violence.
- The Foreign Service will work for the implementation and follow-up of the joint commitments that donors have made to prevent and combat **sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment** in the aid sector. In 2020, on the basis of an internal action plan, the Foreign Service will work in particular to implement the OECD-DAC recommendation to prevent and deter sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment in development cooperation and humanitarian aid, ensure effective and concerted action with other relevant Swedish authorities and civil society, and continue to pursue the normative work with respect to, above all, the UN, the EU and the multilateral development banks.

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

- Using global, regional and bilateral contexts, and in the EU, the Foreign Service will push for the implementation of the **Women, Peace and Security** (WPS) agenda. Sweden will, for example, support implementation at national level, work to ensure that the EU's new action plan in the area produces concrete results and follow up its systematic work on the UN Security Council. In 2020, this will be done at the 20th anniversary of the first Security Council resolution (1325) in the area in order to encourage both states and organisations to step up their efforts. Sweden is contributing to the 20th anniversary through a number of commitments to implement the WPS agenda, not least in the field. Sweden is also placing focus on leadership issues related to the WPS agenda through a collaboration with the International Peace Institute (IPI).
- The Foreign Service will promote the **participation of women and girls as actors** in peace processes, including by contributing expertise from the Women's Mediation Network and encouraging synergies between the Swedish network and other similar networks. Furthermore, Sweden will support local leaders, women's rights activists, and organisations and other civil society actors driving the WPS agenda. In line with this, in 2020 missions abroad will contribute to dialogue forums, capacity development and institution building. Sweden will also continue to work to ensure a stronger link between the African Union's women's mediation network (Femwise) and the Swedish and Nordic mediation networks. The WPS agenda is also a general theme of the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is hosting together with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in May 2020.
- 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 analyses. The gender perspective will also be integrated in **measures to prevent** conflict, radicalisation and violent extremism, and in the development of the link between humanitarian assistance, development and peace. In 2020, Sweden will push for these issues to be systematically integrated into the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, the World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence, and the EU's work in conflict situations, including through the new aid instrument.

- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that the EU, the UN, NATO and the OSCE integrate a gender perspective in their **peace support operations**. In 2020, Sweden will develop guidelines on how the WPS agenda will be integrated into Sweden's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2021, in which Sweden will actively pursue its feminist foreign policy in all relevant forums. In 2020, focus will also be placed on, for example, continuing to follow up on the commitments that Sweden promoted and that are part of the EU's compact for civilian crisis management, including gender mainstreaming in missions, increasing the proportion of women and appointing gender advisors. Sweden will also work to ensure that gender advisors are appointed to EU military training missions and in the OSCE. As a partner country, Sweden will also contribute to NATO's implementation of its action plan for women, peace and security.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed in the area of **disarmament and non-proliferation** and that women actors participate in negotiations and in the drafting and implementation of key documents. In 2020, focus will be placed on continuing to work to ensure improved statistics, more robust gender analyses and more gender-balanced representation at international meetings, including at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), where Sweden will also continue to push the matter of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and their particular impact on women and girls. Work in 2020 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, government agencies and its missions abroad to implement **Sweden's national action plan for women, peace and security** and continue its continuous consultation on how the work can be further developed, including in relation to the expiry of the current reporting period of the plan in 2020. In 2020, there will be a review of the action plan as well as an external evaluation. The Foreign Service will also encourage other countries to produce and implement corresponding 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 bilateral level. In 2020, for example, several Swedish missions abroad will support and encourage women's political participation in upcoming elections. The Foreign Service will also continue to work to ensure that the gender perspective is a natural part of the **election observation missions** that Sweden contributes to and strive for dialogue with women representatives at all levels, including in civil society.
- In its **Drive for Democracy**, the Foreign Service will consider how Sweden can further strengthen and harness women's and girls' representation, participation and influence. In 2020, the work is expected to involve active advocacy work and alliance-building at all levels.
- The Foreign Service will use both bilateral dialogues 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**. The regional updates of these reports will continue in 2020, focusing on the Americas as well as Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
- The Foreign Service will support and raise the visibility of women **human rights defenders**, women's rights organisations and other actors that defend women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. Discriminatory legislation and other measures restricting their freedom of action will be actively opposed and the particular vulnerability of women human rights defenders will be highlighted. This work is conducted at all levels. For example, it is done through multilateral normative work, including through the 2020 Beijing+25 review process, through local advocacy work, various forms of support, 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, environmentalists, cultural workers, journalists and other media actors. Online threats and hate speech will be countered. In 2020, work can be expected to include dialogue, public diplomacy, EU collaboration and various types of communication initiatives.

- The Foreign Service will work for a gender perspective and for women's representation in **EU structures and external work** and in **multilateral organisations**, including through UN reform efforts. In 2020, 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 for instance calls for increased representation of women at all levels of EU external action.
- The Foreign Service will push for gender equality work in the multilateral **environmental and climate funds** and in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. In 2020, Sweden will continue to work for gender mainstreaming and the influence of women and girls in environmental and climate work, and in the work on oceans and on biodiversity, including through collaborations on climate-adaptive agriculture, development of renewable energy and access to and control of natural resources.
- The Foreign Service will support women's and girls' access to good quality **education** and lifelong learning as well as the role of women in research. Development cooperation plays an important role in the endeavour to fulfil the right to education for all, including the most vulnerable people. In 2020, work will be carried out through continued cooperation with partners at bilateral, regional and global level, including through the UN, the development banks and research institutions.

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

- The Foreign Service will work to ensure women's and girls' economic rights and empowerment. This is a matter of **women's and girls' economic and social conditions through their life cycle**, where important obstacles are discriminatory legislation, social norms and attitudes, and lack of access to resources, including land and technological and financial services. Other obstacles are a lack of SRHR and the preservation of harmful practices such as child marriage and early or forced marriage. In 2020, Sweden will take special initiatives in the area.
- The Foreign Service will further develop and implement the **feminist trade policy** by working for gender mainstreaming in trade policy so that international trade brings positive effects for women who are producers, entrepreneurs, employees and consumers, as it does for men. In 2020, Sweden will continue to work to ensure that the EU includes gender equality in its free trade agreements, impact assessments and sustainability assessments, and work for gender equality in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and in Aid for Trade.
- 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 family, religious and traditional law. Influencing discriminatory norms and behaviours in society is also key. In 2020, the work will be carried out through bilateral dialogue and cooperation with multilateral actors, such as the World Bank, and through advocacy work and development cooperation at global, regional and bilateral level.
- The Foreign Service will work to ensure women's agency and rights in the labour market. This will be done, for instance, by supporting their access to **decent and productive work**, including in male-dominated occupations, and by working to ensure the formalisation of the informal economy, where the majority of workers are women. In 2020, the work will focus 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 partnership known as the Global Deal, which was initiated by Sweden in collaboration with the OECD and the ILO.
- The Foreign Service will promote **social security systems** that include the entire life cycle and have a gender perspective. The Foreign Service will also work to ensure gender balance in unpaid work in the home and care work, and for women's access to vocational training and adult education. In 2020, the work will include providing information about Swedish reforms, efforts and experiences in the area. Through development cooperation, Sweden will also continue to support the development of social security systems that promote women's economic empowerment.

- 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 statistics and strengthened gender equality expertise in strategic positions. In 2020, Sweden will pursue gender equality in the EU's next multiannual financial framework. It is also essential to work to ensure resources for gender equality in international development cooperation, not least in the form of resources for women's rights organisations.
- The Foreign Service will also use its **promotion activities** to achieve positive gender equality outcomes. In 2020, the focus will be on implementing the export and investment strategy, concentrating on economic, social and environmental sustainability. The Foreign Service will further strengthen, support and raise the visibility of **women's entrepreneurship** and business networks for women. In 2020, Swedish engagement will continue in collaboration with the International Trade Centre and the Swedish Institute for Standards, as well as through the leadership programmes SHE-Leads and She Entrepreneurs, which are both organised by the Swedish Institute.
- The Foreign Service will push for **sustainable business** 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 2020, a developed Swedish platform for international sustainable business, which includes gender equality, will be presented, not least through regional efforts.

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

- The Foreign Service will work to ensure **everyone's access to SRHR** in all relevant forums, including the EU, the UN and its funds and programmes and in global financing mechanisms, and in all contexts, including humanitarian crises. The advances that have been made in SRHR will be protected and progress will be made where possible. In 2020, 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, and compulsion.
- The Foreign Service will **promote SRHR for everyone** by working to ensure reduced child and maternal mortality, and appropriate health care with access to trained staff and water, sanitation and hygiene. It will also combat child and forced marriage, and work to ensure increased access to comprehensive sexuality education and to contraception and advice, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections. In 2020, focus will also be placed on continuing the work to ensure 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. Sweden will also highlight the 2020 International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife and continue its cooperation with UNESCO to provide comprehensive sexuality education to even more people.
- The Foreign Service will further **enhance its efforts to promote SRHR at all levels**, including by continuing to work to ensure a clear rights perspective within the activities of the UN organisations and other Swedish partners. In 2020, there will be a follow up of the more than 1 000 political and financial commitments to SRHR that were made in connection with the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25) in Nairobi in November 2019. The results of ICPD25 will be fed into the Beijing+25 review process and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- In 2020, the Foreign Service will **push to advance SRHR work 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 continue to develop Sweden's bilateral, regional and global **partnerships** in order to preserve and strengthen international agreements in the area and increase responsibility-sharing for financial support. In 2020, Sweden will continue to cooperate strategically in various ways in order to create new and strong SRHR alliances. Partnerships also include civil society, youth representatives, religious communities and academia, all of whom are important players in SRHR work.

- The Foreign Service will **challenge norms** that make it difficult for women and girls and LGBTI people to enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights. This will be done, for instance, through cooperation with people and groups that are key to influencing these norms. In 2020, Sweden is planning to intensify this work, in part by producing new dialogue material on SRHR.
- The Foreign Service will monitor to ensure that **humanitarian actors** live up to their commitments with regard to SRHR. In 2020, this will for instance 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. Sweden will also work to ensure that the UN Human Rights Council addresses issues of SRHR in humanitarian contexts.

B. The Swedish Foreign Service's internal work will support and manifest 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' (MFA) 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 efforts** around the feminist foreign policy and its methods and results. In 2020, important anniversaries for international gender equality efforts, not least the celebration of Beijing+25 and UN Security Council resolution 1325+20, will be used to further manifest 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 MFA and at the missions abroad, including regarding locally employed staff, 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. The work includes both preventive measures and providing more effective support to people affected by an 'honour'-based system who, when travelling, run the risk of, or are subjected to, forced marriage, genital mutilation or domestic threats and violence. In 2020, the Government made this initiative permanent by incorporating it into its regular activities. Work will continue in this way on, for example, systematic processing and strengthening collaboration and education initiatives in Sweden and at the missions abroad in the relevant regions.
- The Foreign Service will continue to gender mainstream its **security work** and its work on the **properties** of the organisation abroad.

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 the aim of 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. As part of this work, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will continue to review its agencies' policy documents (including instructions, appropriation directions, thematic/regional/bilateral strategies, and other policy documents) to ensure that 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 new policy direction.

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, 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 parts of the EU system specifically tasked with promoting gender equality, such as the European External Action Service Principal Advisor on Gender and UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and other relevant functions, institutions and key actors.

Cooperation between the Nordic countries also provides a platform 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.

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.

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.

2.6 Bilateral actors

The 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 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 interaction with women entrepreneurs and women's business networks, and with legal actors working to strengthen women's economic rights.

3. Tools and methods

3.1 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
- all policy areas.

The Foreign Service will use its own existing and extensive knowledge and that of other Swedish government agencies 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 and girls, and 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 statistics 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 rapidly. 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 gender equality work.

3.3 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 comply with them;
- apply an intersectional perspective to gender analyses and other work;
- produce sex- and age-disaggregated statistics;
- 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, including more women in leadership positions;
- allocate resources to promote gender equality and the rights of women, girls and LGBTI people, including human resources and expertise for action on gender equality.

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

The Foreign Service will cooperate with multilateral actors and use Sweden's board assignments, ownership, 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 LGBTI people as actors, and ensure that available expertise is harnessed.

The Foreign Service will continuously review the composition of its visitors' 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 LGBTI people as actors. Clear sustainable business expectations will apply to companies taking part in promotion trips abroad. This also includes expectations that they 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. Using these alliances and platforms, it 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.

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 influencing tools 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 is a matter of foreign, security, development,

trade or promotion policy. Dialogue with political, military, religious and economic decision-makers is crucial.

Although progress has been significant, efforts to promote the rights of women, girls and LGBTI people often meet with resistance and in certain contexts increasingly active resistance. The Foreign Service will respond to this resistance by standing up for Sweden's values and presenting strong practical arguments and sound analysis. The importance of knowledge, statistics and comparable data in forming and shaping opinion cannot be underestimated. 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 from 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 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 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/or strengthened. This will apply to the follow-up of the Beijing 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 the EU's 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 Gender Action Plan II 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming Lives of Girls and

Women through EU External Relations 2016–2020’ guides gender equality efforts in the EU’s external policy and is therefore important to influence in the right direction. Other key EU processes include the EU’s internal gender equality work and the negotiations of the multiannual financial framework, as well as the EU’s political agreements (such as post-Cotonou), 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, meetings, 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 help to integrate a gender perspective into 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 integrate the gender perspective in other reporting.

3.10 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 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 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 follow-up that are part of the work on 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, 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 the feminist foreign policy forward in different contexts.

Follow-up 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 work 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 produce materials to support this.

In 2020, important anniversaries in international gender equality efforts will be used to further manifest and communicate gender equality issues. This includes the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325.

The Foreign Service will continue to work on and develop different communication concepts that reach out with, and contribute to, the gender equality efforts. One example is WikiGap, which aims to increase the representation of women on Wikipedia by arranging 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.

The regular stories that shine a light on the policy in practice will continue to be published on swemfa.se.

The feminist foreign policy theme page on the MFA Portal and the theme page on government.se are both regularly updated with relevant information and material on gender equality.

4.3 Skills supply and development

Gender equality and diversity are priorities of the Foreign Service's skills supply and 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 online training to support the implementation of Sweden's feminist foreign policy will be reviewed and relaunched. In addition, the SRHR dialogue material ('Dialogue for change: material to support a policy dialogue on SRHR') will also be updated. In 2019, the Foreign Service also developed a training programme to support the work on combating trafficking in human beings and prostitution.

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 (in Swedish). 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 of our 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). The MFA's 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 evaluation 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.

National objectives

The 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:

- an even division of power and influence,
- economic equality between women and men,
- gender equality in education,
- an even division of unpaid work in the home and care work,
- gender equality in 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 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,
 - 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 Gender Action Plan II – ‘Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016–2020’, 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.

