



# EMPOWERMENT RIGHTS RESOURCES

Strategy 2022–2026



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# Introduction

FOKUS is an umbrella organisation that, as of 1 November 2021, have 48 member organisations.

FOKUS builds on long traditions of North-South cooperation with women's organizations to promote women's social, economic and political development. The organisation was established in 1995.

FOKUS strives to advance women's empowerment, rights and access to resources, to increase international involvement on the part of its member organisations, and to ensure that the human rights and participation of women and girls are included in Norway's international development policies.

FOKUS is the only Norwegian organisation that works exclusively at the international level to advance women's rights and gender equality in cooperation with women's organisations. By learning from each other, among and across partner organisations, FOKUS aims to contribute to a stronger, more effective movements to advocate for women's rights and gender equality. FOKUS will work to promote diversity among women and girls (*intersectionally = how social factors such as class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and functional abilities combine to create different kinds of social inequality, vulnerability and discrimination*).

That is required in situations in which fundamental rights for women, especially sexual and reproductive rights and freedom of action for civil society, are under pressure.

## **During the strategy period, FOKUS will strive to:**

- Reduce violence against women and girls.
- Strengthen the overall sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls.
- Protect women's economic rights and participation in legislation, working life and private sector business ventures.
- Ensure that women's rights are protected in all phases of crises and conflicts.
- Draw more attention to, concentrate on and strengthen the inclusion of the gender perspective in the work to combat climate change. These objectives permeate all of FOKUS' activities.
- Strengthen FOKUS as a strong professional and sustainable organisation.

These objectives are to be achieved through a combination of development cooperation work, knowledge-based advocacy and communication activities, in collaboration with and through alliances with other stakeholders.

This strategy have been adopted by FOKUS' member assembly and will be implemented by the FOKUS Board and secretariat.

# Vision

FOKUS' vision is a society based on gender equality and parity, where women's human rights are respected and protected, and where everyone has equal access to participation, regardless of gender.

# Mission

FOKUS is a member-based knowledge and resource centre. Through advocacy and international development cooperation, the organisation will strengthen its international commitment and endeavours to promote women's human rights and participation in society.

# Overall objectives for the strategy period

FOKUS' overall objective is to strengthen women's empowerment, rights and access to resources.

# Target group

The main target group is women and girls who have been unable to realise their rights and potential due to discrimination, oppression and poverty. Factors such as ethnicity, indigenous affiliation, functional disabilities, age, civil status, sexual orientation and gender identity can exacerbate discrimination and marginalisation, meaning they require special attention.

# Rights and frameworks

FOKUS takes a rights-based approach. This means that gender discrimination, poverty and marginalisation are interpreted in a human rights context and as breaches of human rights.

The most important human rights document underpinning FOKUS' strategy is the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). All member states that have ratified the convention have undertaken a commitment to protect women against discrimination, and to protect their civil, social, economic and political rights. Further, the Platform for Action from the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), the Programme of Action from the UN International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994), and the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security are key framework documents, along with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Istanbul Convention and regional normative framework documents are also important as the foundation for work and cooperation taking place in various parts of the world.

In 2015, world leaders adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030. Gender equality is one of the goals of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, but it is a prerequisite for achieving the other goals. All FOKUS' activities during the strategy period are intended to support and adhere to the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" will be the overall goal at societal level for FOKUS' programme and advocacy efforts during the strategy period. FOKUS also contributes significantly to the achievement of a number of the other Sustainable Development Goals.

## Situational analysis

Over the years, the situation of women and girls has benefited from a number of advances, but it has also seen stagnation and very slow progression. Gender equality and opportunities for women and girls to live full and equal lives are still limited or inhibited far more than they should be as a result of gender discrimination in power structures and social, cultural and religious norms. A number of countries are trying to limit the use of already adopted human rights within their own boundaries. They are doing this by referring to their own country's sovereignty and religious traditions, ignoring the fact that human rights are global and universal, and cannot be in conflict with other legislation that would violate human rights. In recent years, we have seen disquieting setbacks, as well as the emergence of different movements such as, for example, neo-liberalism and an anti-gender movement. This affects women and girls, also frequently targeting LGBTQ individuals (lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and queer persons).

Progress has been made in key areas such as access to education and maternal health, but the progress is unevenly divided both among and within countries. Regrettably, it is obvious that progress can easily be reversed. During the Covid-19 pandemic, challenges have emerged in relation to short supplies of pre-natal care and qualified midwifery services, raising the maternal mortality rate.

Women's rights have also faced formidable challenges in other areas during the global pandemic the world has had to live with since early 2020. The consequences of closing services may have ramifications that will not be obvious until access to vaccines reaches other parts of the world.

The sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls have been under tremendous pressure for quite some time. Attempts to retrench further through legislation in a growing number of countries and cutbacks in funding for contraception and access to abortions mean that the right of women and girls to control their own bodies is increasingly becoming a class and poverty issue. Even though the Global Gag Rule has been reversed, the ramifications of funding cuts have had grave consequences for a variety of organisations that work with sexual and reproductive health and rights, impacting at least 26 million women and girls globally, owing to a lack of access to contraception and services.

Gender discrimination and practices entailing the oppression of women continue to thrive, and right-wing populist movements and conservative regimes promote traditional gender roles, undermining women's rights and gender equality. At the same time, the modest freedom of action previously enjoyed by civil society organisations and women's organisations is being further eroded. It is concerning that so-called mainstreaming of discrimination and gender equality is rendering the discrimination of women and girls invisible, leading to a gender blindness that impedes this work. Mainstreaming implies that consideration for gender equality is to be integrated into policy-making in all areas, every step of the way. Far too often, this means that when gender equality is everyone's job, no one takes responsibility.

The pandemic led to a dramatic rise in violence against women and girls, especially domestic violence. This translated into a shadow pandemic, and politicians the world over are still failing to provide the resources needed to fight it. Prostitution and human trafficking are on the rise, and are running rampant without intervention or protection for the victims of the abuse. The Internet and social media have developed into new digital arenas for smear campaigns, exploitation and abuse, which often impact young women and girls. Up until 2030 and achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, this will be one of the greatest challenges, and it calls for genuine action rather than more action plans.

The pandemic has led to a steep rise in the use of digital platforms and in digital participation. Meanwhile, data indicates that women and girls have less access to the Internet and mobile devices than men and boys have. This is often true in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. Limits on access to digital surfaces have consequences on access to information, financial participation and career opportunities.

Freedom and participation are universally considered to be crucial aspects of all of FOKUS' high-priority areas in the strategy.

Women's financial participation and rights are key to many other aspects of sustainable development. Women work in the informal sector of the economy far too often, lacking any safety net or formal rights. They perform unpaid care work that reduce their chances of participating in the formal work force, making it particularly challenging, or impossible.

Climate change and climate adaptation are fraught with far too much gender blindness, even though the available data indicates that the effects are in no way gender neutral. Among other things, these issues impact women who work in agriculture as well as in areas where natural disasters occur. Women and girls are usually more severely affected than men.

# How to achieve lasting change?

Gender discrimination legitimises privileges and the skewed distribution of power, resting on a foundation of social and cultural norms and traditions that must be challenged. FOKUS' overall theory of change rests on taking a human rights-based approach to development. The goal of all these efforts is to realise one or more human right(s). A key aspect of this approach is, on the one hand, to improve the authorities' capacity to protect the rights of women and girls and, on the other, to ensure that women and girls learn more about their rights and have the capacity to insist that they be respected. In other words, women and girls are the most important factors of change affecting the work to improve their rights and empowerment in society. A human rights-based approach to development also implies giving priority to marginalised groups in accordance with the fundamental principle in the Sustainable Development Goals to leave no one behind. By combining development cooperation in the form of programmes with communication and advocacy work, FOKUS aspires to pave the way for the realisation of women's rights in actual practice, creating change from the bottom up.

Access to learning, knowledge and information is decisive for enabling women to participate more actively and to create lasting change. Women's organisations play a vital part in raising women's awareness and in improving their access to knowledge. The organisation of women's interests and the strengthening of women's organisations provide a foundation for mobilisation and advocacy at the local, national and international levels. FOKUS takes a comprehensive approach to change, striving to strengthen women's access to rights, resources and empowerment on several levels and across several axes: Individuals, local communities, civil society organisations, business and industry, local and national authorities and international organisations and institutions.

Targeted initiatives to improve women's lives may create a better platform for organisation and mobilisation, eliminating obstacles to women's genuine participation in politics and community life. Measures to reduce violence against women and girls, or to provide more assurance and support to women who are victims of violence are often decisive for encouraging women to be more active participants in society. Measures that improve the chances of women and girls to control their own bodies and reproduction help remove impediments to women's participation in both working life and politics. Activities that improve women's chances to earn their own income, to have jobs that safeguard their rights in the same way as men's rights, and activities that strengthen their rights to capital, inheritance and property help improve women's financial independence. General development work requires that climate change and climate change adaptation measures be integrated into other efforts. Measures that take account of the special needs of women and girls during times of war, conflict and natural disasters will pave the way for the more active participation of women in rebuilding and social development. This also applies to perspectives connected to fleeing and forced migration, and to women and girls who are particularly vulnerable in such situations in a wide variety of ways.

Lasting change depends on good general framework conditions and laws. By documenting and systematising their own experiences and solutions, women and women's organisations achieve more gravitas and legitimacy in political advocacy activities.

To achieve gender equality and empower women and girls (SDG 5), which is the overall objective at the societal level, it is crucial for FOKUS to collaborate with a wide variety of actors at all levels.



No organisation can achieve gender equality by itself. In addition, a large number of general measures must be implemented in all relevant fields. During the strategy period, FOKUS will give priority to working in four broad thematic areas that are essential for achieving equality between women and men, girls and boys, as outlined below.

## Thematic priorities

Political participation is both a goal in itself and a prerequisite for realising the human rights of women and girls. It is essential to organise and mobilise the interests of women and girls to achieve the objectives in each of the thematic priority areas during the strategy period. FOKUS will actively participate in the efforts to encourage greater participation by women and girls in all their diversity, at every stage of life, and to protect women human rights activists, as well as others who put themselves at risk to advance the human rights and participation of women and girls.

The strategy also includes efforts aimed at girls. Women and girls who have been exposed to violence all their lives and girls under the age of 18 are particularly vulnerable to certain kinds of violence and abuse, including sexual violence, sexual exploitation, human trafficking and harmful customs such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. Further, in many countries, it is especially difficult for girls under the age of 18 to achieve protection for their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including access to information, relevant products and services related to contraception and abortion, among other things. Against this backdrop, FOKUS is of the opinion that it is crucial to include the perspective of girls in the efforts to combat violence and promote SRHR, and that legislation, general framework conditions and campaigns must explicitly include girls. Since they are discriminated in legislation and in practices related to financial rights, girls need more visibility, and they need to be included in the work to promote peace and security. Climate change efforts intended to be carried out across thematic priorities have consequences for women and girls alike.

The Nordic countries can refer to their own experience and research-based results in the global efforts to promote gender equality. As a Norwegian organisation, FOKUS is uniquely qualified to influence Norway's foreign and development policy. The Norwegian Government's Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Foreign and Development Policy is due to be revised in 2022. In future, a new plan must be used as an actual tool, offering clear financial parameters and priorities to move the human rights and participation of women and girls higher up on the foreign and development policy agenda.

### **FOKUS will give priority to the following thematic areas during the 2022-2026 strategy period:**

- Reducing violence against women and girls.
- Protecting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls.
- Promoting the economic rights and participation of women and girls.
- Protecting the rights of women and girls in conflict and crisis.
- Seeing to it that the gender-related consequences of climate change are integrated consistently where relevant.

# The right of women and girls to a life without violence

**Objective for the strategy period:** Reduce violence against women and girls.

Violence against women and girls is a structural problem that impedes gender equality and democracy. Violence can be physical, psychological, economic and/or sexual in nature. It may be rooted in tradition, culture or religion; it may be a strategic tool in conflict situations, or it may be among the practices of a criminal network. FOKUS addresses its efforts at different expressions of violence against women and girls, i.e., domestic violence, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, prostitution, human trafficking, forced labour and sexualised violence in conflicts.

**FOKUS wants to mobilise and work to:**

- Increase knowledge about violence against women and girls, and its consequences.
- Change gender-discriminating social norms that lead to the acceptance of violence in society and impede gender equality.
- Include and integrate measures to combat digital violence, which represents a growing challenge.
- Support decisions and enforce legislation that ensure women and girls the right to a life without violence, and criminalise perpetrators.
- Support measures for women and girls who are victims of violence.
- Implement conventions, national and international legislation, and other framework documents that contribute to the fight against different types of violence and harassment.
- Add to knowledge about climate change and the connected rise in gender-based violence and do more to counter and eliminate them.

**FOKUS will achieve these objectives through:**

- Cooperating with partners to better support women and girls who are victims of violence, and to mobilise local communities against gender-based violence.
- Engaging in communication and advocacy activities to disseminate information about and raise political support for the right of women and girls to lives without violence.
- Building alliances to mobilise against gender-based violence.
- Cooperating with partners and building alliances linked to gender-based violence and connections to the consequences of climate change.

# The right of women and girls to control their own bodies

**Objective for the strategy period:** Strengthen the general sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of women and girls.

The lack of information and comprehensive sexual education has dire consequences for women and girls the world over. Insufficient access to contraception, healthcare services and safe, legal abortions adds to the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe terminations of pregnancies. The cost of pharmaceuticals and contraception far too often makes access into a poverty and class issue.

**FOKUS wants to mobilise and work to:**

- Increase access to contraception, and to safe, legal abortions.
- Decriminalise abortion.
- Ensure that Norway actively promotes and supports the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls in its development policy.
- Ensure that sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are not grounds for discrimination.
- Ensure that women can undergo pregnancy and childbirth without undue risk.
- Introduce legislation that safeguards women's right to decide when and if she wants to have children.
- Ensure safe pre- and post-natal healthcare services.
- Provide universal comprehensive sexual education.
- Increase knowledge about consequences of climate change and the linkages to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

**FOKUS will achieve these objectives through:**

- Cooperating with partners to improve the access of women and girls to sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Engaging in communication and advocacy activities to disseminate information about and promote political support for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls.
- Building alliances to mobilise support for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls.
- Including the climate perspective in FOKUS' work, where relevant.

# The economic rights and participation of women and girls

**Objective for the strategy period:** Ensure that more women and girls see their economic rights fulfilled and participate in economic, social and working life.

Globally women are over-represented among the poorest segments of the population. They hold the most unstable, poorly paid jobs, and they have less access than men to land resources, property and economic resources. Women are frequently under-represented or absent entirely at management level and in strategic decision-making fora. Equal rights to education, inheritance, property and financial services are necessary, but are not in themselves sufficient to alter the balance of economic power between the genders. Women's wages, working conditions and right to join unions are equally important. Business development and investments in emerging markets comprise a larger percentage of Norwegian and international development policies than before, and we see that women and men are influenced differently. These types of investments and efforts represent opportunities for jobs and economic development, at the same time as they represent a risk to people and the environment. FOKUS wants to boost awareness of how the risk that affects women can be identified and dealt with by the business community and authorities.

Climate change and climate change adaptation entail clear gender-related consequences. They also impact opportunities to access information and access to resources, and they have profound consequences when climate-related disasters occur.

## **FOKUS wants to mobilise and work to:**

- Promote equal rights to financial services, inheritance and property for women and men.
- Ensure decent working conditions and a living wage for women.
- Protect women's right and opportunity to join trade unions.
- Ensure that women's rights and gender equality are key parts of Norway's global industrial and trade policy.
- Use international normative frameworks actively to protect the human rights of women and girls in business and industry, civil society and government.
- Promote statutory regulation of the business community's responsibility for the human rights of women and men.
- Promote clear visibility and inclusion of the gender perspective in climate change adaptation measures and measures related to climate change.
- Encourage more inclusion and access to digital tools to counteract the lack of digital literacy among women and girls.

## **FOKUS will achieve these objectives through:**

- Cooperating with partners to improve women's financial independence.
- Engaging in communication and advocacy activities to improve the economic rights of women and girls.
- Building alliances to achieve better statutory regulation of corporate social responsibility for human rights, using the tool SheDil.
- Developing cooperation with different actors involving the use of the net-based tool SheDil.
- Building digital skills as part of the efforts to strengthen women's economic rights and participation.
- Advocating for visibility and clarification of the gender perspective and its consequences related to climate change and climate change adaptation.

# The rights of women and girls in conflict and crisis

**Objective for the strategy period:** The participation and leadership of women and girls in peacekeeping and reconciliation work are being strengthened, women are participating more in preventing and responding to crises and conflicts, and the rights of women and girls are being safeguarded in crisis and conflict.

Conflict and crisis affect women and men in different ways. Given their roles as caregivers for children, the elderly and the sick, and as growers of food and stewards of natural resources, women are more strongly affected than men. Violence and other types of discrimination against women and girls escalate in conflict and refugee situations.

Post-conflict transition is critical in ensuring lasting and just peace. Injustices committed against women and girls are included, regardless of whether they apply to gender-based violence and abuse, or breaches of financial rights like the right to housing, land and property.

Preventing conflicts and crises and their consequences can mitigate human suffering and destruction. The depletion of nature and natural resources increase the risk of natural disasters and future conflicts over resources. In many societies, women are the most important growers of food and stewards of forestry resources. Women's experience-based knowledge must be incorporated into preventive efforts at all levels, from international climate negotiations to local plans for climate change adaptation.

## **FOKUS wants to:**

- Include women and girls and incorporate their rights and needs into all phases of conflict and crisis (prevention, response and reconstruction).
- Ensure that acts of gender-based violence and sexual abuse in times of conflict and crisis, as well as in refugee and migration situations, are reported and prosecuted.
- Safeguard the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls in all phases of conflict and crisis, not least in refugee and forced migration situations.
- Ensure recognition of women's access to and right to land and natural resources during the reconstruction and reconciliation phase in the aftermath of conflict and crisis.
- Promote the active inclusion of women and girls in peace processes, peace negotiations and in the implementation of peace treaties.
- Enact and implement the UN Resolution on Women, Peace and Security and the UN Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security.
- See to it that national and international climate processes and initiatives embody a gender perspective.
- Ensure that women are more resilient to the consequences of climate change.

## **FOKUS will achieve these objectives through:**

- Cooperating with partners on the legal and practical follow up of women and girls who are or have been subjected to violence and abuse in conflicts and strive to ensure that women and girls participate in peace processes.
- Organising communication and advocacy activities to protect women's human rights in all phases of a crisis, including humanitarian operations, and to ensure that the Norwegian authorities retain leadership and continue initiatives in their work with the Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.
- Building alliances and participating in networks that follow up UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security on Women, and Youth, Peace and Security, incorporating the gender perspective into humanitarian efforts, as well as into work related to climate change adaptation and the consequences of climate change.

# FOKUS as a strong, professional and sustainable organisation

**Objective for the strategy period:** : FOKUS is a sustainable organisation that enjoys staunch support among its member organisations and is in a robust financial situation. FOKUS is known as a reliable, innovative professional organisation that finishes what it begins, and as a place of work that safeguards its employees, offering them good development opportunities in a safe environment.

## **Situational analysis**

In 2022, FOKUS will apply to Norad for a new financial framework agreement for a five-year period. An application for a new cooperation agreement with Norad is based on a requirement for a co-payment of 10 per cent of all directly operated cooperative programmes. When the member organisations have projects that are part of an overall cooperative programme, the copayment requirement is 5 per cent. As an umbrella organisation for Norwegian women's organisations and groups, FOKUS represents great diversity, embodying a wide variety of expertise while having the capacity to engage in its own development projects under a framework agreement with Norad. Requirements for administration and fiscal management have become extensive and professionalised, requiring formidable expertise and capacity. This calls for discussions with member organisations about what project work should include and the degree of management that should rest with the organisations themselves, as well as discussions of principles with Norad and the political leadership about how umbrella organisations' programme activities should actually be defined and carried out. The demanding requirements for copayments and expertise posed to member organisations that would like to have their own projects mean that only a few of them feel they have genuine opportunities to run their own projects. The Norwegian authorities clearly want a strong development profile in relation to women and gender equality, at the same time as the conditions attached to copayments make it exceedingly difficult for an umbrella organisation like FOKUS to cooperate with partners in the countries in which we have programmes.

This must also be viewed in a global context, where women's organisations are under pressure and underfunded when it comes to carrying out rights work and projects. Women's organisations are subject to pressure from outsiders – the authorities, certain religious actors, conservative attitudes and pressures on the rights of women and girls.

The diversity in FOKUS' member organisations calls for more attention to be devoted to taking different approaches to cooperation, technical assistance, and FOKUS' role as a centre for knowledge and resources. Stocktaking in 2021 indicated that 20 of the member organisations had secretariats, eight had one employee and 20 are operated solely on a voluntary basis.

# FOKUS as a members' organisation

The member organisations provide expertise, experience and engagement for FOKUS. New arenas for involving member organisations will be further developed during the strategy period to strengthen members' involvement in and ownership of FOKUS' work. This must be done on a broad front to reach members throughout the country.

## **FOKUS wants to:**

- Encourage member organisations to be more proactive in decision-making processes at FOKUS.
- Provide a variety of services related to the role of being a knowledge and resource centre.
- Identify new arenas to enable the member organisations to develop further.
- Engage in coordinated, effective advocacy work to promote women's rights and gender equality at the international level.

## **FOKUS will achieve these objectives through:**

- Serving as a knowledge and resource centre for the member organisations in high-priority policy areas, development cooperation administration, communication and advocacy work.
- Further developing membership-based working groups/groups of experts to cover the four main target areas listed in the strategy.

# FOKUS' financial situation

FOKUS needs to reinforce and expand its revenue base, stepping up its collaboration with partners to co-fund programme cooperation and exploring possibilities for partners to include their resources from other financial donors in the definition of what constitutes a co-payment when working with FOKUS. FOKUS needs to target its efforts to address potential donors in accordance with plans adopted by the Board for income and financial cooperation. Operating with a 10 per cent copayment will continue to present challenges. It is important to secure financial cooperation and contributions from several different donors at the national and international levels alike in order to have a broader financial base and to be less vulnerable to changes in political priorities.

Partners in the countries where FOKUS has programmes deal with different donors with different framework conditions, reporting deadlines and rules for governance. FOKUS will help examine opportunities for possible coordination to make the work easier for the organisations with which we cooperate.

## **FOKUS wants to:**

- Further develop the work to make the organisation less dependent of a single source of income.
- Increase independent revenues.
- Increase the number of financial donors.

## **FOKUS will achieve these objectives through:**

- Following a plan for the mobilisation of resources to contribute to higher revenues and more sources of revenue.
- Increasing and retaining regular donors among private individuals and enterprises alike.
- Engaging in targeted efforts to further develop co-funding.

# FOKUS as a professional actor

FOKUS is still considered the foremost advocate for international women's issues in Norway. As a knowledge and resource centre, FOKUS is to have the knowledge and expertise needed to integrate women's rights and gender equality into a broader development and humanitarian context.

## **FOKUS wants to:**

- Enhance learning and exchange activities across the organisation: Between members, between members and partners, and between partners.
- Provide political input on international women's issues to the Norwegian authorities and other development policy actors.
- Increase the understanding of how civil society, women's organisations, networks and other organisations make a difference in the work to realise women's human rights.

## **FOKUS will achieve these objectives through:**

- Designing new programme guidelines for the next framework agreement period (from 2023).
- Promoting more knowledge-sharing and learning for FOKUS' secretariat, member organisations and partners.
- Engaging continuously in political advocacy activities.



**FACTS**



**UN Women's Convention (CEDAW)**, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979. The Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women defines what is considered as discrimination against women and stipulates requirements for national measures that must be taken to end discrimination. Although almost all UN member states have ratified the Convention, many of them have included reservations on important provisions, citing national legislation or religion as justification.

**The Platform for Action from the UN World Conference on Women** in Beijing (1995). It has 12 thematic areas, which remain equally relevant today. The text of the Platform for Action is used as the basis for requirements posed in national and international fora.

**Programme of Action** from the UN International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994). The programme contains text on sexual and reproductive health and rights that have been ground-breaking.

**UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security** (1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242). UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was adopted in 2000. It marked the first time the UN's supreme governing body for peace and security adopted a resolution recognising that women and men are affected differently by wars and conflicts, that women must be protected against violence in conflicts and that women's participation and rights are decisive for international peace and security. SRC 1325 and subsequent resolutions stipulate requirements for the inclusion of women in preventive efforts, in peace processes, in providing protection against sexual violence and abuse, affirm that violence and abuse against women in situations of conflict are war crimes, and confirm women's right to access the legal system and services. All Security Council resolutions are binding on UN Member States.

**The Palermo Protocol, 2000**, UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children. Art. 9 Prevention of trafficking in persons<sup>9.5</sup> Discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, which leads to trafficking.

## **UN Sustainable Development Goal no. 5**

### **Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- 5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the outcome documents from their respective review conferences.
- 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- 5.b Adopt the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.



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