

# Handbook Sweden's feminist foreign policy



Government Offices of Sweden  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs



Handbook  
Sweden's feminist foreign policy



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# Foreword

In October 2014, Sweden became the first country in the world to launch a feminist foreign policy. This means applying a systematic gender equality perspective throughout the whole foreign policy agenda.

This handbook should be a resource for international work relating to gender equality and all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. It contains a selection of methods and experiences that can provide examples and inspiration for further work of the Swedish Foreign Service, other parts of the civil service and society as a whole. The handbook also describes the first four years of working with a feminist foreign policy. Thereby, it responds to the considerable national and international interest in this policy.

The feminist foreign policy begins and ends with reality. The policy shall be based on facts and statistics about girls' and women's everyday lives, and shall produce results in people's lives. Otherwise, it loses its relevance.

The work with the feminist foreign policy is structured according to three Rs: Rights, Representation and

Resources. This is the basis for the analysis of the conditions where we work. What do the statistics say about the differences between women and men, girls and boys? Do they have the same rights – to education, work, marriage, divorce and inheritance? Are women represented where decisions that affect them are made – in parliaments, on boards and in legal systems? Is gender equality taken into consideration when resources are allocated – in central government budgets or development projects?

The policy has achieved significant results. We have initiated a network of women mediators who are active all around the world. We have championed issues relating to women, peace and security within the UN Security Council. We have campaigned for women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, and for greater access to midwives, as well as for increased female representation in peace processes, legal systems and in the world's biggest digital reference work, Wikipedia.

One important starting point for our work is that gender equality is not a

separate women's issue – it benefits everyone. Research shows that gender equal societies enjoy better health, stronger economic growth and higher security. It also shows that gender equality contributes to peace, and that peace negotiations in which women have taken part have a better chance of being sustainable.

This handbook covers activities carried out by thousands of people all over the world. Therefore, it can only include a selection of everything that has been

done and is being done, not least since the methods employed are constantly being refined based on new knowledge and new analyses.

With its feminist foreign policy, Sweden's feminist government has taken another step towards realising its vision of a gender equal world. By sharing knowledge and experiences, we can all contribute towards promoting global gender equality at a faster pace. Change is possible.

**Isabella Lövin**  
Minister for International  
Development Cooperation  
and Climate

**Margot Wallström**  
Minister for  
Foreign Affairs

**Ann Linde**  
Minister for  
EU Affairs and Trade





Sweden is the first country in the world to pursue a feminist foreign policy. The policy was launched in 2014 in response to the discrimination and systematic subordination that still mark the daily lives of countless women and girls around the world. The feminist foreign policy entails applying a systematic gender equality perspective throughout foreign policy. One starting point is that gender equality is an objective in itself, but it is also essential for achieving the Government's other overall objectives, such as peace, security and sustainable development.

This handbook describes how Sweden's feminist foreign policy was launched, gathered pace and was developed into a hallmark for Swedish dialogue in a world characterised by gender inequality. The handbook is based on experiences from the work of the Swedish Foreign Service, and focuses on the practical implementation of the policy. It is intended to support the Swedish Foreign Service in its ongoing work, while also satisfying the considerable national and international interest in Sweden's feminist foreign policy.

This handbook is divided up into seven sections, combining methods with examples of what the policy has achieved. The introductory chapter describes what Sweden's feminist foreign policy involves and is based on. The next section reviews the methods used to ensure the impact of the policy in the Swedish Foreign Service. The following chapter provides examples of how the feminist foreign policy works with norm change and mobilisation. Then follows a chapter with examples of overall methods that have been used within the three policy areas encompassed by Swedish foreign policy – foreign and security policy, development cooperation, and trade and promotion policy. The two concluding chapters take a closer look at operations at country level and describe the work involved in pursuing a contentious issue.



## 2.1 The core of the feminist foreign policy

Essentially, Sweden's feminist foreign policy is a working method and a perspective that takes three Rs as its starting point and is based on a fourth R. The implication is that the Swedish Foreign Service, in all its parts, shall strive to strengthen all women's and girls' Rights, Representation and Resources, based on the Reality in which they live. Sweden's feminist foreign policy is a transformative agenda that aims to change structures and enhance the visibility of women and girls as actors. Discrimination and gender inequality in all life's stages and contexts shall be counteracted. The policy is based on intersectionality, which means taking into account the fact that people have different living conditions, levels of influence and needs.

"Throughout the world, women are neglected in terms of resources, representation and rights. This is the simple reason why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy – with full force, all around the world."<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström



<sup>1</sup> Statement of Government Policy on Foreign Affairs 2018

"The most controversial issue is also the most basic: the right to decide over your own body, sexuality and reproduction. There are still many women who are unable to decide whom to marry, whom to have sex with or when to have children. This is absurd, and should be relegated to the annals of history."<sup>2</sup>

Minister for International Development Cooperation  
and Climate Isabella Lövin

## The Three Rs

**Rights:** The Swedish Foreign Service shall promote all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights, including by combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their freedom of action.

**Representation:** The Swedish Foreign Service shall promote women's participation and influence in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, and shall seek dialogue with women representatives at all levels, including in civil society.

**Resources:** The Swedish Foreign Service shall work to ensure that resources are allocated to promote gender equality and equal opportunities for all women and girls to enjoy human rights. The Swedish Foreign Service shall also promote targeted measures for different target groups.

### Whose rights? <sup>3</sup>

- 104 countries around the world have laws preventing women from carrying out certain jobs (for example in mining, manufacturing, the construction industry, energy, agriculture, water and transport).
- In 18 countries, men can legally prevent their wives from working.
- 59 countries have no laws forbidding sexual harassment in the workplace.
- 123 countries have no laws regarding sexual harassment in education.
- 37 countries have no laws to protect pregnant employees from being dismissed.
- 45 economies have no laws to protect women against violence in the home. i hemmet.

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank, "Women, Business and the Law 2018"

## Representation – what is the current situation?

- Statistics from 2017 show that there are only 17 women heads of state in all the world's nations. In a survey carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in March 2018, 193 countries were ranked based on the proportion of women in parliament, with Rwanda, Bolivia and Cuba topping the list. Sweden came seventh, with 43.6 per cent women.<sup>4</sup>
- A study of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 revealed that only nine per cent of negotiators were women. Of those who signed peace agreements, more than 96 per cent were men.<sup>5</sup>

"Women must actively participate in all decision-making processes at all levels and be active in defining priorities and resource allocation, in times of peace and in times of war."<sup>6</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

4 [archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm](http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)

5 [www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UNW-GLOBAL-STUDY-1325-2015%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UNW-GLOBAL-STUDY-1325-2015%20(1).pdf)

6 [www.regeringen.se/tal/2016/04/tal-av-utrikesministern-pa-georgetown-university-institute-for-women-peace-and-security-i-washington/](http://www.regeringen.se/tal/2016/04/tal-av-utrikesministern-pa-georgetown-university-institute-for-women-peace-and-security-i-washington/)

“Getting more women into business and trade is sound economic policy. Gender equality contributes to growth in all countries, regardless of the level of development.”<sup>7</sup>

Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde



## Equal distribution of resources

- Women own less than 20 per cent of the world’s land resources. In many countries, women do not have the legal right to own land.<sup>8</sup>
- Globally, 300 million fewer women own a mobile phone compared to men.<sup>9</sup> This limits women’s opportunities to access information and their participation in and access to services such as credit which, in many countries, are now provided via mobile telephony.

7 [www.regeringen.se/tal/2017/12/sveriges-anforande-vid-wtos-ministerial-conference-framfort-av-eu-och-handelsminister-ann-linde/](http://www.regeringen.se/tal/2017/12/sveriges-anforande-vid-wtos-ministerial-conference-framfort-av-eu-och-handelsminister-ann-linde/)

8 [www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/women-own-less-than-20-of-the-worlds-land-its-time-to-give-them-equal-property-rights/](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/women-own-less-than-20-of-the-worlds-land-its-time-to-give-them-equal-property-rights/)

9 [www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/connected-women/](http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/connected-women/) och-handelsminister-ann-linde/

International frameworks that form the basis for Sweden's commitment – a selection

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women).
- The declarations and actions plans from the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing and the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, as well as the final documents from the follow-up conferences.
- The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and subsequent resolutions.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the agreements from the conferences on financing for development.
- The EU action plan for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU's external relations (2016–2020).

## 2.2 The framework for the feminist foreign policy

Sweden's foreign policy has long been characterised by a clear rights and gender equality perspective. However, the feminist foreign policy represents an increase in ambitions. The policy is also an integral part of the work of a feminist government and a continuation of many years of national gender equality policy

Sweden made a name for itself early on with its progressive gender equality policy featuring social reforms to strengthen women and girls at every stage of life and in all forums, such as separate taxation, generous childcare provisions and shared, gender-neutral parental leave. The right to abortion, which was introduced in 1974, also helped to reinforce women's rights. The Swedish Gender Equality Act was introduced in 1979 to create an equal labour market that is free from discrimination. Alongside these initiatives, a progressive movement led by women also emerged. Issues that had previously been seen as 'women's issues' appeared on the general agenda for Swedish domestic policy. Commissions were appointed which emphasised Sweden's overall gender equality objective: *"Women and men shall have the same power to shape society and their own lives."*<sup>10</sup>

Swedish gender research gathered pace and became an established academic discipline.

Another key component in this systematic approach was the introduction of gender mainstreaming as a working method. This was introduced in the 1990s, and has continued to be developed and confirmed since then.<sup>11</sup> Gender mainstreaming involves a gender equality perspective being included in all policies that affect people's conditions, so that all women and men, girls and boys can live equal lives.<sup>12</sup>

Gender mainstreaming work has intensified further in recent years. This is illustrated, for example, by a sharper focus on gender equality within the central government budget. The Government has also expanded its Gender Mainstreaming in Government Agencies (JiM) programme to include almost 60 Swedish agencies.<sup>13</sup> On 1 January 2018, the Government established the Swedish Gender Equality Agency to contribute towards the effective, structured and cohesive implementation of gender equality policy.<sup>14</sup>

Sweden regularly tops rankings of the world's gender equality – from the European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) ranking of gender equality in the EU to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap. This demonstrates that Sweden's policy has been successful in many ways when it comes to promoting gender equality, but significant challenges still remain.

10 [www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2017/01/mer-om-jamstalldhetspolitikens-mal/](http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2017/01/mer-om-jamstalldhetspolitikens-mal/)

11 Bill 1993/94:147

12 [www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/jamstalldhet/jamstalldhetsintegrering/](http://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/jamstalldhet/jamstalldhetsintegrering/)

13 The Gender Mainstreaming in Government Agencies initiative ('Jämställdhetsintegrering i myndigheter' in Swedish, abbreviated to JiM) has its own website, and involves agencies including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA).

14 Dir. 2016:108

## Feminist foreign policy – part of a bigger feminist structure

The Government Communication “Power, goals and agency – a feminist policy for a gender-equal future” was launched 2016. In this Communication, the Swedish Government presented its focus for gender equality policy, including an organisation for implementation, a monitoring system, a ten-year national strategy for preventing and combating men’s violence against women, and a new structure for sub-goals. The starting point for this work is as follows:

“Sweden has a feminist Government. The Government’s gender equality policy is based on the overall objective that women and men shall have the same power to shape society and their own lives. Gender equality is a question of justice and an important part of building society. Gender equality also contributes towards economic growth by making use of the potential of both women and men.

The Government’s gender equality policy takes as its starting point the knowledge and understanding that gender and power are created and maintained structurally in all sections of society. Gender is of fundamental importance to people’s opportunities and conditions, at individual, organisational and societal levels, and at every stage of life. Sweden still features significant differences in conditions for life between women and men. There are systematic differences between women and men when it comes to power and influence, education, work, position, income, pay and careers, unpaid housework and caring, exposure to violence and health. The Government’s gender equality policy therefore aims to create justice between women and men, girls and boys. The gender equality policy is also a central part of the work to ensure full respect for Sweden’s international human rights undertakings. Sweden shall be a role model for gender equality, both nationally and internationally.”<sup>15</sup>

15 "Makt, mål och myndighet – feministisk politik för en jämställd framtid" ("Power, goals and agency – a feminist policy for a gender-equal future"), Government Communication 2016/17:10

16 [www.regeringen.se/informationsmaterial/2018/02/2018-ars-handlingsplan-for-en-feministisk-utrikespolitik/](http://www.regeringen.se/informationsmaterial/2018/02/2018-ars-handlingsplan-for-en-feministisk-utrikespolitik/)

17 [www.prb.org/womens-economic-empowerment/](http://www.prb.org/womens-economic-empowerment/)

18 [www.peaceisloud.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Why-Women-in-Politics.pdf](http://www.peaceisloud.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Why-Women-in-Politics.pdf)

19 See e.g. [www.unwomen.se/demokrati-manskliga-rattigheter-och-kvinnors-politiska-egenmakt/](http://www.unwomen.se/demokrati-manskliga-rattigheter-och-kvinnors-politiska-egenmakt/)

## 2.3 Objective areas for Sweden's feminist foreign policy

Sweden's feminist foreign policy shall contribute to gender equality and all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. In order to implement this, the Swedish Foreign Service has drawn up an action plan that is updated annually, with six long-term external objectives.<sup>16</sup>

The six external objectives in the 2015–2018 action plan. The Swedish Foreign Service shall contribute to all women's and girls':

1. Full enjoyment of human rights
2. Freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence
3. Participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding
4. Political participation and influence in all areas of society
5. Economic rights and empowerment
6. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

These are individual objectives, but they also contribute to the same overall objective: a gender equal world. The objectives are also mutually reinforcing and are dependent on each other. By improving women's and girls' access to sexual and reproductive rights, positive changes can for example be observed in women's economic empowerment.<sup>17</sup> Research also shows that an increase in women's political participation and having more women in decision-making positions leads to more progressive social reforms.<sup>18</sup> Another example is that stronger legislation for women's rights leads to increased participation for women in society.<sup>19</sup> The objectives have intentionally been set at a high level in order to enable several policy areas and tools to contribute to them with their combined strength. This has also made it possible to use focus areas that have helped to highlight challenges within the wider objective areas.

Since 2017, the action plan also includes a seventh objective involving the Swedish Foreign Service's internal work supporting and manifesting the implementation of the policy. This work is described in chapter three, while the work relating to the six external objectives is described below.

### 2.3.1 Full enjoyment of human rights

The Swedish Foreign Service shall work for all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights in its multilateral, regional and bilateral work, and within and through the EU. Discrimination against women and girls affects, among other things, their rights to education, work, security, political participation, family life and control over their own bodies. Gender discrimination is also reinforced by discrimination and vulnerability linked to other factors such as poverty, conflict, migration, climate effects, ethnic origin, functional variation and sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sweden uses a number of different platforms, roles and tools in this work. This is done, for example, by regularly publishing country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and by supporting the work carried out by civil society for women and girls. Sweden has also continued to sharpen the gender equality focus of its development cooperation, including via a new global strategy. Sweden has for example:

- Championed the inclusion of sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights in the General Assembly's resolution on child, early and forced marriage.
- Worked to strengthen the enjoyment of human rights of migrant and refugee women and girls.
- Undertaken concrete measures for integrating a gender equality perspective and measures against sexual and gender-related violence into humanitarian efforts and the Humanitarian Reform process.

## Sweden's main message:

- The nations of the world have undertaken in legally binding conventions to respect, defend and fulfil all people's human rights, without any discrimination.
- Those countries that have not yet ratified the human rights conventions should consider doing so.
- Those countries that have made reservations infringing women's and girls' rights should repeal these, as they contravene the purposes and intentions of the conventions.
- Religion, culture, customs or traditions can never legitimise infringements of women's and girls' human rights.
- The declaration and the action plan from the UN's fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 constitute political undertakings to strengthen women's rights and living conditions. All countries should put the plan into action, including through legislation.

### 2.3.2 Freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence

Freedom from violence is a prerequisite for development. Domestic violence, where the partner is the perpetrator, is the leading cause of injuries to women. 125 countries have legislated against domestic violence, but 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not punishable.<sup>20</sup> In all countries, women and girls run the risk of being exposed to gender-related or sexual violence or harassment in public spaces, which seriously limits their freedom of movement. In the same way, women's opportunities for influence and political participation are limited by the harassment directed towards women who are active in public forums, such as politicians, human rights campaigners and journalists. All forms of violence against women and girls affect both the individual and society at large, and are a barrier to gender equality and development. In many conflicts, women and girls are direct targets of sexualised and gender-related violence. The perpetrators are rarely punished.

Gender-related violence occurs in all societies and countries, regardless of levels of income or education. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than one in three

women have been subjected to physical or sexual violence by a partner and/or sexual violence by someone other than a partner. WHO also estimates that 30–60 per cent of all women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual attacks at some point in their lives.<sup>21</sup> In 2014, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) published an estimate of what gender-related violence costs countries in the EU annually, reaching a figure of EUR 256bn, 87 per cent of which can be attributed to men's violence against women.<sup>22</sup>

Among other initiatives, Sweden has worked to raise awareness of and counteract destructive masculinity norms, strengthen countries' ability to bring proceedings against perpetrators, assist victims of crimes and rehabilitate soldiers. Sweden has also contributed to better knowledge on the link between the uncontrolled spread of weapons and violence against women, and has contributed to several actors having joined the work against gender-related violence in crises, carrying out more than 300 measures in total. Sweden has for example:

- Supported organisations within civil society and other actors working with gender-based violence, including through support centres, helplines and legal support for vulnerable women, as well as working with perpetrators and political influence.
- Been the largest donor to UN Women and UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.
- Carried out extensive work to highlight the link between destructive masculinity norms, violence and conflict.

### Sweden's main message:

- All people have a right to bodily integrity and freedom from violence. All forms of violence are serious attacks against human rights and must be prevented and punished, both in times of peace and in times of conflict.
- Influencing negative and stereotypical masculinity norms is important, as is changing attitudes and behaviours among men and boys who represent and act based on such norms.
- Violence prevents women and girls from enjoying human rights, benefiting from education and becoming social actors.
- Sweden works to strengthen accountability and to combat impunity for violence against women and girls.
- Gender-based violence involves an enormous amount of suffering for those affected. It also has considerable negative socio-economic consequences.

20 UNWOMEN, "Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice"

21 [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women)

22 [eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/eiges-studies-gender-based-violence/estimating-costs-gender-based-violence-european-union](http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/eiges-studies-gender-based-violence/estimating-costs-gender-based-violence-european-union)

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

In countries affected by conflict, women work for peace every day, with good results but often with little recognition. Studies indicate that inclusive peace processes are the most sustainable, but formal and international peace work remain unequal.

Sweden has contributed to increased involvement of women in peace processes in Latin America as well as in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and has both established and encouraged networks of women mediators. Sweden has also made the women, peace and security agenda (UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions) a main priority for its time on the UN Security Council, championed the work in the EU and adopted a national action plan for Sweden's implementation of the agenda. Sweden has also for example:

- Contributed to increased involvement of women in peace efforts in countries such as Colombia, Mali, Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Somalia through political, technical and financial support. Sweden's work has, among other things, contributed to Colombia's peace agreement featuring a clear gender equality

perspective and thereby being able to serve as a model for others.

- Supported Syrian women's involvement in political processes at local and international levels, and the opposition's Women's Advisory Committee (WAC).
- Contributed to other countries drawing up and implementing national action plans for women, peace and security, including in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Canada, Myanmar, the Czech Republic and Sudan.

## Sweden's main message:

- Inclusive peace processes offer opportunities for more possibilities in finding solutions, win better support and are more sustainable. Women's involvement in peace processes and peacebuilding must increase.
- The mandate and work of international peace initiatives must take into consideration the needs and perspectives of men, women, boys and girls in order to succeed.
- Conflict-related sexual violence is a war crime with serious consequences for victims, relatives and society as a whole. Victims of crime have a right to redress, and perpetrators must be held accountable.
- Impunity for conflict-related sexual violence makes reconciliation processes more difficult and undermines peacebuilding. Only a zero-tolerance approach can be accepted.
- It is important to involve men and boys in the work to prevent conflict and to combat gender-related and sexual violence.

### 2.3.4 Political participation and influence in all areas of society

The world's women are under-represented on many levels – as voters, as politicians, as judges, as leaders in organisations, in industry and in academia. More equal representation benefits both society and individuals. Research shows, for example, that more equal decision-making bodies are more active on gender equality issues, and their agenda and resource allocation reflect more groups and needs within society.<sup>23</sup>

Sweden has contributed to women's political participation in several countries, has supported women human rights campaigners, and has carried out active advocacy activities in connection to freedom of speech and opinion. Sweden has also championed gender equality strategies in development banks and environmental and climate funds, and has taken a leading role in the International Gender Champions initiative in Geneva, with particular responsibility for representation issues. Sweden has also, for example:

23 [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9477.00031](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9477.00031)  
[www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.123839?journalCode=polisci](https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.123839?journalCode=polisci)

- Worked to strengthen protection for women journalists, human rights campaigners, environmental campaigners, politicians and cultural workers, as well as those who defend women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights.
- Assisted and cooperated with women's organisations and other actors to highlight, support and strengthen women human rights defenders and others who defend all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights.
- Contributed towards greater gender equality in political parties in developing countries through cooperation with Swedish party affiliated organisations.

### Sweden's main message:

- Women and men shall have the same opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making.
- Women and men shall have the same opportunities to participate in – and influence – political processes and decisions within all areas and at all levels.
- Women's organisations and women human rights defenders shall have the opportunity to work and be protected against threats and violence.
- It is important to address the underlying causes of women's under-representation in political processes and bodies, such as women's traditional main responsibility for unpaid housework and caring.
- Changes occur where power exists. Increasing the proportion of women in the world's parliaments and in leading positions is central.

### 2.3.5 Economic rights and empowerment

When women participate in the labour market their economic empowerment increases, and a society's economic growth increases. Society also develops, since women, more than men, invest their income in local society and in children's health and education. It is therefore not only right but also socially smart to invest in women's economic empowerment. Despite this, many women lack economic rights and thus the opportunity to inherit, own and use land and natural resources, be in paid employment and get access to information and communication technology, financial services and effective markets. Sweden has contributed to girls' education and women's employment, has been a driving force behind a gender equality perspective in the agreements on the Global Goals and on financing for development, and has championed gender equality work within trade policy and sustainable enterprise. In addition, Sweden has highlighted men's responsibility for gender equality work through initiatives such as the He for She campaign. Sweden has also, for example:

- Contributed to central recommendations from leading economic forums, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, emphasising the importance of including growth and women's participation in the labour market.
- Contributed to an enhanced gender equality perspective in the work of international organisations within the field of trade policy, for example in negotiations, statistics and analysis, and contributed to the EU driving these issues forward in bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and negotiations on the EU's free trade agreement with third countries.
- Contributed to gender equality aspects having been made visible in corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts. This has been achieved through, for example, intensified bilateral work with the aim of strengthening women's roles and rights within the labour market in countries such as Iran, Cambodia, Croatia, Nigeria, Poland and Turkey. This work has often taken place in cooperation with Swedish companies, trade unions and agencies.
- Supported the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Middle East and North Africa programme, which has focused on enterprise with gender equality awareness and has contributed to the establishment of a Women's Economic Empowerment Forum to improve women's economic opportunities in the region.

## Sweden's main message:

- Women's and girls' inheritance, ownership and usage rights and their access to financial services must be strengthened.
- Everyone should have the same right to good quality education.
- Women and men should have equal rights to work with good and fair working conditions, to form trade unions, to run companies and to have access to markets.
- Women and men should have the opportunity to combine family life and gainful employment. Unpaid housework and caring must be shared equally between women and men.
- Women's poverty is largely due to a lack of access to economic resources.
- Women's participation in the labour market and access to markets for trading lead to stronger economic growth and higher GNP per capita.

### 2.3.6 Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are human rights, and are essential to women's and girls' health and living conditions. SRHR involves every individual's obvious right to decide over their own body, but also has a direct bearing on everything from level of education to social economics. Despite this, SRHR remains a controversial subject in many parts of the world.

Sweden has stepped up its SRHR work as the resistance to these issues has grown. Sweden works, among other things, through alliance building, board positions, development cooperation and dialogue, including by initiating the global #SheDecides movement. At country level, this work has, for example, contributed to more midwives and better access to sex and relationship education, contraception and safe abortions. Sweden has also:

- Provided UNFPA with extensive core support, which during 2014–2015 has made it possible to prevent more than 600 000 unplanned pregnancies, 200 000 unsafe abortions and 900 cases of maternal mortality, and to provide more than 1.6 million people with contraception.

- Put pressure on the European Commission to forcefully stand up for SRHR and to include SRHR in its annual reporting on the implementation of the EU action plan for gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU's external relations (2016–2020).
- Contributed to thousands of people having received midwife training each year, leading to millions of women having been able to give birth with the support of trained personnel. For example, Sweden has financed midwife training in Afghanistan, Myanmar, South Sudan and Zambia.

### Sweden's main message:

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights, and are necessary for women's and girls' enjoyment of other rights, and for gender equality and development.
- It is essential to invest in maternal health, with the right and access to safe and legal abortions, in order to reduce maternal mortality and to satisfy the right to the best possible health.
- Access to contraception and sex education for young people and adults benefit gender equality and counteract sexual violence, involuntary pregnancies, abortions and sexually transmitted diseases. Men and boys need to be involved in order to change attitudes.
- Preventing and treating HIV is also part of Sweden's work for gender equality and human rights.

### 3. Working methods within the Swedish Foreign Service

The Swedish Foreign Service has extensive experience of working with gender equality issues. The internal work has focused on issues such as staffing policy, control and operational support, and the organisation strives to be at the cutting edge in the field. The level of ambition has been raised further with the feminist foreign policy, contributing to increased systematic guidance, and to more initiatives within various subsidiary areas, including in work relating to premises and security.

Some of the working methods and actions related to the internal objective of the action plan are described below. These methods continue to be refined, to ensure that the organisation is able to implement the policy effectively in varying environments, and in an ever-changing world. However, four components have remained and have proven to be decisive for the policy's impact both within and beyond the Swedish Foreign Service.

### 3.1 Leadership

Leadership for the policy is clear at the highest level, but is also mainstreamed throughout all other parts of the organisation. Everyone in the Swedish Foreign Service is responsible for systematic work with the feminist foreign policy – within operations and in the workplace. Several Swedish missions abroad confirm that the distinct management from the top of the system has been essential.

This clear leadership has included:

- Continuous references to the policy in speeches, articles, social media posts, etc.
- Clearly prioritising these issues during visits, trips, contacts, etc.
- Repeated messages to the Swedish Foreign Service's management and regional meetings.
- Frequent assignments to the Foreign Service on delivering messages and proposals.
- Concrete decisions and initiatives.

“In pursuing foreign policy, it is reassuring with a solid ideological foundation for gender equality at home, as well as the full support of the political leadership. This has provided us with sharper tools for pursuing gender equality issues in various forms for dialogue.”

Swedish embassy

24 The Statement of Government Policy on Foreign Affairs at the 2015 foreign policy debate in the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) on Wednesday 11 February 2015

The political leadership has been clear right from the start, and has since been followed up by repeated messages about the feminist foreign policy in, for example, articles, speeches and Statements of Government Policy on Foreign Affairs (see examples in the info box below). The Government also appointed a Swedish Ambassador for

Gender Equality and Coordinator of Feminist Foreign Policy early on, to support the work involved and to give this work a clear priority.

This strong leadership has contributed significantly to the work with the perspective and to the policy having a firm foothold within the organisation.

### The Statement of Government Policy on Foreign Affairs 2015<sup>24</sup>

"A feminist foreign policy is now being formulated, the purpose of which is to combat discrimination against women, improve conditions for women and contribute to peace and development. Women's participation in decision-making must be strengthened in countries at peace, countries in conflict and countries in which reconstruction is under way. This will also strengthen the sustainability of our societies.

Concrete steps to promote the status and rights of women are also being taken through increased cooperation with civil society and with our partners in the EU and the UN. Together with our Nordic EU friends, we have proposed appointing an EU representative for gender equality and the implementation of Resolution

1325. [...] We will also continue our efforts to combat impunity for gender-based violence, which is necessary both in times of peace and in connection with armed conflicts.

UN Member States should advance efforts for the human rights of women and girls, their right to economic empowerment and their right to control their own bodies. It is particularly important this year, when the international community is to affirm the commitments concerning women's conditions that were made in Beijing in 1995. These conditions must be improved – not undermined. A feminist foreign policy will be an integral part of activities throughout the Swedish Foreign Service, and aims to strengthen women's rights, improve women's access to resources and increase women's representation.

## 3.2 Ownership

The feminist foreign policy was initially launched top-down, but has since been developed in consultation with the entire Swedish Foreign Service. Many departments and missions abroad emphasise how important this working method has been for the ownership of the policy and for the Swedish Foreign Service as an organisation.

All departments within the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' – functional, geographic and administrative departments, as well as Sweden's missions around the world – were asked early on to share their views on how Sweden's feminist foreign policy can be implemented within all the Swedish Foreign Service's policy areas and operational areas.

Almost one hundred responses were received, providing a long list of ideas that formed the basis for the Swedish Foreign Service's initial action plan for the feminist foreign policy. The process also contributed to more integrated discussions about gender equality between areas of policy and responsibility, and to more involvement in gender equality work of various sections and staff. This inclusive method has continued in the further

development, planning and monitoring of the policy.

There is also ongoing consultations on the policy with various sections of society in accordance with the action plan for the feminist foreign policy. This applies to civil society, academia and industry, among others, so that these actors can contribute with knowledge and approaches from their respective areas. These consultations take place at both national and international levels.

What have been the success factors in the implementation of the feminist foreign policy?

- Clear leadership
- Participation and co-creation
- Priority
- Support with tools, skills development, advice, etc.
- Focal points at departments and embassies

### 3.3 Guidance

One important factor in the implementation of the feminist foreign policy is that gender equality issues are integrated into ordinary systems, processes and responsibility structures. This means that a gender equality perspective is incorporated into ongoing operations, and cannot be portrayed or perceived as a parallel process.

In the work with **guidance, planning and monitoring** gender mainstreaming has been strengthened.

The action plan for the feminist foreign policy is included in the Swedish Foreign Service's operational plan. This means that the objectives in the action plan are integrated in the Foreign Service planning processes and that they are monitored by all Foreign Service managers, within ordinary processes and on an annual basis.

In line with the feminist foreign policy, the **rules of procedure** of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs clarify that all managers have a responsibility for integrating a gender equality perspective in their areas' responsibility, including in decision-making and resource allocation processes.<sup>25</sup>

The Foreign Service's **operational planning process** has also been reviewed, to ensure that the feminist foreign policy is included in the regular annual operational dialogues. This means that every department and mission abroad must explain how the feminist foreign policy is carried out or has been carried out during the year. In the review of the operational planning process for 2017, there were 502 operational targets relating to the objective of a more gender equal world. This is a significant increase compared with previous years.

The Swedish Foreign Service has also carried out continuous work with gender mainstreaming of **budgeting**. As part of this, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has clarified the guidelines for its grant management, ensured that its mandatory grant management training teaches gender mainstreaming, and ensured that employees have been able to take part in the Government Offices' training on this theme. An ongoing review of internal regulations, templates, procedures and checklists is being carried out to ensure that they include a gender equality perspective.

**Gender budgeting** shall be carried out within all governmental policy areas, including foreign policy. This means that prioritisations, choices and

resource allocation in the budget shall promote gender equality as far as possible. The Government Offices supports this work using the JämKAS Budget analytical tool. ‘JämKAS’ is an abbreviation of the Swedish ‘jämställdhet, kartläggning och analys’, meaning ‘gender equality, mapping and analysis’.<sup>26</sup> Gender budgeting includes using sex-disaggregated data according to the guidelines from Statistics Sweden.<sup>27</sup> Sweden has formed a gender equality

group, Friends of Gender Equality, within the OECD. This group meets regularly, discussing topics such as gender budgeting and the importance of gathering and analysing sex-disaggregated data.

**Info box: JämKAS Budget**

JämKAS Budget is an analytical tool that can be used as a means of support when including a gender equality perspective in a budget and for carrying out gender equality analyses of proposals. The analysis involves a number of different steps/questions.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Is gender equality relevant to the proposal?	In what way is gender equality relevant to the proposal?	What conclusions can be drawn in connection with women’s and men’s, girls’ and boys’ conditions and circumstances in the proposal?	Which gender patterns emerge, and what significance does the proposal have for gender equality?	Which alternative proposals are there that can promote gender equality more?

25 The Government Offices’ regulations and rules of procedure for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2017)

26 The Swedish Ministry of Finance, JämKAS Budget

27 Statistics Sweden (2004), “Könsuppdelad statistik. Ett nödvändigt medel för jämställdhetsanalys” (“Statistics by sex. A necessary tool for gender analysis”)

The action plan for the feminist foreign policy is a comprehensive guidance instrument that contains chapters about both actors and tools that are relevant to the ongoing work with the policy. In line with this guidance, the Swedish Foreign Service shall in its **analytical work** take into account how its operations can contribute towards greater gender equality and the strengthening all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. This can be achieved through, for example, using gender equality analyses when projects, action plans and strategies are formulated. These analyses should have an intersectional perspective and should take into account the fact that women and girls, men and boys are not homogeneous groups but have different identities, needs, influence and living conditions. Analyses therefore need to consider factors other than gender, such as age, geographic domicile, socioeconomic status, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, functional variation, level of education, declarations of faith and religion. The Swedish Foreign Service shall also make use of gender equality analyses based on sex- and age-disag-

gregated data in reporting and ongoing operations. As part of this work, the Swedish Foreign Service shall request this type of data, if it is missing, from bilateral and multilateral actors, and from civil society organisations. The Swedish Foreign Service shall, alongside collecting quantitative data, also take into account and request qualitative information from multilateral, bilateral and other sources – such as local women's organisations – who often have valuable knowledge about and access to women and girls in the context in question.

28 The latest action plan is available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/informationsmaterial/2015/11/utrikesforvaltningsens-handlingsplan-for-feministisk-utrikespolitik-20152018/>

## Checklist for gender equality analysis in reporting:

- Ensure that the reporting illustrates gender equality aspects and the theme, for example voter participation, from a gender equality perspective as a corner-stone of democracy, or gender-related violence as a threat to security.
- Clarify the rights, opportunities and needs of women, girls, boys and men in the context.
- Use sex- and age-disaggregated data.
- Use an intersectional perspective that clarifies the fact that women and girls, men and boys have different identities, needs, influence and living conditions.
- Consult people, groups and/or organisations that work with gender equality.

## 3.4 Support

The Swedish Foreign Service's work with the feminist foreign policy is supported by a **coordination team** led by the Ambassador for Gender Equality and Coordinator of Feminist Foreign Policy. The coordination team works with areas such as policy development, operational planning, communication, skills development and representation. All employees of the Swedish Foreign Service can contact the coordination team, but they can also contact the **focal point(s)** for the feminist foreign policy appointed at every department and mission abroad. These focal points receive continuous support and information from the coordination team. The coordination team for the feminist foreign policy is also in regular contact with the Division for Gender Equality at the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. This Division supports and coordinates gender equality work within all governmental policy areas. This cross-ministry cooperation helps to ensure that methods and information are disseminated quickly within the Government Offices.

The coordination team draws up the Swedish Foreign Service's annual

**action plan** for the feminist foreign policy, in cooperation with other sections of the Swedish Foreign Service, and in dialogue with other parts of the Government Offices and other agencies, representatives from civil society, etc. (For more information about the plan, see point 4.3.3.)

The coordination team has produced a digital **theme website** on the feminist foreign policy, where all employees can access **fact sheets, brochures, speeches, articles, good examples, PowerPoint presentations** and other materials. Certain missions abroad have also produced information sheets on the feminist foreign policy, translated into local languages.

The theme website links to internal **e-training** devised by the coordination team, which has been translated into English so that locally employed staff can access the information. In addition, several embassies and departments have carried out their own in-depth studies and training, and/or have developed knowledge bases in the form of gender equality libraries. Certain managers participate in a special **Gender Coach** -programme that focuses on methods and tools for leadership in gender equality work.

## The Gender Coach programme – how it works

The programme is aimed at senior managers within the Swedish Foreign Service and gives them the opportunity to improve their knowledge of gender equality and women's and girls' rights, including based on the UN's security resolutions on women, peace and security. The programme includes joint seminars for the whole group of participants, but all participants also have their own personal coaches to help with the concrete and direct application of gender mainstreaming within their respective areas of operation.

"As civil servants within the Swedish Foreign Service, carrying out the feminist foreign policy, it is essential to do so in a workplace that is as gender equal as possible. The Gender Coach programme gave me the knowledge and the tools – and thus also the self-confidence – needed to take our internal gender equality work up a gear together with my management team. The programme made me see how important it is to focus on the work processes that we can actually control, and to find concrete ways to integrate gender equality aspects into these. The results far exceeded our expectations. While we have long worked with gender equality within staffing, we identified a number of other processes – within areas such as guidance, security, premises and interior design – where we could benefit from reinforcing the gender equality perspective."

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs'  
Director-General for  
Administrative Affairs Håkan Åkesson

Just over two years after the launch of the feminist foreign policy, the coordination team initiated a monitoring process. This process involved departments and missions abroad and resulted in a **collection of examples** with actions and results within the seven objectives of the feminist foreign policy from the action plan. This collection of examples has come to provide additional support and inspiration in the work with the policy: [www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2017/10/sveriges-feministiska-utrikespolitik-exempel-pa-tre-ars-genomforande/exempel-pa-tre-ars-genomforande/](http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2017/10/sveriges-feministiska-utrikespolitik-exempel-pa-tre-ars-genomforande/exempel-pa-tre-ars-genomforande/)

## Three questions for Ann Bernes

### Sweden's Ambassador for Gender Equality and Coordinator of Feminist Foreign Policy



#### 1. Which methods have proven to be the most important in the work involved with the policy?

The 'feminist foreign policy'

concept is an unbeatable method. You only have to say the words to arouse interest and show what Sweden stands for. The four Rs are also an important tool, since they are comprehensive while also being comprehensible and easy to communicate. The inclusive co-creative process has also proven to be decisive. All employees were able to contribute, so the work has had great momentum behind it.

#### 2. What has been your biggest moment of realisation as coordinator?

That change is possible, even when you don't believe it is. It's simply a matter of finding the arguments or other expressions that will get

through. Linked to this, another realisation was to witness the fantastic creativity and inspiration that have appeared throughout the Swedish Foreign Service.

#### 3. What was the first challenge in this work?

Being able to provide enough support. The fact that all colleagues learn more about gender equality doesn't make the need for support any less. Instead, the issues become more numerous and increasingly advanced, while the need for monitoring and overview grows. It's clear that integration processes of this magnitude need support functions that can live up to the work.

### 3.5 Examples of internal work

All sections of the Swedish Foreign Service shall establish a gender equality perspective within their field of operations, in accordance with the feminist foreign policy.

In line with this, the gender equality perspective permeates for example **consular work**, particularly with regard to issues relating to women, children and young adults. Swedish embassies and consulates are contacted increasingly often by people in need who are resident in Sweden, but who have been victims of family-related violence while travelling abroad, often in connection with being prevented from returning to Sweden. Those who are affected risk being subjected to forced marriage or female genital mutilation, experiencing threats, coercion or violence from their families, or being forced to stay abroad against their will. This group of people in need, who are overwhelmingly women and girls, are prioritised from a consular point of view because their situation makes the usual precautions, assistance with self-help, etc. impossible.

Since 2015, continuous strategic work has been carried out to develop the Swedish Foreign Service's consular tools and expertise for supporting particularly vulnerable groups.

During 2018, a specific two-year investment was decided on to further strengthen consular support within family conflict, with a particular focus on child and forced marriage. This SEK 10mn investment has enabled significant information, education and cooperation initiatives to be carried out in this area.

Within the framework of the Swedish Foreign Service's operational support, the feminist foreign policy has involved developing the gender equality perspective on **premises**. In line with this, the Swedish Foreign Service has reviewed the guidance for choosing management accommodation, which now establishes that such premises should be functional and welcoming for all employees and guests. In certain locations, for example, the choice of management accommodation may be decisive for the possibilities for women not having to follow local clothing customs in and at this accommodation. In the same way, inclusive management accommodation may allow women and LGBTQ persons to participate in events where other premises in certain locations involve difficulties or risks. The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has also worked with Sweden's National Public Art Council to ensure that works of art in management accommodation and in offices include works by both women and men.

## Gender equality and premises – how does it work?

- Is there anything in the design of the working environment that could affect women and men differently?
- Is there anything in the design of the premises and in the working environment that makes it harder for women to carry out certain duties than for men?
- In the case of overseas postings, there may be cultural and other norms that limit women's freedom of movement. How can premises solutions improve the situation for those who find themselves on such postings?
- Both women and men should be able to feel comfortable at the Swedish Foreign Service's premises. Are there any actions that can be taken to ensure this?
- Professions and work duties often follow gender roles. Is this evident in connection with premises-related work at the workplace? If so, what can be done to change this?
- How many female and male artists are represented in the artworks in the workplace?

Within the field of **security** the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has initiated a certification programme for security companies working in conflict environments. This certification – from the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA) – emphasises how private security companies are expected to act in conflict areas, particularly with regard to human rights and international humanitarian law. The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs requires that security companies included in their procurement processes must be ICoCA-certified. This certification is in line with Sweden's feminist foreign policy

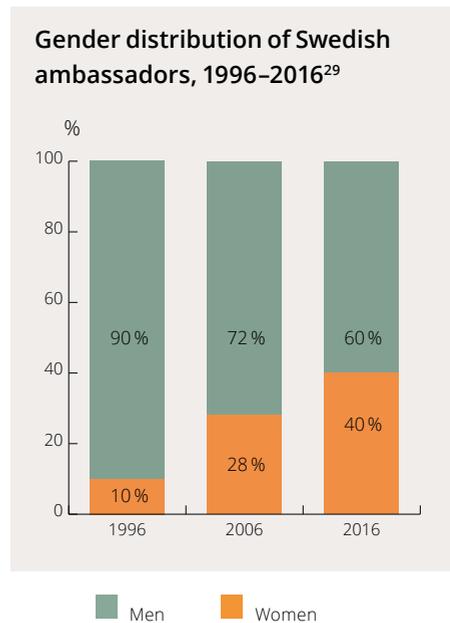
through its clear gender equality message. The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has ensured, among other things, that companies have a number of gender equality tools when carrying out their inspection visits, that they engage in dialogue with women's organisations and that they work to counter sexual harassment and assaults.

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has also worked to review, highlight and enhance **personal safety** for women employees on the basis of a consultation with missions abroad around the world. Other actions include reviewing the gender distribu-

tion of the security guards sent out and to impose demands on procured security companies to have a gender mainstreaming policy. The Swedish Foreign Service has also highlighted the gender equality perspective in multilateral consultation on the monitoring of the global codes of conduct for private security companies.

Within the field of **staffing**, the Swedish Foreign Service is working to strengthen the gender equality perspective further. This involves initiating a review of the entire chain, from recruitment and leadership programmes to the process for appointing managers. Specific measures are being carried out to increase the number of women applicants for management positions, including ambassador roles. The proportion of women managers has also increased, and is now 50 per cent (counting all management positions). Forty per cent of all ambassador positions are held by women (see the diagram). Participants in the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' regular admission programme (the Diplomat Programme) have gone from being 20 per cent women in 1972 to 47 per cent women in 2016. The Swedish Foreign Service also works to combat irrelevant salary differences between women and men

by monitoring and reviewing salary developments on an ongoing basis. Work has been initiated to increase the number of women honorary consuls and trade commissioners, and to review which locally employed personnel carry out which duties, in order to identify and break gender stereotypical patterns.



29 Statistics from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Three questions for the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Human Resources Department<sup>30</sup>

**1. What has the work to strengthen the role of women in decision-making positions involved?**

The feminist foreign policy is an agenda for change and part of the Government's work for gender equality. It's also an attitude, and a lens through which we look at our human resources work and seek to contribute to securing women's representation and resources in the Swedish Foreign Service. The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has worked strategically to increase the number of women applying for management positions. The reasons why women have sometimes not applied for management positions have been investigated and analysed. Good role models have been highlighted. Internal development programmes for potential managers have contributed towards having more women managers.

**2. Which tools do you use in your work?**

Internal training now includes a gender equality perspective. For example, the feminist foreign policy is included in the ministry's admission and administrator programmes, and in the training for new managers at missions abroad. E-training on the feminist foreign policy is available to all staff. Internal leadership training targeted at both women and men has helped to increase the number of women managers. A gender equality analysis is carried out on recruitment to the ministry's training and leadership programme. Today, women are in the majority in lower management positions. This promises good future opportunities for achieving a full gender balance in higher positions.

**3. Describe a specific challenge in terms of further enhancing the gender equality perspective for staffing issues within the Swedish Foreign Service.**

There's an imbalance between women and men in administrative positions in the Swedish Foreign Service. Work is being carried out within recruitment to address this.

30 Per Augustsson, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Human Resources Department

## **Summary of methods for work within the Swedish Foreign Service:**

### **1. Leadership**

- Clear, open, consistent, “everywhere, all the time”
- Integrated into the Statement of Government Policy on Foreign Affairs
- Regularly raised in speeches, articles and tweets
- Targeted decisions and initiatives

### **2. Ownership**

- Inclusive co-creation process for the feminist foreign policy
- Focal points at every department and mission abroad
- Managers are responsible for a gender equality perspective being integrated into all operations, including in decision-making and resource allocation processes

### **3. Guidance**

- Clarified distribution of responsibility for gender equality in the rules of procedure
- Integration of the action plan for feminist foreign policy in ordinary monitoring of objectives and results
- Stronger gender mainstreaming, including in the form of gender budgeting
- Regular gender equality analyses

### **4. Support**

- Theme page on the intranet
- Collection of examples for the first three years with the feminist foreign policy
- Fact sheets and other information materials
- Ambassador for Gender Equality and Coordinator of Feminist Foreign Policy
- E-training for all Swedish Foreign Service staff

### **5. Examples of methodical work:**

- Gender equality aspects in consular issues
- Operational support (e.g. security and premises) with a gender equality perspective Innovative staffing policy for greater representation of women

### 3.6 Voices on feminist foreign policy

When Sweden's feminist foreign policy was launched, it was met with both praise and scepticism. As the policy has been implemented, support has continued to grow and much of the former doubt has given way to interest.

There is an extensive interest in the policy from various sections of society, and this interest is also reflected in the fields of research. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has received many questions from researchers and students alike, who have produced articles, studies and theses about the Swedish initiative.<sup>31</sup>

"...The most interesting and potentially most innovative thing about a feminist foreign policy is not specific initiatives, efforts and programmes, but that it has potential as a new approach to contribute to a changed view of what foreign security actually is and who it is for."<sup>32</sup>

Professor Robert Egnell,  
the Swedish Defence University.

31 A few examples of interest from the world of research:

[www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1175888&dsid=2583](http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1175888&dsid=2583)

[politics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-368](http://politics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-368)

[www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2016/swedish-feminist-foreign-policy-in-the-making-ethics-politics-and-gender/](http://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2016/swedish-feminist-foreign-policy-in-the-making-ethics-politics-and-gender/)

[centreforforeignpolicy.org/journal/2018/5/18/bipfj3ify8rz97ar4tic4nx3scj53j](http://centreforforeignpolicy.org/journal/2018/5/18/bipfj3ify8rz97ar4tic4nx3scj53j)

[www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/uk-feminist-foreign-policy-both-right-thing-do-and-smart-strateg](http://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/uk-feminist-foreign-policy-both-right-thing-do-and-smart-strateg)

32 Feministisk utrikespolitik i teori och praktik ("Feminist Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice"), Robert Egnell, [journals.lub.lu.se/index.php/st/article/view/16441](http://journals.lub.lu.se/index.php/st/article/view/16441)

There is also great interest from both Swedish and international media, and in general the feminist foreign policy arouses both curiosity and debate.<sup>33</sup>

“The phrase ‘feminist foreign policy’ got caught in my mind, based on what Sweden is doing.”<sup>34</sup>

Founder of the Feminist Foreign Policy blog  
Marissa Conway

The concept of feminist foreign policy is discussed and used by both organisations and countries. One example is Canada which has a stated feminist government, uses the term ‘feminist foreign policy’ and, in June 2017, launched a feminist development policy following consultations involving more than 15 000 people in 65 different countries.

“It is important, and historic, that we have a prime minister and a government proud to proclaim ourselves feminists. Women’s rights are human rights. That includes sexual reproductive rights and the right to safe and accessible abortions. These rights are at the core of our foreign policy.”<sup>35</sup>

Canada’s Minister of Foreign  
Affairs Chrystia Freeland

33 Examples of media interest:

[www.nytimes.com/2017/11/17/world/europe/margot-wallstrom-sweden.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/17/world/europe/margot-wallstrom-sweden.html)  
[policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2017/the-three-rs-of-feminist-foreign-policy/](http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2017/the-three-rs-of-feminist-foreign-policy/)  
[www.irishtimes.com/opinion/the-case-for-a-feminist-foreign-policy-1.3183835](http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/the-case-for-a-feminist-foreign-policy-1.3183835)  
[foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/06/swedens-foreign-minister-has-no-time-for-giggles/](http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/06/swedens-foreign-minister-has-no-time-for-giggles/)  
[www.una.org.uk/magazine/2017-2](http://www.una.org.uk/magazine/2017-2)

34 [www.passblue.com/2016/11/04/what-exactly-is-a-feminist-foreign-policy-a-new-website-explores-the-subject/](http://www.passblue.com/2016/11/04/what-exactly-is-a-feminist-foreign-policy-a-new-website-explores-the-subject/)

35 [www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/06/address\\_by\\_ministerfreelandoncanadasforeignpolicy-priorities.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/06/address_by_ministerfreelandoncanadasforeignpolicy-priorities.html)

Swedish Foreign Service staff testify to Sweden's feminist foreign policy helping to advance positions and creating a valuable platform for dialogue. The issue of gender equality has become an issue for every member of staff, whatever their position or subject area and wherever in the world they are based.

"The fact that Sweden has gone from gender equality to feminism is definitely something new, and can successfully be used exactly so in the work of the embassy. It has long been well known that Sweden champions gender equality issues, and we still do so – but now in the company of many other like-minded nations. However, having a feminist foreign policy clearly marks us out. With it, we demonstrate an ability to see bigger contexts, with political courage and a desire to lead. References to feminism in politics deter some and inspire many, but it is clear that it attracts broad interest and encourages important debate."

Swedish embassy

The policy has also involved an organisational and cultural shift within the Swedish Foreign Service. The real driving force for many employees has been the inclusive process – pursuing pioneering work, based on a clear vision. The work has taken shape along the way and is based on in-depth internal discussions and reflections. Several employees say that they are proud to be able to drive forward and contribute to such a ground-breaking policy as the feminist foreign policy. The creative process has strengthened the Swedish Foreign Service and laid the foundation for continued innovation.

"This has been an incredible journey. What started as a 3 or 4 page document in October 2014 has evolved into a full-scale foreign policy, in which we have jointly decided on the content. The feminist foreign policy has become our trademark."

Swedish embassy

The feminist foreign policy has also contributed to coherence between the different areas of foreign policy – foreign and security policy, development cooperation, and trade and promotion policy – in new and clearer ways.

"The feminist foreign policy has been significant in how we have worked with the issue as an integrated embassy, dealing with all areas of foreign policy. The feminist foreign policy has given us a joint underlying platform. In practice, it has meant that we have linked together our political, development and promotional work more clearly. Our external communication is more distinct, our political dialogue is more structured and focused on our message, and our dialogue with our partners in the field of development now has a broader approach and a clearer political dimension. The feminist foreign policy is a source of inspiration for us, and gives us courage in our dialogue with various actors."

Swedish embassy

Several missions abroad also note that the policy has strengthened Sweden's position as a champion of gender equality and women's and girls' rights.

The country's brand has become even clearer and stronger: "Sweden is clearly wearing the yellow jersey".

"The feminist foreign policy has also contributed to Sweden being even more clearly seen as 'the country of gender equality' – as a role model, as the first instance to turn to for the media's international comparisons or for civil society organisations when seeking information or making enquiries about cooperation. [...] Sweden has become the 'go to' nation in terms of gender equality for the media and the like. The demand for contact with the embassy on the theme of gender equality has risen, and is continuing to rise. We also ensure that we reach high-level representatives (including the head of state) when working with these issues."

Swedish embassy

## 4. Methods for norm change and mobilisation

The feminist foreign policy aims to create new approaches and contribute to change. This requires methodical, systematic work. It is a matter of keeping our sights set on creating the right conditions for a world where women and girls are heard more, are given more space and can realise their visions.

In line with this, the Swedish Foreign Service works to promote gender equality issues and actors for change for gender equality and human rights at **meetings, conferences or side events**. The Swedish Foreign Service continuously reviews the events, programmes of visits, delegations, panels and negotiation teams in which it participates, to ensure that these contribute as far as possible to increased visibility of women, girls and LGBTQ persons as actors and to make use of all the available competence.

**Communication** is of great importance for a normative impact. The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Communications Department and other relevant departments produce information materials on a regular basis to support the work on the feminist foreign policy. Hashtags and other social media messages have proven to be a successful way of reaching out, even in countries with relatively little internet access. Embassies arrange events including Twitter sessions on the theme of gender equality to communicate with various target groups about gender equality and women's rights. Another important platform is the [www.swemfa.se](http://www.swemfa.se) website, where articles and blog posts about the feminist foreign policy are among the most commonly shared materials.

Under the hashtag **#EqualityMakesSense** the Swedish Foreign Service publishes examples of how it works with gender equality, spreads messages about the feminist foreign policy and shares information about articles and events. Here is a selection of messages from the campaign:

- “Women are an essential ingredient in the recipe for lasting peace.”
- “When women carry out professional work, economies grow. It’s that simple. It’s important to include the under-used workforce resource.”
- “Counteracting the systematic and global subordination of women is a good thing in itself. However, it’s also a smart practical policy.”
- “Investing in women’s development reduces poverty. It builds societies, democracies and economies.”

The hashtag **#Morewomenmorepeace** which aims to strengthen the role of women in peacebuilding and peace negotiations, was launched to mark the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and has been used in a number of contexts since then. Set occasions are when Swedish missions abroad arrange events to raise awareness of the resolution. Other occasions include targeted initiatives to increase women’s participation in peace work, such as when the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) worked closely alongside the Swedish Embassy in Kabul to train around 30 women from different provinces in Afghanistan in dialogue and mediation. The hashtag has also been used in a series of articles about women peace actors, written and disseminated by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

One of the targeted initiatives and hashtags that has had the greatest impact **#WikiGap**. Wikipedia is the world’s biggest online and user-generated encyclopedia. The content that is conveyed influences and colours users’ knowledge about the world. However, there is a great imbalance. Ninety per cent of the content has been created by men, and there are four times more articles about men than about women. To help bring about change, the

Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs – in partnership with Wikimedia and a number of local partners – launched an initiative called **#WikiGap** to add information about women to Wikipedia. The initiative began on International Women’s Day, on 8 March 2018, and was carried out in the form of parallel edit-a-thons in almost 50 countries, from Sweden to Indonesia, Egypt and Colombia. More than 1 600 people took part, writing articles in over 30 languages. During the first three months of the campaign alone, participants wrote almost 4 000 new articles that were read over five millions times, and more articles are continuing to stream in. To support this initiative, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Wikimedia produced a toolbox containing a step-by-step guide to organising #WikiGap events, including logos, communication materials and suggestions for those wishing to take the project further. A special WikiGap film has also been produced.

## Tools for Wikigap work

- The Wikigap toolbox can be found at: <http://www.swemfa.se/wikigap/>
- Wikigap film on You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdPb4Bap3hk>
- Article about WikiGap in The Economist: <https://www.economist.com/news/business/21738402-together-wikimedia-swedish-diplomats-are-hosting-wikigap-edit-thons-54>



Another method for norm changes and mobilisation for gender equal values is **cultural cooperation** actions. One successful example is the play **Seven**. The play consists of seven narratives by women's rights activists from Afghanistan, Guatemala, Cambodia, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Pakistan and Russia. The play has been performed in around 30 different countries and in almost as many languages, and is always staged as a collaboration involving local partners and the local Swedish Embassy. In every country, *Seven* is performed as readings by seven known personalities who represent different sections of society, and who have strong integrity and impact. The readings are usually carried out by politicians, artists, sports personalities, journalists, musicians or individuals with their own experience of vulnerability. *Seven* has successfully communicated issues relating to women's rights and challenges to decision-makers, opinion-formers and the general public. The attention in the media has contributed to create interest and has enabled local organisations to support politicians in pursuing women's rights issues. 2017 saw premières in Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in 2018 *Seven* – in partnership with the Swedish Embassy, UN Women and the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU – has become something of a viral phenomenon in Pakistan with the play being

performed in several locations in the country.<sup>37</sup>

Sweden has also emphasised the importance of **leadership** in its norm change work. International **Gender Champions** was launched in 2015, with Sweden among those spearheading the campaign, and the initiative brings together decision-makers who have undertaken to challenge structures and barriers to gender equality. The network was established in Geneva, but has since grown to become a much broader network of more than 200 leaders from 60 countries and a wide range of institutions including public administration, the UN, the EU, academia and civil society. All members have signed the IGC Panel Parity Pledge, committing to no longer sit on single-sex panels. Each member also sets two gender equality objectives of their own, involving anything from overall operational targets to their own leadership. The Nordic group has set the joint objective of promoting a work-family life balance through: 1) early information and advance notice of meetings to enhance predictability and planning, and 2) avoiding calling meetings that will take place during evenings, weekends and public holidays. For more information about International Gender Champions, see: <https://www.genderchampions.com>

<sup>37</sup> <https://si.se/evenemang/seven/>

## Five questions to ask in order to achieve more gender equal panels<sup>38</sup>

1. What do you do to ensure an even gender balance at the events you organise?
2. What is the gender balance of the panels on which you sit?
3. Could there be cases where one group should be over-represented?
4. Has the organiser contacted experts of the unrepresented gender?
5. Are you/your organisation able to share lists with the names of experts to ensure more even, more inclusive representation?

The Swedish Foreign Service has also taken several initiatives to mobilise support for gender equality and all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. Some of these initiatives have covered the entire spectrum of issues (such as the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality below), while others have addressed subsidiary issues (such as #midwives4all and SheDecides below).

In 2015, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs launched the **#midwives4all** initiative with the aim of highlighting the central role of midwives and mobilising support for them using methods such as digital diplomacy. The campaign has had a wide reach. In Uganda alone, around 4.5 million people have been reached via social media, radio and newspapers, and through famous Ugandans being named ambassadors or champions for the initiative. Sweden also supports the training of midwives in the country, and takes part in an annual prize-giving ceremony that recognises particular skill within the profession. This cooperation has strengthened Ugandan women's and girls' access to safe maternity care, which in turn has led to substantial reductions in maternal mortality and premature births. As well

38 [www.genderchampions.com](http://www.genderchampions.com), fritt översatt och delvis modifierad

as raising awareness of the important role of midwives via social media, the #midwives4all campaign also contributes towards training. An online midwifery programme is offered at Dalarna University in Sweden, and cooperation has been established with, among others, Somaliland. The ambition is that Midwives4all shall have a life of its own, and shall engage, inspire and awaken debate about the central role of midwives in strengthening the health and rights of women and girls.

**She Decides** was launched in February 2017 at a conference in Brussels, organised by Belgium, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, in reaction to conservative forces and reduced support for SRHR issues. She Decides marked the start of a broad new movement that has since mobilised both financial and political support from non-governmental organisations and UN bodies. It involves giving women and girls greater access to advice, evidence-based information, non-discriminatory sex education, family planning, modern contraceptives, safe childbirth, HIV tests and safe abortions. She Decides illustrates the importance of alliance building and the energy that exists in quickly mobilising support in connection with a particularly burning issue.

### **Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality**

on 15–17 April 2018 was arranged by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Institute. The forum brought together more than 700 participants from over 100 different countries. The participants included politicians, civil servants, representatives from international organisations, activists, debaters, academics, industry actors and representatives from civil society. The aim of the conference was to facilitate and encourage exchanges of methods, new initiatives and more in-depth cooperation to reinforce international gender equality work.

The programme featured around 30 seminars, workshops, round-table discussions and other events addressing challenges to global gender equality and concrete actions and tools for greater gender equality and women's and girls' rights, representation and resources. The key word for the conference was 'co-creation'. In this spirit, participants were asked to contribute to the content and structure of the programme. This resulted in a dynamic meeting on highly topical questions and subjects. A wide range of themes was covered, including women's economic empowerment, SRHR and the role of women in peace work. Several new reports and initiatives were launched, including the World Bank's latest Women, Business and the

Law report and a Call to Action for Women Human Rights Defenders presented by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, together with a number of partners.

During the week of the conference, **#GenderEqualWorld** reached almost 3 million people worldwide. Participants registered initiatives, undertakings and collaborations that arose linked to the conference at <http://genderequalworld.com/initiatives/>. Documentation from all seminars and round-table discussions is also published on the website. The Swedish Institute is developing a toolbox that allows Swedish embassies and other interested parties to ensure that the conference and its results live on in other contexts. Sweden is also presenting the results of the conference to partners such as UN Women. In connection with the forum, the first **Feminist Think Space** was arranged in cooperation with UN Women where discussions included the further development of ideas highlighted during the forum. Sweden engages in dialogue with partners who are interested in arranging events that build on the conference, and in 2019 the **Tunis Forum on Gender Equality** will be organised as a follow up on the conference in Stockholm.

## Summary of methods used in norm-critical and mobilising work

- Gender equality-conscious and gender balanced conferences, meeting and panels
- Gender mainstreamed and focused communication work, for example via social media
- Mobilising commitment and resources for gender equality
- Cultural cooperation that raises awareness of and tackles gender equality challenges
- Networks and platforms to bring together competence and create shared visions for a gender equal world

5. Working methods within  
the various subsidiary areas  
of foreign policy

Swedish foreign policy involves Sweden's connections with – and policy towards – countries and international organisations, and ultimately aims to promote peace, security and sustainable development. Swedish foreign policy is divided up into three main policy areas: foreign and security policy, development cooperation, and trade and promotion policy. These three areas are interrelated tools for the work to pursue and develop Sweden's feminist foreign policy. The policy is carried out by the whole of the Swedish Foreign Service, i.e. the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm and around 100 overseas agencies. There is close cooperation with other ministries within the Government Offices and with a number of central government agencies. The policy is also carried out in dialogue with a number of Swedish and international actors, in accordance with the action plan for the feminist foreign policy.

Working methods within the different policy areas are partly the same as methods for the internal work of the Swedish Foreign Service, since leadership, ownership, control and support are central to the gender equality work carried out in both organisations and countries. This could, for example, involve proposing and pushing for guiding documents, steering documentation, legislation, policies, functions and operational assistance that supports gender equality and women's and girls' human rights. Another example is to demand reporting based on sex- and age-disaggregated data.

## Sweden's work with its feminist foreign policy within the EU

Sweden has been a driving force in drawing up the EU action plan for gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU's external relations 2016–2020. One main area in the action plan is the need for an institutional cultural change with an emphasis on leadership, accountability and sufficient resources for gender equality work, which is fully in line with Sweden's feminist foreign policy. The action plan can be found here:

[https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/150921\\_final\\_swd\\_gap.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/150921_final_swd_gap.pdf)

The feminist foreign policy is a clear profile issue for Sweden's work in the EU. By systematically and continuously repeating the same message, Sweden has developed a predictability which in turn has led to those who are responsible for drawing up draft versions of texts increasingly often anticipating Swedish input by including references to women and gender equality from the outset. Examples include the free trade agreement with Chile in which, for the first time, the EU has proposed an entire chapter on gender equality.

This chapter goes into more depth about how the feminist foreign policy has been carried out within the various policy areas and some of their subsidiary areas.

## 5.1 Foreign and security policy

“We see it as an objective in itself to achieve gender equality and human rights. However, we also see gender equality as an essential element in order to achieve other objectives, such as sustainable peace, security and development. Solutions where half of societies and populations are excluded are not sustainable solutions.”

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

The Swedish foreign and security policy is pursued via direct relations with other countries and also through bodies such as the EU and the UN. This cooperation is based on international law, which consists of all international agreements and provisions governing how states and other international actors shall cooperate and how they may and may not act towards each other. Preventing risks and threats is an important part of Sweden’s security policy, which in turn is part of its foreign policy.

### 5.1.1 Peace and security

War and crises result in societies being shattered, families being split up and development coming to a halt. Women and girls, men and boys are affected in different ways, and have different opportunities to influence peace work. Studies indicate that the likelihood of peace agreements being reached, and lasting, increases if women participate in the peace process.<sup>39</sup> Despite this, women are almost entirely absent in most peace negotiations, which has consequences for the way peace is shaped. Only 18 per cent of the 1 168 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2014 included any reference to women or gender equality.<sup>40</sup>

One of the cornerstones of Sweden’s feminist foreign policy is that the work for sustainable peace and security must be representative and inclusive. A central tool for achieving this is **UN Security Council Resolution 1325** on women, peace and security which was adopted in 2000, and which – together with seven subsequent resolutions – constitutes the international agenda for women, peace and security. The agenda focuses on women’s increased participation, condemns conflict-related

39 See e.g. Paffenholz et al., “Making Women Count: Assessing Women’s Inclusion and Influence on the Quality and Sustainability of Peace Negotiations and Implementation.”

40 UN Women (2015) “Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace – A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325”

sexual violence and confirms the key role of gender equality in building peaceful societies. Ensuring the integration of this agenda into all work for peace and security is a highly prioritised issue for Sweden. Its implementation shall be an integral and natural part of both day-to-day and long-term strategic work for peace and security.

Sweden pursues this issue at country level and within the UN, NATO, OSCE, the EU and the Council of Europe, and in cooperation with the Nordic nations. Sweden's non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council 2017–2018 has been a central platform offering opportunities to raise the profile of these issues and to establish a more integrated way of working in connection with the agenda for women, peace and security.

Sweden has also reviewed its own broad work with women, peace and security, which includes financing, seconding Swedish experts and training Swedish and international actors. Another aspect of this work involves initiatives of the Swedish Women's Mediation Network and providing technical support and advice to countries/actors

wanting to establish equivalent mediation networks. A new national action plan on women, peace and security, the third since 2006, was adopted in spring 2016. It is aimed at three ministries and eleven agencies, and has been drawn up in broad consultation with relevant actors in Sweden and with five conflict and post-conflict nations: Afghanistan, Colombia, DR Congo, Liberia and Palestine. For the first time, the action plan includes focus countries and targets women's influence and participation in peace processes, conflict prevention, improved protection against violence and integrating gender equality perspectives into all peace and security work.<sup>41</sup>

41 Sweden's action plan for women, peace and security: <http://www.regeringen.se/rapporter/2016/05/sveriges-nationella-handlingsplan-for-genomforande-av-fns-sakerhetsradsresolutioner-om-kvinnor-fred-och-sakerhet-20162020/>

## Women's mediation networks as a method

The Swedish Women's Mediation Network was initiated in 2015 in response to the significant under-representation of women in mediation and peace processes. The aim of the network is to promote peaceful conflict resolution and actively support women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding initiatives – before, during and after conflicts. The mediation network consists of members with different thematic and geographic fields of expert knowledge, from both civil society and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. All members are women in senior positions with long experience of peacebuilding, diplomacy and political processes. So far, they have been involved in countries including Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, Somalia, Ukraine and Zimbabwe. These efforts have taken place at different levels, and have included strategic support for women in different local societies as well as contributions to peace negotiations at the highest formal level. The Swedish mediation network is part of a Nordic mediation network, and works closely alongside a number of similar initiatives, not least in Africa and the Mediterranean region, and with the UN, the EU, the AU and OSCE. The mediation network is a flexible resource that can engage at short notice in different conflict contexts and respond quickly to needs that arise. There is great demand, and the network has had to be expanded from nine to 15 members.



Image from p. 3 NAP 1325

Sweden works for gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the EU's foreign and security policy in accordance with the EU action plan for gender equality and women's empowerment. Sweden has also contributed to the EEAS having carried out a study of how human rights and gender equality are integrated into the EU's planning and implementation of its foreign and security policy. One outcome of this baseline study is that the code of conduct for all missions has been updated with references to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and gender-based violence.

In a UN context, work with women, peace and security is driven forward in continuous dialogue between Stockholm, the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN and other relevant missions abroad. One consistent experience from the dialogue with international organisations is that impact increases significantly if there is access to new data and arguments for why the gender equality perspective is needed and which concrete measures should be taken for strengthened integration.

## A selection of what Sweden has done within the framework of the women, peace and security agenda

- Regularly championed the issue within the UN Security Council of which Sweden is a non-permanent member during 2017–2018. In 2017, references to women, peace and security were made for the first time in history in 100 per cent of the Security Council's presidential statements on crisis situations.
- Championed the UN Security Council's inclusion of information from representatives from women's organisations in its analyses.
- Contributed to sexual and gender-based violence having become a separate listing criterion in a UN sanctions regime.
- Cooperated with, and provided support for, the UN's Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Worked to ensure that gender equality aspects are taken into account in the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and championed gender equality issues in relation to the UN's new Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and ensured the satisfactory inclusion of texts about women and girls in the review of the UN's counter-terrorism strategy. Created and supported Swedish, Nordic and other regional networks of women mediators to support peace negotiations.
- Contributed towards women's participation in peace work in a number of countries including Afghanistan, Colombia, Mali and Syria.
- Been a driving force behind the establishment of a senior advisor in the European External Action Service (EEAS) in matters relating to gender equality and women, peace and security.
- Promoted issues relating to women, peace and security on the agenda within regional and multilateral organisations.
- Contributed towards a more integrated gender equality perspective in the EU's civilian and military crisis management efforts, including by working to strengthen gender equality expertise within the EU's institutions and initiatives.
- Through Swedish agencies, carried out extensive training for Swedish and international personnel taking part in peace initiatives. 66 Handbook Sweden's feminist foreign policy Handbook Sweden's feminist foreign policy 67.

## 5.1.2 Human rights, democracy and the rule of law

A number of different methods and tools are used in pursuing the feminist foreign policy in Sweden's work for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Gender equality and all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights are continuously raised in the **dialogue with official representatives** of states, the EU, multilateral and regional organisations and other relevant actors. The intensification of this dialogue has been made possible through the introduction of an Ambassador for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, an Ambassador for Gender Equality and an Ambassador for Combating Trafficking in Persons.

Sweden plays an active role in **negotiations** on human rights in forums such as the UN's General Assembly, the UN's Human Rights Council and the UN's Commission on the Status of Women. Sweden has contributed to an increased focus on women's and girls' rights and on the importance of sex- and age-disaggregated data in both thematic and country-specific resolutions. Sweden promotes the individual as the bearer of rights and the universality of human rights, and rejects the

argument that a focus on family issues involves attempts to restrict women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights or confirms stereotypical gender roles.

Sweden also rejects references to religion, culture, customs or traditions being used in international agreements to legitimise restrictions on women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights. Sweden works to encourage countries that have lodged reservations about the Women's Convention and other conventions to retract those reservations that contravene the purposes and intentions of the conventions.

In 2016, Sweden arranged an **international meeting** to counter discriminatory legislation, hosted by Minister of Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. As a result of the meeting, Sweden has also contributed support to the cooperation between the World Bank, UN Women, the OECD and the CEDAW Committee (the Women's Convention), which develops indicators to measure a country's compliance with SDG 5.1: "End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere." Among other things, the meeting emphasised the importance of support for representatives from civil society. By supporting women human rights defenders, Sweden has intensified the work for democracy and to combat the shrinking space.

Gender-related violence is a serious barrier to women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights. According to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, sexual violence can be part of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Sweden cooperates directly with countries, national legal institutions and other bilateral actors, as well as the ICC and its chief prosecutors, to combat the occurrence of – and impunity for – gender-related and sexual violence in conflict. This work often aims to **increase national capacity** to investigate and bring proceedings against violence, and to highlight the need to counteract stigma, strengthen protection for victims of crime and witnesses, and recognise the importance of civil society organisations' role in this work. Sweden has also supported GQUAL, an **international campaign** that advocates establishing international and national guidelines to increase and promote the proportion of women in leadership positions in international tribunals and judicial bodies.

Sweden has also championed gender equality issues and shared Swedish experiences in the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Commission. In addition, Sweden has made **financial contributions** to the implementation of the Council of Europe's action plans

for various member states. A Swedish expert has also trained the secretariat on gender mainstreaming. Sweden has campaigned successfully to have a Swedish expert elected to the Council of Europe's GRETA expert group, which monitors compliance with the Council's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

The 250th anniversary of the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act was observed with an international seminar with and for women in journalism and associated industries, with a focus on the harassment they encounter. Sweden continues to support the safety of women journalists through the Fojo Media Institute, and provides project support for a pilot study on establishing a centre to support journalists who are subjected to online hate, with a particular focus on women journalists.

## Sweden's Ambassador for Human Rights and the Rule of Law



### **1. In which ways is the feminist foreign policy a useful tool for you in your role as Sweden's Ambassador for Human Rights?**

The feminist foreign policy is one of the foundations of my work – a starting point, analysis, method and perspective that permeates working for democracy, human rights and the rule of law in foreign policy. The feminist foreign policy is based on the principle of everyone's equal value and rights, everywhere and all the time. Ultimately, it is about non-discrimination, which is at the core of human rights. It's a good, useful way to communicate our work to protect and promote human rights.

### **2. What reactions do you encounter when the Swedish feminist foreign policy comes up for discussion?**

It is clear that people are familiar with the policy, and that they understand what it involves. The way I see it, Sweden is associated with a strong human rights policy, both by those who agree with us and by those who don't, and that the feminist foreign policy is seen as a natural part of this policy. We have long championed women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights, and are seen as pioneers in this field. In this context, I believe that the feminist foreign policy is seen as another step in showing that the whole of society, peace and security benefit from women's and girls' human rights being respected.

### 3. What do you think are the three most important areas within human rights where the Swedish feminist foreign policy has a clear role to play in the future?

- The agenda for peace and security, for which we now have empirical data showing how important it is to include women and their perspective.
- The global SRHR agenda, where we are seeing a clear reversal – even in stable democracies in the global West – in areas such as abortion, access to contraceptives and sex and relationship education.
- Given the shrinking democratic space globally, it's incredibly important to support and protect defenders of human rights, journalists, bloggers, academics and artists, who are often doubly exposed if they are women, both online and offline.

42 [www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2016/10/den-svenska-sexkopslagen-har-varit-framgangsrik/](http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2016/10/den-svenska-sexkopslagen-har-varit-framgangsrik/)

43 Sweden's view was put forward by Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér in a speech about human trafficking during an open debate at the UN Security Council in New York on 15 March 2017.

### The Swedish Sex Purchase Act

The Swedish prohibition on paying for sexual services came into force on 1 January 1999. This made Sweden the first country in the world to criminalise purchasing – but not selling – sex. International interest in the Swedish model banning paying for sex has been, and remains, high. Several other countries have also adopted the Swedish model, such as South Korea, South Africa, Iceland, Norway, England and Wales, Northern Ireland, Canada and France.<sup>42</sup>

Sweden emphasises the importance of not creating legal markets for human trafficking. Discussions are taking place, including within the UN, on whether or not prostitution should be regarded as a profession. The term 'sex worker' is often used in these discussions. Sweden's policy on this matter is clear. Prostitution can never be regarded as a profession; prostitution is always exploitation. Sweden encourages more countries to consider legislation targeted at the person who pays for sex and offers support to the person being exploited. The criminal focus and guilt are thereby shifted from the exploited to the exploiter. Knowledge about the individual's own rights, including about sexual and reproductive health and rights, is essential.<sup>43</sup>

### 5.1.3 Disarmament and non-proliferation

Within the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, the work has focused on both gender mainstreaming and specific initiatives targeted at women and girls.

Women are under-represented in contexts where disarmament and non-proliferation are discussed – at diplomatic and technical levels, and within academia and civil society organisations. Sweden has worked to increase women’s representation and involvement in disarmament and non-proliferation. Sweden has also worked to develop and disseminate knowledge about how access to and proliferation of weapons affects women, men, girls and boys differently. This involves highlighting the different effects of using and testing nuclear weapons. Sweden pushes a gender equality perspective in processes relating to international weapons inspections and the disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. For example, in the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and in the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

There is often a link between concentrations of small arms and light

weapons and instances of violence that can lead to conflict in a society. Sweden has contributed to the development of sex-disaggregated data in relation to the consequences of armed violence. Swedish support has contributed to research and policy documents within the field, for example through studies carried out by the Small Arms Survey. This in turn has led to targeted initiatives in connection with international negotiations and processes on small arms and light weapons, and with international weapons inspections.

Sweden has also promoted a gender equality perspective in processes on international weapons inspections and disarmament, such as the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The ATT is an important tool in the work to combat illicit and irresponsible trading in conventional weapons. Sweden is working for the application of the Arms Trade Treaty (article 7.4) and that state parties should take into account the risk of exported materials being used for – or facilitating – gender-based violence or violence against women or children. Ahead of the ongoing review of the NPT, Sweden contributed to a discussion on a report highlighting the disproportionate biological and social impact on girls and women of detonating and testing nuclear weapons. The study also problematised the unequal representation in disarmament contexts.

Alliance-building and dialogue have been significant for the impact of the gender equality perspective in these issues, both multilaterally and bilaterally. Countries and organisations that were not previously active have been engaged, and there are concrete plans for monitoring in the committee work of the UN General Assembly. Another example is the work within the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in which Sweden has started the Group of Friends of Women in Nuclear with the aim of contributing to gender equal representation and more gender equal policy within the IAEA.

By providing actors with political and financial support, Sweden has helped to raise awareness of the link between the proliferation of weapons and gender-based violence, and to ensuring gender mainstreaming within operations. UN bodies, agencies and civil society organisations are some of the actors who have received Swedish support. During 2018, Sweden supports, for example, the United Nations Institute of Disarmament (UNIDIR) in working to integrate a gender equality perspective into multilateral disarmament platforms. Cooperation between the Nordic nations and within the EU has also been important for this purpose.

## The export of military equipment

By championing a feminist foreign policy, the Swedish Government works systematically with achieving results that strengthen women's and girls' rights, representation and resources. Sweden attaches great importance to preventing and counteracting gender-based and sexual violence in conflict and in society generally. One important aspect of this work is the strict control exercised over the export of military equipment from Sweden. This takes place, for example, through Sweden applying article 7.4 of the ATT. The article was included in the treaty with the strong support of countries including Sweden, and requires state parties to take into account the risk of exported materials being used for – or facilitating – serious gender-based violence or serious violence against women or children.

Sweden has also worked to ensure that the Inspectorate of Strategic Products has sufficient competence to be able to include gender equality aspects and risks of gender-based violence in assessments relating to

human rights and international humanitarian rights, and to apply article 7.4 of the ATT. As part of this work, a targeted skills development initiative for the inspectorate was arranged in 2016.

In addition, the Government submitted a bill to the Riksdag in October 2017, including proposals on further sharpening export controls on military equipment (Bill 2017/17:23). The legislative change came into force on 15 April 2018. The new regulations imply that the democratic status of the receiving country shall be a central condition for assessing whether or not to grant permission. This assessment shall also take into account whether the export could counteract equitable and sustainable development in the receiving country. An overall assessment will be carried out.

## 5.2 International development cooperation

"When we strengthen women and girls, we strengthen nations and reduce poverty. This begins with giving every woman and girl the right to control her own body."

Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin

Sweden's development cooperation aims to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. Swedish development aid is often channelled via multilateral organisations and the EU. Humanitarian aid also involves Sweden's efforts to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity for people in need who are affected by natural disaster, armed conflict or other catastrophic conditions.

The focus on gender equality in development cooperation is based on the insight that strengthened gender equality contributes to reduced poverty and more sustainable development. It is also based on the insight that poverty is different for women and men, girls and boys. An important issue for Sweden is to involve boys and men in the work for gender equal societies. This could

involve initiatives that promote positive forms of masculinity.

Swedish development cooperation is the area of foreign policy that has historically worked the longest with a clear gender equality perspective. The feminist foreign policy has meant a further raise of ambition. Gender equality is a thematic focus of the Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance decided on by the Government in 2016.<sup>44</sup> The framework establishes that all Swedish development cooperation shall be gender mainstreamed. Guidance has also been strengthened through the addition of new wording on gender equality in the ordinance to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Sida is also part of the Swedish Government's Gender Mainstreaming in Government Agencies (JiM) development programme. The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), which works with international peace initiatives and development cooperation, is also involved in the JiM programme. The FBA has a gender equality perspective throughout all its operations, and works in particular with women, peace and security in various conflict and post-conflict nations as part of

Sweden's international development cooperation.

Aid efforts are carried out within all objective areas for the Swedish feminist foreign policy. This includes support to strengthen countries' legislation for women's and girls' rights, to promote women's economic empowerment, to combat men's violence against women, to strengthen women's roles in peace processes and to increase women's political participation and access to SRHR.

44 Government Communication 2016/17:60

## Concrete tools in Sida's work with gender equality:

- The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has a **gender mainstreaming plan** for the period 2016–2018. One objective of this plan is to increase the proportion of operations with gender equality as a main focus. Particular efforts are being carried out within the area of productive sectors, such as market development, agriculture, energy, the environment and climate. The plan also establishes that routines and working methods to strengthen gender mainstreaming should continuously be reviewed, particularly with a focus on monitoring and results.
- Sida has also developed a toolbox focusing on gender equality in development aid, the **Sida Gender Toolbox**. The toolbox provides knowledge, tools and inspiration on how the gender equality perspective can be strengthened in Swedish development cooperation. The Sida Gender Toolbox consists of tools for addressing the 'How?' question (e.g. gender equality analyses and gender mainstreaming) and thematic overviews (the 'What?' question), and is available in English at: <https://www.sida.se/English/partners/resources-for-all-partners/methodological-materials/gender-tool-box/>
- Experience shows that gender mainstreaming must be combined with targeted gender equality initiatives to achieve the best results. In line with this, the Swedish Government adopted a **global strategy for gender equality and women's and girls' rights** for the 2018–2022 period in April 2018. The strategy's objective areas involve strengthened global and regional normative work and counteracting discrimination and gender stereotypical norms and all forms of gender-based violence and harmful customs. The strategy also has a particular focus on strengthening working conditions for women's rights organisations, feminist movements and women human rights campaigners. Another area in the strategy is to work for increased access to and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender equality research. The strategy will be financed with SEK 1bn over a five-year period.

### **1. How has the process of been in developing the documentation for the Government?**

In order to draw up the documentation for the strategy, Sida appointed an internal working group in autumn 2017 to support and win backing for the work at the agency, and to identify synergies with other operations. An extensive consultation process was carried out in several stages, including with other missions abroad, other Swedish agencies, civil society organisations, researchers and consultants working within the field of gender equality. Written contributions for the analysis and the focus of the work were obtained from almost 30 international partners, from within the UN, civil society and research institutes.

### **2. What are the biggest changes with the new strategy compared with how Sida worked previously**

The global strategy should be seen as a raising of ambitions for gender equality and for women's and girls' rights in development cooperation. It both complements and reinforces

ongoing work, and provides opportunities for innovative and catalytic work within the field. Since the global gender equality strategy includes the entire gender equality agenda, this also facilitates support for new types of actors who work for gender equality and for women's and girls' rights.

### **3. What do you see as the main challenges, both internally at Sida and externally, with implementing the new strategy?**

This is an ambitious strategy that is dependent on synergies with other global thematic areas. The challenges include ensuring a continued prioritisation of gender equality in the design and implementation of other strategies, both thematically and geographically. Supporting the coordination and development of a global normative agenda also requires close cooperation and coordination with thematic policy competence and multilateral focal points within Sida. Several innovative and catalytic initiatives, including support for women's rights organisations and the safety of women human rights activities, are also resource-intensive from staffing and case management perspectives.

45 Interview with Sida's Lisa Mossberg and Eva Johansson, April 2018

Swedish development cooperation is channelled via several different actors. Extensive core support to various multilateral organisations are prepared at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as well as direct grants to several organisations and projects. Through agencies such as Sida, the FBA and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), aid is channelled to several actors at project and programme levels. Comprehensive support is also provided to Swedish civil society organisations to pursue a poverty-focused and gender equal agenda.

With the feminist foreign policy, gender budgeting (as mentioned in chapter 3) has been strengthened within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' grant management. Demands are imposed to ensure the gender mainstreaming of grant management in every individual case. This means, for example, that gender equality and power analyses must be included as part of the preparation and monitoring of the grant decision. New templates have also been drawn up for preparing core support for multilateral organisations in which the gender equality perspective must be integrated.

To be able to meet the different needs of women and men, every initiative must be preceded by a gender equality

analysis. A gender equality analysis identifies differences between women, men, girls and boys with regard to the groups' access to resources, opportunities and power, and to the barriers that exist along the way. This does not necessary involve a group being worse off or being more seriously affected, but that the groups of women and men, or boys and girls, are often affected differently. In order to highlight this, a gender equality analysis must be carried out.

## Gender equality analyses within development cooperation

- Ensure that women, men, girls and boys are consulted during the planning phase to identify needs and bottlenecks.
- Carry out on-site consultations that are accessible to both women and men, and at times of the day when they are available. Carry out gender-separate consultations if necessary.
- Be clear. Avoid wording such as “Gender equality shall characterise all phases of the project”. Instead, describe what, how and when.
- Analyse women’s and men’s access to resources: economic, productive, political and time resources.
- Use both quantitative and qualitative indicators to follow up on the initiative.
- Ensure sex- and age-disaggregated data.

Sweden champions gender equality work in multilateral organisations by being an active donor and board member. For example, Sweden is the biggest donor to UN Women and is also a major donor to UNFPA. Sweden has also played a leading role in drawing up gender equality strategies for the development banks, including the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the European Investment Bank.

## Accountability and impact

Sweden shall work to achieve concrete results for gender equality and for women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights by cooperating with multilateral actors and using directorships, co-ownerships, memberships, partnerships and other tools in order to pursue both normative and operational work. As part of this, Sweden shall cooperate actively with the accountability mechanisms in the multilateral bodies and shall work to ensure that the bodies:

- Have guiding documents based on international law and international agreements, consistently follow these regulations, and apply an intersectional perspective in gender equality analyses and other work,
- Develop sex- and age-disaggregated data,
- Increase their expertise on gender equality and women's and girls' rights,
- Increase their expertise and strengthen their prevention work against discriminatory rules, norms and stereotypes in relation to gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation,
- Have an active organisational and staffing policy that creates non-discriminatory organisational structures and promotes gender equality, including more women in management positions,
- Set aside resources for working with gender equality and women's, girls' and LGBTQ persons' human rights, including human resources and expertise for gender equality work.

## Sweden's work to counteract sexual harassment and assaults within the aid sector

Sweden takes a zero-tolerance approach towards sexual harassment and assaults. As part of this, Sweden is adding wording on sexual harassment and assaults to the decision on conditions for core support. This decision means that multilateral organisations who want to continue to receive support from Sweden must follow ethical rules and apply protection against sexual harassment and assaults. Ongoing dialogue is also taking place with multilateral partner organisations and funds on how they can meet Sweden's demands for a zero-tolerance approach in relation to the long-term Swedish core support. In addition, a review is being carried out of Sida's agreement templates for civil society organisations, and Sweden is continuing to work with these issues in various multilateral forums.

Among other things, Sweden has worked to:

- Promote a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of sexual harassment and assaults within the aid sector.
- Minimise negative effects on populations in need, particularly in humanitarian contexts, where harassment or assaults are brought to light and the withdrawal of support is enforced.
- Ensure that sexual harassment and assaults are included on the agenda at a high level. Sweden has raised the issue at meetings of EU ministers for development aid and with the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, written to the heads of the major UN bodies, engaged in dialogue with the UN Secretary-General and raised the issue with the multilateral development banks.
- Ensure that issues relating to sexual harassment and assaults are included when drawing up the EU's aid instruments.
- Hold an active dialogue with the circle of donors within the framework of safeguarding, in order to coordinate donors' actions.

The feminist foreign policy has also involved a stronger gender equality perspective in Sweden's work with **humanitarian aid**. The Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance states that Sweden's humanitarian aid shall contribute towards strengthening women's and girls' right to protection in humanitarian crises, and shall strengthen their opportunity to play an active role in response to humanitarian crises. Gender equality analyses can be decisive in order to be able to save lives and alleviate suffering, as the challenges and needs may be different for women and men. For example, dramatic increases in teenage pregnancy, child marriage and gender-based violence have been demonstrated in disaster situations. Sweden has undertaken concrete measures to integrate a gender equality perspective and measures against sexual and gender-based violence into humanitarian efforts and the humanitarian reform process. For example, Sweden has committed to work for those affected by crises to have greater influence over humanitarian work and only intends to support humanitarian actors who base their work on a gender equality analysis and sex- and age-disaggregated data. Sweden has also consistently emphasised

the importance of a gender equality perspective in international humanitarian law (IHL), including at the humanitarian world summit in Istanbul in 2016 and by publishing the report "IHL and Gender – Swedish experiences" in association with the Swedish Red Cross.

Through the global initiative Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, launched by the UK and Sweden in 2013, gender-based violence in humanitarian catastrophes and crises is highlighted. The aim is to drive the question forward and to persuade humanitarian actors (state actors, bilateral donors, multilateral organisations and civil society) to take more responsibility for systematically including the issue of gender-based violence in their work. Sweden chaired the initiative in 2016–2017 and contributed to a growth in membership and to more than 360 undertakings being pledged in relation to the initiative's action plan. The network now includes more than 70 actors from around the world. Tools have been devised to facilitate the work involved, including a website (<https://www.calltoactiongbv.com>) where the abovementioned action plans for the period 2016–2020 can be found.

## Migration and gender equality in foreign policy:

Sweden works to ensure that refugee and migrant women and girls can enjoy human rights, including through engagement in the processes to draw up two global frameworks: one for refugees and one on migration. Within the context of the negotiations on the global migration framework, Sweden has worked to increase the number of support offices along the main migration routes and in major transit countries. These support offices can provide humanitarian support and advice, and carry out specific initiatives for women and girls. Sweden has also prioritised the issue of safe workforce migration with decent conditions, particularly for women. Within the process to draw up a global refugee framework, Sweden has emphasised the importance of refugee girls and boys needing access to good quality education and that the framework must feature a gender equality perspective. Sweden also provides support for the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM), to ensure that their vital work along the central Mediterranean route can continue. This is of the utmost importance in order to be able

to meet the urgent needs of refugees and migrants – not least women and girls – and to find solutions for them, including evacuation and returning. Sweden is also one of the biggest grant donors to the UN's refugee organisation, the UNHCR. The UNHCR works to save lives and alleviate suffering in humanitarian situations all over the world, and does so with a gender equality perspective to ensure that women and men get equal access to protection and aid.

## Climate and gender equality

Climate effects in the form of drought, flooding and extreme weather lead to poorer health and growing food and water supply problems. These challenges hit the world's 1.3bn poor people the hardest, and because women have limited access to political, economic and material resources, this has a negative effect on their vulnerability to – and ability to adapt to – climate impact.

Women are often responsible for the majority of agricultural work and for their families' food security. Women also often play a key role in the use and administration of forest resources and water. Women are thereby important agents for change who can contribute to important perspectives and solutions for dealing with climate change. There are also many examples of investments in renewable energy contributing to greater employment opportunities for women and promoting female enterprise.

Sweden has strengthened the work to integrate the environmental and climate perspective with the gender equality perspective in development cooperation, both bilaterally and within the EU, and in the major multilateral environmental and climate funds. In funds such as the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the World

Bank's Climate Investment Funds (CIF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Sweden has worked successfully with the development of ambitious new gender equality policies and concrete action plans for their implementation. Sweden has also worked actively for strategic recruitments to strengthen gender equality work in these funds' secretariats. Sweden drives forward gender equality work in these funds by, for example, imposing requirements that:

- conditions placed when accrediting the funds' implementation organisations include gender equality;
- the result frameworks include indicators relevant to gender equality that allow the funds' results to be monitored within the field of gender equality; and
- women are involved in the design and implementation of projects.



Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin signs the Government proposal for a new Climate Act

### 5.3 Trade and promotion policy

“Investing in equality is smart. Excluding women from economic opportunities is probably the biggest waste in the world. [...] As well as being smart and right, gender equality is also good for the economy. When women participate in the labour market as employees or entrepreneurs, their power over their own lives increases and the whole of society is strengthened.”

Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde

Swedish trade and promotion policy aims to promote Swedish economic interests and Sweden’s image abroad, which in turn facilitates exports and imports and enables a mutual exchange of trade with other countries. Swedish trade policy has a strong redistributive effect and a clear gender equality perspective. The feminist foreign policy has further raised the ambitions in operating and promoting a progressive and

fair trade policy that increases women’s economic empowerment.

The potential is enormous. A 2015 UN study shows that if the world’s labour markets were completely equal, the global economy would grow by USD 28 trillion by 2025. The gross world product would rise by 26 per cent, roughly equivalent to the combined GNPs of China and the USA. In India, GNP would rise by a full 60 per cent, as the country is further down the list of women’s labour market involvement.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the world’s women currently carry out 75 per cent of unpaid work. This work is estimated to be worth USD 10 trillion each year, corresponding to 13 per cent of the global economy.<sup>49</sup>

Much remains to be done before these figures can become a reality. Globally, 50 per cent of women of working age are in gainful employment compared to 77 per cent of men. Women aged 25–64 have increased their participation in the workforce, while participation among younger women has fallen. The reason for this is probably growing education opportunities. Women work part-time more often, and receive considerably lower hourly pay than men. The reasons are that women work

48 McKinsey Global Institute (2015), “The power of parity: How advancing women’s equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth

49 Ibid

in low-paid industries and that men receive higher pay than women for equivalent work. Women work more often in the informal sector with domestic services and market trading, and have poorer access to information technology, which affects access to financial services and markets. Girls and women in all parts of the world account for a large proportion of unpaid work in the home and in society. Women often stop paid work earlier to care for older relatives or to look after children and grandchildren. Their lifetime pay is lower, and thus so too is their pension. In turn, they can end up in a position of dependence in relation to their spouses and children.

Women face many challenges in the field of trade. Women entrepreneurs often work within small-scale operations which lack access to financial capital, technical training and the marketing capabilities required to benefit from new trading opportunities, and survive in competition with other actors. Women also often have limited access to other resources, including energy, water, technology, tools, transport, education and market data, to name just a few. Other barriers to women's economic empowerment include gender stereotyped social norms and discriminatory legislation.

By working with **responsible business in guarantees** the Swedish Export Credits Guarantee Board (EKN) contributes to the work on the Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda and to the feminist foreign policy. In certain industries and on risky markets, where the need is often the greatest, EKN's guarantees can be decisive for business success. These guarantees contribute to development both in Sweden and in buying countries. In developing countries with limited financial opportunities, EKN's guarantees contribute to financial resources that strengthen the countries opportunities for development. By contributing to infrastructure and public transport, for example, EKN makes a contribution towards women's opportunities.

Pursuing a feminist foreign policy includes a feminist trade policy. For example, Sweden has contributed to a gender perspective in the agreements on the Global Goals and on financing for development, and to central recommendations from leading economic forums such as the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **World Bank** emphasising the importance of including growth and women's participation in the labour market.

**Three questions for the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' focal point for feminist foreign policy within the field of trade:**

**1. Do you and your colleagues think that the work with a feminist foreign policy has been beneficial within trade?**

The Government's trade policy work within the framework of the feminist foreign policy has contributed towards more organisations providing statistics and analysis in this field, which is just as complicated as it is decisive. Getting an accurate picture means that we can argue much more convincingly and formulate more effective proposals for actions. The fact that Sweden has pushed these issues in cooperation with other like-minded countries has also contributed to many countries supporting a declaration on gender equality and trade at the eleventh World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in December 2017

**2. Which tools and arguments have you benefited from the most in your work to implement the feminist foreign policy?**

Analyses and statistics showing unequal conditions within international trade and trade policy have been

decisive for pursuing gender equality issues within this area. Being able to point to analyses of the positive economic effects of gender mainstreaming has also been important.

**3. What's in the pipeline right now, in terms of new agreements, strategies, partners, etc.?**

Sweden is currently pushing for gender equality to be integrated into a number of free trade agreements. One way of doing this is by strengthening the use of – and the process in connection with – existing tools such as the EU's sustainability impact assessments. It's also important that relevant organisations produce sex-disaggregated data and analyses within trade policy to a greater extent.

Within the EU, Sweden has been a driving force for better integrating gender equality into trade policy and encouraging others to do likewise. Sweden wants to see a stronger gender equality perspective in the work of the WTO and in the EU's free trade agreements with third countries and welcomes the fact that the EU Trade Commissioner has encouraged the WTO to integrate gender equality to a higher degree. Within the OECD, Sweden has pushed for gender equality to be integrated into trade policy work. Sweden has also worked with the UN's trade body UNCTAD to produce a toolbox containing methods for assessing the effects of trade policy initiatives for women and gender equality.

Swedish support to the UN for developing gender equality tools within trade

Sweden's cooperation with UNCTAD has resulted in the Swedish-financed Trade and Gender Toolbox. The toolbox aims to help governments, officials and other actors to predict and assess the effects of trade policy initiatives for women and gender equality.<sup>50</sup> In this way, the toolbox can contribute to trade playing greater role for inclusive development and for women's economic empowerment.

## Trade and Gender Toolbox



To further increase knowledge within this field, Sweden’s National Board of Trade has carried out a study of trade, social sustainability and gender equality, and has held a seminar on gender equality and trade under the **Global Review of Aid for Trade**.

Sweden also supports the International Trade Centre (ITC), a UN/WTO organisation that aims to create the right conditions for small and medium-sized companies in developing countries to enter global markets for trade. The ITC works actively with trade and gender equality and with women’s enterprise, and has launched

the **#SheTrades**<sup>51</sup> initiative which aims to connect a million women entrepreneurs to the market by 2020. The initiative identifies seven global actions in which governments, the private sector and civil society can make concrete pledges to remedy obstacles hampering women-owned businesses.

### The seven actions for SheTrades



50 [unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/Gender-and-Trade/Trade,-Gender-and-Development.aspx](http://unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/Gender-and-Trade/Trade,-Gender-and-Development.aspx)  
 51 [www.shetrades.se](http://www.shetrades.se)

In 2016, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven launched the **Global Deal** initiative – a global focus on social dialogue and better labour market conditions – in partnership with the ILO and the OECD. The aim of the Global Deal is to improve the dialogue between labour market actors and national governments to improve terms of employment and productivity. Effective labour market relations and decent work contribute towards greater equality and inclusive economic development, benefiting workers, businesses and society – a ‘win-win-win’ situation. The Global Deal concept does not involve developing a new framework or agreement to be implemented in a uniform manner in all countries or creating a new international organisation. Instead, the aims are to develop a platform to highlight the issue of cooperation between parties and to strengthen existing cooperation structures. For example, Sweden and Bangladesh have signed a cooperation agreement to contribute to better dialogue between employers and employees in Bangladesh’s female-dominated textiles industry. The project is being carried out by the ILO in cooperation with local trade unions and employer organisations. H&M and IF Metall are also involved.

One aspect of foreign policy involves promoting Swedish values and spreading the image of Sweden around the world. Gender equality is an important part of this image. Many Swedish embassies confirm that there is a great demand for information about how Sweden has achieved such a high degree of gender equality. Questions about Swedish society – including childcare, parental insurance and the proportion of women in the Swedish labour market – are asked regularly, and there is a clear interest in finding out more.

One tool for implementing the feminist foreign policy is the Swedish Institute’s (SI) toolbox (<http://sharingsweden.se>), which contains presentations such as Swedish Dads (see chapter 6) and other information about a number of gender equality-conscious themes. These show what it means to be a feminist foreign policy pioneer and where Sweden stands on the issue of gender equality.<sup>52</sup>

## Swedish Dads

Swedish Dads is a photo exhibition featuring portraits of fathers who have chosen to take at least six months of parental leave. Photographer Johan Bävman followed some of these fathers to find out about their experiences and how parental leave has affected their relationships with their partners and their children. The aim of the exhibition is to show the effect of more equal parenting at individual and societal levels.

The exhibition has been developed into an important tool in the Swedish Foreign Service's work to encourage new approaches and values. It has been displayed at Swedish embassies in around 50 countries, and more exhibitions are planned. (For more information, see chapter 6.)

"I use portraits and interviews with dads together with their children in everyday situations, with the aim of focusing on fathers who choose their family over their jobs and careers. The aim is also to focus on universal loving aspects of parenting, regardless of whether this involves fathers or mothers." <sup>53</sup>

Photographer Johan Bävman

52 The Swedish Institute. Fact sheet: Pioneering a feminist foreign policy and Gender equality – we've come a long way, haven't we?

53 [si.se/evenemang/swedish-dads-fotoutstalling/](https://si.se/evenemang/swedish-dads-fotoutstalling/)

## 6. Working methods at country level

Swedish missions abroad play a central role in the implementation of the feminist foreign policy.

One important starting point for the feminist foreign policy is that the work must be based on the reality where operations are carried out, so that the analyses are accurate and the approach has the maximum impact. This means that the approaches may vary between different missions abroad. At the same time, some experiences coincide. For example, virtually all missions abroad say that the feminist foreign policy has involved something new and different that encourages new integrated discussions internally, as well as new ways of working and initiatives externally, where all tools and policy areas work together and have a greater impact. In the same way, interaction is created with a number of Swedish actors on location, such as Sida, the FBA, Business Sweden, the Swedish Institute and Swedish businesses. This in turn makes it possible to draw on the expertise of all these actors and reach out to more target groups.

For the missions abroad, the feminist foreign policy puts these issues in focus of political dialogue, development cooperation, promotion policy and in country analyses. Awareness of and interest in these issues is increasing, including among employees and cooperation partners.

"The fact that we have a feminist foreign policy has made us something of a 'superhero' among the aid actors present. Colleagues say that they are often asked by other state aid agencies what promoting a feminist foreign policy is like, and how good this initiative is."

Swedish embassy

The in-depth work has borne fruit, both externally and internally. Below is a selection of examples on how missions abroad work systematically with the feminist foreign policy using various methods. Other examples can be found elsewhere in this handbook and in the collection of examples for the first three years' implementation of the policy.<sup>54</sup>

International Women's Day, Human Rights Day, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, International Day of the Girl Child and other **international days** are used by all parts of the Swedish Foreign Service to raise awareness for these issues. These events enable Sweden to spread messages of gender equality and women's and girls' rights via **panel discussions, speeches, articles, radio programmes and social media posts**.

The embassies are also actively involved in the global **16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence** campaign, which is held every year and runs from 25 November, International

Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, until 10 December, Human Rights Day. In Bangladesh, for example, the Swedish Embassy has used the occasion to invite participants to **round-table discussions** on women's career opportunities in the textiles industry, in association with the Swedish Institute and the other Nordic embassies.

The work to combat gender-based violence has also included a **'hackathon'** in Honduras, with organisers including the Swedish and Dutch embassies. The event resulted in several tools and initiatives that received support for further development. These included a mobile app for women exposed to violence in the home, featuring a direct line to the police and support groups, as well as recommendations about who else to contact.

**Swedish and local holidays** also offer excellent opportunities to discuss gender equality and women's and girls' rights. For example, the Swedish Embassy in Tanzania reports that:

54 [www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2017/10/sveriges-feministiska-utrikespolitik-exempel-pa-tre-ars-genomforande/](http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2017/10/sveriges-feministiska-utrikespolitik-exempel-pa-tre-ars-genomforande/)

“The 2017 Lucia reception provided another platform for reaching out with the message about girls’ rights. Many guests said that they appreciated how Sweden had succeeded in using a reception to present an important message. The event was broadcast on one of the biggest local TV channels, ensuring a wide reach for the message.”

The Swedish Embassy in Tanzania

**Dialogue and sharing experiences,** both on an ongoing basis and in connection with high-level visits, are key tools in this work. These dialogues are often based on specific issues, but many countries also show an interest in the Swedish overall view.

The Swedish feminist foreign policy has contributed to **women’s enterprise and employment** in a number of different countries. In Bolivia, for example, Sweden has contributed to more than 500 new jobs (self-employed or employed) for women with few resources. Similarly, by financing the Women in Business programme with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Sweden has been able provide women entrepreneurs in Eastern Europe with capacity development and advice, as well as preferential loan terms with local banks. Another example is the networks of local support centres for women (WINNET) which have been developed in recent years in accordance with the Swedish model, and which build upon cooperation between civil society, the state, the private sector and academia. These centres have created skills development opportunities and jobs for vulnerable women, enabling them to empower themselves, resulting in increased self-confidence and more interest in political engagement and

participation. Sweden has also established a **leadership programme for women managers and entrepreneurs** in Saudi Arabia, and has carried out an expert visit to Sweden from China on the theme of women in tech, focusing on women coders. In addition, Sweden works to change discriminatory legislation that presents barriers to women's equal economic participation.

In several countries, including Chile, the Swedish embassy works with many different actors to apply the feminist foreign policy. Thanks to cooperation with Chilean journalists, several millions of TV viewers in the country have been informed about Sweden's parental insurance. Through cooperation with the Hay Mujeres organisation, the embassy has created the "Embajadores Hay Mujeres" network with the aim of involving men in gender equality work. The embassy has also involved managers within industry in the #HeforShe campaign.

The Swedish Embassy in Thailand has carried out initiatives within **migration work** to better discover and prevent human trafficking, particularly of women. The embassy also works within a number of other areas, including by engaging prominent Thai personalities to present the feminist foreign policy's message. The embassy is actively

involved in the domestic policy discussion through debate articles and social media. Development cooperation contacts have been used for influencing work and dialogue.

Within **cultural promotion** the Swedish Embassy in Mexico City has initiated discussions on what is traditionally expected of men and women, and how gender stereotypes can be influenced in the long term by reaching new and broader groups. These discussions have taken popular culture as their starting point, such as how to include gender equality issues in the scripts of popular soap operas (telenovelas) and using music to reach out in particularly challenging environments. In the latter case, the embassy hosted discussions between women rappers in the form of Swedish artist Silvana Imam and Mexican group Batallones Femeninos, who use their music to promote women's rights in Ciudad Juárez, which has particularly high levels of violence and is dominated by a macho culture.

The Swedish Embassy in Athens has carried out a number of activities within the cultural sector, including a three-day tribute to the **role of women in film-making** and to the role of film for gender equality. Broad discussions have also included issues relating to parental leave and other measures of significance for a gender equal society.

The abovementioned Swedish photo exhibition **Swedish Dads** has generated discussion in many countries, and has acted as a useful springboard for further dialogue and events relating to gender roles and gender equality. In Croatia, the Swedish Embassy organised a Festival of Fathers and held round-table discussions in parliament in connection with the exhibition, while in Iran the embassy has taken the exhibition on a national tour. **Local photo competitions** for fathers have also been held in several countries, including China, Uganda, Thailand, Tunisia and Switzerland. In other cases, discussions have been held on parental insurance, socially engaged photography, the role of fathers and destructive masculinities. The exhibition has taken different forms and has been shown in different places within society, including in the Shanghai Metro and at the OECD in Paris. Employees at some embassies have also developed aspects of the campaigns, adopting the term Embassy Dads and using social media to talk about their own experiences as dads and equal partners.

Within **development cooperation**, the gender equality focus has been further increased and has led to operations relating to all the Rs and the objectives of the feminist foreign policy. Not least, Sweden has focused on SRHR and

gathered its forces by working at global, regional and bilateral levels and with a wide range of actors and sectors. A quarter of development cooperation's bilateral strategies include objectives relating to health, focusing on **robust health systems, SRHR and improved paediatric and maternal health**. This support has contributed to more midwives, greater access to contraceptives, improved access to safe and legal abortions, better conditions for young people to make informed decisions about their health, sexuality and reproduction, and better conditions for LGBTQ persons to enjoy human rights. In Mozambique, the embassy has helped to draw up the new national guidelines for abortion care, and in Zambia a programme with Swedish support that focuses on sex education in schools is thought to have helped prevent around 50 000 unplanned pregnancies.

Programmes to strengthen women's political participation have been funded in several countries, including Zimbabwe, Syria and Moldavia. In Somalia, Sweden's efforts are estimated to have contributed towards the proportion of women members of Somalia's parliament having increased by 70 per cent in the 2016 election to a level of 24 per cent. The Swedish Embassy in Somalia has also helped to create a national

platform with government, private sector and civil society representatives to implement the peace, women and safety agenda. Similarly, the embassies work in other conflict and post-conflict nations to increase the involvement of women and girls in all aspects of peace work. For example, the Swedish Embassy in Iraq is actively involved in the dialogue on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, contributing to its implementation by supporting local civil society organisations and working to ensure that the UN bodies there meet their undertakings in relation to gender equality and women's and girls' human rights.

## The focus on masculinity at the Swedish Embassy in Kinshasa, DR Congo

As mentioned previously, one of the positive results of the Swedish feminist foreign policy is the new way of working, whereby the individual parts of embassies work together in a more integrated manner across operational borders. One example is the work carried out by the Swedish Embassy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to promote positive masculinity. The embassy works with boys' and young men's image of men using extensive support from Sida within the scope of development cooperation, and has also funded a study of masculinity together with UN Women. Other initiatives have included holding essay-writing competitions for young students on the theme of boys' and men's roles in gender equality work, organising a photo competition on the theme "un vrai homme" ("a real man"), holding round-table discussions on masculinity and sharing regular messages on social media with interviews from men's networks and activists. The far-reaching impact is the outcome of the work across operational areas that has been carried out effectively within foreign policy, culture, promoting Sweden and development cooperation.

Via Sida, Sweden also supports many initiatives for **women's economic empowerment**, including through the regional initiative "JP RWEE" carried out in seven countries: Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria and Rwanda. The aim is to boost rural women's potential by improving access to and control over resources, services and opportunities, and by giving them a stronger voice in the home and in society.

Many missions abroad emphasize that the Swedish feminist foreign policy has given Sweden **new arenas and access to other actors** compared to the embassies' traditional networks. In Sarajevo and Washington, for example, the Swedish embassies report high levels of interest among university students.

The feminist foreign policy has also **strengthened the voice and reach of certain groups**, such as women's rights activities, through Sweden inviting them to international conferences and highlighting their work on social media. One example is the work of the Swedish Embassy in Brazil. In Angola, Sweden was one of a few embassies to accompany the Angolan Minister for Gender Equality on a roadshow in rural areas to discuss gender equality, with a large social media presence.

Several Swedish embassies have also helped to **create platforms for women and girls**. For example, the Swedish Embassy in Liberia allows women's rights organisations and women's forums to hold meetings and discussions at the embassy's premises, with the aim of improving their conditions for pursuing gender equality issues together. Dinner meetings have also been arranged with civil rights organisations and women journalists. The embassy invites women's rights organisations to political discussions as a matter of course, to ensure that women and girls have opportunities for political participation and influence. The platform offered by the embassy gives women their own space where they can build the social networks that men often already have. The embassy also contributes with training for partners on various gender equality issues, including gender budgeting and resource allocation.

Extensive work is carried out internally at missions abroad to enhance their own **expertise on gender equality and women's and girls' rights, and to sharpen working methods and analytical tools**. The embassies work to broaden their basis for obtaining information and to ensure that all voices and perspectives are heard. In line with this, the Swedish Embassy in

Ethiopia established a network in spring 2018 for gender equality issues and women's rights. The idea of the network is that it should help the embassy to analyse and understand developments in connection with gender equality and women's rights in the country, and to contribute towards devising various events and activities under the embassy's management on this theme. The network consists of nine people with documented experience of working for gender equality and women's rights. The participants also represent different sections of Ethiopian society, including the public and private sectors, academia, civil society and the media, including social media.

The Swedish Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, is another example of an overseas agency that has carried out extensive work to increase **the level of knowledge** internally. In order to create impact for the feminist foreign policy externally, the embassy has identified that its own staff need more knowledge and understanding. One hub for such discussions is the embassy's operational planning process, which provides opportunities for discussing what a feminist approach can involve in concrete terms within the embassy's various operational areas, as well as for regular monitoring and evaluation.

## 7. Pursuing a contentious issue

“Few foreign policy issues are as well-founded as this subject, but I still sometimes encounter distrust.”

Swedish embassy

Sweden’s feminist foreign policy is sometimes met with resistance that manifests itself in different ways, including through suppression techniques such as ridiculing and making invisible.

At the same time, this resistance has been less than expected and has eased in line with the continuous growth in interest and support. One explanation for this trend is the Swedish Foreign Service’s active work to win support for the policy within the fourth R, i.e. the reality in which it is operated. Swedish embassies and departments within the Swedish Foreign Service use a number of different approaches. In addition to the rights perspective, it is also important to highlight research, experiences and arguments which show that gender equality benefits social and economic development. For example, invest-

ments in gender equality increase the frequency of gainful employment and strengthen the human capital of the whole of society. Experience has also shown that it may be important to identify common challenges (men’s violence against women, gender stereotypes, differences in pay and responsibility for unpaid work, an ageing population, digitalisation of industry, etc.) and to allow gender equality to become an integral part of the discussion on how solutions to the problems can be identified and worked on together.

Examples of arguments for increased gender equality:

- The global economy would grow by 26 per cent if women and men were equal in working life.<sup>55</sup>
- Research shows that the proportion of household income spent on children’s development increases significantly when women have greater control over the resources of the household.<sup>56</sup>

55 [www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth](http://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth)

56 See e.g.: <http://womendeliver.org/investment/boost-womens-economic-empowerment/>

- If women were able to farm on the same terms as men, 100 million people would avoid going hungry.<sup>57</sup>
- Research shows that gender equal societies are more peaceful, and a growing number of studies indicate that peace processes and peace agreements that include both women and men are more sustainable.<sup>58</sup>

Sexual and gender-based violence is a central issue that can still be difficult to discuss and counteract in all its forms, but there are now more tools and platforms for this. One example is the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), the first legally binding document on violence against women in Europe. The convention condemns all forms of violence and describes violence against women as an expression of historically unequal power relationships between women and men. It also establishes that violence against women is gender-based at a structural level. In parallel with its national work to prevent and combat violence, Sweden also works to ensure that other countries ratify the convention and live up to its obligations.

The #MeToo movement has provided new opportunities to highlight and combat men's violence against women, which Sweden has seized. One way is to hold internal discussions on whether and how the Swedish Foreign Service practises what it preaches. Another way is to take part in discussions with external actors.

"Work on readjustments relating to gender equality usually touches upon key issues such as the distribution of resources, influence and responsibility. Therefore gender equality work often arouses strong feelings. Some show their concerns openly. Others practise various forms of denial, such as denying various facts that point towards gender inequality or that unjust conditions have anything to do with gender. Some become aggressive. Many protest in silence."<sup>59</sup>

57 [www.wfp.org/our-work/preventing-hunger/focus-women/women-hunger-facts](http://www.wfp.org/our-work/preventing-hunger/focus-women/women-hunger-facts)

58 UN Women, "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325"

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## Checklist for pursuing a contentious issue

- Win support and encourage leadership for gender equality at the highest possible level, including with both female and male political, military, religious and economic decision-makers.
- Work to include gender equality in steering documents and checklists at all levels.
- Find like-minded actors, forge alliances and drive forward issues together with them or in interaction with them.
- Broaden ownership for issues through dialogue and cooperation with more/new groups.
- Create and support platforms so that more actors are made visible and can contribute.
- Establish exchanges of experience and knowledge between different actors (e.g. networks, breakfast clubs, lunch circles and series of seminars).
- Use dialogue with international, national and local women's organisations, and with other human rights and civil society organisations, to support them but also to make use of their knowledge, problem analysis and proposals which are of decisive importance in the work for sustainable solutions.
- Find out why critics are sceptical and what their line of thinking is.
- Counteract doubt and criticism with clear arguments based on statistics, facts and concrete examples from the environment in questions and/or from other contexts such as Sweden.
- Persevere, and be prepared for continual wearing down and negotiation.
- Headline and integrate the gender equality issue to make it clear that it fits in, and how.
- Emphasise that greater gender equality is often a partial solution to the problems vulnerable groups face, but that women and girls are not vulnerable groups in themselves.

Certain issues meet with more resistance than others. One such issue is sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including the issue of abortion. Sweden is a leading defender of SRHR, at global, national and local levels. The ongoing dialogue with both states and multilateral organisations and other relevant actors is an important tool that makes a difference. Sweden is also a major donor to SRHR work at all levels, and continuously emphasises the link between SRHR and human rights, gender equality, health, combating HIV and sustainable development etc. Other methods include external and mobilising campaigns (cf. SheDecides in chapter 4) and dialogue and sharing experience with like-minded parties, including civil society.

"Pursuing issues that  
not everyone agrees with  
requires both courage  
and patience."

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

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#StockholmGenderForum  
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@margotwallstrom  
#EqualityMakesSense  
#MoreWomenMorePeace  
#WikiGap  
#Midwives4all  
#SheDecides  
#SwedishDads  
#SheTrades

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