Evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action +20 and the opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda

Study for the FEMM Committee
Evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action +20 and the opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda

STUDY

Abstract

Upon request by the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) of the European Parliament, this study provides background information for the delegation of the FEMM Committee to the Commission on the Status of Women’s 59th Session. The key priority theme for the Session will be the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, 20 years after its adoption. Importantly, the session will address opportunities for achieving gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda. The study reveals that global progress on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action has been slow, uneven and limited. It concludes that adequate financing for gender equality, strong accountability mechanisms and a "gender data revolution", are essential to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women after 2015.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**BPfA**  Beijing Platform for Action

**CEDAW**  Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

**CSDP**  Common Security and Defence Policy

**CSW**  Commission on the Status of Women

**EIGE**  European Institute for Gender Equality

**EU**  European Union

**ILO**  International Labour Organization

**FEMM**  Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality

**FRA**  European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

**MDG**  Millennium Development Goal

**NAP**  National Action Plan

**ODA**  Official Development Assistance

**OECD**  Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

**OWG**  Open Working Group

**SDG**  Sustainable Development Goal

**UN**  United Nations

**UNECE**  United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

**UNSCR**  United Nations Security Council Resolution
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will take place at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York from 9 to 20 March 2015 and will be attended by UN entities, Member States and non-governmental organizations from all regions of the world. The key priority theme will be the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, 20 years after its adoption. The CSW will undertake a review of progress made of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. Importantly, it will discuss opportunities for strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda through the integration of a gender perspective.

Aim

The aim of the present study is to provide background information and recommendations for the delegation of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament who will be attending the 59th session from the 17th until the 19th of March. The note discusses key issues relating the session’s priority themes from the perspective of the EU. These include:

- The implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Member States of the European Union;
- Gender equality and women's rights in the post-2015 development agenda from a European Union perspective;
- Building evidence and monitoring results through gender statistics and indicators;
- Realising the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged women and girls;
- Managing the transition from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): lessons learned for gender equality from the MDGs and galvanizing transformative change.

Analysis

The 59th CSW session marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and involves a full review of the implementation of the BPfA at global and EU level (Chapter 1). The study clearly demonstrates that the increased efforts in the EU and its Member States have had its effect the last five years: women’s participation in the labour force and in higher education have risen, the gender pay gap has improved and women’s representation in decision-making bodies has gone up. Furthermore, the provision of services for survivors of gender-based violence has improved. Importantly there is a significant increase of gender statistics produced by Member States.

Nevertheless there is still significant room for improvement at the EU and the global level as women and girls are at a disadvantage in all the BPfA's critical areas of concern. Overall progress on the implementation of the Platform for Action has been slow, uneven and limited. Discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes, as well as women’s unequal participation in decision-making have hampered progress in all critical areas of concern.
Furthermore, progress on the critical areas of concern has been particularly slow for women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Despite increased efforts at EU level, the Beijing +20 review shows that monitoring progress on the implementation of the BPfA is challenged by a lack of comparable, high quality data on gender equality globally.

Positively, the study shows that the 59th session of the CSW takes place at an opportune moment, as the international community negotiates the post-2015 development agenda (Chapter 2) which will succeed the MDGs and address poverty eradication and sustainable development globally. Among EU institutions there is a strong consensus on the central role of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the post-2015 framework. Gender equality is seen as a goal in its own right, as well as a crosscutting issue to be mainstreamed across the framework. Three key issues to be discussed at the 59th CSW are of particular concern from an EU perspective: the monitoring of results through gender statistics and indicators (Chapter 3); the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged women and girls (Chapter 4); and the managing of the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs (Chapter 5). At the 59th CSW the EU should maintain a strong common position on gender equality and women’s rights and urge the CSW to link the post-2015 agenda explicitly to the goals of the Platform for Action, as the lack of convergence between the MDGs and the BPfA are among the main criticisms of the previous framework. The study concludes (Chapter 6) that 2015 provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to position gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment at the heart of the global agenda. The CSW should therefore call for increased financing for gender equality, strong accountability mechanisms and a “gender data revolution” in the post-2015 framework.
INTRODUCTION

In September 1995, 17,000 participants and 30,000 activists from around the globe travelled to Beijing for the **Fourth World Conference on Women** which aimed to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women everywhere. After two weeks of intensive political debate, representatives of 189 governments agreed upon commitments that were historic in scope. The Beijing Conference represented a turning point in the development of gender equality policies, not only because it launched the gender mainstreaming concept, but also because it resulted in the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing gender equality and women’s rights worldwide: the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**. For the last 20 years, the BPfA has been the world’s most powerful framework for international and national gender equality policies and practices.

As a defining framework for change, the Platform for Action makes comprehensive commitments under **12 critical areas of concern** and outlines strategic objectives and actions to be taken by the international community, national governments and civil society for the full implementation of the human rights of women and girls as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. The critical areas of concern are: (A) women and poverty, (B) education and training of women, (C) women and health, (D) violence against women, (E) women and armed conflict, (F) women and the economy, (G) women in power and decision-making, (H) institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, (I) human rights of women, (J) women and the media, (K) women and the environment and (L) the girl child.

In 2000, a five-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was carried out at the 23rd special session, entitled ‘Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century’. At the end of this CSW session, an outcome document entitled ‘Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action’ was adopted which agreed upon further actions and initiatives to advance gender equality. In 2005 and in 2010, at its 49th and 54th session, the CSW carried out 10-year and 15-year reviews of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly.

The **59th CSW session** will review the **implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, 20 years after its adoption (Beijing+20), including the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. Importantly, the session will also address opportunities for achieving gender equality in the **post-2015 development agenda**, as the 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration takes place at an opportune moment, namely the end of the implementation period for the Millennium Development Goals and the deliberations on the post-2015 development framework and sustainable development goals (see Chapter 2). In particular, the discussions of the CSW will focus on linking the implementation of the Platform for Action to the opportunities for strengthening gender equality and empowering women in the post-2015 development framework, with the aim of providing a major contribution to the on-going intergovernmental deliberations on the post-2015 agenda, which are expected to result in a new global framework, to be adopted at a summit by Heads of State and/or Government in September 2015.
1. THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

KEY FINDINGS

- Global progress on the implementation of the BPfA has been slow, uneven and limited.
- Increased efforts at the EU level have had its effect in the past years. Nevertheless, significant room for improvement remains as women and girls are still at a disadvantage in all 12 critical areas of concern.
- Discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes, as well as women’s unequal participation in decision-making have hampered progress in all critical areas of concern, at EU and global level.
- Both globally and in the EU, progress on the critical areas of concern has been particularly slow for women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Despite increased efforts at the EU level, monitoring progress on the implementation of the BPfA is challenged by a lack of comparable, high quality data on gender equality globally.

1.1. Global review of progress

In the run up to the 59th session, all UN Member States and regions were asked to undertake comprehensive national and regional level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. In December 2014, the Secretary-General of the CSW issued a report 'Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly' which bundles national and regional reviews and discusses progress, challenges and opportunities at the global level (CSW 2014a). Its conclusions are summarized below.

Over the past two decades, governments have increasingly removed discriminating laws and have adopted laws promoting gender equality and addressing violence against women. Significant gains are also noted in the enrolment of girls in primary and secondary education. In several regions, women’s participation in the labour market has increased, while some regions have made progress in increasing access to birth control. Harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriages have started to decline in some contexts. Furthermore, some countries have made major gains in women’s representation in national parliaments.

Nevertheless, global progress has been slow, uneven and limited. All in all, the world is still very far from achieving the vision set in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and progress has stagnated and even regressed in some contexts. Several lessons learned and challenges for the implementation of the Platform for Action are put forward.
First, despite expanded normative commitments on women’s and girls’ human rights, **persistent gaps remain between norms and implementation and between commitment and action.** Equality under the law is often undermined in practice by a lack of implementation, institutional barriers, discriminatory social norms and women’s lack of resources. Furthermore, countries give uneven attention across the critical areas of concern. Increased access to education for instance, has not been matched by policies to increase women’s access to decent work, good employment conditions, promotion and equal pay.

Second, progress on the 12 areas of concern has been particularly slow for **women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.** For instance, there remain large gaps with regards to education, maternal mortality and access to basic services for women who are poor and/or live in rural or conflict-affected contexts. Also women with disabilities, indigenous women, migrant women, lesbian gay, bisexual and transgender women are at particular risk of marginalization, discrimination and violence.

Third, old and new **discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes** continue to hold back progress on all critical areas of concern. For instance, discriminatory social norms and practices regarding the unequal division of unpaid care work between men and women, limit women’s full enjoyment of social and economic rights. These entrenched social norms and practices prevent the transformation of gender power relations necessary to realize the vision of the Beijing Declaration.

Fourth, progress to all critical areas of concern is hampered by the **low levels of participation and leadership of women in decision-making,** at all levels – household, local, regional and national governments, the management of environmental resources, national planning and development structures, national parliaments and global governance.

Furthermore, progress has been slowed down by the broader political, social and economic context. The different waves of the financial and economic crisis since 2007 have deepened inequalities, both within as well as in between countries, and have increased the vulnerabilities of marginalized women. Rising inequalities and increasing vulnerabilities are also linked to the **persistence of violent conflict** in which civilians are increasingly under attack, as they limit women and girls access to services and economic opportunities and increase their vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, a **rising extremism and conservatism,** in both developing and developed countries, are threatening gender equality gains. While such forces have diverse manifestations across contexts, a common feature is the resistance to women’s human rights, for instance by restricting women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights or limiting women’s autonomy and engagement in the public sphere.

There continues to be a **chronic underinvestment in gender equality globally,** a tendency which has been aggravated by the austerity measures adopted in many countries in the post-crisis context. In addition, aid focused on gender equality is typically concentrated in social sectors such as education and health, while only low levels of aid have been targeted to economic and governance sectors. Women’s organisations at all levels remain significantly under-resourced.

Lastly the implementation of the BPfA has been hampered by the **absence of strong accountability mechanisms** to hold decision-makers and other stakeholders accountable for their (in)action. Gender mainstreaming remains limited and key institutions and mechanisms for promoting gender equality, such as national gender equality mechanisms,
are often under-resourced and lack political support. And while women’s organizations play a crucial part in monitoring progress, a lack of resources among other things, has hampered their role as policy watchdogs. In addition, monitoring progress is challenged by a severe lack of comparable data of high quality. Many countries are still not producing regular statistics that are of critical importance for gender equality such as time use, asset ownership, women’s participation in decision-making at all levels, or data on gender-based violence and poverty.

Based on the above lessons learned, the Secretary-General proposes urgent action in five priority areas to accelerate progress: transforming discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes; transforming the economy to achieve gender equality and sustainable development; ensuring the full and equal participation of women in decision-making at all levels; significantly increasing investments in gender equality; and strengthening accountability for gender equality and the realization of the human rights of women and girls (CSW 2014a).

1.2. Implementation in the Member States of the European Union

At the EU level, all Member States have signed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and have committed to take concrete actions to implement it. While national governments have the primary responsibility for implementation, the EU was involved in the initial formulation of the Beijing Declaration and has consistently committed itself to promoting its objectives. The same year the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted, the European Council firmly acknowledged the EU’s commitment to the BPfA and requested annual reviews as well as thorough full reviews every five years. Since 1999, both quantitative and qualitative indicators have been developed by successive presidencies of the Council of the EU in 11 out of 12 critical areas of concern to monitor progress in the EU towards achieving the BPfA objectives.

Since 1995, four extensive EU reviews of the implementation of the BPfA in relation to the 12 critical areas of concern have been carried out: a first Beijing+5 follow-up by the EU in 2000, a Beijing+10 report by the Luxembourg Presidency in 2005, a Beijing+15 report by the Swedish Presidency in 2010 and recently a fourth Beijing+20 review of the overall development at the EU level of the BPfA by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). In the next sections, the implementation of the BPfA’s 12 critical areas of concern in the EU Member States will be discussed, based on a thorough review of the EU-wide report ‘Beijing + 20: The 4th Review of the Implementation of the BPfA in the EU Member States’ (EIGE 2015), the regional reports issued by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the national reports prepared by the EU Member States for the CSW meeting.

(A) Women and poverty

Poverty is a multidimensional problem that goes beyond the lack of basic resources and extends to the deprivation of civil, social and cultural activities as well as the lack of opportunities for political engagement and social mobility. The BPfA aims to promote macroeconomic policies and measures that address the needs of women in poverty, as well as other policies and practices that ensure women’s equal access to economic resources,

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2 The national reports of the EU Member States are available at: [http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35455](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35455)
savings and credit. Recent policy developments, such as the Europe 2020 Strategy, commit the EU and its Member States to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and explicitly link the reduction of women’s poverty to the objective of inclusive growth (EIGE 2015).

In 2012, women were at a higher risk of poverty compared to men in over half of EU Member States. The fact that women remain more likely to be economically inactive due to care responsibilities, be in part-time work or fixed term contracts, as well as the gender pay gap are put forward as explanations. While gender differences to be at-risk-of-poverty are small overall, certain groups of women in the EU are more likely to be living at risk of income poverty, namely young women aged 16 to 24 years and single parents - among which women are overrepresented. Also of concern, is the wide gender pension gap as women receive 39 per cent less pension than men on average. Over half of the EU Member States (17) have gender pension gaps above 30 per cent, reflecting serious institutionalized gender inequalities in the labour market and the private sphere (EIGE 2015).

Policy measures carried out by EU Member States in this critical area of concern have focused on either facilitating access to work or self-employment or developing (child)care provisions to support mother’s access to employment.

Few member state policies have addressed women’s poverty specifically. An exception in this respect can be found in the UK and Northern Ireland where a pension reform was introduced to benefit women who under the previous system were generally unable to achieve enough qualifying years for a full pension. The simpler flat-rate state pension has brought forward by a decade the point at which women have equivalent state pensions as compared to men (by the early 2040s instead of the early 2050s) (UNECE 2014a).

Consequently, EIGE recommends that future policy measures to support gender equality in economic activity should be reinforced and specifically target the risk of poverty faced disproportionally by women as a result of interrupted careers and different working patterns.

In addition, policy measures that prevent poverty for women who are most at risk - notably young women aged 16 to 24 years as well as lone parents – are needed.

Policy should also tackle the disproportionate gender pension gap in the EU, which can be seen as the sum of gender discrimination over the life course.

(B) Education and training of women

Education is a key area to ensure an individual’s full potential, as well as respect their freedom of thought and eliminate discrimination between men and women. The Platform for Action aims to eliminate disparities between women and men in access to education and educational outcomes at all levels and in all forms of education, including vocational training, adult literacy and lifelong learning, as well as to develop a non-discriminatory education and training. In line with the EU’s Europe 2020 Strategy which sets out the target of reaching 75 per cent employment of women and men, Member States are
required to reinforce the education and training of women, particularly in sectors where they are underrepresented (EIGE 2015).

 Accordingly, the UNECE qualifies the increase in women and girls’ participation in education and training as one of the most significant advances towards gender equality in the last two decades. **Women now outnumber men in education and training** at the tertiary level in most Member States. However, **segregation patterns** in line with gendered expectations remain deeply entrenched. Women are overrepresented in sectors linked to traditional roles, such as health and welfare, humanities and teaching. Areas such as science, engineering and construction, computing and mathematics are still male-dominated, although the gender gap in these traditionally male-dominated sectors is slowly improving (EIGE 2015). Nevertheless, educational success does not translate into proportionate economic success and decision-making power for women, despite similar educational backgrounds (UNECE 2014b). Lastly, within the EU’s higher education structures, a profound and worrying **gender imbalance** remains in the number, seniority and influence of **women in academia**.

In response to the above patterns **Member States have taken steps to improve gender equality in education** by focusing on issues such as stereotypical gender roles and their impact on career choices and vertical and horizontal segregation in education, with a view of tacking employment segregation and the gender employment gap. Some Member States have started to implement laws and policies to tackle the male domination in higher levels of academia.

**Box 2: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Education and Training of Women**

Future policy needs to continue and strengthen the work carried out with respect to eliminating gender stereotypes in education and training, as gender segregation in education leads to inequality in the labour market and unequal economic opportunities. Especially, stronger attention is needed on the **extent to which women are able to capitalize on higher education** as women and men with the same educational background are not able to access the same career opportunities. Policies encouraging a more gender balanced educational representation should thus include an evaluation of the corresponding professions they lead to and guarantee that women and men have access to the same career opportunities.

Furthermore, the **glass ceiling in European academia** is an important issue that needs urgent action in the majority of Member States. Recruiting, retaining and promoting more women, minimising the gender bias in the definition and measurement of ‘scientific excellence’ as well as addressing the gender dimension in research itself are needed.

Finally, **attracting men and boys to feminized sectors** is an important action to ensure more equal opportunities for all, as sectors traditionally dominated by women have not seen a similar improvement of the gender imbalance. A good practice in this respect can be found in Germany where initiatives such as ‘Boys’ Day’, ‘New Paths for Boys’ and ‘More Men into Early Childhood Education’ promote the expansion of career opportunities beyond the gender-stereotypical occupations (UNECE 2014c).
(C) Women and health

Health covers physical, mental and social well-being as well as the absence of sickness and infirmity, and is determined both by the social, political and economic contexts in which people live, as well as their biological characteristics. The Platform for Action calls for the realization of women’s right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, access to information and related services, the strengthening of preventative programmes that promote women’s health, but also implementing gender-sensitive approaches to sexual and reproductive health issues, and promoting research, monitoring and the dissemination of information of women’s health.

In most EU Member States life expectancy is on the rise amongst women and men, with the gap between women’s and men’s life expectancy closing, as women’s life expectancy is not increasing as fast as men’s, due to an increased prevalence of smoking and drinking among women in the EU relative to men. As life expectancy in the EU has been on the rise since 1980, with women having a life expectancy of 80 years or above in most Member States, an increasing amount of women spend a greater percentage of their lives in disability and ill-health as compared to men (EIGE 2015).

The majority of people consider healthcare to be accessible and most did not report unmet needs. In cases where there are unmet needs, cost appears to be the most common reason, especially for women. Also, certain groups, such as women from a migrant background or women with disabilities are facing barriers in accessing healthcare (EIGE 2015, UNECE 2014b).

Box 3: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Women and Health

For future policy it is crucial that health is addressed from both a sex and gender perspective as to ensure that the underlying causes of differences in health situations are better understood. The development of gender-sensitive research and data in this area is a priority.

Access to reproductive health and rights is a challenge due to a lack of consensus among Member States. However, given its key position in women’s lives it is crucial that this issue is addressed at the EU and Member State level. It implies that difficult topics such as abortion and contraception will need to be dealt with.

Furthermore, in the context of increasing life expectancy, it is crucial to ensure that the treatment of elderly and disabled women is specifically addressed from a gender perspective, as these groups are at a higher risk of abuse and/or neglect.

Lastly, as regards access to health care, more should be done to tackle barriers encountered by certain groups of people such as migrant women or women in poverty (EIGE 2015).

(D) Violence against women

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), defines Violence against Women as ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women’. This includes violence in the family, in the general community and elsewhere, as well as acts undertaken by the state.
The **Platform for Action** calls on states to take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women, to study the causes and consequences of violence against women and to eliminate trafficking in women.

An extensive **EU-wide survey on the prevalence of violence** against women carried out by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) estimated that one in three women has experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, amounting to 62 million European women. One in ten has experienced some form of sexual violence and one in 20 has been raped since the age of 15. Furthermore approximately 22 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime (FRA 2014).

Since Beijing + 15, **significant efforts** have been made at the EU and Member State level to tackle issues in this critical area of concern by adopting new legislation, developing and implementing new measures (addressing, for example, ‘honour’-related crimes or female genital mutilation) and improving access to shelters and other specialised services. Several Member States have introduced or amended legislation to encompass stalking, sexual violence and/or change the legal definition of rape to be in line with international standards. Furthermore, in the last five years there has been a consensus at the EU level to adopt and implement National Action Plans (NAPs) to end violence against women. Between 2000 and 2011 most Member States have conducted national studies on the prevalence of violence against women (FRA 2014).

However despite the significant progress in data collection at both EU and Member State level, serious **data gaps persist due to under-reporting and data-quality issues**. Also, although NAPs are in place in almost every Member State, progress is often hampered by a lack of implementation timeframes and clear responsibilities, limited budgets or the absence of a gender perspective (EIGE 2015).

**Box 4: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Violence Against Women**

- Given the pervasiveness of the problem of gender-based violence, ensuring further **commitment, resources and the collection of data** of adequate quality will be key in future policy.

- Furthermore violence should be addressed in connection to **norms, attitudes and stereotypes** as these underpin gender-based violence and gender inequality in general.

- Lastly, **critical assessment of patriarchal structures and hegemonic masculinities, as well as the involvement of boys and men** are crucial in combatting gender-based violence (EIGE 2015).

**Women and armed conflict**

Armed conflicts affect women and men as they are targeted as victims and suffer the economic, social and political consequences. Due to women’s greater social vulnerability, women can be particularly affected and tend to be among the largest part of the harmed civilian population. Furthermore women are exposed to specific forms of violence, such as systematic sexual abuse and rape, slavery and displacement. The **BPfA** calls for an increase in women’s participation in conflict resolution decision-making and the promotion
of non-violent forms of conflict resolution. It also prioritizes the protection of women in situations of armed conflict, as well as assistance to refugees, internally displaced people and women in colonies and non-self-governing territories.

The EU and its Member States are committed to contribute to the full implementation of the women, peace and security agenda set in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820. In December 2008, the Council adopted the *EU Comprehensive Approach on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security* (Comprehensive Approach) covering the whole spectrum of external action instruments throughout the conflict continuum, from conflict prevention to crisis management, peace-building, reconstruction and development cooperation. In 2010, the Council adopted a set of 17 indicators to follow up progress at EU and Member State level, with a report to be compiled at least every two years.

The 2014 report on the EU-indicators for the Comprehensive Approach showed some positive developments, indicating for example that 9 out of 14 CSDP Missions and Operations have appointed a gender advisor. Furthermore, the EU and its Member States are active on the issue of women, peace and security in more than 70 countries.

While there have been improvements in recent years, decision-making structures in conflict resolution remain notoriously men-dominated: the average proportion of women in diplomatic missions and EU delegations rarely exceed 10 per cent. The same goes for CSDP missions and UN peacekeeping operations with average proportions of women at 10 and 5 per cent respectively. Also specific gender training for diplomatic, civilian and military staff in times of war and conflict remains insufficient (implemented only in 8 Member States). Furthermore, despite women being disproportionally affected by conflict, only a minority of aid to fragile states has gender equality and/or women’s empowerment among its objectives.

**Box 5: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Women and Armed Conflict**

**Future policy** should urgently deal with the above issues and systematically integrate a gender perspective in all procedures and practices.

Furthermore, additional investments should be made in gender capacity-building for frontline staff while tackling the severe gender imbalance at all levels in diplomatic and military sectors (EIGE 2015).

**F**  Women and the economy

The economy is a key area for action, as the terms and conditions under which women are able to participate in, contribute to and benefit from the economic sphere are closely interlinked with women’s well-being and decision-making power in private and public areas. The BPfA seeks to promote women’s economic rights and independence, including access to equal employment, appropriate working conditions, control over resources, the elimination of occupational discrimination and segregation and the harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

The EU standards on discrimination and gender equality in the workplace are an international and regional reference point, alongside the relevant ILO conventions (UNECE
Women’s employment is an implicit part of the EU’s Europe 2020 strategy for growth, which calls for an employment rate of 75 per cent for people aged 20 to 64.

Increasing women’s labour market participation has been a key priority for Member States and several countries have experienced particular successes in this respect. Nevertheless, across the EU, the rate of women’s employment remains well below the target of 75 per cent. Women continue to be the primary carers of children and dependants. As a result, a disproportionate number of women work part-time in comparison with men, which is negatively affecting their economic and financial resources, including wages and pensions. Furthermore, while the gender pay gap has reduced over the past years, it remains at a high 16 per cent across EU Member States (EIGE 2015).

To balance work and family, Member states have carried out measures such as strengthening or introducing parental leave and extending childcare benefits to certain groups, such as part-time workers. Several Member States have made efforts to address the gender pay gap. Austria and Germany for instance have developed tools for monitoring women and men’s wages and identifying discrepancies, while Finland has developed an extensive Equal Pay Programme, including collective agreements, career development for women and the introduction of analytical pay systems, equality planning and pay surveys, aimed to reduce the gender pay gap to 15 per cent by 2015 (UNECE 2014d). Access to childcare services has improved in several EU countries thanks to increased investments and concrete targets set in the Barcelona Declaration (eg. the target to provide childcare for at least 90 per cent of children between 3 and school age and for 33 per cent of children under 3). Measures have also focussed on redistributing family responsibilities and unpaid care work to men. For instance, fifteen days of fully paid paternity leave, extendable by 75 days, was introduced in Slovenia in 2001 (UNECE 2014e) accompanied by a media campaign to encourage active fatherhood and overcome the stereotyping of the roles of women and men in society. The campaign ‘Daddy, get active!’ ran for several years and included radio and TV commercials, a documentary, ‘daddy runs’ and the dissemination of information material (UNECE 2014f).

**Box 6: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Women and the Economy**

**Future policy** should foster equal participation (in both full-time and part-time employment) of women and men in the labour market, as well as tackle horizontal and vertical gender segregation between sectors and occupations.

Also, introducing family friendly policies and implementing transformative measures that challenge the unequal division of care and domestic work between women and men are highly needed.

Lastly better data on pay is required to increase the visibility of pay differentials and implement policies for change (EIGE 2015).

**(G) Women in power and decision-making**

Women’s equal participation in all levels of decision-making is not only a matter of justice and democracy is also a prerequisite for women’s interests to be taken into account. Accordingly, the B PfA calls on governments to take measures to ensure women’s equal
access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making and to increase women’s capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

Overall in the EU, women continue to be seriously underrepresented in decision-making. Less than a third of political decision-making positions are occupied by women and this proportion has remained stable in the past years. In relation to economic and financial decision-making progress is even less evident as central banks and executive boards of companies remain largely male-dominated (EIGE 2015).

Gender imbalance in political and economic decision-making is an important challenge which has gained growing importance and visibility in the last few years at the EU level and in a number of Member States. The Commission’s development of the database on women and men in decision-making has increased awareness about the underrepresentation of women in political and economic decision-making. At member state level, there have been several countries that have adopted policies to promote women in power and decision-making, especially in the area of political representation, through voluntary quotas adopted by political parties and legislative quotas in the elections for national/regional/local assemblies. Especially legislative gender quota have proven to be an effective measure to balance representation in elected assemblies and have been increasingly adopted in several Member States with success (for instance in Ireland, Italy and Poland).

Furthermore, in the last five years, there has been an increase of women in high-ranking positions in national public administration. To accelerate progress some Member States have introduced measures such as gender quota for the highest levels of civil service (for instance in Belgium and France).

The proportion of women judges in Supreme Courts has only slowly advanced and needs further attention. The same goes for women’s presence in economic decision-making and on boards of publicly listed companies. Positively, in the context of the European Commission’s efforts to legislate company boards, several Member States have started to develop activities supporting this objective. In Belgium for instance a recent federal law aims to ensure the presence of women in Boards of Directors of autonomous public and listed companies and establishes a quota of at least one third of the members of the least represented sex (to be reached within a period of six years for large companies, eight years for small and medium enterprises and without delay for public companies). In case of non-compliance, penalties such as the suspension of financial benefits, are imposed (UNECE 2014).

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3 In November 2012 the Commission proposed legislation to attain a 40 per cent of the underrepresented sex in non-executive boards in publicly listed companies.
**Box 7: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Women in Power and Decision-making**

**Future policies** need to build on the good practices developed in several Member States.

Formal and informal **gender quotas** to break the ‘glass ceiling’ should be accompanied by initiatives on gender **norms, attitudes and stereotypes** that prevent women from equal representation in political, economic and administrative decision-making (EIGE 2015).

(H) **Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women**

In this critical area of concern the **BPfA** articulates three components: the creation or strengthening of national machineries and other governmental bodies; the integration of gender perspectives into legislation, public policies, programmes and projects; and the generation and dissemination of data and information disaggregated by sex for planning and evaluation.

Across all EU Member states, the responsibility to promote gender equality has been increasingly placed at a higher level of government structures: as of 2012, the majority of **gender equality bodies have been placed at the highest ministry levels**. While their mandate and reach varies across national contexts, their strategic location and existence keeps gender equality visible and on the political agenda. Furthermore, since Beijing + 15, there has been an **increased legal and institutional commitment for gender mainstreaming**. Nearly half of the Member States have a legal commitment to implement gender mainstreaming and all but three have governmental structures for implementing it (EIGE 2015).

At both EU and Member State level, progress has been made with regards to the collection and dissemination of gender-disaggregated statistics. In this respect the creation of the European Institute for Gender Equality has been an important development. Among other things, EIGE’s Gender Equality Index has been a major improvement in the visibility of statistics disaggregated by sex.

Nevertheless, several worrying trends have also occurred. One noticeable development is the gradual **merging of specialized bodies for the promotion of gender equality with overarching bodies** responsible for addressing several ground of discrimination at once. While this might have advantages with respect to addressing intersectionality, such approach risks to undermine gender equality as an important policy area in itself and makes it difficult to identify and measure the resources that have been allocated to combat gender inequality. A thorough review of this development in several EU Member States would be advisable. Second, there is a growing focus on **addressing gender equality from a legal or judicial perspective**, which protects rights on an individual basis and downplays the possibilities to address structural inequalities and discrimination at the societal level (equality ‘de jure’ instead of ‘de facto’). Lastly, while institutional machineries have been crucial to ensure political support for gender equality, since 2007 there has been a **decrease in spending on human resources** for governmental gender equality bodies across the EU (EIGE 2015).
Box 8: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of women

The implementation of gender equality legislation and the European acquis need to be reinforced. Gender equality needs to remain a policy priority in its own right as well as a crosscutting issue in all other policy areas at EU and Member State level.

The allocation of appropriate human and financial resources is essential to fulfil this task. In addition, the increased use of mainstreaming tools for policy-making, such as gender budgeting and gender impact assessments, is strongly recommended.

Lastly it is important to retain and strengthen structures and resources dedicated specifically to equality between women and men, while keeping a positive focus on multiple discrimination and intersectionality (EIGE 2015).

(I) Human rights of women

The BPfA makes clear that the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls is essential for achieving gender equality and calls on Governments to promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice and to achieve legal literacy.

Several measures have been carried out in this respect. Gender equality has been integrated in national human rights programmes and efforts have been made to include national minorities and immigrants in gender equality policies, for instance by disseminating gender equality legislation in non-official/minority languages, e.g. in Estonia and Slovenia. Furthermore, improvements have been made on the recognition of the gender specific grounds in asylum processes on the basis of the European Qualifications Directive (UNECE 2014b).

Nevertheless, at the EU level, the critical area of Human Rights seems to be the most neglected area in terms of monitoring at the EU level as it is the only area in which indicators have yet to be developed to assess the progress of the Member States. Correspondingly there seems to be a lack of conceptual clarity on what this critical area of concern entails from an EU perspective (EIGE 2015).
Box 9: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Human Rights of Women

To assess the progress of Member States in this area of concern, specific indicators should be developed at EU level and explicitly linked to the obligations under CEDAW.

Furthermore, as women in the EU, particularly those who are survivors of violence, still face considerable institutional barriers in claiming justice and reparation, additional measures to guarantee equal access to justice for all women are necessary.

Lastly, explicitly recognising women’s diversity by addressing multiple discrimination and intersectionality remains an issue that requires attention across all critical areas of concern (EIGE 2015).

(J) Women and the media

The media (print, broadcast, social media and other forms) is an important area with the potential to make a contribution to gender equality as it plays a vital role in shaping opinions, beliefs and prejudices of its consumers. The BPfA urges states to increase the participation and access of women to the expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication and to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women and men in the media.

The number of women entering the media profession has increased in the EU and women are now well represented in media-related degrees and organisations. For instance in France the proportion of women journalists has risen from 37.5 per cent in 1996 to 43 per cent in 2014 (UNECE 2014b). Several media organisations in the EU have started to develop self-regulation on gender equality. Furthermore, since 2014 data on the gender balance in decision-making bodies of the public media sector at Member State level are integrated in the European commission’s database on women and men in decision-making (EIGE 2015).

Nevertheless discrimination in this area of concern is still widespread. Women in media face a persistent glass ceiling, combined with a large gender pay gap in the sector as a whole. Women are generally excluded from top-level positions within diverse media organisations where there is the greatest influence on editorial content. Furthermore, in some parts of the media there is a sectoral segregation. Data on media content, and the stereotypes they contain remains weak. When monitoring happens, it is mostly done by non-governmental organizations, with the exception of France and Spain who have commissions on the image of women and an annual barometer of diversity in the media (UNECE 2014b).
Box 10: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Women and the Media

To transform the persistent unequal power relations in the media sector as well as stereotypical images in media content, the voluntary measures which media organisations have started to adopt need to be complemented by policy measures.

Furthermore, the position of women in relation to new media technologies, such as women’s position within digital media organisations needs to be examined (EIGE 2015).

(K) Women and the environment

The BPfA calls for building on the progress made at the UN Conference for Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992, and for the full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of sustainable development. More specifically it urges states to actively involve women in environmental decision-making at all levels; integrate gender concerns and perspectives in sustainable development policies and programmes; and improve the assessment of development and environmental policies on women, including compliance with international obligations.

The discussion on how climate change and gender (in)equality interconnect is relatively new in the EU, as is the attention to the participation of women in climate change decision-making. While the number of Member States with activities on women and the environment has increased (for instance in Finland, Germany and Lithuania), there is no systematic gender mainstreaming of environmental policymaking taking place. Gender objectives are only rarely included in government’s environmental strategies. Furthermore, women have not yet achieved equal representation in climate change decision-making at any level – national, European and international (EIGE 2015).

Box 11: Recommendations for the critical area of concern Women and the Environment

There is a strong need for further research on the gendered impact of climate change as well as for the development of a common conceptualisation to facilitate strategies on women and the environment.

Furthermore, gender perspectives need to be included in the current discussions on green growth and economy in the framework of the EU’s Europe 2020 Strategy, which needs to go beyond women’s access to green jobs.

While women have made significant progress towards parity within the UN’s key bodies on climate change, women’s participation in climate change decision-making remains an issue of concern at national, European and international level (EIGE 2015).

(L) The girl child

While issues of concern for girls cut across all 12 critical areas of concern, the Platform’s twelfth and last area explicitly devotes attention to the discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child. In particular, the BPfA identified nine strategic objectives, on eliminating all forms of discrimination; eliminating negative cultural attitudes and practices;
promoting and protecting girls’ rights; increasing awareness of girls’ needs and potential; health and nutrition; eliminating economic exploitation; education, skills development and training; eradicating violence; promoting awareness and participation in social, economic and political life; and strengthening the role of the family.

Enhancing the life choices and eradicating gender stereotypes in the education system have been priorities in the EU and have been met with considerable success (UNECE 2014b). The participation of girls in mathematical and scientific literacy has continuously increased over time and the gap between girls and boys results in mathematics and sciences is rapidly reducing. In the majority of Member States, girls now outperform boys in sciences (EIGE 2015).

Nevertheless important issues remain unaddressed. In several South East European countries certain groups of girls including Roma girls, girls from remote areas, girls with disabilities and girls in penitentiaries or childcare institutions are facing barriers in accessing education, health and social services (UNECE 2014b). Furthermore, body-image, self-hatred, eating disorders and the sexualisation of girls in media are emerging as serious issues in all Member States of the EU. Across Member States, great variation exists in the provision of sex and relationship education, with a lot of attention to health issues including contraception and sexually transmitted infections and less focus on subjects such as gender-based violence, gender stereotypes in romantic relations and LGBT issues. Lastly EU and Member states policies on children’s rights and child protection are generally gender blind (EIGE 2015).

**Box 12: Recommendation for the critical area of concern The Girl Child**

**Future policy** needs to make sure that the progress made in relation to girls performances in mathematics and scientific literacy are matched by a more balanced representation of girls and boys in the higher level fields of study in science, mathematics and computing.

Furthermore, a more holistic and regular sex and relationship education is needed in most EU Member States, including issues related to the impact of norms, attitudes and stereotypes and the promotion of gender equal relationships.

Also, the emergence of new technologies is an emerging threat that needs to be researched and acted upon, as they involve an increased scope for gender-based violence, for example through cyber-bulling (EIGE 2015). A good practice in this respect can be found in the Netherlands where the Ministry of Security and Justice, issued a documentary film ‘De Mooiste Chick van het Web’ (The Prettiest Chick on the Web) to raise awareness on the risks of social media to children, parents and teachers. The project includes a teaching pack for secondary schools to address the subject. Furthermore a youth-oriented approach to increase sexual resilience among young people through social media has been developed by the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Health, Welfare and Sport. Among other things the joint project involves a ‘sexual resilience tool’ which has been developed for social media and gives young people insight into their resilience profile while providing individual advice (UNECE 2014h).
2. GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

KEY FINDINGS

- The 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action takes place at an opportune moment, as the international community negotiates the global post-2015 framework to address poverty eradication and sustainable development globally.

- Among EU institutions there is a strong consensus on the central role of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the post-2015 framework. Gender equality is seen as a goal in its own right, as well as a crosscutting issue to be mainstreamed across the framework.

- Three key issues to be discussed at the 59th CSW are of particular concern from an EU perspective: the monitoring of results through gender statistics and indicators; the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged women and girls; and the managing of the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs.

2.1. The Post-2015 Development Agenda

The Beijing+20 review takes place at a historic moment when the global community is deliberating a post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals as a global roadmap for the future. This UN-led process aims to define the framework that will succeed the UN Millennium Development Goals once they expire and follows up on the outcome of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

In 2000, at the UN Millennium Summit, the international community committed to a global partnership to reduce poverty and agreed on eight specific, time-bound goals - the MDGs⁴ - set to expire at the end of 2015. In 2012, the Rio+20 Conference decided to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address the key challenges of sustainability, and prepare options for a sustainable development financing strategy. In particular, the Rio+20 Conference mandated the creation of an Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals to draft a set of post-2015 goals.

The Post-2015 Agenda will address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development globally for all countries in the world. The Open Working Group, with representatives from 70 countries, had its first meeting in March 2013 and presented its final proposal for Sustainable Development Goals to the UN general assembly in September 2014. The proposal contains 17 goals with 169 targets covering a broad range of sustainable development issues, including a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment (SDG5). If Member States agree to the draft set of 17 SDGs at a UN summit in New York in September, they will become applicable from January 2016. The proposed set of universal goals, targets and indicators

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⁴ The eight MDGs included the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality, improving maternal health; combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.
relating to future international development that UN Member States will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years. The SDGs follow, and expand on, the MDGs. The 17 proposed goals are the following:

1) End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
2) End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;
3) Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages;
4) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
5) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
6) Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
7) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
8) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all;
9) Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation;
10) Reduce inequality within and among countries;
11) Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
12) Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
13) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
14) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
15) Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss;
16) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;
17) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

As the international discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs are in full process, it is evident that the 59th session of the CSW which marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action takes place at a historic moment. Indeed, this milestone is a crucial opportunity to influence the post-2015 agenda and link it directly to the goals of the Platform for Action, as the lack of convergence between the MDGs and the BPfA are among the main criticisms of the previous framework. Building coherence between both agenda’s means that gender equality and women’s rights must be reaffirmed as essential ends in themselves and means for achieving peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development. Explicitly connecting the post-2015 agenda with the UN Platform for Action calls for a transformative stand-alone goal on gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment, as well as the comprehensive mainstreaming of gender across all other goals and targets.
This confluence of interconnected processes provides a once in-a-generation opportunity to draw on lessons learned and position gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment at the heart of the global agenda. The EU should capitalize on its unique historical role as a gender equality promoter and seize this opportunity to strengthen its commitments in this area and ensure that the future framework delivers transformative change in the lives of women and girls.

2.2. The EU and gender equality in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Among international organizations, the EU stands out in its support for the goal of gender equality. The Lisbon Reform Treaty considers ‘equality between women and men’ among its key values and objectives and, since 1997, the EU has committed to mainstreaming gender considerations into all aspects of its operations and policies, including its external and development policy (EU 1997 Article 2). Accordingly, the EU has adopted a range of high-level policy documents confirming that gender has to be integrated in all areas of external and development policy and into all programmes and projects at regional and country levels.

The EU is also the world’s largest aid donor, providing over half of all official development assistance (ODA) globally, together with its Member States. In this role, the EU and its Member States have made the MDGs a central reference point for their ODA and have led the way in integrating them into EU development policy and practice. As the world’s most generous donor and key MDG proponent, the EU has a prominent and constructive role to play in the international discussions on the design of the post-2015 development framework which will succeed the MDGs. As regards the gender equality and women’s rights agenda, here seems to be a consensus among EU institutions on the central role of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the post-2015 framework. Gender equality is seen as a goal in its own right, as well as a crosscutting issue that should be mainstreamed across the post-2015 framework.

2.2.1 European Commission

In February 2013 the Commission published its pioneering communication on ‘A Decent Life for All – Ending Poverty and giving the world a sustainable future’, outlining a proposed EU vision for a post-2015 framework, namely eliminating extreme poverty by 2030 while ensuring a sustainable development for the planet, and put forward a roadmap for achieving this. This vision laid the groundwork for the EU’s position on post-2015 and fed into the discussions at the European Parliament and the Council. As regards the promotion of gender equality, the Commission clearly states that the framework ‘should address justice, equality and equity... as well as the empowerment of women and gender equality, which are vital for inclusive and sustainable development, as well as important values in their own right’ (European Commission 2013:12).

A second Communication ‘A decent life for all: from vision to collective action’ was issued in June 2014 to contribute to the EU position at the UN General Assembly’s Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The 2014 Communication refines the
principles laid out in the previous Communication and proposes 17 thematic priority areas, including gender equality and women’s empowerment. It reaffirms that ‘gender equality, women’s empowerment and the full enjoyment of rights by women and girls in all countries are essential conditions for sustainable development, poverty eradication and for addressing the unfinished business of the MDGs.’ Furthermore, increasing global investment in gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment, collecting gender-disaggregated data and ensuring high level political commitment globally are put forward as key issues. With respect to the thematic priority area ‘gender equality and women’s empowerment’, the Commission proposes five potential target topics:

- Prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls
- End all forms of discrimination against women and girls
- Increase women’s representation, participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels and in all spheres
- Ensure women and girl’s universal and equal access to essential services
- Close and ultimately eliminate the gender wage gap in the public and private sector’ (European Commission 2014).

An Annex to the Communication elaborates further on each topic and mainstreams gender equality and women’s empowerment in some other proposed priority areas such inequality; food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture; education; full and productive employment and decent work for all and oceans and seas.

The 2015 Communication on ‘Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015’ jointly prepared by the High Representative and Vice President, the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, and the Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, sets out the overarching principles and main components necessary for the implementation of the post-2015 agenda. It shows how all countries, including the EU and its Member States could contribute to the international efforts to eradicate poverty and boost sustainable development by identifying key components for future actions.

While gender is not covered in much detail in this Communication, the Commission does stipulate that addressing inequality and social inclusion remains essential and calls for the global partnership to be based on universal values including gender equality. Among its proposed means of implementation, it mentions the use of tools such as gender and age markers (European Commission 2015).

2.2.2 The European Parliament

In June 2013, the European Parliament resolution 'Millennium Development Goals – defining the post-2015 framework' was agreed. It recognises that the situation of
women globally has not progressed a great deal and calls for a **stand-alone goal** as well as the **integration of gender equality issues across the post-2015 framework** to address persistent inequalities facing women and girls (European Parliament 2013).

In its latest resolution of **November 2014** on ‘**The EU and the global development framework after 2015**’ the European Parliament explicitly stresses ‘the central role of women in the global development framework’ in a separate chapter and welcomes the centrality of gender equality in the Open Working Group outcome document. The Parliament calls for a framework with **ambitious targets** on gender equality and the rights of women and girls and the enhanced implementation of these targets. Specifically, the Parliament proposes that the post-2015 global agenda should:

- Reiterate the importance of **eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence** against women and girls;
- Redouble the efforts towards the **UN Security Council Resolution 1325** to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in peace and security efforts;
- Integrate ‘a gender equality perspective in **environmental and climate change policies**’;
- Promote ‘the **participation of women in decision making processes**’;
- Ensure ‘**equal access to employment** for both women and men, and **equal pay** for work of equal value everywhere’;
- Enhancing women’s and girls’ **access to all levels of education** while removing gender barriers to learning, as well as their **access to health services** such as family planning, including sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Recognise the right of women to migrate’ and ‘establish effective specific protection arrangements for **migrant women**’;

Furthermore, the Parliament urges the EU and its Member States to support the call of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals ‘for a **stand-alone goal** on gender equality while ensuring the integration of **gender mainstreaming across all goals**’. As regards human rights, the Parliament urges the EU to set the **elimination of all forms of violence against women** as one of the top priorities in the field of human rights under the new global framework. Lastly, the Parliament explicitly calls for ‘a **participatory approach** in the new framework’ and stresses the crucial role which civil society organisations, including **women’s organisations** have played in global development, as ‘promoters of universality, equality, inclusiveness, accountability and transparency’ (European Parliament 2014).

2.2.3 **The Council of the EU**

In response to the Commission’s Communication ‘**A Decent Life for All: ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future**’ of February 2013, the EU General Affairs Council issued Council Conclusions on ‘**An overarching post-2015 framework**’ in June 2013, setting out an EU vision for a universal agenda for poverty eradication and sustainable development. With regards to gender equality, the Council explicitly stated that the framework should:
'Ensure a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights. It should also address justice, equality and equity, good governance, democracy and the rule of law, with a strong focus on the empowerment and rights of women and girls and gender equality, and on preventing and combating violence against women as essential preconditions for equitable and inclusive sustainable development, as well as important values and objectives in themselves. We remain committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of their review conferences and in this context sexual and reproductive health and rights’ (Council of the EU 2013).

In response to the second Commission Communication of June 2014 which provided a more detailed EU vision for the post-2015 agenda, a common EU position was agreed at the EU General Affairs Council meeting on ‘a transformative post-2015 agenda’ in December 2014. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the BPfA and added the following strong conclusion on gender equality:

‘We reiterate that the empowerment and human rights of women and girls, and ending both discrimination in all its forms and violence against women and girls, must be at the core of the post-2015 agenda. Goals, targets and indicators across the framework should address legal, social and economic barriers to gender equality. We recognise the importance of involving men and boys in advancing gender equality’ (Council of the EU 2014).

In the spring of 2015, new Council Conclusions are to be expected in response to the latest Commission Communication on the Post-2015 agenda.

It is clear that the EU has been playing an active role in shaping the post-2015 agenda by expressing its views in a number of key documents, as well as in discussions and negotiations with its international partners. As illustrated above, the central role of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the post-2015 framework has been a reoccurring theme in these documents and discussions. Three key issues in particular - which will be discussed at the 59th session of the CSW on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - are of great concern from an EU perspective: the building of evidence and the monitoring of results through gender statistics and indicators; the realisation of the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged women and girls; and the managing of the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs taking into account the lessons learned from the MDGs while galvanizing transformative change for gender equality. They will be debated in depth by the delegation of the FEMM committee during designated Panel discussions at the 59th CSW and will be discussed in the following chapters below.
3. BUILDING THE EVIDENCE AND MONITORING RESULTS: GENDER STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

**KEY FINDINGS**

- A "gender data revolution" is needed to build evidence and monitor progress towards achieving gender equality, women's empowerment and the human rights of women in the post-2015 framework.

- Political will and commitment are required to ensure indicators and data on the most sensitive gender equality and women's rights issues are developed, collected, analysed, and made public.

As the Open Working Group has proposed an ambitious post-2015 framework, one of the main challenges in this respect will be the development and collection of statistics to allow monitoring of results. According to the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, including the EU Commissioner for Development, monitoring the SDGs will require a “data revolution”, which will involve a strengthened capacity building to ensure the collection and availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data, in a transparent manner, to ensure real accountability (High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda 2013).

As a sustainable development goal in its own right, as well as a key driver for achieving other SDGs, the development, collection and analysis of high-quality gender statistics is a crucial aspect of the "data revolution" needed to ensure the adequate monitoring of the new framework. All countries will need to put in place, track and report on gender-sensitive indicators that measure progress towards achieving gender equality, women's empowerment and the human rights of women and girls in line with both new and existing international commitments on gender equality, including the BPfA and CEDAW.

The good news is that there has been an increase in the availability of gender statistics in the last ten years. Today we have better and more widely available data on gender equality, women's rights and empowerment than when the MDGs were developed two decades ago. The majority of UN Member States are now able to produce sex-disaggregated statistics on population, education, employment and parliamentary representation. In addition, gender statistics in some newer areas such as time use and violence against women are becoming available (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2010). For example, at EU level, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has released the results of the largest survey ever on violence against women in March 2014. This EU-wide survey is the first of its kind covering all 28 Member States and based on interviews with 42,000 women, who were asked about their experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including incidents of intimate partner violence (FRA 2014).

Also, there has been progress with respect to international standards, guidelines and methodologies which has advanced the development of gender statistics. In 2003, the definition of informal employment was adopted, paving the way for improved measurement of the informal sector and informal employment. In recent years, several international standard classifications have been established by intergovernmental bodies, including those...
relating to occupations, economic activity, and functioning, disability and health (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2010). Furthermore, in February 2013, the UN Statistical Commission adopted a minimum set of 52 standard gender indicators while initiatives such as the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Initiative⁶ are developing and testing methodologies to measure women’s asset ownership and entrepreneurship.

Nevertheless, due to a persistent global underinvestment in gender statistics, a significant challenge for effectively monitoring progress towards gender equality in the framework of the BPfA, as well as the post-2015 agenda, is the lack of comparable data of high quality, collected over time (CSW 2014a, EIGE 2015). In many areas of critical importance such as time use, asset ownership, women’s experiences of poverty, women’s participation at all levels of decision-making, and violence against women, statistics are still not produced regularly (CSW 2014a). For instance at the global level, just over half of all countries report data on intimate partner violence, and where it is reported, data is often incomplete (hardly including women over 49), incomparable and of inconsistent quality. Furthermore, very little data is available on the distribution of money or the division of labour within households. Also, much more data are needed on the economic roles of women of all ages as caregivers to children, older persons and the disabled in the household and in the labour force (Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development 2014). Even in countries where snapshot data exist, there are often no trend data that enable monitoring of changes over time.

The data and statistical requirements for monitoring gender equality, women’s empowerment and the human rights of women and girls in the post-2015 development agenda will thus be substantial (CSW 2014a). To bring about real change in the lives of women and men and boys and girls, measuring and assessing progress towards achieving gender equality, and women’s rights and empowerment, a gender data revolution in the post-2015 framework is needed (UN Women 2014 2015).

A "gender data revolution" will require setting gender-responsive targets, and developing and enhancing standards and methodologies for use at the national and international level to improve data collection and availability, including on women’s poverty, income distribution within households, unpaid care work, women’s access to control and ownership of assets and productive resources, women’s participation at all levels of decision-making and, violence against women. Clearly, this implies a need to increase investment in the production of gender data and information. Strengthening gender statistics with a particular focus on sex and income-disaggregated data will in its turn provide critical information for more effective financing allocations (UN Women 2014).

The minimum common denominators are already in place but are not sufficient. Political will and commitment are required to ensure indicators and data on the most sensitive gender equality and women’s rights issues are developed, collected, analysed, and made public (UN Women 2014). There is a need to capitalize on the work already conducted by the EU as well as the UN (the agreed minimum set of 52 gender indicators) and ensure these good practices are rolled out in every country and region worldwide.

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⁶ See http://genderstats.org/EDGE.
4. REALISING THE RIGHTS OF MARGINALIZED AND DISADVANTAGED WOMEN AND GIRLS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>KEY FINDINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Progress in the implementation of the BPfA and the MDGs has been slow for marginalized and disadvantaged women and girls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Specific actions as well as targets and indicators that include women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are needed in the post-2015 agenda.</td>
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As gender inequalities intersect with other sources of inequality, such as status, age, income, geographical location, language, ethnicity, disability, and race, overall progress in the lives of women and girls has often been uneven. Indeed, progress in the implementation of the BPfA as well as the MDG framework has been particularly slow for women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. In the EU for instance, stark gaps exist in access to services, employment, income and decision-making for certain groups of women such as women with disabilities, women from ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma women), women with a migrant background, older women and young women (EIGE 2015). On the global level, progress on maternal health and access to education and basic services such as water and sanitation has been particularly difficult for women and girls living in rural areas and in poor urban settlements. Also, young women globally are at a much greater risk of new HIV infections, compared to their male peers. Marginalized groups of women, such as indigenous women, migrant women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender women are at particular risk of discrimination and violence worldwide (CSW 2014a).

The vulnerabilities of marginalized groups have increased even more in the context of the global economic crisis. The succession of worldwide crises have slowed down progress towards gender equality and have deepened inequalities both within and between countries (CSW 2014a).

In this respect, the UN High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda, have used the concept of ‘Leave no-one behind’ in their report, as one of the five big transformative shifts which are needed to drive the global agenda and to ensure that success in raising average levels does not mask continuing deprivation of the most marginalised groups. This call was explicitly repeated in the most recent Council Conclusions stating that:

‘The agenda should leave no one behind. In particular, it must address, without any discrimination, the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, including children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, as well as of marginalised groups and indigenous peoples; and it must respond to the aspirations of young people. We should ensure that no person – wherever they live and regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion or belief, race, or other status is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities’(Council of the EU 2014).
Combating the multiple and intersecting inequalities experienced by marginalized groups, for instance by indigenous women who are also often members of poor households, calls for specific actions and policies that address not only socioeconomic disadvantages but also discrimination, stigma and violence (CSW 2014a). Furthermore it requires the development, collection and analysis of data and indicators that include marginalized and disadvantaged women and girls when measuring progress in the context of the BPFA and the post-2015 framework. To make sure no one is left behind in future policies, data needs to be disaggregated (by sex, geography, income, disability, etc.) as well as combined, to capture intersecting inequalities.

Indeed, in the past, targets and indicators have been too narrowly defined and were poorly designed to pick up the slower pace of progress among the most marginalised groups and those facing multiple discrimination (as was the case within MDG3). An important lesson for the post-2015 framework is therefore the need to develop indicators that enable to measure progress among women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
5. MANAGING THE TRANSITION FROM MDGS TO SDGS

KEY FINDINGS

- To galvanize transformative change for women in the post-2015 agenda and the SDGs, the lessons learned for gender equality from the MDGs need to be taken into account.

5.1. Lessons learned for gender equality from the MDGs

There is broad agreement that the MDGs, as a set of time-bound targets have played a critical role in mobilizing international action on global poverty issues and have improved the lives of people in a context of poverty. Based on the Millennium Declaration, gender equality and women’s empowerment were recognized as key aspects of development with a stand-alone goal (MDG3 on gender equality and women’s empowerment), and the integration of gender issues in some other goals. The centrality of gender equality in the MDG framework has been important to leverage funds, increase political will and provide a mechanism for Parliamentarians and CSOs to hold governments accountable (Kabeer and Woodroffe 2014).

However, evaluations of the MDG framework show mixed results. While considerable success has been achieved with regards to reducing extreme poverty, improving access to education for boys and girls and access to safe drinking water, progress has been slow and uneven in other areas such as reducing maternal mortality, fighting hunger and improving access to basic sanitation. Progress has been especially slow for groups facing multiple discriminations based on gender, status, age, ethnicity, race, location, disability etc. This mixed picture in terms of achieving the MDGs has been attributed to a lack of attention to the concrete policies needed to achieve the desired outcomes, as well as to the failure to consider the root causes of gender inequality, poverty, or the holistic nature of development (UN Women 2013).

Furthermore, the MDGs’ targets and indicators have been criticised for being too narrow (Saith 2006). Especially MDG3 on gender equality women’s empowerment has been extensively criticized for its narrow scope and minimal agenda as it distracts attention from the implementation of the more wide-ranging and transformative BPFA. Indeed, MDG3 on gender equality women’s empowerment was translated into one single target on gender parity in education\(^7\) as well as three indicators to be monitored, including the ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector and the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. While these are crucial aspects of gender equality, they are clearly insufficient to achieve the broader goal as gender inequalities are complex and multi-dimensional (UN Women 2013).

Core issues that were missing, included violence against women, gender-based wage discrimination, women’s disproportionate share of unpaid care work, sexual and

\(^7\) The target was to ‘eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015’.
reproductive health and rights, women’s limited asset and property ownership and unequal participation in private and public decision-making at all levels (UN Women 2013, Woodroffe and Kabeer 2014). As such, the goal of gender equality and women’s empowerment was considered as insufficiently transformative, as it was tackling the symptoms rather than the structural causes of discrimination. Indeed, discriminatory social gender norms and practices such as the unequal distribution of unpaid work have significantly impeded the achievement of MDG targets on education, employment and reproductive health, while women’s exclusion from decision-making and women’s unequal access to productive resources have limited progress on targets related to poverty, nutrition, environmental sustainability and women’s employment (UN Women 2013).

Finally, the world’s resources for gender equality and women’s empowerment have been inadequate to the task of improving women’s position in society for effective equality between men and women. More specifically, at the 58th session of the CSW in March 2014 on the ‘challenges and achievements in the implementation of the MDGs for women and girls’, the CSW has stressed that ‘significant underinvestment in gender equality … continue to limit progress on the Millennium Development Goals for girls and women of all ages, their families and communities’ (CSW 2014b: 9). Especially in the context of the global economic crisis, shifts to austerity measures with a reduction in investment in social sectors taken by some countries have impacted women and girls negatively.

5.2. Galvanizing transformative change

Building on the lessons learned from the MDGs, the post-2015 development agenda should include a strong and comprehensive stand-alone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women as well as integrate gender equality perspectives throughout the entire framework. The design and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda should be aligned with existing international commitments on gender equality, including the BPfa and CEDAW. Furthermore it is crucial that the agenda tackles the structural causes of gender inequality as well as multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Box 13: The Open Working Group’s proposal
Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls
- 5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls
- 5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations
- 5.4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work and promote shared responsibility within the household and family
- 5.5. Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life
- 5.6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
Taken together, Sustainable Development Goal 5 on ‘achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls’ (see Box 1) combined with the inclusion of strong gender-sensitive targets in several other goals, as proposed by the OWG, can be considered potentially transformative. The OWG proposal builds on MDG3 by addressing underlying structural constraints to achieving gender equality, with targets on ending all forms of discrimination against women, ending violence against women and girls, and harmful practices such as early, child and forced marriage, ensuring women’s full and effective participation in all levels of decision-making, recognition of women’s unpaid care work, and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health – major issues which were missing from the MDGs. Nevertheless, there is still substantial room for improvement to ensure the promotion of gender equality, women’s rights and the empowerment of women’s rights in the post 2015-framework.

First of all, in the next months, it will be crucial to focus on the ways in which the SDGs will be implemented. It will be critical that the ambition of the gender equality goal is matched by equally ambitious means of implementation and, in particular, ambitious financing. A transformative post-2015 development agenda will require significantly increased investments in gender equality as well as in gender statistics and statistical capacities to support effective monitoring (UN Women 2014).

Indeed, analysis of national reports for the Beijing +20 review has shown that adequate financing for gender equality remains a challenge. In several countries, for instance, laws on gender-based violence are not being implemented due to a lack of funding or national gender equality machineries lack the resources and capacity to fulfil their mandate. Indeed, the chronic underinvestment in gender equality needs to be turned around and all governments – developed and developing alike – need to increase their financing for gender equality and invest at least the minimum critical resources necessary for achieving gender equality and women’s rights in the post 2015 framework, in line with the commitments under the Beijing Declaration and CEDAW (UN Women 2014). Therefore a specific target on financing gender equality and women’s rights needs to be included in the new development agenda as to strengthen accountability in domestic allocations to gender equality. The Third International Conference on Financing for Development that will take place in Addis Ababa, in July 2015 is a historic opportunity to insist on increased investments for gender equality globally and shape a financing package fit to deliver on both long-established and newly won commitments on gender equality (OECD 2015).

Furthermore, we need strong accountability mechanisms that clearly set out who is responsible for what and provide avenues for citizens, parliaments and civil society to hold governments answerable for their actions. This includes inclusive processes and structures for women’s civil society organizations at grassroots, regional and international levels to effectively participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda (UN Women 2015).

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8 One entry point for ensuring that domestic resource mobilization and allocation is gender responsive is the Global Partnership indicator on gender equality developed to monitor progress in the implementation of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011). The indicator provides data on whether governments track allocations for gender equality and make this information public (OEDC 2015).

Second, some of the proposed targets under SDG5 are still too vague and non-committal, with important aspects missing. SDG targets should also correlate explicitly with international norms, standards and agreements on gender equality. For instance:

- The first SDG5 target on ending ‘all forms of discrimination against all women and girls’ should be more specific and explicitly linked with the targets of the BPfA. A better and more encompassing formulation would be: ‘end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls in laws\textsuperscript{10}, policies and practice’ (UN Women 2015)

- The fourth SDG5 target to ‘recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work’, is a timely and transformative target, as women spend on average roughly twice as much time on unpaid care and domestic work compared to men (CSW 2013), which is significantly impacting women’s poverty, education, employment and reproductive health. As the unequal distribution of unpaid work is a major impediment to gender equality as well as to other SDGs, the proposed target should be made more ambitious and transformative. In line with the priorities of gender equality advocates, it should be reformulated as ‘Reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work’ (Women’s Major Group 2014, Beyond2015 2014).

Third, the framework should go further with respect to the protection and fulfilment of the human rights of women. Important issues include:

- The stand-alone goal SDG5 to ‘achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’ should explicitly include women’s and girls’ human rights in its title (Women’s Major Group, 2014).

- While the framework recognizes the need to ‘ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights’, references to sexual and reproductive health and rights have been removed from the OWG proposal in the process of its deliberations. Nevertheless, the rights of women and men to control matters regarding their own sexuality are crucial aspects of human rights and a sustainable development agenda.

Lastly, the mainstreaming of gender issues across other goals’ targets could be improved. For instance:

- SDG 13 to ‘combat climate change and its impacts’ should recognise the differential impacts of environmental threats on the lives of women, as well as women’s (decision-making) role in contributing to sustainability (Beyond2015 2014)

- SDG16 on ‘peaceful and inclusive societies’ should include a target to ensure women’s full participation in peacekeeping, peace building and reconstruction, in line with UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

\textsuperscript{10} 2005 was established as a target date for the revocation of laws that discriminate against women by the UN’s Beijing +5 Review in 2000. SDG 5 must make sure that this long overdue deadline is finally achieved (UN Women 2015).
6. THE WAY FORWARD

KEY FINDINGS

- At the CSW, the EU could take a clear and detailed position on specific elements of the final Declaration to promote a strong and transformative global approach to gender equality and women’s rights after 2015.

- During the negotiations on the post-2015 agenda in the coming months, the EU has a crucial role to sustain the global call for a transformative stand-alone goal on gender equality and the comprehensive mainstreaming of gender issues across the framework, including strong targets and indicators that address the structural causes of inequality.

- Adequate financing for gender equality, strong accountability mechanisms and a "gender data revolution", are essential if the transformative potential of the post-2015 agenda is to be realized.

6.1. Next steps at the CSW

The 20+ review of the BPfA, as well as the evaluation of the MDG framework have exposed inadequate financing for gender equality globally, which has been aggravated by austerity measures in the post-crisis context. This persistent underinvestment must be turned around as gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable and prosperous societies. The experience of the MDGs and the implementation of the BPfA have also pointed out the absence of strong accountability mechanisms to hold decision-makers and other stakeholders accountable for their (in)action, as well as the severe lack of comparable data of high quality to monitor progress on gender equality worldwide. The confluence of the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with the international deliberations on the post-2015 framework, provides a once in-a-generation opportunity for the CSW to draw on lessons learned and position gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment at the heart of the global agenda.

The review of the Draft Political Declaration (see Annex) suggests that the following valuable aspects regarding financing, accountability and gender data should be developed more into-depth and included in the Final Declaration. Specifically, the final document should include the following:

- The CSW should express deep concern on the persistent underinvestment in gender equality, which has been aggravated by austerity measures in the context of the crisis.

- The CSW should emphasize that adequate investments in gender equality are a prerequisite for prosperous and sustainable societies and call upon all countries to increase investments in gender equality and address particularly underfunded areas such as women’s leadership, economic rights, gender-based-violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights and women’s peace and security.

- The CSW should stress principles of transparency, accountability and accessibility as essential for the realisation of international commitments to gender equality and women’s rights. Making transparent information available and
accessible on the measurement of progress as well as on financing, is necessary to strengthen accountability for delivery on international commitments and gives citizens, parliaments and civil society the tools to hold government, donors and other stakeholders accountable.

- The CSW should call for robust systems to track allocations to gender equality, for all countries to strengthen accountability to women in domestic financing.
- The CSW should call for the post-2015 framework to be explicitly linked with the commitments and targets agreed upon in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the CEDAW.
- The Final Declaration should stress that the new agenda should focus on ambitious values and aims and drive the collection of new data. This "gender data revolution" is needed to satisfy the substantial need for data and statistical requirements in the post-2015 development agenda for monitoring gender equality. This involves increased investments in the production and analysis of high-quality data and information, both at national and international level, including on women’s poverty, income distribution within households, unpaid care work and time use, women’s access to control and ownership of assets and productive resources, women’s participation at all levels of decision-making and, gender-based violence.
- Therefore the CSW should push for political will and commitment to ensure that indicators and data on the most sensitive gender equality and women’s rights issues are developed, collected, analysed, and made public.
- The CSW should ensure that gender equality and women’s rights are prominent in the on-going and upcoming financing discussions to underpin the implementation of the SDGs and articulate a clear financing strategy which explicitly links financing for gender equality with the SDG on gender equality and the gender-related targets in other SDGs.

### 6.2. Recommendations for the EU

The European Parliament should call on the Commission, the European External Action Service and the Council to maintain a strong common position on gender equality and women’s rights in the last phases of the development of the post-2015 framework, based on the lessons learned from the MDGs and the implementation of the BPfA. The EU should take a leadership role, in alliance with other like-minded countries and/or regions, in maintaining and strengthening the centrality of gender equality and women’s rights within the framework. Specifically, the EU institutions should cooperate in accordance with their executive or legislative functions to:

- reiterate their financial commitment to gender equality in all EU policies by providing increased financing for gender mainstreaming as well as specific projects on gender equality and women’s rights, including an increase in resources for local, national, regional and international women’s organisations.
- call upon all countries to track and make public domestic spending on gender equality and women’s rights.
- sustain the call for a strong stand-alone goal on gender equality in the SDG framework, as well as the thorough mainstreaming of gender across the entire framework.
• contribute with detailed proposals for **transformative targets and indicators** across the framework, addressing the structural causes of gender inequality and building on good practices developed at the EU and global level.

• expand the call for a "data revolution" outlined by the High level Panel to a call for a "gender data revolution".

• Take a strong position in the international **dialogue on financing gender equality and women’s** rights in light of the on-going negotiations on the post-2015 development framework and, in particular, in the lead-up to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that will take place in Addis Ababa, in July 2015.
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ANNEX: 59TH CSW – DRAFT PRESENTED BY CSW BUREAU

Political declaration on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women

We, Heads of State and Government, ministers and representatives of Governments gathered at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in New York, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, in the context of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcomes of the Conference and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”, including current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as opportunities for strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda through the integration of a gender perspective, and with a commitment to ensuring that the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, scheduled to take place from 25 to 27 September 2015, effectively contributes to the realization of gender equality.

1. Reaffirm the Beijing Declaration1 and Platform for Action,2 the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly3 and the declarations of the Commission on the Status of Women on the tenth and fifteenth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women;4

2. Recognize that the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the fulfilment of the obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are mutually reinforcing in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women;

3. Welcome the comprehensive review activities undertaken by Governments, the United Nations system, civil society, and other actors at national, regional and global levels on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

4. Welcome the progress made towards achieving gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls through concerted policy action at national, regional and global levels and the contribution of all stakeholders;

5. Express concern that progress has been slow and uneven and that major gaps and obstacles remain in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, and recognize that twenty years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, no country has achieved equality for women and girls, that significant levels of inequality between women and men persist, and that some women and girls experience increased vulnerability and marginalization due to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination;

6. Recognize that new challenges have emerged in the elimination of discrimination against women and girls and the implementation of the Beijing

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1 Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.
2 Ibid., annex II.
3 General Assembly resolution 55/3, annex, and resolution 55/3, annex.
Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly:

7. 
Reaffirm our political will and firmly commit to tackle critical remaining gaps and challenges and pledge to take concrete further actions to transform discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes, transform the economy to achieve gender equality and sustainable development; significantly increase investments in gender equality; ensure full and equal participation and leadership of women in decision-making at all levels and achieve gender parity; and strengthen accountability for gender equality and the realization of the human rights of women and girls to ensure the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly through laws, policies, strategies and programme activities for all women and girls.

8. 
Express our firm belief that gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls is achievable with requisite political will, targeted action, resources and social mobilization and therefore commit to achieve measurable results by 2020 and to fully realize gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls by 2030.

9. 
Emphasize that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is essential for achieving the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals to be adopted in September 2015, and that gender equality and the empowerment of women must be realized to achieve sustainable development beyond 2015.

10. 
Commit to ensuring that the centrality of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls to sustainable development are addressed through a transformative and comprehensive approach and reflected in a stand-alone goal and integrated through gender-sensitive targets into all goals of the post-2015 development agenda.

11. 
Commit to further strengthen and increase support for institutional mechanisms for gender equality, at all levels; and to prioritize increased investment in achieving gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls, enhance resources, capacity building, data collection and monitoring, and access to and use of ICTs, and call upon all stakeholders, in all sectors and at all levels, to enhance their efforts in this regard;

12. 
Welcome the establishment and recognize the important role of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and the central role the entity is playing in mobilizing States, civil society, the United Nations system, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders at all levels in support of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; and encourage UN-Women to continue these efforts beyond the Beijing+20 review;

13. 
Welcome the major contributions made by civil society, including women’s and community-based organizations and feminist groups to the implementation of the Platform for Action and commit to increase resources and support for grassroots, local, national, regional and global women’s and civil society organizations to advance and promote gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls.
14. Call upon the United Nations system to strengthen its efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women under all its respective mandates, including through systematic gender mainstreaming, resources to deliver results, and monitoring of progress with data and robust accountability systems;

15. Commit to engaging all stakeholders and call upon them, including international and regional organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, the media, academia and research organizations, political parties, youth, as well as all women and girls, men and boys, to become part of the movement for gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls and to fully commit themselves and intensify their contributions to the realization of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls;

16. Resolve to use all opportunities in 2015 and beyond in the areas of sustainable development, peace and security, human rights, humanitarian action, and climate change to take historic action for irreversible progress on gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls.
ROLE

Policy departments are research units that provide specialised advice to committees, inter-parliamentary delegations and other parliamentary bodies.

Policy Areas

- Constitutional Affairs
- Justice, Freedom and Security
- Gender Equality
- Legal and Parliamentary Affairs
- Petitions

DOCUMENTS