



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY  
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Action Plan

# Equal rights – equal opportunities

Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Foreign and Development Policy 2013–15





Gender equality, Igor Dukic, USA

# ► Foreword

Women's rights are being fought for all over the world. These efforts have given millions of girls and women access to education and health services, the opportunity to exert an influence in politics, and economic independence. But gender equality is not just about women; it is about changing relations between women and men. An active participation of men is therefore vital for its success.

The progress made so far has been slow, unevenly distributed, and fragile. Far too many girls grow up in a culture of discrimination that is damaging to their health, denies them control over their own bodies and sexuality, prevents them from being able to support themselves and their families, and turns them into second rate citizens in their own country.

Norway is already deeply engaged in promoting gender equality and women's rights. We push for women's participation in all efforts to promote peace and security. We advocate for the right of girls and women to have control over their own bodies and sexuality. We are actively helping to improve girls and women's access to healthcare and education, combating sexual and gender-based violence, and promoting the position of women in the labour market. In order to achieve lasting results, we will now strengthen our efforts through funding, sharing expertise and capacity-development.

Gender equality is a goal in its own right – we have a moral obligation to promote and protect women's fundamental human rights. Gender equality is, however, also one of the most effective drivers of economic development, fair distribution, peace and democracy. Gender equality means putting an end to discrimination and that making it possible for everyone to live to their full potential. It means bringing the needs of both women and men to the fore in politics and targeting support where it is most needed. With this it is possible to realise rights and at the same time get more out of every dollar spent. This

is just as important in Bamako as it is in Barcelona. And this is why we attach importance to mainstreaming a gender perspective at every opportunity.

Our work to promote women's rights takes place in different areas, in different cultures and through different forms of cooperation. We will include a gender perspective in all our development cooperation both bilaterally and with multilateral organisations such as the UN and the World Bank. We will also include the gender perspective in the implementation of our High North policy, in our security policy, in our engagement in NATO and in our cooperation in the European Economic Area. There should never be any doubt that Norway is on the side of girls and women wherever their rights are threatened.

Promoting gender equality is challenging. It requires knowledge, respect and the willingness to enter into dialogue. In this Action Plan we address these challenges by combining foreign policy and development policy approaches, which will lead to greater impact. It is a strategic document that clarifies Norwegian policy and identifies concrete goals and action points that will direct our future efforts in this field. The requirement to mainstream the gender perspective in all policy areas is particularly emphasised. We intend to implement tailored measures that will integrate the gender perspective more clearly in policy areas such as climate change, business, energy and peace and security. We are sending a strong signal to senior managers in the Foreign Service that we expect results in the field of gender equality.

Norway cannot and should not attempt to transfer its national gender equality policy directly to other countries. However, we can provide political, practical and financial support to help other countries to fulfil their international obligations and follow up on their own priorities in this area. In this way we will help new generations of girls and boys to set their own goals and fight their own fights on a more equal basis.



Espen Barth Eide  
*Minister of Foreign Affairs*



Heikki Eidsvoll Holmås  
*Minister of International Development*

# ▶ Gender equality is a key priority

In 2005, the Government made gender equality a key priority in Norway's foreign and development policy. This is made clear in three recent white papers: *Interests, Responsibilities and Opportunities: The main features of Norwegian foreign policy*,<sup>1)</sup> *Sharing for prosperity: Promoting democracy, fair distribution and growth in development policy*,<sup>2)</sup> and *On Equal Terms: Women's Rights and Gender Equality in International Development Policy*,<sup>3)</sup> and the Storting's recommendations regarding these.

For the Government, promoting women's rights on the basis of universal principles and our human rights obligations is a reflection of our values. Gender equality has a positive impact on society and gives women and men an equal share of resources. This applies to all countries, irrespective of the political, social or cultural environment or level of development. Gender equality is an important key to change.

Gender equality is about both power relations and opportunities. Our point of departure is that women and girls should be able to shape their own future just like boys and men. When women and girls are subjected to systematic discrimination, they are deprived of the chance to realise their rights and make full use of their resources. Discrimination takes place in the family, in decisions about money, boys' and girls' education and the division of tasks in the home. It takes place in local communities, where traditional gender roles are

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1) Report No.15 (2008–2009) to the Storting

2) Meld. St. 25 (2012–2013)

3) Report No. 11 (2008–2009) to the Storting

sustained by norms for women's and men's participation in working life and in the family, and by the fact that violence against women is often legitimised. It takes place at the national level, where a lack of gender equality may be enshrined in legislation that discriminates against women, and reflected in various forms of cultural expression and in the level of women's and men's participation in politics and business. And it takes place at the international level, where international and intergovernmental processes relating to issues such as peace and security, climate change and environmental issues often fail to include a gender perspective. We are also seeing active opposition to the recognition of women's sexual and reproductive rights from several quarters.

## **Principles for implementing the Action Plan in foreign policy**

This Action Plan provides the framework for the next phase of the Government's efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality. Its purpose is to clarify the Government's policy, set out our priorities, and enhance our performance in this area.

The Action Plan identifies two key steps that need to be taken. The first is to coordinate the foreign policy and development policy to ensure that they are mutually reinforcing. Through political leadership, diplomacy and financial support, Norway will be at the forefront of efforts to mobilise a strong and broad global consensus on women's rights, and will promote the implementation of these rights through concrete measures. The second is to ensure more systematic implementation of our gender equality policy. This will help to strengthen programme development, reporting and accountability mechanisms in the Foreign Service.

### **The following principles underpin the Action Plan:**

#### **Common objectives and common human rights obligations**

The overall objective is to strengthen the capacity of individual countries and regional and global forums to enable them to meet their gender equality obligations. The normative framework is set out in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing

Platform for Action, the Cairo Programme of Action, the UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and in other core conventions, as well as in national strategies and cooperation agreements relating to gender equality, including strategies for implementing the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. It is often not a lack of norms and rules that is the problem, but rather ensuring that these norms and rules are put into practice.

### **Focus our efforts where we can make a difference**

Norway's efforts to promote gender equality at the international level are taking place in dialogue with our partners. Gender equality is viewed differently, in different countries and institutions. Stark opposition often co-exists with formal ratification of the international normative framework related to women's rights. However, this should not stop us from consistently promoting gender equality.

Norway's own experience in this field is in demand internationally. For example, many countries and institutions are interested in learning about the high level of participation of women in politics and working life in Norway, our system of parental leave for both women and men, and our efforts to combat violence against women. Achievements in these areas have enhanced social development and welfare in Norway. Norway's experience cannot simply be copied by other countries, but it can provide knowledge and inspiration that can help other countries to develop their own solutions. We will therefore increase our capacity to share Norway's experience and to establish long-term cooperation between various groups that promote and support gender equality, where this is of interest and will be of value. This will require cooperation with the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, which has responsibility for Norway's gender equality policy.

### **New actors and new dimensions**

Women's organisations will be important partners in our efforts to ensure that women have more control over the development in their countries and their own lives. Civil society plays an important role in challenging social structures and policies that limit women's rights. Women's organisations have specific knowledge about the situation and needs of girls and women. They also play an important role in providing input to policy development

at local, national and international level, and this will be promoted by the Norwegian government.

We will work systematically to mainstream gender equality and issues relating to women's rights in our foreign and development policy analyses, and we will work strategically to establish new alliances that help us achieve our objectives. Conservative religious arguments are increasingly being used to undermine women's rights. But both religious leaders and knowledge about religion can be important for promoting gender equality and preventing girls' and women's rights from being undermined in its name. This is something we will consider in our efforts to build alliances.

Young people will be a priority target group of our efforts to prevent discriminatory attitudes from being passed on from one generation to the next. It is primarily in childhood and adolescence that attitudes are formed, and this is also the time when knowledge of, and respect for, equal rights is best learned. Our policies and programmes for children and young people are to have a clear gender perspective.

We will improve our ability to combat multidimensional discrimination based on gender and ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, disability, caste or indigenous status. Girls and women who are affected by several forms of discrimination often fare worse in terms of access to services, resources, and opportunities, and are more likely to be subjected to violence and abuse. A policy of combating this discrimination will also help towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. For the Norwegian Foreign Service, this means that we will seek and promote solutions that are inclusive and rights-based.

We want to strengthen our cooperation with diaspora groups in Norway. Some of these groups have expertise that can help us increase the effectiveness of our efforts and improve the results of our policy and programmes. We acknowledge that we can learn a good deal from others, including from countries in the South.

We will also increase our efforts to involve boys and men in our work to promote gender equality. Both men and women find that their freedom of action and the opportunities open to them are restricted as a result of

traditional gender roles. Fair distribution of power and opportunities leads to better living conditions for both women and men. It is therefore important to include men and boys in this work so that they can experience how gender equality can improve their own situation, and also gain greater respect for women's and girls' rights. This requires change at the individual level and a gender equality policy at the national and global level that encompasses, and thus brings benefits to, both women and men. Only then will gender equality and non-discrimination be established as core values. We will work with partners who view women and men as stakeholders in their own lives and who are seeking to break down the restrictions and hierarchies that traditional gender roles reinforce.





Female genital mutilation, Anna Gizella Varga, Ungarn

# ► Goals and action points

The present Action Plan is designed to translate our gender equality policy and commitments into concrete efforts throughout the Foreign Service based on a comprehensive approach.

### **Our objectives**

1. We will be at the forefront of efforts to strengthen girls' and women's rights in global normative processes
2. We will mainstream gender equality in major political efforts
3. We will enhance women's political empowerment and rights
4. We will enhance women's economic empowerment and rights
5. We will combat violence against girls and women
6. We will strengthen girls' and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights
7. We will secure women's participation in the security sector and in peacebuilding efforts, and combat sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations

Norway's role will be twofold: firstly, we will protect and further develop the normative framework for promoting women's rights; and secondly, we will play a proactive role in its implementation, for example by providing financial support to help translate obligations in this field into concrete efforts.

Norway will use a wide range of methods to achieve these objectives. We will make use of political and financial measures in our bilateral relations and in multilateral organisations such as the World Bank and the UN. UN Women will be an important partner in this work because of its key role in promoting gender equality in the UN system. We will also promote this agenda in various forums for regional cooperation ranging from the EEA, the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the forums for cooperation in the High North to NATO and the African Union. Civil society will continue to play a vital role in advocacy work and in efforts to improve the position of women and their living conditions.

This chapter elaborates on the objectives listed above. It provides an overview of the current status and outlines some of the efforts being made in each these areas, but is not intended to give a full account of all the activities Norway is engaged in.

1. We will be at the forefront of efforts to strengthen girls' and women's rights in global normative processes

### **Current status**

The UN has played a decisive role in efforts to strengthen women's rights and promote gender equality. In cooperation with civil society actors and progressive member states, the UN has advanced women's rights, opportunities and position in society. The UN Commission on the Status of Women, which was established in 1946, is the most important intergovernmental forum for promoting women's rights. One of its key tasks is to follow up the implementation of the platform for action that was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Beijing Platform for Action. As secretariat for the Commission, UN Women plays an important part in this work. In addition, all countries that are state parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

are required to report on the measures they have taken and progress made in this area for consideration by a committee of experts established for this purpose, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. CEDAW has been ratified by 187 UN member states and can thus be regarded as universally accepted. The recommendations of the CEDAW Committee provide a good basis for efforts to promote gender equality at national level.

The issue of women's rights is also on the agenda of the UN Security Council through the resolutions on women, peace and security. These resolutions highlight the importance of women's participation in efforts to promote peace and security, and espouse concrete measures to protect women in war and conflict, especially against sexual violence.

Gender equality and women's rights are also key issues for the UN Commission on Population and Development, which has been mandated to follow up the Cairo Programme of Action, and in a number of other forums, such as the UN Human Rights Council. One of the most important tasks over the next few years will be to ensure that gender equality is central in the new global development goals for the post-2015 period.

Women's rights are also considered and debated outside official fora. The women's movement, the research community, the trade union movement, religious leaders, the private sector, the cultural sector and the media all play a role in shaping attitudes and setting goals and standards regarding the situation of women. These arenas and actors are also important for Norway's efforts.

The progress that has been made in the context of the UN is coming under increasing pressure from forces that are seeking to weaken the commitments that have been agreed on. This applies particularly to the right of girls and women to control their own bodies and sexuality and to access to information and health services in this area, but it also applies to economic and political rights. Norway is now leading the way in countering attempts to reverse the progress made, through systematic cooperation with the authorities in like-minded countries in the global North and the global South, and with civil society organisations.

Global policy is important in that it provides a guide for activities and funding and as such can make a difference to the everyday lives of women and men in relation to all the themes covered by the Action Plan.

**Our goals are:**

- ▶ That the promotion of women's rights is both identified as a separate development goal and mainstreamed in the other global development goals.
- ▶ That the 20th anniversaries of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (2014) and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (2015) strengthen the normative framework for safeguarding women's rights.
- ▶ That gender equality is mainstreamed in climate change and environmental negotiations.
- ▶ That the UN Security Council integrates issues relating to women, peace and security into the mandates of peacekeeping operations and other relevant measures.

**Action points**

- ▶ Women's rights are to be given particular priority in connection with participation in the UN's normative bodies. This will be clearly reflected in the UN Human Rights Council and in the General Assembly, and in the importance we attach to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Population and Development.
- ▶ Women's rights and gender equality is one of the priority areas identified by Norway in its work on the post-2015 development agenda.
- ▶ A three year project on sexual and reproductive rights was established in 2012. The purpose is to strengthen efforts and build new alliances between national authorities and civil society to counter the forces that are seeking to weaken girls' and women's rights in this area.

## 2. We will mainstream gender equality in major political efforts

### Status

IGender mainstreaming was adopted as a strategy at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Together with targeted measures, it comprises a two-pronged strategy for achieving gender equality.

Mainstreaming in this context means that the gender perspective must be included in all phases of policy development and implementation. An overall analysis of Norway's performance in this respect has not been carried out, but the qualitative and quantitative documentation that is available points in the same direction: there has not been sufficient focus on mainstreaming gender equality in a way that produces real and relevant results. Moreover, gender equality impact assessments, formulation of goals and gender sensitive reporting in programmes have not been carried out in a sufficiently systematic way. We intend to address this situation by directing particular attention to gender mainstreaming in major foreign and development policy focus areas.

Energy and climate change are two of these key areas. Climate change must be addressed through gender-sensitive mitigation and adaptation measures because it directly affects women's access to and control over natural resources, their food security, burden of work and welfare. The energy sector is vitally important for economic development both for society as a whole and for individuals, for example by providing opportunities for setting up businesses and for employment. Systematic gender mainstreaming will help to release the potential for development in these areas for both women and men.

Our European policy is another of these key areas, and is linked to one large budget item, the EEA and Norway Grants. The Grants contribute to reducing social and economic disparities in the European Economic Area and are also intended to strengthen contact and cooperation between Norway and the 15 European beneficiary countries. The EEA and Norway Grants for the period 2009–14 amounted to around NOK 1.8 billion. Of this total, some NOK 50 million is channelled to programmes to promote gender equality and combat violence against women. This is equivalent to approximately 3 per cent of the total budget. There are still significant

challenges related to women's rights in Europe, and this is something that Norwegian policy needs to take into consideration. It is therefore important that gender equality is also mainstreamed in efforts where it is not the main objective.

The High North is Norway's most important strategic foreign policy priority. The white paper, *The High North – Visions and strategies*,<sup>4)</sup> sets out the Government's views on how Norway should meet the challenges and opportunities in the north in a generational perspective. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates Norway's High North policy, which encompasses issues relating to the law of the sea, relations with other countries and various organisations, security policy, and the framework conditions for business development and value creation. In 2013, some NOK 2 billion will be spent on High North efforts, around NOK 353 million of which will be channelled via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' budget. Not all aspects of the High North cooperation are relevant for gender mainstreaming, but there is both a need and a potential for developing the gender perspective in this work.

We must also ensure systematic gender mainstreaming of our efforts to prevent war and threats to Norway's security, and to promote global peace and stability through a UN-led international legal order. Gender equality must be clearly in focus when we further develop our security policy, and make choices in terms of approaches and public spending. In order to ensure that the core areas of security policy – peace, the rule of law, economic security, human rights and democracy – are safeguarded, it is vital that the interests of both women and men are taken into consideration, and that both women and men have the opportunity to take part in forming future policy.

### Action points

- ▶ A separate plan for gender mainstreaming in key policy areas is to be completed by the summer of 2014. This is to be tailored to each policy area and will be results-oriented.
- ▶ A special programme for gender equality efforts is to be established under the Oil for Development and the Clean Energy for Development initiatives respectively. These programmes are to be developed in

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4) Meld. St. 7 (2011–2012)

dialogue with the partner countries concerned. The goal of the program is to ensure that both men and women's needs and priorities are addressed when access to energy, employment and the prevention of negative environmental and social impacts are considered.

- ▶ A review is to be carried out of how gender equality has been mainstreamed in programmes financed by the EEA and Norway Grants and how gender mainstreaming can be strengthened in the next grant period.
- ▶ Norway will take the initiative to champion a gender perspective in the Arctic Council.

### 3. We will enhance women's political empowerment and rights

#### Status

In 2013, only 20.4 percent of the world's parliamentarians are women, but there are major regional variations. In the Nordic national assemblies, there are 42 percent women, in sub-Saharan Africa 20.5 percent and in Arab countries 13.8 percent. Worldwide, the proportion of women in governments is 15.6 percent, and there are just under 20 female heads of government.

Progress has been made in the realisation of women's rights in recent decades. More effective reporting on human rights at country level in the UN's Universal Periodic Review process has put violations of women's rights higher up on the agenda. The Human Rights Council has, on the initiative of Norway and others, established the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice. The Working Group is to submit an annual report on this issue. Many countries have made reservations to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: 30 countries do not want to give women equal rights in marriage; 20 countries deny women equal rights regarding nationality; and 7 countries do not give women the same right as men to choose their residence and domicile.

In many countries, we see that girls and women who take part in the public debate and argue in favour of gender equality are increasingly experiencing

harassment and violence towards themselves and their families. This constitutes a serious threat to their individual political rights, the rule of law and democratic development.

Education for both boys and girls is essential if they are to be able to take part on an equal footing in participation in the society. Girls are at the very back of the queue when it comes to access to education. Girls are kept away from school and put to work, because they are exposed to violence on their way to school or at school, or because they become pregnant or are married off. Of the 70 million children worldwide who do not attend school, it is estimated that as many as 23 million are children with disabilities. Children from ethnic minorities and children from rural communities are also more likely to fall outside the school system than others.

#### **Our goals are:**

- ▶ That women are represented and have real influence in political processes and bodies at local, national and international level – both in formal political structures and in other organisations and social movements.
- ▶ That defenders of women's human rights and representatives of women's and gender equality organisations are able to put forward their demands safely, and have the resources to do so.
- ▶ That women's and girls' rights are properly reflected in anti-discrimination legislation
- ▶ That all girls and women are able to realise their right to education.

#### **Action points**

- ▶ The Ministry's staff and diplomats are to promote women's rights through cooperation with women's organisations and other defenders of equal rights. They are to acquire knowledge about and report on the situation of women and the country's gender equality policy, and, where appropriate, provide economic and political support.
- ▶ Continue to support the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UN-GEI) and other UNICEF efforts to promote equal rights to education for all children and high quality schools, as well as the Global Partnership for Education, which gives priority to girls' education.

- ▶ Seek to ensure that the EEA and Norway Grants are targeted towards European gender equality efforts that are supported by the authorities and civil society in the countries concerned.

#### 4. We will enhance women's economic empowerment and rights

##### **Status**

Women make up the majority of the world's poorest people. Low income and malnutrition are more widespread among women than among men. In richer countries too, we see that women have less control of the resources available. Women also earn less than men on average; in OECD countries the average difference is 15 percent. Women have a greater overall burden of work than men because women carry out most of the unpaid care-related tasks. In developing countries it is most often women who provide the family's food. In OECD countries, women do more than twice as much housework as men. Moreover, in many regions of the world, men can legally prevent their wives from having a job or starting a business. Studies show that they do so in 20 percent of the countries in South Asia, 29 percent of sub-Saharan countries, and 36 percent of the countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Women's double workload together with the legal and social barriers to their participation in the formal labour market are the reasons why women make up the greater part of the informal and unregulated labour market, with its lower wages and poorer working conditions.

Inadequate legislation and social limitations often make it more difficult for women to exploit the opportunities for production and trade at both local and national level. If women and men had equal economic rights, equal access to credit and education, and equal opportunities to participate in agriculture and the labour market in general, the economic gain would be considerable. Figures from the World Bank show that productivity would increase from 3 percent to as much as 25 percent in certain countries. According to estimates from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), crop yields in some areas would increase by as much 30 percent if women had equal access to productive resources. In Western countries, including Norway, we see that a high proportion of women in the labour market lead to greater economic growth. Women make an important contribution to society, and should have the opportunity to influence how resources are distributed.

**Our goals are:**

- ▶ That women have access to decent work that gives them economic security.
- ▶ That women and men have equal opportunities to start up businesses and take part in commercial activities.
- ▶ A strengthening of women's positions in the fields of agriculture and fisheries, including their access to productive resources.

**Action points**

- ▶ Full implementation of *Aid for Trade: Norway's Action Plan*, which identifies gender equality as one of its three thematic areas. This action plan will help to ensure that the gender perspective is included in national trade policy strategies and in our dialogues with multilateral actors. It provides a basis for targeted efforts to promote gender equality in regional trade organisations and for providing support for women entrepreneurs and exporters.
- ▶ Weight will be given to the integration of gender equality and human rights considerations in allocating funding for business development, social partners and Norfund.
- ▶ As set out in Norway's strategy on food security, *Matsikkerhet i et klimaperspektiv (2013–2015)*, Norwegian support for food security is to benefit women small-scale farmers and strengthen their formal and informal rights. The implementation of the strategy will also increase women's access to the means of production and thus strengthen their position throughout the value chain.

**5. We will combat violence against girls and women****Status**

The UN 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, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private

life”.<sup>5)</sup> Violence against girls and women includes violence; threats of violence and abuse in the family; sexual abuse; murder by an intimate partner; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; trafficking in women, often with a view to sexual exploitation; as well as rape and other forms of sexual violence. These crimes take place both in peacetime and during violent conflict and humanitarian emergencies.

Violence is not easy to quantify, but several studies have made disturbing findings. A study carried out in the Gauteng province of South Africa found that 51 percent of women had experienced violence, and 78 percent of men had been violent against women. In the US, a third of all murdered women were killed by a current or former partner. In the EU, 21 percent of the population knows someone who has used violence against their partner, and 25 percent say they have a friend or a relation who experiences violence from their partner. Girls and women make up the majority of the thousands of people who are sold every year to the sex industry and other forms of exploitation. Three million girls in Africa are at risk of female genital mutilation every year.

Violence against women causes physical and psychological trauma for both the individual victim and her family, and costs society huge amounts in health services and lost earnings. Violence against girls and women with disabilities tends to be even more widespread but at the same time even less visible than violence against girls and women without disabilities.

Not enough emphasis is placed on preventing violence through measures that challenge traditional gender roles, give women higher status in society, and map and reduce risk factors.

In addition, the response from the police, the judicial system and the health service when acts of violence have occurred is not satisfactory in most countries. A study from Bangladesh shows that as many as 98 percent of men who had committed rape could report that they faced no legal consequences. The situation is problematic in Europe as well: on average, only 14 percent of reported cases of rape result in a conviction. Lack of expertise in how to respond to the victims, poor coordination between various government bodies and a general attitude that violence against girls and women is acceptable lie behind these figures.

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5) A/RES/48/104

**Our goals are:**

- ▶ That violence against girls and women are prevented.
- ▶ That violence against women and girls is met with an appropriate and effective response from the legal system and the health service.
- ▶ That female genital mutilation is eliminated.
- ▶ That men and boys are engaged in the efforts to stop violence against girls and women.

**Action points**

- ▶ Continue to support efforts to end female genital mutilation in cooperation with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, civil society and other partners
- ▶ Continue to support measures against gender-based violence in European countries through the EEA and Norway Grants Domestic and Gender-based Violence Programme.
- ▶ Support civil society projects on combating various forms of violence against women, including trafficking in women and children and domestic violence, at both national and global level.
- ▶ Contribute to strengthen international efforts to eliminate violence against women at both normative and operational level through the UN, including UN Women, and other multilateral organisations.

6. We will strengthen girls' and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights

**Status**

Girls and women have the right to decide over their own bodies, including whether and when to have children. They have the right to make choices about their own sexuality without being subject to violence or coercion. Girls and women, men and boys should have access to quality sexual and reproductive health services, thereby ensuring safe pregnancy and child-

birth, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, and access to family planning and contraception. Health services and health information should take into account differences adults and youths, and should be tailored so as to be accessible to people with disabilities or who find themselves marginalised for other reasons. Girls and women in conflict or post-conflict situations and in humanitarian crises should be given particular attention and protection. UN member states have committed themselves to upholding these principles. The facts on the ground tell a different story.

More than 220 million girls and women in developing countries do not have adequate access to contraception. This means that they are not able to make their own decisions about reproduction and are, moreover, exposed to serious risks in connection with unsafe abortions and complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Mortality relating to pregnancy, childbirth and abortion has been halved over the last 20 years, but insufficient access to health services means that 800 women still die every day in connection with pregnancy and childbirth. This amounts to a total of around 280 000 preventable deaths every year. Maternal mortality in developing countries is still 15 times higher than in developed countries. It is estimated that 47 000 women die as a result of unsafe abortions every year. Restrictive abortion laws do not lower abortion rates. In fact, rich girls and women can still purchase safe services, while poor girls and women have to resort to dangerous methods often causing injury or death.

Sexual and reproductive health services are also crucial to preventing the spread of HIV. Most cases of HIV infection between adults are sexually transmitted. Children are mainly infected at birth and from breastfeeding. In sub-Saharan Africa, women still make up the largest proportion of people with HIV, and young women are particularly vulnerable. In Europe, HIV infection is now increasing fastest among men who have sex with men and among people who inject drugs.

Child marriage is very common in many developing countries, where 67 million girls under the age of 18 are married off every year. Many of them discontinue their education and have children at a very young age. This means that they are at serious risk of complications and of dying in childbirth. They also tend to have more children than they would like.

Sexual relations between people of the same sex are punishable by law in 76 countries. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experience discrimination, violence and exclusion from the labour market on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Openness about sexuality is vital in order to bring about change. This is why gender roles, gender identity, sexual behaviour and sexual rights must be included in the political debate.

**Our goals are:**

- ▶ That women, men and young people have sufficient access to contraception and information about sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, including knowledge-based sexuality education.
- ▶ That women, men and young people's right to reproductive health services are fulfilled, including safe and legal abortions for girls and women.
- ▶ That teenage pregnancy and child marriage is prevented.
- ▶ That sexual relations between people of the same sex is decriminalised and discrimination based on sexual orientation is eliminated.

**Action points**

- ▶ Continue to support the UN's Every Woman, Every Child campaign, including the Family Planning 2020 initiative, which is mobilising governments and civil society in the global south and the global north in an effort to meet the needs of girls and women for contraception and family planning services by 2020.
- ▶ Follow-up the work of the UN Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children, which is helping to increase women's access to medicines and other commodities at affordable prices, including various forms of contraception and medicines that can save women's lives during childbirth.
- ▶ Provide financial support to Norwegian, international and national organisations working to ensure access to services that provide safe abortions and to promote other aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

- ▶ Continue to be at the forefront of efforts to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights in relevant fora, such as the UN General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Commission on Population and Development, and the Commission on the Status of Women.
- ▶ Be at the forefront of efforts to ensure that sexual and reproductive health services are included in humanitarian efforts.

7. We will secure women's participation in the security sector and in peacebuilding efforts, and combat sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

### Status

Since the Security Council adopted its first resolution on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325), the participation of women and the integration of the gender perspective in processes relating to peace and security have become more firmly established as an international norm. Likewise, sexual violence in conflicts has been recognised as a threat to international peace and security by the Security Council. Strategies and reporting routines have been established in several international organisations such as the UN and NATO. A number of countries, including Norway, have drawn up national action plans. Tools have also been prepared for identifying how well the gender perspective has been mainstreamed in humanitarian efforts. This has increased awareness and performance among key humanitarian actors.

While these normative and administrative steps are important, it is still difficult to see concrete results of the international efforts to implement the resolutions on women, peace and security, especially on the ground in conflict and post-conflict countries. Women still account for less than 8 percent of the participants in formal peace processes, and only 3 percent of those who sign peace agreements and ceasefires. Between 2004 and 2012, issues relating to women's rights and participation were included in only 25 percent of the mandates of truth and reconciliation commissions. Women are often excluded from measures designed to promote economic development and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of armed groups. In recent years, we have also seen that political transition process-

es have in fact led to a weakening of women's formal rights. Moreover, sexual violence against women, men, girls and boys is still widely used to terrorise civilians in a number of armed conflicts.

An evaluation of Norway's efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation shows that Norway has increased funding for gender-sensitive efforts in the areas of peacebuilding, human rights and humanitarian relief significantly since 2002. Efforts both in bilateral relations and in multilateral contexts to promote the women, peace and security agenda have also been considerably strengthened and are becoming an integral part of all Norwegian peace and security efforts.

**Our goals are:**

- ▶ That gender equality is mainstreamed in all efforts to promote peace and security.
- ▶ That women have real opportunities to participate and should have rights in peace negotiations and other processes to promote peace and security.
- ▶ That women's rights and economic and political participation are strengthened in post-conflict countries, fragile states and in countries that have been through political transition processes.
- ▶ That civilians are protected against sexual and gender-based violence.
- ▶ That perpetrators are prosecuted and survivors have access to comprehensive rehabilitation services.
- ▶ That input from local women's organisations, networks and human rights defenders that promote peaceful conflict resolution is included in peace processes where Norway is engaged.
- ▶ The focus on results in Norway's women, peace and security efforts is to be sharpened.

**Action points**

- ▶ Develop a new strategy for Norway's women, peace and security efforts from 2014.



Tereotype this!, Eric Le, Australia

# ▶ How we intend to achieve our objectives

Gender equality is not going to happen by itself. The key is systematic and continuous efforts, adequate resources and managers that constantly demand results.

In implementing the Action Plan, we will use a set of tools that will help us achieve concrete results and promote gender mainstreaming throughout the Foreign Service. Active use will also be made of the lessons learned from the evaluation of our performance in relation to the previous action plan, *Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (2007–13)*.

This Action Plan sets out new measures and delineates existing measures with particular focus on three areas: working methods, resources and expertise, and follow-up of performance.

### **We will use effective working methods in our policy development and implementation**

The way we work is important for the relevance and effectiveness of our results. Gender equality must be mainstreamed right from the start of our policy development and implementation, and right up to the point where results are documented. With this in view, we will carry out the following measures:

- ▶ The gender perspective will be taken into account in all matters that are submitted to the political leadership. The guidelines on gender equality impact assessments, *Veileder til utredning av konsekvenser for likestilling* (Norwegian only), are to be used.
- ▶ Gender equality must be included systematically in the agenda of delegations, in statements and on meeting at all levels. The Minister of Foreign Affairs' and the Minister of International Development's delegations are to include at least 40 percent of each sex.
- ▶ The gender perspective is to be systematically mainstreamed in all mandates for intergovernmental processes, including discussions on policy development, decisions on the use of funds and programmes, and in connection with administrative matters.
- ▶ Gender equality impact assessments are to be included in country strategies and plans, and are to be a key element in the development of policy initiatives and programmes.
- ▶ The gender equality requirements (gender equality impact assessments, targets and reporting) that are placed on grant recipients are to be reviewed, and if necessary tightened.
- ▶ The gender perspective is to be systematically taken into account in all Norad's expert advice to the Ministry and embassies.

## **We will mobilise knowledge and resources**

In accordance with the political target of promoting women's rights and gender equality as both an independent and a cross-cutting theme, our gender equality efforts are to be carried out throughout the Foreign Service, as well as by a dedicated gender units at the Ministry and Norad.

Mainstreaming the gender perspective is a management responsibility in all policy areas. Norway's high ambitions in this field make it necessary to ensure continuous knowledge development and a high level of expertise.

More knowledge about gender equality is to be built up in the Foreign Service, and Norwegian and international centres of expertise are to be used where relevant. The funds available for implementing foreign and development policy are to be used strategically and effectively with a view to achieving the best possible results.

Guidelines for Norway's efforts to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights and for Norway's efforts to promote the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have been produced to assist Foreign Service personnel in their efforts to advance these agendas. Guidelines on rights-based development cooperation are currently being developed.

**The following measures will be implemented:**

- ▶ The mandatory training on gender mainstreaming will be further developed – in the trainee programme, courses prior to postings abroad, management training, and training programmes at our missions. Particular emphasis will be placed on developing expertise in working with multiple causes of discrimination. Support for competence-building will be provided to other actors and partners, where relevant.
- ▶ Tailored expert advice will be provided to ensure that the gender perspective is systematically mainstreamed in all relevant policy programmes and processes. Gender equality reviews will be used for training purposes and for inspiring enhanced efforts at our missions.
- ▶ Allocations for research is to focus on projects designed to increase the knowledge-base on which our efforts are founded and strengthen the research and innovation capacity of our partners. Priority will be given thematic areas that are highly prioritized and to projects and programmes that lead to more effective gender mainstreaming in the various sectors and policy areas.
- ▶ Upon request, we will offer sharing of lessons learned from Norway's own experiences in women's empowerment and gender equality, through for instance Norwegian experience in this field cannot be transferred directly, but can be a source of inspiration for other countries as they develop their own solutions. The particular themes and form of cooperation must be defined by the partner country in dialogue with the Norwegian partner involved. Cooperation with the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and other ministries will be

important in order to ensure that this cooperation is well targeted. We will seek to make better use of the experience gained from work on the women, peace and security agenda, and enhance the way this is shared between relevant ministries.

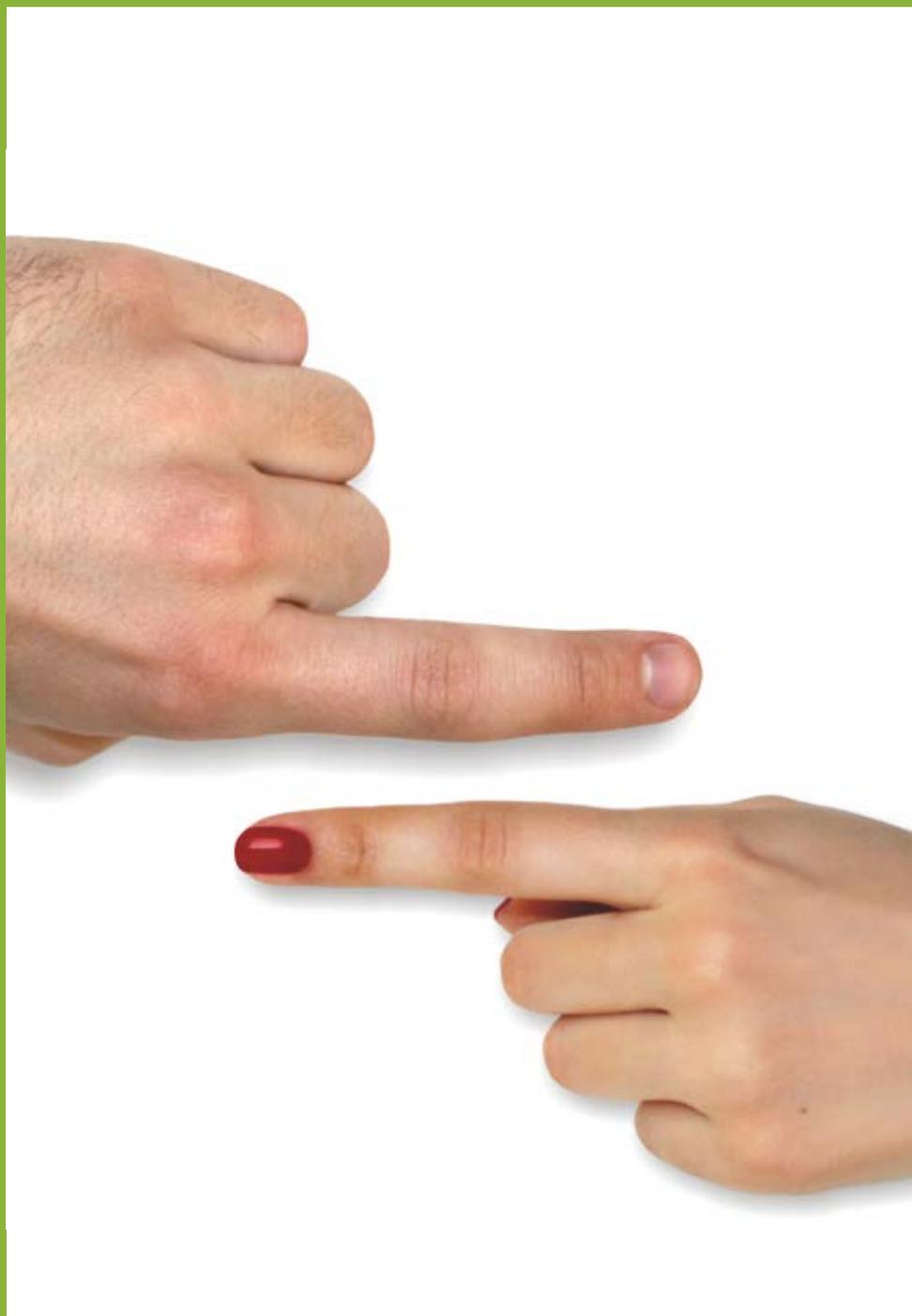
- ▶ The allocation for women's rights and gender equality is to be used to support the objectives and themes highlighted in this Action Plan, such as strengthening measures to ensure access to safe abortions, end violence against girls and women, follow up the women, peace and security agenda at the local level, and support measures aimed at involving men and boys in gender equality efforts. It is also to be used to promote effective gender mainstreaming of other high profile initiatives in order to ensure that these produce results for both women and men. The allocation is not to be used for measures that are covered by other allocations, such as long-term core funding to organisations.
- ▶ We will consider earmarking funds for gender equality under budget lines where this is of particular strategic importance or where gender mainstreaming efforts are proceeding too slowly. This could apply to key allocations, such as the EEA and Norway Grants, the allocation to the High North and the allocations to energy and climate efforts.
- ▶ There are to be a sufficient number of positions in the Foreign Service with gender equality and women's rights as the main area of responsibility. The role of these employees is to develop gender equality expertise, methods and policy, with gender mainstreaming as a separate reporting area. They must also have the capacity and knowledge to assist employees working in other policy areas in their gender mainstreaming efforts.
- ▶ Responsibility for gender equality as a policy area is to be specified in job descriptions for managers, and performance in the gender equality field is always to be included in managers' appraisal interviews.
- ▶ In order to achieve gender equality at all levels of the Foreign Service, importance is to be attached to recruiting women and men to job categories where they are underrepresented. A determined effort is to be made to increase the proportion of women heads of mission, as men are still overrepresented at this level. We also have a skewed gender distribution in the administrative area, with an overrepresentation of women.

## Implementation of the Action Plan

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the implementation of the *Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Foreign and Development Policy*. Sufficient capacity will be made available for coordination and analysis, reporting, following up the use of the tools available, and documenting and disseminating results.

The implementation of the Action Plan is to be followed up through the following measures:

- ▶ Annual reports on the main objectives of the Action Plan are to be drawn up. A special framework will be developed for this work.
- ▶ The diplomatic and consular missions' reports on their programmes and policy efforts will form the basis for the annual report on the Action Plan. This reporting will be part of the missions' normal reporting activities. Guidelines will be produced to help missions draw up these reports in line with the Action Plan's objectives.
- ▶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the embassies, and Norad are to set out in their annual work plans how they intend to fulfil their responsibilities under the Action Plan.
- ▶ A website is to be established to provide resources and guidance for efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights in foreign and development policy.



Hands, Ivana Cokrljic, Serbia

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