

# Ten years of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy

An opportunity  
for Latin America  
and the Caribbean

Ana Güzmes García  
Brianda Romero Castelán



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## Abstract

In the last decade, there has been a trend within a group of 12 countries and among various international organizations for foreign policy and international development cooperation policy to be used to accelerate the attainment of gender equality and respect for the human rights of women and girls in their diversity, from a feminist perspective. This trend is constantly widening and deepening.

This document analyses the emergence and evolution of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy in 12 countries, with an emphasis on Latin America and the Caribbean and its significant contribution to the Regional Gender Agenda, setting out from its history of feminist contributions to peace, multilateralism and intergovernmental agreements. It also discusses the need to move from formal to substantive equality through a strategy based on rights, resources, representation, reality check, research, resistance and results. The study provides a historical analysis, identifies promising practices and lays out a road map for the implementation of policies that place equality and the sustainability of life and the planet at the centre of the foreign policy and international cooperation agenda, presenting an encouraging outlook for the care society and sustainable, gender-equal development in Latin America and the Caribbean.



## Introduction

In 2014, Sweden became the first country in the world to adopt a feminist foreign policy, expressing the ambition to become the strongest global voice for gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2015, p. 3). Three years later, in 2017, Canada adopted its first Feminist International Assistance Policy, recognizing the role for feminism in the effort to eradicate global poverty by tackling its structural causes. In 2018, France expanded its International Strategy for Gender Equality to include a cross-cutting feminist perspective in all its diplomatic and international development cooperation initiatives. Since then, more and more countries have followed suit. Mexico joined the list of countries with a feminist foreign policy in 2020, followed by Libya, Luxembourg, Spain and Germany in 2021. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, Chile and Colombia followed in 2022 and Argentina in 2023. These are being joined by more and more countries, as well as by intergovernmental entities such as the European Union and the United Nations, which have incorporated gender equality as a guiding theme in their foreign policy and international development cooperation policy (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021; UN-Women, 2023b).

Mexico was the first country in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the global South to adopt an explicitly feminist foreign policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, 2022). Chile, Colombia and Argentina are the other countries of the region that have joined this initiative. On 1 September 2023, representatives of the foreign ministries of these countries in the region and of Brazil, with the support of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the European Union-Latin America and Caribbean (EU-LAC) Foundation, and in partnership with the foreign ministries of Spain, Canada and the Kingdom of the Netherlands and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), held the first high-level panel on feminist foreign policy in the region. At that meeting, the participating governments committed to:

Jointly pursue and reaffirm the commitments made to achieve effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Buenos Aires Commitment and the set of agreements of the Regional Gender Agenda, strengthening the institutional framework and architecture for gender equality, especially feminist foreign policy, in regional and international forums, such as the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and other bodies of the multilateral system and major international and regional forums (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, 2023b).

For Latin America and the Caribbean, the developments described represent an opportunity to renew multilateralism via the contribution made by feminist foreign policies and international development cooperation policies to removing structural obstacles in the way of gender equality, guaranteeing of the rights of women, adolescent girls and girl children in all their diversity, allowing these to exercise their autonomy and fostering sustainable development at the global, regional, national and local levels.

Latin America and the Caribbean has a long tradition of contributions by feminists and feminisms to multilateralism, sustainable development and peace. When the United Nations was created in 1945, diplomats Bertha Lutz of Brazil and Minerva Bernardino of the Dominican Republic were the key women who, acting from the South, secured the inclusion of the phrases “equal rights of men and women” and “the dignity and worth of the human person” in the preamble of the United Nations Charter. Milestones such as the first United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Mexico in 1975, the subsequent adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the inauguration of the Regional Conferences on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in Cuba in 1979 attest to this renewed momentum. It was also the region that adopted the first binding treaty, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994), which recognizes violence against women as a human rights violation.

In addition, 25 November was designated as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in General Assembly resolution 54/134 of 17 December 1999, sponsored by the Dominican Republic with the support of a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries and the feminist movement of the region in memory of the Mirabal sisters. Among other recent examples, 29 October was designated as the International Day for Care and Support by General Assembly resolution 77/317 of 24 July 2023, introduced by Chile and Spain, while the resolution on the centrality of care and support from a human rights perspective (A/HRC/54/L.6/Rev.1), submitted by Argentina and adopted by the Human Rights Council on 10 October 2023, is the first of its kind.

The countries of the region have worked actively in global and regional forums to integrate gender equality as a guiding principle and pillar into global agreements on climate change, sustainable development, migration, financing for development, human rights, peace and security, international cooperation and international trade, among other topics, which shows that no area of foreign policy is gender-neutral and that women’s full and equal participation remains a work in progress everywhere.

The governments of the region have been meeting for 45 years at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, a subsidiary body of ECLAC. This conference has become the main intergovernmental forum for discussing and agreeing ways of overcoming structural obstacles to gender equality in the region. Cumulatively, the commitments made by the Latin American and Caribbean countries at each edition of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean have given rise to a thorough, ambitious and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda that is a monument to the political will and coordinated work of the ECLAC member States and the support of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and cooperation agencies, as well as the active contribution of the feminist and women’s movement.

Today, there are treaties, agreements, conventions and global and regional commitments that provide a legal framework for the protection, respect and fulfilment of all the human rights of women, adolescent girls and girl children in all their diversity, as well as non-discrimination and the attainment of gender equality. However, real or substantive equality is actually very far from being achieved. In this context, the feminist perspective has been incorporated into foreign policies and international development cooperation policies, with a more ambitious and responsible vision, and holds out hope for a more rapid reduction of gender gaps and a renewed multilateralism.

To achieve a transformative recovery in a context of cascading multidimensional crises and a Latin American and Caribbean development model that, as ECLAC has repeatedly pointed out, is unsustainable, the countries of the region need feminist foreign policies and international cooperation

policies that have gender equality and women's and girls' autonomy at their core. The implementation of feminist foreign and cooperation policies could usher in a more productive, inclusive and sustainable future with substantive equality. To achieve this, feminist policies, in addition to establishing principles, will need to move to create a State institutional framework and provide for adequate budgets, action measures, clear process and impact indicators and effective participation, evaluation and accountability mechanisms. It is therefore important to identify lessons learned for a shared transition in the region from formal equality to substantive equality or equality of outcomes.

Almost a decade on from the birth of the expression "feminist foreign policy", and with 12 countries having decided to adopt one, different results can be observed at the national level. The analysis in this paper has a threefold objective. The first is to present the current status and historical development of feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies. The second is to point to promising practices, challenges and opportunities for improvement. The third is to offer a road map for countries that have feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies.

This document is intended for those responsible for formulating their governments' foreign and international development cooperation policies. It is also intended for all those involved in gender mainstreaming and affirmative action in public policies as a means to achieve gender equality at the national and international levels. In addition, the document aims to inform those in academia and civil society who have an interest in foreign policy and international development cooperation.

Following the Introduction, with its historical overview of the evolution of feminist foreign policy, the first section of this paper analyses the conceptual framework of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy, as well as the contribution of feminist studies in this field. The second section focuses on the integration of the gender perspective into the work of international forums and dwells on the normative framework adopted to date, on the pioneering initiatives undertaken within the United Nations, both at the world and international conferences and in the Security Council, and in intergovernmental mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly the Regional Gender Agenda. The third section presents a comparative study of feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies, considering four aspects that allow comparisons to be made: financing for gender equality in cooperation, measured approximately by official development assistance and the resources allocated to the agenda for women, peace and security; women's representation in positions connected to foreign policy and international development cooperation; gender considerations in States' security strategies as incorporated into national action plans; and the inclusion of the gender perspective in international trade agreements. The fourth section presents case studies describing the development and implementation of feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies, with a cut-off date of September 2023, in the following 12 countries: Sweden, Canada, France, Luxembourg, Mexico, Spain, Libya, Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Chile, Colombia and Argentina. The fifth section details recommendations and opportunities, in line with the 10 implementation pillars of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030. The sixth section presents the conclusions of the text.



## I. Conceptual framework

While international relations emerged as an academic discipline more than a hundred years ago, the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in international relations theory and practice is much more recent. International relations were long considered gender-neutral, with no consideration of their differential impact on women (Bonifaz, 2021). Women's lives and experiences were excluded from their study, resulting in a line of research with a biased male view of political reality (Egboh and Aniche, 2011).

The first feminist theories of international relations were formulated in the 1980s, mainly in the English-speaking world, in publications such as Ann Tickner's *Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation* (1988) (Viggiano, 2021). According to this school of thought, the structure of the modern State and the concepts of sovereignty and national power were constructed on the basis of patriarchy and gender oppression. For example, MacKinnon theorized that women had been excluded from the design of the legal institutions of the State, which were self-perpetuating and at the same time reproduced the inequality of which they were a product (MacKinnon, 1989). Feminist international relations theorists initially privileged the study of civil society, non-State actors and transnationalism as spheres in which transformations in the direction of gender equality might be pursued (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond and Kronsell, 2019). Furthermore, although the concept of international development was incorporated into the study of international relations in the 1950s and 1960s with the structuralist theories of scholars such as Rostow, Harrod-Domar and Lewis, gender was not taken into account in development studies until the 1990s. Its inclusion was associated with the emergence of new approaches such as those of human development and rights-based development (Domínguez-Serrano and others, 2015).

Thus, for several decades now, there has been a great deal of feminist scholarship in the field of international relations, including analyses of foreign policymaking, the impact of international trade and the effects of national and international security policies from a feminist perspective (Robinson, 2021). However, research into feminist foreign policies has been conducted mainly in the last decade. After feminist foreign policies were first adopted in Mexico, then in Chile, Colombia and Argentina, academia and civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean have increasingly analysed this issue, focusing on the transformation of patriarchal systems and the removal of the structural inequalities that characterize the region, and favouring South-South cooperation, multilateralism and the development of a common approach in the global South.

A number of feminist scholars argue that a feminist foreign policy can and should transform State institutions and the relations between these and other structures of domination, nationally and internationally, so that they are no longer inherently male-dominated arenas (García Morales, 2021). For example, Viggiano, Cordero and Orbeti (2021) argue that feminist foreign policy should redress the unjust effects of international politics by restructuring the underlying system that generates these. Scheyer and Kumskova (2019), for their part, consider that feminist foreign policy entails rethinking and reimagining the gender structures of gender institutions and systems. Thus, it cannot be limited to representation for women, but needs to change the patriarchal system in which they are embedded. Accordingly, at an online meeting hosted by the Foreign Ministry of Argentina in 2021, the feminist academic Cynthia Enloe argued that having a feminist foreign policy meant governments dismantling the patriarchal structures that can be seen to operate in the daily functioning of the State system in order to become more transparent, less militarized and more democratic. Ridge and others (2019) urge that feminist politics should transform the status quo in respect of the gender norms and roles that are embedded in its formulation, with visible and measurable changes based on human rights principles.

In addition to being transformative, a feminist foreign policy approach must acknowledge that the norms governing the operations and foreign policy of the State are not neutral and recognize intersectionalities (Bonifaz, 2021). This means that it must focus not just on women's rights in general, but on women in their diversity with their intersecting identities, traversed by power relations (Barbas, Chaves and Lucero, 2022; Ridge and others, 2019). Given that foreign policy structures have traditionally been male-dominated and thus tend to perpetuate male privileges and perspectives, a "gender-neutral" foreign policy ends up by renewing gender inequalities and failing to incorporate diverse perspectives (Zilla, 2022).

The same holds true for international development cooperation. Some scholars of the subject point to the need for a change in power relations between men and women, with a special focus on the intersectionalities between gender inequality and other forms of inequality (Domínguez-Serrano and others, 2015). They also stress that this "means not only focusing on cooperation (as a tool to promote development) but also rethinking other policies with clear impacts on development such as, for example, foreign trade and climate change initiatives" (Domínguez-Serrano and others, 2015, p. 8).

Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond and Kronsell (2019) look beyond intersectionality and argue that feminist foreign policy must focus on the concept of care. The purpose of care is to ensure not only survival, but also well-being and development (Durán, 2002). From a philosophical perspective, Fisher and Tronto (1990) propose a definition that highlights some important issues. The first is that care not only maintains and continues the world, but "repairs" it. The second is the need to weave networks for sustaining life. The third offers a holistic view that encompasses our bodies, our being and our environment, so that we can live in the world in the best way possible (Fisher and Tronto, 1990; Tronto, 2006). This concept is aligned with feminist economics and the contribution of indigenous peoples, which ECLAC has captured in the document *The care society: a horizon for sustainable recovery with gender equality*. This publication advocates a transition towards a care society that prioritizes the sustainability of life and care for the planet, guarantees the rights of people requiring care and those providing it, makes provision for self-care, works to reduce the job insecurity that pervades the care sector and raises awareness of the multiplier effects of the care economy on well-being and as a sector that can drive a transformative recovery with equality and sustainability (ECLAC, 2022a, p. 28). From this perspective, ECLAC argues that recovery from the crisis must be transformative, with gender equality and sustainability. Putting care at the centre implies a profound reorganization of the economic and social system in our societies and requires the role of the State and of international and cooperation policy to be re-examined.

The inclusion and substantive representation of women and other historically excluded groups in the design and implementation of feminist foreign policies and international development cooperation policies are another essential element, because they have the capacity to highlight potential solutions to problems that the status quo tends to ignore. Although women's representation cannot be the only

change in foreign policy and international development cooperation policy with a feminist perspective, a growing body of research shows that equal participation by women in public and political life influences the progress of public policies with a gender perspective (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond and Kronsell, 2019). For example, Sepúlveda (2021) argues that increasing gender parity in Latin American diplomatic corps and foreign ministries has generated “activism from within” which operates as an agent of change and drives bolder feminist policy commitments and actions. Likewise, Bonifaz (2021) considers that the participation of female experts and women’s organizations in international security policymaking can bring perspectives that are important for mitigating and recovering from crisis situations. However, representation must be substantive and not only numerical.<sup>1</sup>

In practice, efforts to shape these policies have focused on establishing goals and principles, such as ensuring gender equality and environmental integrity, protecting human rights, and combating racism and patriarchal structures (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021). While there is a general consensus on the principles underpinning them, there is no homogenous strategy for achieving them. This is because of the diversity of the countries that have embarked on the mission of promoting gender equality beyond their borders under the banner of feminism. According to Rivera and Cruz (2021, p. 169), “considering ourselves from within our own context, analysing how the intersections of race, class and gender have affected us, is an opportunity ... to formulate a feminist foreign policy that is genuinely attuned to our reality”. Similarly, Sepúlveda, Jorquera and Borda (2023, p. 3) consider that the main challenges for feminist foreign policies in the region “relate to the creation of documents that are culturally and institutionally relevant to political and strategic realities in the countries”. Within this diversity, however, it is important to maintain a minimum standard of action, demand concrete actions and ensure that mechanisms for measuring and evaluating processes and results are available, because, as Towns points out, feminist foreign policy is not something that is declared and then just happens (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, 2021). Box 1 presents the definition of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy proposed by the authors of this study.

#### Box 1

##### **A definition of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy**

On the basis of national policies and studies dealing with feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy over the last 10 years, and of discussions in intergovernmental forums and contributions from academia and women’s movements, the following definition is proposed:

Feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies are policies that are transformative of patriarchal systems, structures and patterns of international politics, are human rights-based and incorporate the gender equality perspective and intersectionality. Additionally, they are oriented towards a common future of inclusive and sustainable development with substantive equality, women’s autonomy at the heart of change, a guaranteed right to peace for current and future generations, and resolute progress towards a care society centred on the sustainability of life and the planet.

Setting out from the recognition that States’ foreign policy norms, policies and practices are not gender-neutral, feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies help to revitalize partnerships, solidarity and cooperation for the attainment of substantive equality in the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development. They contribute to a renewed multilateralism centred on the care society, as proposed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2022c). This proposal was incorporated into the Buenos Aires Commitment (ECLAC, 2022b), an intergovernmental agreement adopted by the countries of the region at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to transforming institutions and politics from a feminist perspective to achieve a better world, feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies are oriented towards transforming all areas of international action while also reducing inequalities within and between countries and accelerating the attainment of gender equality and the autonomy of women and girls in all their diversity and in all spheres.

<sup>1</sup> This relates to Hanna Pitkin’s concepts of substantive and descriptive representation. Descriptive representation is simply the extent to which the people doing the representing share characteristics with the people represented. In contrast, substantive representation refers to the extent to which those doing the representing make decisions that reflect the interests and preferences of those represented (Pitkin, 1967).

Feminist policies promote and uphold the protection and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms through peaceful means and, being feminist, are fully committed to eliminating gender-based violence against women and all forms of discrimination, whether on the basis of sex, age, race, nationality, religion, disability status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender expression or migration status, among other types of discrimination that are relevant in the national, regional and global contexts.

These policies are based on regional and international human rights commitments. States should also accept an enhanced obligation to adopt legislative, administrative, budgetary, economic and other measures to effectively implement them via national strategies and action plans. To this end, they need dedicated, permanent institutional and administrative arrangements to endow them with stability, sustainability and progressiveness.

The design of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy is tailored to the needs and specificities of the international, national and local context. They must include action plans with resources, targets and instruments for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and accountability. In addition to foreign ministries, the implementation of action plans involves different levels and branches of government, including national and subnational government entities (especially national machineries for the advancement of women) and women's and feminist organizations.

#### **The seven pillars (“seven Rs”) of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy**

In summary, it is proposed that feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies be based on the four pillars (“four Rs”) established by Sweden, plus three more:

- (i) Human **rights** placed at the centre of international policy design and implementation;
- (ii) Adequate, incremental human, technical and financial **resources** to effectively implement feminist public policies and resources for gender equality, including the strengthening of feminist organizations;
- (iii) Equal **representation** of women in decision-making positions and diplomacy and of the feminist perspective in international and cooperation policies;
- (iv) **Reality checks** involving disaggregated data collection and gender and intersectional analysis to diagnose needs, measure progress and promising practices, pinpoint challenges and propose tailored solutions;
- (v) The **resistance** of feminist politics, particularly in the current context, characterized as it is by the resurgence of conservative, negationist and anti-rights positions, so that the gender perspective becomes increasingly institutionalized in normative frameworks, governmental structures and the participation mechanisms of society;
- (vi) **Research** to continue innovating and formulating strategies for dealing with structural obstacles to the attainment of gender equality through international action in the global, regional and bilateral arenas, and the development of feminist and gender studies in academia and think tanks;
- (vii) Measurable and tangible **results** of feminist foreign and cooperation policies, validated by periodic monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms with the participation of State and civil society actors.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

## II. Earlier developments at the United Nations and in Latin America and the Caribbean

Although feminist foreign policies, feminist international development cooperation policies and the study of both are a relatively recent phenomenon, gender mainstreaming in the context of international relations has a long history, having made great strides in the last five decades particularly. Thanks to the impetus provided by the regional and global women's and feminist movement in civil society and by governments and multilateral organizations themselves, a regional and global network of human rights instruments, norms, institutions and policies dedicated to the attainment of gender equality and women's rights has been consolidated.

Latin America and the Caribbean hosted the first United Nations World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975, and the goals of International Women's Year were adopted here, leading to the fundamental charter of women's rights: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Much earlier, in 1945, regional diplomats Bertha Lutz of Brazil and Minerva Bernardino of the Dominican Republic had played key roles from the South in securing the inclusion of the phrases "equal rights of men and women" and "the dignity and worth of the human person" in the preamble of the United Nations Charter.

### A. The legal framework

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women represented a turning point in the progress of gender equality on the international stage. For the first time, a binding international instrument dealt specifically with women's rights and established the international obligations of States in relation to them. The Convention has been ratified by 189 of the 193 United Nations Member States, including all Latin American and Caribbean countries. This commits them to achieving substantive equality between men and women, both in laws and regulations and in actions and results.

The Convention has a committee that monitors compliance, made up of 23 independent experts. This prepares recommendations for States parties and reports publicly on the progress made and obstacles encountered by its members in complying with them. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women analyses the compliance reports that States parties are required to submit at least every

four years to assess the level of implementation of the Convention. After examining these reports, it issues “concluding observations” with recommendations to States parties. In addition, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women gives the Committee the power to clarify and interpret the contents of the Convention. So far, it has issued 39 general recommendations on issues affecting women and girls, with the latest concerning the rights of indigenous women and girls; movements in the region were widely consulted when it was being formulated. Lastly, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1999) provides for a special mechanism for women to access international justice. The Protocol allows the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to process individual petitions, issue recommendations, initiate investigations into systematic breaches of the Convention and request precautionary measures to protect the rights of women and girls (OHCHR, 2023).

In this way, the Convention and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women have become crucial tools for women’s rights activists around the world to raise awareness of and apply pressure to halt persistent violations of the human rights of women in their diversity.

Other legal instruments that are crucial to the protection and promotion of the rights and autonomy of women and girls in their diversity include: the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocols; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976); the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), in particular numbers 100, 102, 111, 156, 169, 183, 189 and 190; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990); the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (1994); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006); the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance (2013); the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance (2013); the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons (2015); and the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) (2021), among other relevant treaties, agreements and conventions that provide an international legal framework to protect, respect and guarantee all the human rights of women, adolescent girls and girl children in all their diversity, as well as non-discrimination and the attainment of gender equality.

An important development in Latin America and the Caribbean was the adoption of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women in 1994 and its Follow-up Mechanism within the Inter-American Commission of Women. These instruments form part of the Inter-American System of Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS), to which the vast majority of Latin American and Caribbean countries belong.<sup>2</sup>

In the current context of environmental deterioration and efforts to respond to climate change in the region, the Escazú Agreement, the first binding regional treaty on the environment, takes on particular importance. Its objective is to guarantee access to environmental information and justice in environmental matters for all persons in Latin America and the Caribbean and to foster their participation in environmental decision-making (ECLAC, 2023i). Its relevance lies in the fact that the effects of climate change on women and girls are marked and differentiated because of historical and current gender inequalities and multidimensional and intersectional factors (ECLAC, 2022c). The existence of a binding agreement on this issue is of paramount importance, since climate action can either reinforce and exacerbate inequalities and even generate new ones or deliberately set out to overcome them and accelerate progress towards gender equality. In addition to these considerations, the Escazú Agreement establishes legally binding commitments to protect environmental defenders, many of them Latin American women, who often fall victim to violence in the course of their activities (ECLAC, 2022d).

<sup>2</sup> In the case of Europe, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention, was adopted in 2011 and entered into force in 2014.

## B. United Nations global and international conferences

The evolution of the gender agenda can be traced in the United Nations World Conferences on Women held in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). These were initiated by the Commission on the Status of Women, which has been part of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1946 and is the main international intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The first United Nations World Conference on Women was held in Mexico City during International Women's Year and involved representatives of 133 governments, 4,000 participants and nearly 6,000 civil society organizations. It adopted the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, the first multilateral document of its kind, which called on participating governments to draft a convention on women's rights with effective implementation instruments (UN-Women, 2023c; United Nations, n.d.).

Building on the agreements reached at the first three conferences, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted in 1995. This was a second milestone and remains a landmark in the establishment of measures for the empowerment of women. Unanimously adopted by 189 governments, this document set out strategic objectives and key actions for achieving gender equality in the following areas: women and poverty, women's education and training, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women in power and decision-making, women's human rights, women and the media, women and the environment, and the girl child. It is also notable for having recognized the centrality of gender equality and the mainstreaming of gender agendas to achieve development, peace and social justice goals (Domínguez-Serrano and others, 2015; UN-Women, 2023c).

Reviews and assessments of progress have been conducted every five years since then. The most recent review was conducted in 2020, in conjunction with the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. Although the session was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, point 12 (i) of the draft declaration called for strengthened North-South, South-South and triangular international cooperation and public-private partnerships to implement commitments that would lead to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (United Nations, 2020).

In 1996, ECOSOC extended the mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women and charged it with monitoring progress and challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Commission now adopts multi-year work programmes to assess progress and make further recommendations for accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. It also contributes to the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development targets related to gender equality and women's rights and autonomy. In addition, it analyses emerging issues, trends and new approaches to matters affecting the situation of women and agrees on further actions for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Lastly, the Commission develops multi-year work plans. The priority themes of the current plan, which covers the period 2021–2024, are accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment by reducing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective (UN-Women, 2023d).

Other important commitments made by States are: the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993); the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994); the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001); the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992); the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992); the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992); the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/ or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (1994); the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007); the programme of activities of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2014); the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (2018); the International Conferences on Financing for Development (Monterrey, 2001, Doha, 2008 and Addis Ababa, 2015);

the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III); the Modalities for Accelerated Action for Small Island Developing States (Samoa Pathway) (2014); the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015); the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030; and the Paris Agreement (2016) and subsequent climate change agreements.

It is also important to mention the financing for development mechanisms within the United Nations, which date back more than 20 years. In 2002, ECOSOC convened the first International Conference on Financing for Development, from which the Monterrey Consensus emerged. The second edition of this event took place in Doha in 2008, while the third was held in Addis Ababa in 2015 (United Nations, 2023e). The agreements reached at these conferences systematically highlighted the importance of considering the role of gender in decisions on financing for development. For example, the Monterrey Consensus called for gender mainstreaming in all development policies and at all levels (United Nations, 2003).

As a result of the Addis Ababa conference in 2015, ECOSOC was mandated to hold an annual financing for development follow-up forum to analyse trends in financing for development and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the 2023 forum, participating governments reaffirmed their commitment to exponentially increase their efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and reiterated “the need for gender mainstreaming, including targeted actions and investments, in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies and programmes “ (United Nations, 2023d, p. 3). At the same time, they reaffirmed “the need to recognize and value women’s and girls’ disproportionate share of paid and unpaid care and domestic work and adopt measures to reduce and redistribute this work” (United Nations, 2023d, p. 3).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are more ambitious than the Millennium Development Goals and include, for example, reducing inequality within and between countries (SDG 10), should also be highlighted. The commitment to gender equality is cross-cutting throughout the 2030 Agenda, being present in the declaration, the SDGs and their targets, the implementation methods, the monitoring and review process and the proposed measurement indicators. The 2030 Agenda also includes a specific Goal related to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (SDG 5) and explicit gender commitments in several of the other Goals (United Nations, 2023c).

SDG 17 is of great importance in this analysis, as it refers to the strengthening of the means of implementation and the revitalization of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. It states that sustainable development and gender equality can only be achieved through inclusive partnerships and cooperation. In particular, it underlines the importance of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation on a range of issues to achieve the SDGs, including gender equality. Specifically, target 17.2 calls for developed countries to fully meet their ODA commitments, including the commitment to allocate 0.7% of their gross national product (GNP) to ODA. In addition, target 17.6 refers to the enhancement of regional and international North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation in science, technology and innovation and increased knowledge sharing. Meanwhile, target 17.9 concerns increased international support for effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all SDGs, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation (United Nations, 2023c).

## C. Security Council

Feminist foreign and cooperation policies have a strong connection with resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security adopted by the Security Council in 2000, which deals with the effects of armed conflict on women and girls and the important role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding. The Security Council adopted nine further resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2160, 2122, 2242, 2467 and 2493) which, together with resolution 1325 (2000), form the agenda on women, peace and security. Among the aspects highlighted in this agenda are the need to ensure women’s representation at all levels of decision-making regarding conflict prevention, management and resolution and peace processes, and the protection of women against sexual violence as a war crime and gender-based violence in the context of armed conflict (United Nations, 2023f).

In 2004, the Secretary-General of the United Nations called on Member States to develop national action plans to follow up resolution 1325 (2000) and the women, peace and security agenda. As of September 2023, 107 countries (including 9 from Latin America and the Caribbean) had developed such plans. To build peaceful and prosperous societies, it is necessary to implement foreign and security policies with a gender perspective and increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Over time, the goals and objectives of national action plans have become clearer and more measurable, and it has been increasingly recognized that conflict prevention must be a fundamental part of peace and security strategies. As a result, many national action plans have begun to incorporate sustained strategies to prevent conflict and violence. There has also been a movement towards including a wider range of actors in their development and implementation. The following sections specifically address the national action plans of countries with feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies.

## **D. The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The first United Nations World Conference on Women established that regional conferences would be held to promote gender equality and women's rights. Since 1977, therefore, the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is a subsidiary body of ECLAC, has been held regularly in parallel with the United Nations World Conference on Women.

The first of these conferences was held in Havana in 1977 and resulted in the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development. On that occasion, the countries of the region decided to give ECLAC a mandate to convene conferences on a permanent and regular basis, at intervals of no more than three years. The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is the main United Nations intergovernmental forum on women's rights and gender equality in the region. It is organized by ECLAC, as the Secretariat of the Conference, and since 2020 has been held in coordination with UN-Women. It brings together numerous representatives of governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental agencies, academia and civil society organizations, in particular women's and feminist movements.

The commitments approved by member States at the 15 meetings of the Conference constitute the Regional Gender Agenda. Its depth, progressiveness and comprehensiveness position the region as the only one in the world to have an agenda that contains proposals for removing the structural obstacles to gender equality and guides the countries' public policies for achieving gender equality, both legal and de facto, and guaranteeing women's rights and autonomy. ECLAC has stressed that formal equality is a necessary but not sufficient condition for guaranteeing women's rights and autonomy. In line with various contributions from feminist theory and the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Regional Gender Agenda calls for progress from formal equality to substantive equality or equality of outcomes (Güezmes, Scuro and Bidegain, 2022).

In 2000, ECLAC introduced the concept of women's autonomy as an analytical and practical public policy category in the region. It also established the concept of women's autonomy as a process of transforming conditions of subordination. With the creation of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (OIG) at ECLAC in response to a request by governments at the tenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Quito in 2007, three dimensions of women's autonomy are addressed, namely the economic, physical and decision-making dimensions. These are interdependent and must be interpreted from an intersectional, intercultural and life-cycle perspective and within the framework of human rights (ECLAC, 2023g).

Among other milestones, the Montevideo Strategy, adopted in 2016 at the thirteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, is of particular interest to this report because it constitutes the regional strategy for achieving the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development from the perspective of women's autonomy and rights, and because it identifies four structural challenges facing Latin American and Caribbean women. These challenges are mutually reinforcing in the region's socioeconomic, cultural and patriarchal belief systems and hinder and reduce the scope of policies for gender equality and women's autonomy (see box 2).

**Box 2**  
**Structural obstacles to gender equality**

- (i) Socioeconomic inequality and the persistence of poverty;
- (ii) Discriminatory, violent and patriarchal cultural patterns and the predominance of a culture of privilege;
- (iii) The sexual division of labour and the unfair social organization of care;
- (iv) The concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030* (LC/CRM.13/5), Santiago, 2017.

The commitments in the Montevideo Strategy are organized with a view to advancing towards the effective guarantee of women's rights and autonomy in accordance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination, with ten implementation pillars that largely parallel the basic principles established for feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies by the academic literature and practice. These are: (i) normative framework, (ii) institutional framework, (iii) participation, (iv) capacity-building, (v) financing, (vi) communication, (vii) technology, (viii) cooperation, (ix) information systems and (x) monitoring, evaluation and accountability (ECLAC, 2017).

The Strategy also recognizes the need to pursue regional and international cooperation initiatives in order to progressively fulfil the right to development and generate the conditions for guaranteeing women's rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is why it includes a specific pillar on international cooperation for development as a tool for bridging development gaps, with their differential effects on women (Bidegain, 2017).

The Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is a subsidiary body of ECLAC, also recognizes the importance of pursuing gender equality in the field of international cooperation for development in order to promote gender equality and the rights of women in their diversity, among other purposes. ECLAC is the only regional commission to have had a permanent intergovernmental cooperation body for more than four decades. The Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions, created in 1979, was renamed the Committee on South-South Cooperation in 2004 and the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2021. Resolution 1(I) of the first meeting of the Conference, held in Santiago on 30 and 31 May 2023, urged the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC, including the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to strengthen synergies in areas related to bilateral, multilateral, South-South, triangular and humanitarian cooperation, sustainable development and gender equality, in particular with regard to the identification of common criteria to guide the evaluation and assessment of these cooperation modalities and their effects, including those of humanitarian cooperation (ECLAC, 2023c).

At the fifteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the governments agreed, in the Buenos Aires Commitment, to move towards a care society focused on the sustainability of life and the planet, with agreements in innovative areas geared towards a transformative recovery with gender equality and sustainability. The Commitment recognizes care as a right of people to care, to be cared for and to exercise self-care. It calls for measures to overcome the sexual division of labour and move towards a fair social organization of care, within the framework of a new development style

that promotes gender equality in the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (ECLAC, 2023h). Paragraph 36 also provides for the encouragement of “subregional, regional and multilateral cooperation programmes through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation modalities, as well as between national machineries for the advancement of women, that promote gender equality, women’s autonomy, the prevention and elimination of all forms of gender-based violence against women, including human smuggling and trafficking, particularly of women and girls, and the right to care” (ECLAC, 2023h, p. 13).

Despite the progress made by the international and regional community on gender equality, there is still a long way to go. Feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policies are therefore essential tools that complement the array of strategies that international organizations, committed countries and civil society organizations have employed for the past five decades to advance gender equality and the full enjoyment of the rights and autonomy of women and girls in their diversity.



### III. The evolution of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy: a comparative analysis

This section will analyse the comparable data available on four aspects that are central to feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy, namely: (i) funding for gender equality in cooperation, approximately measured by the amount of ODA dedicated to gender concerns and other resources allocated to the agenda for women, peace and security; (ii) appointments to diplomatic posts with responsibility for coordinating or representing feminist foreign policy; (iii) gender considerations in States' security strategies as expressed in national action plans; and (iv) inclusion of the gender perspective in international trade agreements. This will provide an initial overview, based on comparable sources, of the starting point and progress of foreign and cooperation policies, which will serve as a basis for analysing each country's situation in the case studies.

#### A. Official development assistance

As mentioned in the Introduction, gender is increasingly a priority of international development cooperation agendas, both domestically and multilaterally. Measuring ODA is one way, although not the only one, of estimating countries' commitment to gender equality.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) tracks, measures and analyses ODA for gender equality and women's rights using the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender equality policy marker, drawing on data from developed country members that report this indicator. Official assistance activities and projects can be classified as: (i) targeting gender equality as the "principal objective", (ii) targeting gender equality as a "significant objective" or (iii) not targeting gender equality. The "principal" category is assigned when gender equality is an explicit and fundamental objective of the design of the activity concerned, while the "significant" category corresponds to activities where gender equality is an important but secondary objective (OECD, 2023a).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This marker, together with a number of specific codes with subclassifications, is part of the OECD Creditor Reporting System. Activities are considered to promote gender equality if they: (i) reduce inequalities in social, economic or political power between women and men and between girls and boys; (ii) benefit women as much as men or address gender discrimination; or (iii) develop or strengthen gender equality or anti-discrimination policies, laws or institutions (OECD, 2023a).

Despite being an imperfect measure for the purposes of this study because it does not include cooperation resources allocated to gender equality beyond the bilateral ODA of donor countries, this has hitherto been one of the few methods for comparably quantifying the financial resources that countries allocate to the promotion of gender equality globally. It also makes it possible to examine the extent to which feminist principles have permeated the financial aspects of the international development cooperation policies of Canada, France, Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Spain and Sweden, which report to DAC. Although the marker has existed for decades, full and accessible public information, expressed in dollars at constant prices, was available at the time of writing only for the period 2009–2021. The data presented in the report do not include ODA provided through European Union institutions (see box 3).

**Box 3**  
**Official development assistance for gender equality**

In 2021, gender equality-related bilateral official development assistance (ODA) provided by members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) amounted to US\$ 32 billion, excluding European Union institutions. This figure represents approximately 42% of the total bilateral ODA provided that year by the developed country members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publishing the indicator. This percentage of ODA breaks down into 37.9% with significant gender equality objectives and 4.2% with gender equality as the principal objective. Fragile and conflict countries received about US\$ 17.5 billion in ODA with gender equality objectives in 2021. However, more than 85% of this amount was for projects with mainstreaming objectives rather than initiatives focused principally on the rights and autonomy of women in all their diversity.

Levels of ODA allocated to gender equality show an increasing trend over the 13 years for which information is available. However, the same is not true of projects targeting gender equality as their principal objective, which held steady at around 4.5% of total funding over the last decade. In fact, ODA with gender equality as the principal objective declined from US\$ 5.6 billion to US\$ 5.2 billion between 2020 and 2021.

Moreover, in the latest four years for which information is available, only about 40% of total resources went significantly or principally to gender agendas. This means that around 60% of ODA had not yet incorporated the gender perspective. These percentages remained unchanged despite the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which in turn triggered a series of cascading crises. These had differential effects on women and deepened gender inequalities, making the need for resources even greater.

In 2021, women's rights organizations and movements received about US\$ 333 million, representing approximately 1% of ODA with a gender perspective that year.

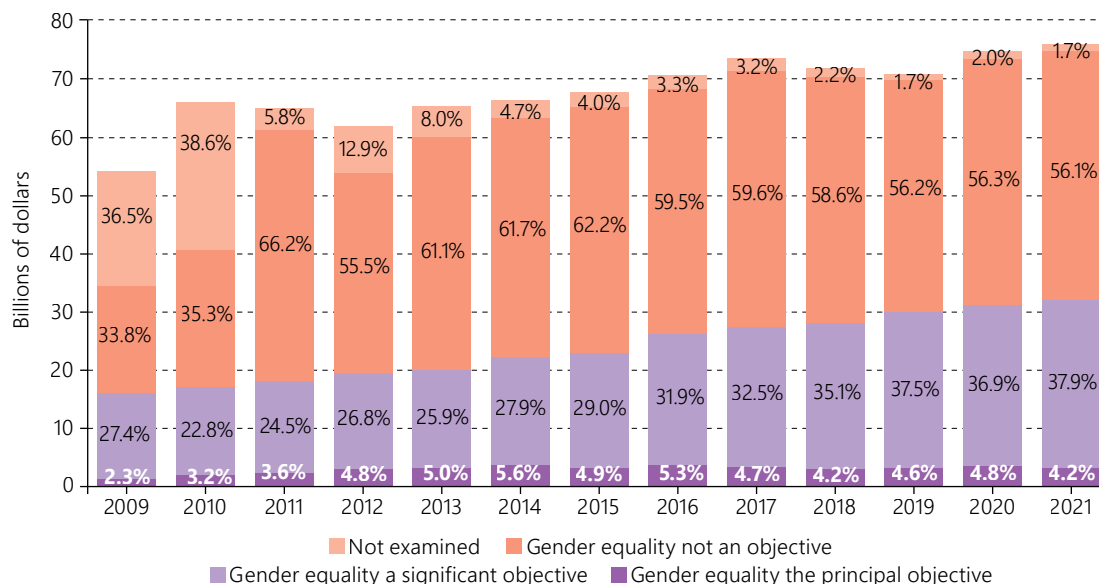
While increased mainstreaming of gender equality in international development cooperation is very important, it is even more important for DAC countries to modify their ODA so that gender equality is a priority in their cooperation objectives.

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Aid Activities Targeting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (CRS)", Paris, 2023 [online] [https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER).

Figure 1 shows the amounts that the DAC countries, excluding European Union institutions, have contributed in ODA each year since 2009. In addition to the total amount of annual development assistance from countries in the global North, figure 1 shows the percentages and amounts spent each year on different types of ODA, categorized according to their gender objectives. This chart shows a rising trend for international assistance devoted to ODA with gender mainstreaming objectives, but stagnation in funding for projects where gender equality and women's rights are the principal objective (OECD, 2023a).

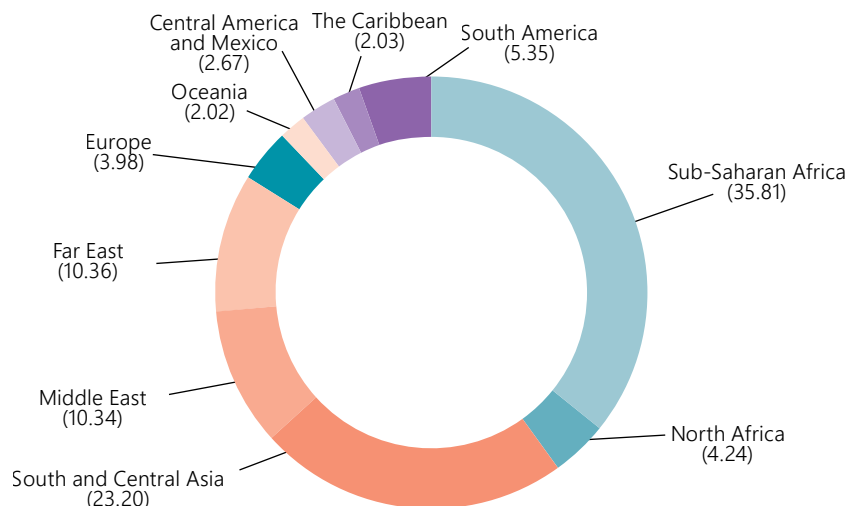
Figure 2 shows the destination of bilateral ODA from DAC countries that was principally or significantly oriented towards gender objectives in 2021 by recipient region. That year, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa were the regions that received the largest shares of ODA with a gender perspective, accounting for more than 80% of this source of funding. Globally, the top recipients in 2021 were, in descending order, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Afghanistan and the Philippines. Overall, Latin America and the Caribbean received about 10%. This percentage is the same when only ODA with gender equality as the principal objective is considered. The top destinations for ODA with a gender perspective in the region in 2021 were, in descending order, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Guatemala (OECD, 2023a). Conversely, about 57% of the ODA that Latin America and the Caribbean received from the 30 DAC members in 2021 had no gender objectives, and only 4.4% had gender equality as the principal objective (OECD, 2023a).

**Figure 1**  
**Bilateral official development assistance (ODA) from the 30 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), by year and gender equality objective, 2009–2021**  
*(Billions of dollars and percentages)*



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).  
 Note: Information in dollars at constant 2021 prices. The 30 DAC member countries considered are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lithuania, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union is also a member of this grouping, but its contributions have not been included in the charts of this document.

**Figure 2**  
**Bilateral official development assistance (ODA) for gender equality from the 30 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), by recipient region, 2021**  
*(Percentages)*

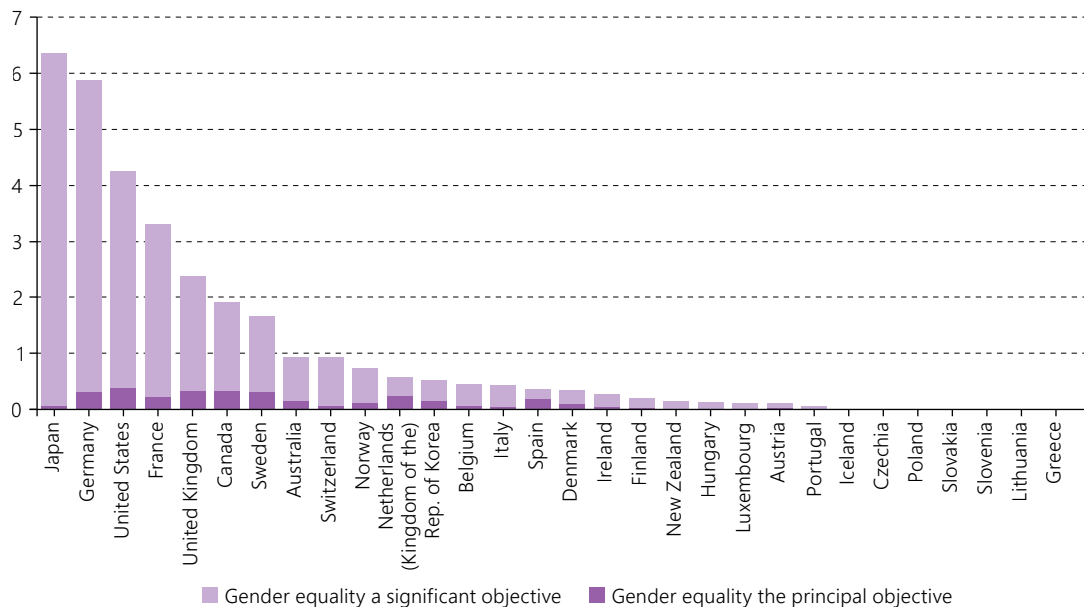


Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).  
 Note: Information in dollars at constant 2021 prices. The 30 DAC member countries considered are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lithuania, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union is also a member of this grouping, but its contributions have not been included in the charts of this document.

It is possible that the low percentage of ODA with a gender perspective going to Latin America and the Caribbean is related to the categorization of most countries in the region as upper-middle-income. ECLAC has observed a significant reduction in ODA relative to average GNP and to the amounts received by other developing regions since Latin America and the Caribbean was classified as a middle-income region (OECD, 2023a). In the view of ECLAC, a country's income level does not necessarily indicate that its level of development is sustainable, nor does it reflect its capacity to mobilize internal and external resources for development. Latin America and the Caribbean currently faces major challenges in relation to inclusion, the reduction of inequalities and sustainability (ECLAC, 2023d). The region still needs the support of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation to help overcome structural development gaps, including structural challenges to the attainment of gender equality.

Of all DAC members, Japan, Germany, the United States, France and the United Kingdom are the countries that devoted the most resources to ODA for gender equality in 2021 (see figure 3). With the exception of France, these are the countries that have contributed the most to gender projects through ODA in the 13 years for which data are available (OECD, 2023a).

**Figure 3**  
Gender equality-related bilateral official development assistance (ODA) from the 30 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), by donor, 2021  
(Billions of dollars)

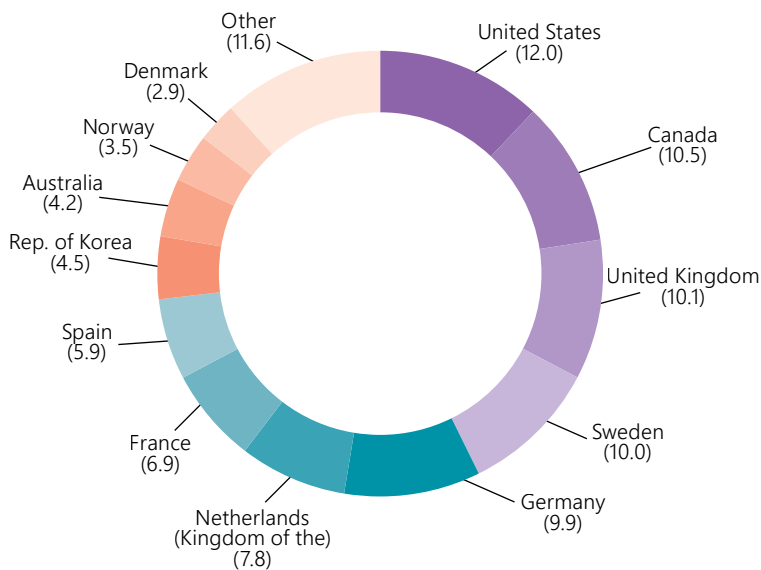


Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Note: Information in dollars at constant 2021 prices. The 30 DAC member countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lithuania, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union is also a member of this grouping, but its contributions have not been included in the charts of this document.

With regard to ODA funding projects whose principal objective is to contribute to gender equality and the rights of women, adolescent girls and girl children in all their diversity, figure 4 shows that the top donors in absolute terms in 2021 were the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany. Six of the seven DAC countries with feminist foreign policies or feminist international development cooperation policies were among the top 10 donors of this type of ODA (OECD, 2023a).

**Figure 4**  
**Origin of bilateral official development assistance (ODA) from the 30 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) with gender equality as the principal objective, 2021**  
*(Percentages)*



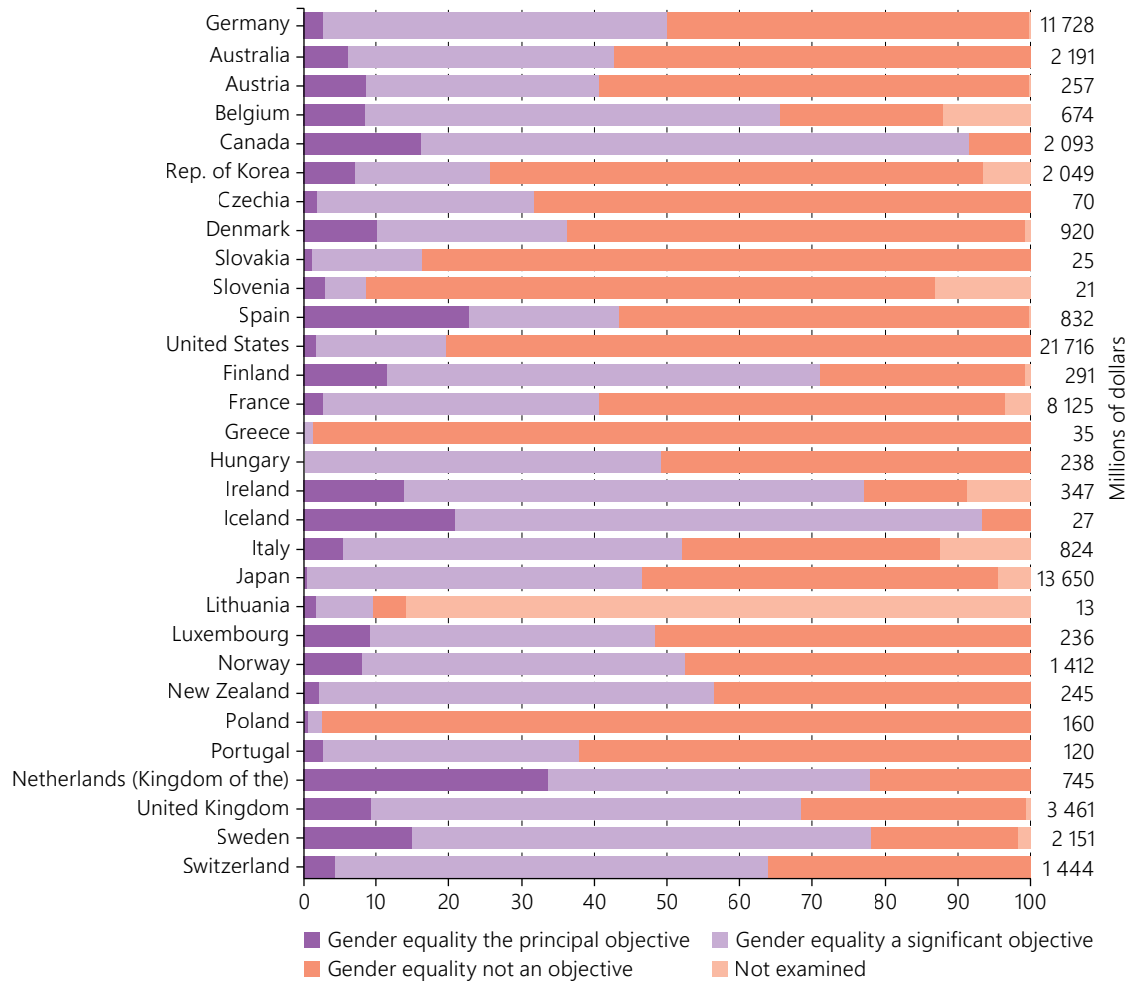
Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).  
 Note: Information in dollars at constant 2021 prices. The 30 DAC member countries considered are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lithuania, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union is also a member of this grouping, but its contributions have not been included in the charts of this document.

In relative terms, however, the countries that spent the highest percentages of their ODA on gender equality (as a significant or principal objective) in 2021 were Iceland (94%), Canada (91%), the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Sweden (78%), and Ireland (77%). The Kingdom of the Netherlands was the country that spent the highest percentage of its ODA on activities with gender equality as the principal objective (34%), followed by Spain (23%), Iceland (21%), Canada (16%) and Sweden (15%) (see figure 5) (OECD, 2023a). Thus, the leading donors (Japan, Germany, the United States, France and the United Kingdom) have great potential to increase the percentage of projects targeting gender equality as the principal or a significant objective.

From the information presented, it is possible to conclude that countries with feminist foreign and international development cooperation policies have maintained a commitment to gender equality that is reflected in their ODA. However, it is also clear that some countries which have not adopted overtly feminist international policies are among the leading donors of ODA with a gender perspective, including Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom and Iceland.

**Figure 5**  
**Distribution of gender equality-related bilateral official development assistance (ODA) from the 30 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), by donor, 2021**

(Percentages and millions of dollars)



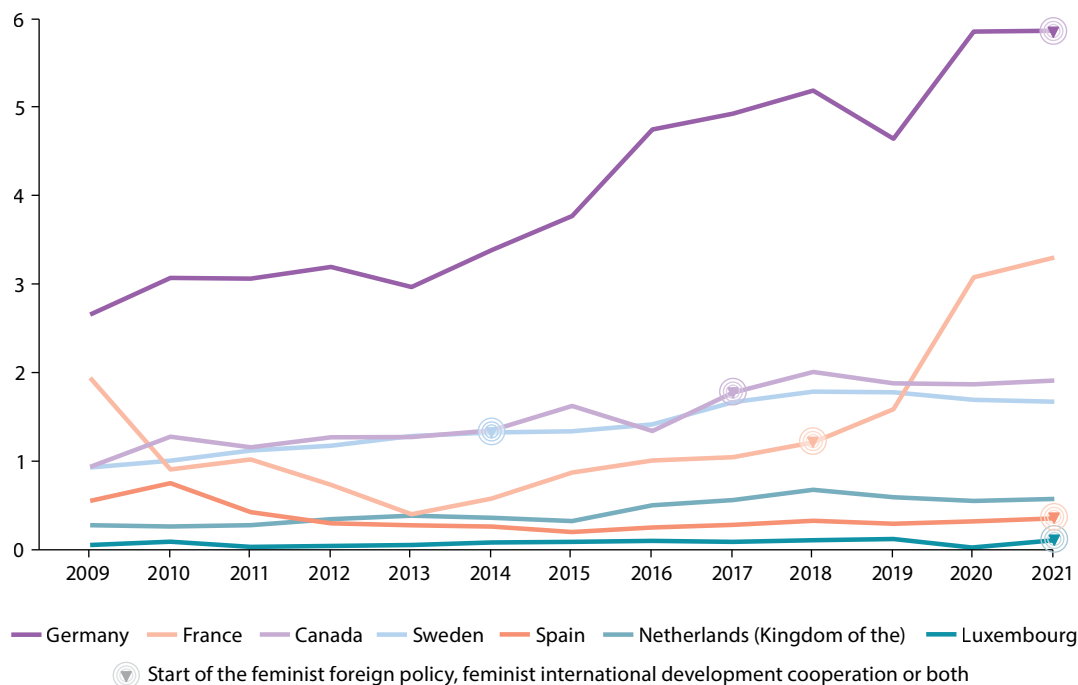
Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Note: Information in dollars at constant 2021 prices. The 30 DAC member countries considered are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lithuania, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union is also a member of this grouping, but its contributions have not been included in the charts of this document.

Among countries with feminist international policies, Canadian and Swedish ODA with a gender perspective shows similar levels of expenditure and upward trajectories from 2009. In the case of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Spain, levels of ODA with gender equality objectives grew less quickly than in the first two countries (see figure 6). Spain shows a negative trend in ODA spending on women's rights in the period from 2010 to 2015, coinciding with the country's economic and financial crisis and an overall reduction in ODA levels. However, ODA grew by almost 50% between 2015 and 2021. France

shows a positive trend in this type of ODA from 2013 onward and quickening growth in 2018 and 2019. At the same time, the level of gross disbursements by Germany oriented mainly or significantly towards gender objectives increased systematically, and the country has reinforced its commitment to significantly increasing this aid in its recent feminist foreign co-operation policy (OECD, 2023a).

**Figure 6**  
Gender equality-related bilateral official development assistance (ODA) from the seven member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) with a feminist foreign policy or feminist international development cooperation policy, 2009–2021  
(Billions of dollars)

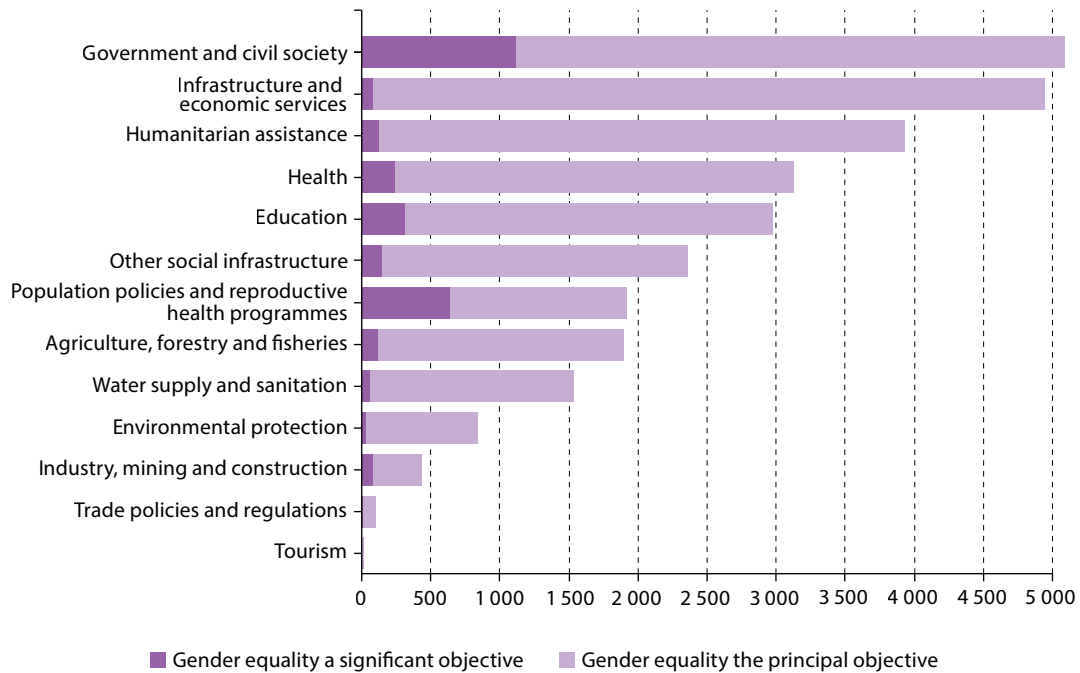


**Source:** Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).  
Note: Information in dollars at constant 2021 prices. The seven DAC member countries that have or have had feminist foreign policies or feminist international development cooperation policies are Canada, France, Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Spain and Sweden.

Public DAC data for 2021 provide a picture of the sectors to which most ODA was allocated (see figure 7). In that calendar year, the “government and civil society” category was the most heavily represented among ODA recipient sectors where the principal or a significant objective was gender-related. A major item in this category was funding of almost US\$ 333 million for women’s rights organizations and movements, equivalent to some 1% of ODA with a gender perspective that year. Another element worth highlighting is the relatively low investment in gender policies in production sectors such as industry, mining, construction, commerce and tourism, and in environmental protection.<sup>4</sup> With regard to projects with gender equality as the principal objective, the largest amount of funding went to the “government and civil society” and “population policies and reproductive health programmes” sectors (OECD, 2023a).

<sup>4</sup> These amounts do not include ODA provided by European Union institutions.

**Figure 7**  
**Gender equality-related bilateral official development assistance (ODA) from the 30 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), selected sectors, 2021**  
*(Millions of dollars)*



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Note: Information in dollars at constant 2021 prices. The 30 DAC member countries considered are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lithuania, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union is also a member of this grouping, but its contributions have not been included in the charts of this document.

When looking at the figures mentioned in the previous pages to compare the commitments of individual DAC members relative to the size of their economies, it is important to consider the extent to which they have met the target of 0.7% of GNP for ODA. This target was set at the General Assembly session in 1970 and reiterated in the Monterrey Consensus, Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and elsewhere (United Nations, 1971). In the DAC countries with feminist international policies and preliminary data for 2022, the percentages, in descending order, are: 1.00% for Luxembourg, 0.90% for Sweden, 0.83% for Germany, 0.67% for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 0.56% for France, 0.37% for Canada and 0.30% for Spain (OECD, 2023c). In other words, only three of the seven countries have met the target. Some major changes that will be implemented in Spain in this area to reach the 0.7% target in the near future are outlined below.

The charts and information presented in this section illustrate four important points about the relationship of ODA to feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy. First, in general, these policies are based on a government commitment to women's rights and rising ODA spending. At the same time, some countries that show a commitment to gender equality in their ODA, in both absolute and relative terms, do not describe their international cooperation policies as feminist.

Secondly, with the exception of France, the adoption of feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies did not lead to a sudden rise in the amount of ODA allocated to gender equality activities by the seven DAC countries with such policies already in place in 2021. However, this volume has grown steadily. In the case of France, it is clear that the trajectory of bilateral aid disbursements turned positive in 2013 and that the pace of growth increased in both 2018

and 2019, coinciding with the start of the country's second and third gender and development agendas, which are discussed in the next section (OECD, 2023a). So far, the data for the remaining six countries seem to point to the continuation of existing practices in respect of funding for gender equality projects and programmes. However, the relative novelty of feminist policies in North-South international cooperation and the lack of data for the last two years make it harder to analyse their impact. For example, in the charts presented it is not yet possible to distinguish the impact that feminist policies have had on ODA in Germany and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Thirdly, the sectors in which ODA with gender objectives has been concentrated are those related to governance, infrastructure and basic social, economic and financial services. There has been less investment in civil society and in production sectors that promote women's economic integration. This may present an area of opportunity for allocating greater resources and promoting women's economic inclusion to a greater extent.

In the fourth place, there is a large area of opportunity for the main DAC donors to increase the percentage of funds they devote to gender equality, as well as ample room for various members of this group, including some with feminist international development cooperation policies, to improve their performance by increasing the percentage of ODA allocated to projects with gender equality as their principal objective. These two needs are just as obvious when the analysis is confined to fragile and conflict-affected countries, where women, adolescent girls and girl children in all their diversity suffer differential effects of violence and therefore require special international support.

Besides ODA, another way of proxying developed countries' commitment to gender equality globally using publicly available information is to analyse commitments and deposits made to United Nations trust funds dedicated to the women, peace and security agenda. In 2019, the Secretary-General of the United Nations produced a set of directives for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, including financing, in which he established a commitment to dedicate 15% of United Nations programmatic resources to gender equality and women's empowerment (United Nations, 2019).

The main inter-agency funding mechanisms in the United Nations system are multi-partner trust funds and stand-alone joint programmes. By 2021, 37% of multi-partner trust funds and 48% of joint programmes already contained gender equality objectives. While there are numerous funds and programmes, three of them have the specific goal of promoting gender equality in conditions of conflict and violence, namely: (i) the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Action Fund, which funds leadership and empowerment initiatives in situations of armed conflict; (ii) the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Prevention Multi-Partner Trust Fund (CRSV-MPTF); and (iii) the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, which seeks to increase the substantive participation of women in such operations.

Most countries in the global North with feminist international policies have contributed to United Nations trust funds for the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda. However, they have not done so to the same extent. While Germany has made deposits of over US\$ 60 million to these funds and Canada has earmarked some US\$ 22.7 million for the same purpose, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and Luxembourg have lagged behind, with some US\$ 6.2 million, US\$ 5.6 million, US\$ 2.5 million and US\$ 33,000 respectively. France does not appear on the list of contributors to the three trust funds mentioned. However, the European Union is the largest contributor to the Spotlight Initiative, a joint initiative with UN-Women aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women, having deposited more than US\$ 520 million by April 2021 (Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, 2023b).

## **B. Posts related to feminist foreign policy**

Given their importance in feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policies, this subsection examines the allocation of posts in which decisions about feminist policies can be taken in foreign services, foreign ministries and international development cooperation ministries and agencies. The substantive increase in women's representation in decision-making positions can be correlated with the

promotion of issues that have been neglected in traditionally male-dominated foreign policy and international cooperation agendas. However, there are as yet no comparable measurements of the proportion of women in diplomatic posts or in foreign policy and international development cooperation policy positions.

For the purposes of this study, an alternative way of measuring countries' commitment to feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy is the appointment of female ambassadors and special envoys responsible for coordinating this work in foreign ministries and foreign services. Table 1 lists the countries and international organizations that have so far created positions of this kind and the official names of the posts. Countries with feminist foreign policies are highlighted in blue.

**Table 1**  
**Ambassadors, representatives and special envoys for gender issues**

Country	Position
Germany <sup>a</sup>	Special Envoy for Feminist Foreign Policy
Argentina <sup>a,b</sup>	Special Representative for Feminist Foreign Policy
Australia	Ambassador for Women and Girls
Brazil	High Representative for Gender Affairs
Canada <sup>a</sup>	Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security
Spain <sup>a</sup>	Ambassador-at-Large for Feminist Foreign Policy <sup>c</sup>
United States	Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues
Finland	Ambassador for Gender Equality
Iceland	Special Envoy for Gender Equality
Norway	Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security
Netherlands (Kingdom of the) <sup>a</sup>	Ambassador for Women's Rights and Gender Equality
United Kingdom	Special Envoy for Gender Equality
Seychelles	Ambassador for Women and Children
Sweden <sup>a</sup>	Ambassador for Gender Equality
African Union	Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security
European Union	Ambassador for Gender and Diversity

Source: Prepared by the authors, and updated to December 2023, on the basis of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia; Permanent Delegation of Norway to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; Foreign Affairs Department of Seychelles; United States Department of State; International IDEA; Government of Canada; Government of the United Kingdom; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland; Ministry of the Presidency, Justice and Relations with the Courts of Spain; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil; European External Action Service (EEAS); Council of Europe, "Conference on men and boys in gender equality policies", Strasbourg, 28 April [online] <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/-/gec-annual-conference-2023>; Government of the Kingdom of Netherlands, "Feminist foreign policy explained", Amsterdam, 18 November 2022 [online] <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2022/11/18/feminist-foreign-policy-netherlands>; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, "Decreto 658/2022", *Boletín Oficial de la República Argentina*, Buenos Aires, 25 September 2022; African Union, *Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security: Newsletter October 2021*, Addis Ababa, 2021; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), "Political Declaration on Feminist Approaches to Foreign Policy", New York, 20 September 2023 [online] <https://www.international.gc.ca/news-nouvelles/2023/2023-09-20-feminist-approaches-foreign-policy-strategies-feministes-politique-etrangere.aspx?lang=eng>.

<sup>a</sup> Countries that have or had feminist foreign or cooperation policies.

<sup>b</sup> Argentina's feminist foreign policy and the position of Special Representative for Feminist Foreign Policy ended on 10 December 2023 in the context of the change of government.

<sup>c</sup> Replaces the position of Ambassador-at-Large for Gender Equality in Foreign Policy, created in 2007 (OHCHR, 2008).

The existence of these posts is very important for the effective implementation of feminist international policies. For these policies to have substance, they need to be allocated a sufficient amount of appropriate financial, technical and human resources. Having diplomatic posts and personnel responsible for overseeing and coordinating the application of the feminist approach in the different areas of foreign policy and international development cooperation is undoubtedly an important factor in bringing this about. Only 6 of the 12 countries with feminist foreign policies have created an ambassador's or equivalent post.

Lastly, in the area of substantive representation, all 12 countries that have announced feminist foreign policies have had women heading their foreign ministries on numerous occasions, although as of September 2023 these positions are held by women in 5 countries and by men in 7.

Moving towards parity in senior foreign policy decision-making positions and diplomatic representation and towards full participation by women in international negotiations is among the objectives that ought to be set for feminist foreign policies.

### **C. National action plans to follow up Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions on women, peace and security**

In the words of the United Nations Secretary-General, “feminist foreign policies must promote the implementation of women and peace and security priorities, and show clear connections to national action plans” (United Nations, 2022, p. 19). Given their importance for the implementation of feminist principles in security and conflict resolution policies, it is important to mention the progress made in adopting national action plans to follow up Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

As of September 2023, 107 countries had adopted such plans, including all those that have reported having a feminist foreign policy or cooperation policy, with the exception of Libya and, for the time being, Colombia, which recently committed to adopting its first national action plan. In other words, 10 of the 12 countries analysed here have or have had such plans. Besides Chile, Argentina and Mexico, only four countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have national action plans, namely Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala and Paraguay (WPS Focal Points Network, 2023). Colombia is in the process of developing one, as detailed in the Colombian case study.

While progress in adopting national action plans to follow up Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) has been considerable, there is still ample room for improvement in their design, performance and evaluation. According to the United Nations Secretary-General’s 2022 report on women and peace and security, although 85% of national action plans include a monitoring framework with indicators, assessing and capturing the impact of their implementation remains a weakness for most. The report therefore argues that there is a need to strengthen data collection, monitoring and reporting capacity in the interests of accountability. The success of feminist plans and policies is measured by their impact on women’s and girls’ autonomy and substantive equality or equality of outcomes, an important measure of societal progress and peace. Moreover, according to the Secretary-General’s report, most national action plans contain little or no information on budgeting or financing mechanisms, and few have funds earmarked for monitoring, data collection and the evaluation of progress (United Nations, 2022). In October 2023, the Secretary-General called on ODA donor countries to devote at least 1% of their ODA to direct support for women’s organizations working for peace (United Nations, 2023a).

The following section analyses the content of each of the national action plans of countries that have adopted feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies.

### **D. Gender provisions in free trade agreements**

Having analysed the interrelationship between international trade and gender equality, ECLAC stresses that international trade is not gender-neutral and that trade policies can reproduce or reduce gender inequalities (ECLAC, 2022a and 2019; Castillo, 2021). The analyses by ECLAC suggest that regional trade integration could contribute to women’s economic autonomy and reduce inequality gaps. If oriented towards sectors with high industrial and technological content, international trade can be a path towards productive diversification and the creation of quality employment for women. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which export,

and in which women are relatively strongly represented, also provide an opportunity to foster progressive structural change with equality (ECLAC, 2022a). However, trade without a gender perspective can have adverse effects. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the vigour of exports in natural resource-intensive sectors has resulted in a low level of job creation, especially for women. Moreover, when women's low wages are used as a competitive advantage, the employment opportunities that international trade generates for them end up being concentrated in sectors where employment is of very poor quality (ECLAC, 2019).

Thus, in the absence of a gender perspective, international trade can accentuate gender inequalities in the labour market, the concentration of production in sectors with poor employment conditions and little value added, the unfair distribution of unpaid care work, and the wage gap for women. It can also exclude women from international trade, considering that the export of raw materials from Latin America and the Caribbean has proven to have little impact on the creation of jobs for women (ECLAC, 2019). International trade can also put downward pressure on women's wages, e.g., when export competition is concentrated in low-technology manufacturing sectors and wages are the main adjustment variable (Braunstein, Bouhia and Seguino, 2020; CEPAL, 2019). Lastly, the concentration of female employment in a few export sectors may have the effect of increasing women's vulnerability to external shocks. For example, highly feminized export sectors such as textiles and tourism services were among the worst affected by the COVID-19 crisis (ECLAC, 2022a).

When designed with a gender perspective, on the other hand, international trade has the potential to expand employment and entrepreneurship options for women, with better working conditions (ECLAC, 2019). In the region, this would mean taking advantage of intraregional trade to diversify the production structure of the Latin American and Caribbean countries beyond so-called static comparative advantages, which depend on the supply of natural resources and low-cost labour, and orient it towards more knowledge-intensive sectors (ECLAC, 2022a).

At the global level, initiatives to examine the differential impact of international trade on women are also beginning to emerge. For example, the Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment was endorsed by 117 countries at the eleventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO, 2017). In September 2023, 127 WTO members and observers had endorsed the Declaration. At the regional level, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in 2018 calling for the inclusion of gender equality provisions in the new generation of trade agreements to be negotiated by the European Union.

According to Monteiro, 83 (14%) of the 573 regional trade agreements analysed in his 2021 report for WTO contain at least one provision specifically concerning women, while 257 implicitly refer to gender-related issues. Of these 83 agreements, 58 were negotiated between developed and developing countries, 12 between developed countries and 13 between developing countries (Monteiro, 2021).

Monteiro's (2021) study shows a rising trend in the number of gender provisions in regional trade agreements over the years. Actors such as the European Union, Chile and Canada stand out for the number of agreements with gender provisions they have entered into and the number of provisions in each of these agreements. The European Union is the actor with the most trade agreements containing gender provisions, while Canada and Chile far exceed the global average for the number of agreements with gender provisions and the average number of gender-related references in trade agreements.

The Inclusive Trade Action Group (ITAG), formed by Canada, Chile and New Zealand in 2018, is a notable example in this area. At a ministerial meeting of the group on 4 August 2020, trade officials from these three countries established the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement, which aims to strengthen trade and gender policies and enhance the role of women in trade, in the context of initiatives to achieve equality and economic empowerment for women. Mexico joined in 2021, followed by Colombia and Peru in 2022. In 2023, Costa Rica and Ecuador also joined the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement and ITAG (OAS, 2023).

It is important to note that while the inclusion of a gender chapter or provision is an essential prerequisite for progress with gender mainstreaming in trade policy, this does not happen automatically. It is crucial to take a comprehensive approach to the agreement and to allocate specific resources to implement the commitments. However, it is also essential not to approach and implement gender and trade chapters independently or in isolation from the other chapters of trade agreements.

Among other countries with feminist foreign policies or feminist international development cooperation policies, mention should also be made of Mexico and Argentina, which are below the world average for the number of their trade agreements containing gender provisions (fewer than five), but slightly above the world average for the number of gender provisions in those same trade agreements. Colombia, meanwhile, is below the world average on both measures (Monteiro, 2021).

As with ODA, and with the exception of Canada, so far there does not appear to be a correlation between the adoption of feminist international policies and the conclusion of trade agreements with gender provisions. Nevertheless, countries and regional bodies that had already taken account of gender in international trade were apparently more likely to adopt feminist foreign policies. Still, it is premature to attempt a categorical analysis of the impact of feminist policies on international trade based on the inclusion of gender provisions in trade agreements, as the time frame for negotiating such agreements can be very long. There will be greater opportunities in future research to determine whether or not countries with feminist foreign and cooperation policies have been successful in bringing feminist principles into the trade arena.

After outlining the general situation with feminist foreign and cooperation policies by means of this comparative study of the provisions and practices of international cooperation, diplomatic appointments, security and trade, the following pages present detailed case studies of the implementation of these policies in the countries that had officially adopted or announced them by September 2023.



## **IV. The evolution of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy: case studies**

This section provides context and key facts for the development of the feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies existing to date and documented in this study. Drawing on official documents, it sets out their guiding principles and main objectives, as well as salient elements of their functioning in practice. The mechanisms and budgets of these feminist policies are also analysed, with an emphasis on their impact on international development cooperation policies in general.

The case studies below are from the 12 countries that have reported having a feminist foreign policy or a feminist international development cooperation policy, and are presented in chronological order by the date the countries announced these policies: Sweden, Canada, France, Luxembourg, Mexico, Spain, Libya, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Germany, Chile, Colombia and Argentina. Of these 12, Sweden and Argentina have not persisted with this approach. For purposes of comparison, we assess whether or not seven aspects vital to achieving the objectives of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation are present, according to the definition given in the conceptual framework (see diagram 1). For other aspects, such as women's participation in diplomacy or the incorporation of a gender perspective into triangular cooperation, there is as yet no source that provides comparability.

**Diagram 1**  
**Key requirements for the implementation of feminist foreign policies**  
**and feminist international development cooperation policies**



Source: Prepared by the authors.

In making these comparisons, the position of the offices in charge of international cooperation within the structure of governments needs to be considered. While the theoretical framework treated feminist foreign policy and international cooperation as an integrated whole, the reality is that, although international development cooperation policies are part of international policy, the competent institutions in each country may either report to the ministry of foreign affairs or be independent of it.

Table 2 summarizes the institutional framework for international cooperation and relations with the foreign ministries in the selected countries.

**Table 2**  
**Position of ministries and entities in charge of international development cooperation within the governance structure of countries with feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies**

Country	Ministry or entity in charge of international cooperation	Structure
Argentina	Argentine Agency for International Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance - White Helmets (ACIAH)	ACIAH is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship.
Canada	Global Affairs Canada	Canada's cooperation agenda is the responsibility of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, better known as Global Affairs Canada. The agenda is led jointly by the Minister of Foreign affairs and the Minister of International Development. Canada does not have an international cooperation agency.
Chile	Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID)	AGCID is a functionally decentralized body with legal personality and its own assets, forming part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile.
Colombia	Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC)	APC is part of the Office of the President. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sets policy in this area and signs cooperation agreements.
France	French Development Agency (AFD)	AFD is one of the 12 agencies reporting to the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

Country	Ministry or entity in charge of international cooperation	Structure
Germany	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	GIZ is the agency specializing in technical cooperation for sustainable development and receives its instructions from BMZ. BMZ and GIZ are independent of the Germany Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
Libya	Has no specialized agency.	Has no specialized agency.
Luxembourg	Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency (LuxDev)	LuxDev is a public limited company (S.A.) whose majority shareholder is the State of Luxembourg (98%). The agency is independent of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.
Mexico	Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID)	AMEXCID is a deconcentrated agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico with specific competencies to deal with matters related to international development cooperation.
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	The Kingdom of the Netherlands does not have an international cooperation agency. The Directorate-General for International Cooperation is one of the four directorates-general making up the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and the Minister of Foreign Affairs lead the country's international cooperation policy. The Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation is responsible for coordinating official development assistance (ODA) resources.
Spain	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)	AECID is a State agency that forms part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation and is responsible for managing the Secretariat of State for International Cooperation, which also forms part of the structure of this ministry.
Sweden	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)	Sida is part of the structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden and is one of the 10 government agencies over which the Ministry has authority.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany, Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID), Presidential Agency of International Cooperation, French Development Agency, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency (LuxDev), Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

## A. Sweden

In 2014, Sweden became the first country in the world to adopt a feminist foreign policy, stating the ambition to become the strongest global voice for gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2015, p. 3). This was connected to the appointment as Foreign Minister of Margot Wallström, a senior diplomat who had previously served as the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. As Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond and Kronsell (2019) note, prior to her appointment as Foreign Minister, Wallström repeatedly emphasized the link between women's participation in peace processes and international politics, national and international security and, above all, sustainable peace.

Foreign Minister Tobias Billström terminated Sweden's feminist foreign policy in October 2022, after it had been pursued for eight years. In an interview for *Aftonbladet* newspaper, he argued that equality between men and women was a core value for both Sweden and his government, but that they would not pursue a feminist foreign policy. He said that this label had served no good purpose and had obscured in particular the need for Swedish foreign policy to be based on consideration of Swedish values and interests (Granlund, 2022). The Swedish case study has been retained in this document because of the importance of the country's experience for the genesis of the feminist policies that came afterwards and as an example of how even a strong commitment to gender equality can suffer a reverse. This highlights the importance of institutionalizing and consolidating gender equality in public administration systems and State policies.

In adopting its feminist foreign policy in 2014, Sweden stated that protecting and promoting women's fundamental human rights was an international obligation and a precondition for achieving the broader national foreign policy goals of peace, security and sustainability. Feminist foreign policy was framed as a goal in itself, aligned with the country's domestic and international obligations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2015).

Sweden's feminist foreign policy was based on four pillars, also known as the "four Rs", namely: (i) rights, referring to the commitment of the Swedish foreign service to promoting the full enjoyment of women's human rights; (ii) representation of women in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas; (iii) resources, in line with the commitment to allocate adequate budgetary resources to the promotion of gender equality; and (iv) reality check, involving a results-based approach and consideration of context. This last point was added later, as the feminist foreign policy handbook originally released in 2015 mentioned only the first three (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2015). Feminist foreign policy simultaneously covered the following three areas: (i) national and foreign security policies, (ii) development cooperation and (iii) trade and advocacy policies (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond and Kronsell, 2019; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2015).

Sweden's initial long-term goals in establishing its feminist foreign policy were: (i) the full enjoyment of women's human rights; (ii) freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence; (iii) women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, and peacebuilding; (iv) women's political participation and influence in all areas of society; (v) women's economic rights and empowerment; and (vi) sexual and reproductive health and rights. In 2017, a seventh goal was added in order to involve the Swedish foreign service in the implementation of this policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2015).

With regard to the implementation of its feminist foreign policy, Sweden also committed to achieving gender parity in appointments to international government posts and to strengthening the gender perspective in consular work (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2015). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought to increase the number of women applying for senior positions there and conducted research on the reasons why they often did not do so. Sweden also appointed a feminist foreign policy coordination team headed by the ambassador for gender equality (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2019).

Sweden's feminist foreign policy handbook stated that this was a strategy aimed primarily at solving problems of inequality beyond the country's borders. Even so, the country emphasized the transformation of the foreign service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to reflect internally the feminist principles being pursued in foreign policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2019).

At the same time, a "top-down" approach was initially adopted in formulating the feminist foreign policy. Three years later, a wide-ranging consultation process was conducted and all departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all Swedish diplomatic representations around the world were asked to express their views on how feminist foreign policy should be implemented in the different operational and policy areas before the foreign policy handbook was drafted (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2019).

Another factor that was important to the effective implementation of Sweden's feminist foreign policy was gender mainstreaming in routine systems, processes and accountability structures, including through budgeting tools and gender mainstreaming training for all staff administering budgets (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2019). In its feminist foreign policy strategy, Sweden also outlined its budget commitments and stated that the foreign service should draw up gender equality budgets for the distribution of internal resources within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gender mainstreaming was also to encompass all grant administration processes (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2015).

However, the action plan that established Sweden's feminist foreign policy did not specify the amounts of these budgets or how they would be determined. The exception was the budget for gender equality activities of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), which, since the adoption of the feminist foreign policy, had not only designed a gender toolbox and a new gender strategy, but also allocated 1 billion Swedish kronor (about US\$ 90 million) to gender equality for the period 2018–2022 (EBA, 2020).

In the area of security and conflict resolution, the feminist foreign policy handbook stated that women's participation in peacebuilding should be increased. To support this goal, Sweden sought to foster women's participation in peace processes in Colombia, Mali, the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Somalia by means of technical, political and financial support and help for third countries to adopt national action plans (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2019).

With regard to the women, peace and security agenda, Sweden has so far adopted three national action plans, the latest of which ran from 2016 to 2020. Its objectives were: to increase women's participation in international peacebuilding and security operations; to protect women and girls in situations of armed conflict; to take steps to ensure that women in conflict areas participated equally in conflict prevention, crisis management, humanitarian operations and post-conflict initiatives; and to include both men and women in the fight against the structural causes of violence (Government of Sweden, 2016a). One of the strengths of Sweden's plans was the involvement of representatives from various government agencies, civil society and think tanks in their development. The 2016–2020 national action plan set out specific activities and measurement indicators and also had the virtue of establishing an evaluation framework with annual reviews and a detailed matrix of implementation indicators.

A network of women mediators was also founded in Sweden to provide technical support to countries and actors wishing to establish similar networks. It was further argued that disarmament and non-proliferation were essential pillars of feminist foreign policy and that the country relied on the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to ensure that it did not contribute to violence against women around the world through arms exports (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2015).

Although international trade is one of the three main areas of Sweden's feminist foreign policy, no concrete plans were found for this pillar, which is implemented through the European Union. That said, the free trade agreement between the European Union and Chile has an entire chapter on gender equality, the result of an initiative by Sweden and the Latin American country (Hicks, 2021). Similarly, no references were found to concrete actions to address the intersections between gender inequality and climate change. Still, Sweden was one of the countries that worked to mainstream gender equality in the Paris Agreement of 2021.

Sweden has distinguished itself in the area of international development cooperation for its gender approach. It was one of the actors that actively worked to mainstream gender in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Hicks, 2021). Gender equality was also addressed in the Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance adopted in 2016 (Government of Sweden, 2016a), which stipulates that all development cooperation has to go through a gender mainstreaming process.

Gender equality is also one of the mandates of Sida. As mentioned, Sida has developed a gender mainstreaming plan and a set of tools for including gender equality in development assistance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2019). These tools include a guide to the agency's work on gender issues, a document on applying the gender perspective to humanitarian aid, a text on gender mainstreaming in development research and a handbook on applying gender indicators to ODA (Sida, 2023).

Sida has also made great progress in mainstreaming gender in its financial contributions and actions for international development. By 2021, the cooperation agency had included gender equality in almost all its 45 bilateral, regional and global strategies in areas such as human rights, economic and political participation, education, sexual and reproductive health, humanitarian assistance, peace and security, and education, among others. In addition, between 2010 and 2021, Sida increased the percentage of its budget allocated to projects with gender equality as a principal objective from 9.0% to 16.5% (Sida, 2021).

As mentioned above, Sweden is one of the few countries in the global North to have met the commitment to devote at least 0.7% of GNP to ODA. With the exception of small reductions in 2019 and 2020, the proportion of assistance dedicated to gender equality has grown every year since 2009.

According to data from 2021, Sweden spent the largest shares of its ODA with gender objectives in the government and civil society, humanitarian assistance and social infrastructure sectors that year. The main destinations were Afghanistan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Somalia, Mozambique and Kenya (OECD, 2023a). When analysing this information, however, it should be noted that the new Swedish government has decided to reduce its ODA target from 1% of GNP to 0.8% for 2023. While still meeting the target of spending at least 0.7% of GNP on development assistance, this may mean a reduction in budgets for gender cooperation (George, 2022).

With regard to the mechanisms for monitoring the feminist cooperation policy, internal evaluations were conducted and the foreign policy action plan was adapted every year in view of the results, although there was still no monitoring and evaluation strategy based on measurable objectives (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2017). As a result, the initiative was taken to improve evaluation processes. In 2020, the Expert Group for Aid Studies (the independent governmental committee tasked with assessing and analysing the management, governance and implementation of Swedish ODA) issued a call for proposals for a study on the implementation of Sweden's feminist foreign policy. This process concluded in August 2021, but the study could not be carried out owing to the discontinuation of the feminist foreign policy (EBA, 2020).

Eight years on from its creation, Sweden's feminist foreign policy remained the benchmark for this novel approach. Its emphasis on creating stable implementation and budgeting processes and its international visibility meant that it was still an example to follow. Rosén and Elgström (2020) interviewed 31 diplomats representing other European Union countries and found that three quarters of them considered Sweden's foreign policy to have substantially influenced European policies. Undoubtedly, this feminist policy, the first of its kind, and its iconic "four Rs" remain a source of inspiration for others in Europe and around the world.

## **B. Canada**

In 2017, Canada launched its Feminist International Assistance Policy after a year of consultations with fifteen thousand people in 65 countries. The Canadian strategy aims to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. To achieve this, international feminist assistance is to be human rights-based and evidence-based and seek to transform unequal power relations. This cooperation policy is divided into five areas of action: human dignity, growth serving all people, inclusive governance, climate action, and peace and security (Government of Canada, 2017a). Although Canada defines its foreign policy as feminist, to date no feminist strategy has been formulated apart from the 2017 international assistance policy.

Canada's feminist strategy also mentions the steps that need to be taken to address humanitarian crises, forced displacement, and economic and financial exclusion. Its goals include preventing gender-based violence in humanitarian crisis situations, strengthening local women's groups to respond to humanitarian emergencies, using international assistance for women's and girls' empowerment programmes, promoting financing for women entrepreneurs, supporting women's technical and vocational training, and pursuing reforms to increase women's social protection, among others. This feminist international development cooperation policy also aims to contribute to international initiatives to eradicate poverty around the world and identifies gender equality as a way to achieve this (Government of Canada, 2017a).

In the areas of climate change and governance, Canada's ambitions focus on the inclusion of women's leadership in decision-making and negotiation processes. Among other measures, Canada will seek to increase women's participation in government-funded climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives and support women seeking business opportunities in the renewable energy sector. In addition, Canada committed to disbursing 2.65 billion Canadian dollars by 2020–2021 to support the countries most vulnerable to climate change in their efforts to adapt to its effects and mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions (Government of Canada, 2017a).

To maintain accountability, Canada has developed key performance indicators in each of the feminist cooperation policy areas, on which Global Affairs Canada is required to collect and publish data annually. This is the monitoring mechanism in place for the time being (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021).

With regard to peace and security, Canada committed itself through its International Feminist Assistance Policy to supporting the substantive participation of women and of women's rights organizations in conflict prevention work and peace processes. In addition, it set out to promote women's rights in post-conflict situations in partnership with governments and civil society organizations and to strengthen accountability and training mechanisms to prevent sexual violence in conflict situations, particularly during peacekeeping missions (Government of Canada, 2017a).

Canada's feminist international development cooperation policy does not indicate concrete measures to be taken in this area. However, Canada is one of 107 countries that have now adopted a national action plan, which helps to elucidate the kind of peace and security actions that the country can implement in this field.

Canada's most recent plan covers the period 2017–2022 and was developed by Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Department of Justice and various agencies responsible for public safety, women's rights and the right to asylum. A number of entities were appointed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the 2017–2022 national action plan, including civil society (Government of Canada, 2017b). The objectives of the plan are to increase the participation of women and women's networks and organizations in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in post-conflict reconstruction; prevent and respond to gender-based and sexual violence in conflict situations; promote and protect the human rights of women and girls in fragile, conflict and post-conflict contexts; meet the needs of women in humanitarian crisis contexts; and strengthen the capacity of peace operations to deliver on the women, peace and security agenda. Each of these objectives has specific indicators and funding allocations (Government of Canada, 2017b).

Another Canadian security project is the Elsie Initiative, which promotes women's participation in United Nations peace operations. Canada is the founding country and main funder, along with the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Rosales and others, 2021).

Although Canada does not have a comprehensive plan to incorporate gender considerations into its international trade policy, it has made progress in recognizing the gender implications of its trade. Thus, it decided to include a gender chapter in the free trade agreement between Canada and Chile and, at Canada's initiative, references to gender were added to the new free trade agreement between Mexico, the United States and Canada (Chapnick, 2019).

With respect to funding, Global Affairs Canada committed to allocating 15% of its bilateral ODA budget to initiatives specifically dedicated to promoting gender equality and improving the quality of life of women and girls by 2022. This includes initiatives to combat gender-based violence, support local women's human rights organizations and promote capacity-building and knowledge generation (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021). It also set a target of investing an additional 80% of its bilateral development assistance budget in projects that incorporate a gender and women's and girls' empowerment perspective (Government of Canada, 2017a). Thus, 95% of Canada's ODA should have a gender focus. The overall objective is close to being met, with 91% of Canadian ODA already allocated to gender equality as a significant or the principal objective, according to 2021 data. However, as the 2021 OECD data show, and as mentioned by the Auditor General of Canada's 2023 report, the target of allocating 15% of ODA to gender-specific projects has not yet been met (OECD, 2023a).

Still, it should be recognized that Canadian ODA dedicated to gender equality has been on a rising trend over the past 11 years, albeit with some fluctuations in 2016 and the last three years for which information is available. The 2021 data reveal that the sectors receiving the most funding were humanitarian assistance, health, and government and civil society. The top destinations for these resources were, in descending order, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mali, the United Republic of Tanzania and Haiti (OECD, 2023a).

In addition to the 95% of ODA allocated to gender equality, Canada's feminist international development cooperation policy has the advantage of specific budgets for some of its objectives. For example, investments of 650 million Canadian dollars over three years in reproductive health services and 3.5 billion Canadian dollars in maternal and child health in developing countries are cited (Government of Canada, 2017a). Canada has also spearheaded an initiative to direct more resources to women's rights organizations and feminist movements. This includes the establishment of the Equality Fund, a feminist fund into which 300 million Canadian dollars was channelled in June 2019. There was also a commitment of 150 million Canadian dollars to support local women's organizations, which later became the Women's Voice and Leadership Program (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021).

## C. France

In 2007, France established its first international cooperation strategy for gender and development. In 2016, the French Interministerial Committee on International Cooperation and Development (CICID) decided that a new international strategy for gender equality and development would be adopted in 2018, consolidating the commitment to mainstreaming gender in all international development cooperation instruments. The main difference between the 2018 strategy and previous ones is that it takes a broader approach encompassing France's international activities. The document identifies the following challenges: institutional strengthening and political commitment, gender mainstreaming in foreign policy, the allocation of greater resources to these agendas, and the development of accountability and impact measurement mechanisms (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2018). This is why the term "feminist diplomacy" has been used in France since 2018 to refer to foreign policy. The intention is for the gender agenda to be reflected in international policies on security, economic growth, sustainable development, climate change, the defence and promotion of human rights and international development cooperation (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2022).

At the same time, the country set itself the goal of devoting 50% of ODA to gender issues by 2022, a target that, according to data from 2021, has not yet been reached (OECD, 2023a; Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2018). As part of its international feminist policies, France intends to be more ambitious in the coming years, so that 75% of ODA-funded projects promote gender equality (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2018).

In 2021, UN-Women and the Governments of France and Mexico convened representatives of governments, civil society, international organizations and the private sector to participate in the Generation Equality Forum, held in Mexico City and Paris to commemorate 25 years of the Beijing Platform for Action. As a result, six coalitions for action were established on issues related to gender equality and the rights of women and girls in their diversity. Among other things, France committed an additional 50 million euros to combating maternal and child mortality in West Africa, around 165 million euros to girls' education and 100 million euros to sexual and reproductive rights (Generation Equality Forum, 2023). During the French presidency of the Group of Seven (G7) in 2019, furthermore, France encouraged its members to adopt the Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and to create the Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality, in line with the recommendations of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2021b).

The International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018–2022) governs France's efforts to advance gender equality and women's rights and autonomy on the international stage. It is conceived as a tool to meet the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the general context of a regression in women's rights and a resurgence of religious extremism. The guiding principles of this strategy are a comprehensive approach, a rights-based approach and a gender mainstreaming approach (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2018). This strategy is the successor to the French international cooperation strategy of 2013, which reinforced gender objectives and was in place until 2017.

The 2018 strategy also includes areas where French feminist diplomacy could expand beyond international cooperation. Goal 1 is to promote gender equality in the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. To this end, France committed to altering its internal practices so as to increase the number of women in foreign policy leadership positions and improve their working conditions (e.g., by ensuring a work-life balance for all ministry staff, expanding teleworking and improving arrangements for covering maternity leave). Planned actions include increasing the number of women in leadership positions in ministries and embassies (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2018). Furthermore, according to Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar (2021), the French government has also asked its diplomatic network abroad and its departments in Paris to design and report on a gender action plan each year.

Similarly, in accordance with goal 2, France has set out to promote gender equality in multilateral institutions and funds, including the World Bank, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2018).

Goals 3 and 4 focus on improving the integration of gender equality into ODA and increasing the transparency and accountability of ODA for gender equality. This reflects the fact that international development cooperation is the strategy's priority and main mechanism for action. Lastly, goal 5 is to strengthen the links of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs with civil society organizations, research centres and the private sector to further promote gender equality. The French authorities have recognized the importance of collaborating with these non-State actors to identify pathways for international action towards effective gender equality (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2018).

Five sectoral priorities have been identified in France, namely: (i) ensuring equal access to social services such as education and sexual and reproductive health; (ii) facilitating access to productive and economic resources and decent employment for women; (iii) ensuring equal access for women and girls to justice and protection against all forms of violence; (iv) ensuring equal participation in economic, political and social decision-making spaces (including those related to climate change); and (v) ensuring women's equal participation in peace and security processes (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2018).

Given that at the time of writing there is no handbook or action plan setting out the mechanisms of French feminist diplomacy in greater detail, an opinion piece written for *Libération* newspaper in 2018 by Jean-Yves Le Drian, then Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and Marlène Schiappa, former Minister for Gender Equality and the Fight against Discrimination, will be analysed to form a better understanding of its significance. These senior officials argued that France had adopted a foreign policy that sought to combat sexual and sexist violence, promote the education of women and girls around the world and foster the economic empowerment of women worldwide, particularly in Africa. They pointed out that, to achieve these objectives, President Macron had endowed the French Development Agency (AFD) with a budget of 120 million euros, with the central goal of supporting women's movements and organizations in developing countries. Furthermore, they stressed that the President had instructed the cooperation agency to increase funding for the reduction of gender inequality to 700 million euros per year by 2022 (Le Drian and Schiappa, 2019).

Where ODA is concerned, France has considerably increased this type of assistance for gender equality initiatives since 2013, with a sharp recovery beginning in that year and an even bigger jump between 2019 and 2020. This is probably related to France's commitment to giving half its ODA a gender focus by 2022. It is therefore to be expected that French cooperation in this field will continue to show rapid growth as data for the following years become available. While there is still ample room for improvement, given that the percentage of French ODA allocated to gender equality is only slightly higher than the DAC average, there is growing ambition and the trend is undoubtedly upward.

OECD data from 2021 show that the ODA priorities for gender projects that year were multisectoral initiatives, economic infrastructure and services, health, and water supply and sanitation. The top recipient countries for France's gender-responsive ODA in 2021 were, in descending order, Morocco, Brazil, Türkiye, India and Colombia (OECD, 2023a).

Besides its growing commitments in the area of international development cooperation with a gender perspective, a strength of France's International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018–2020) is that it has an accountability framework to measure progress. This not only includes clear targets and metrics, but also provides for a biennial public evaluation of what has been achieved. To this end, the High Council for Gender Equality (HCE), an independent body made up of gender experts that advises French government authorities on the implementation of external and domestic public gender policies, was given evaluation powers (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021). In November 2020, HCE presented its first monitoring and evaluation report on France's feminist diplomacy to the Minister for Gender Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities and the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The report provides an interim assessment of the implementation of the International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018–2022) and 19 recommendations for improvement.

One of the first steps taken by HCE in this report was to provide its own definition of feminist foreign policy. The parameters laid down in this definition are largely consistent with those established by feminist foreign policy experts and scholars and with the definition recommended in the present report. In the HCE appreciation, feminist diplomacy is a State policy that places equality between women and men, women's freedom and rights and the struggle to abolish the patriarchy at the centre of its action abroad in all dimensions (ODA, diplomacy itself, trade and the economy, culture, education, influence, defence and security, and the climate and environment, among others). To this end, it provides for the equal participation of women and feminist movements (at home and abroad) in its co-construction and implementation, allocating substantial long-term resources to the attainment of this goal and establishing a dedicated and durable institutional and administrative organization within the State that ensures policy consistency and includes a system of accountability (HCE, 2020, p. 6).

According to HCE, a multiannual budget is needed to ensure the continuity of feminist diplomacy and reinforce the availability of human resources dedicated primarily to implementing this cross-cutting agenda in the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and monitoring the French national action plan. It also recommends a continuing push for gender parity in decision-making positions in French diplomacy and the other ministries projecting French influence abroad. Furthermore, HCE highlights the lack of action in the area of trade (HCE, 2020).

Although France's International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018–2020) does not mention the role of international trade as a foreign policy tool with the potential to promote gender equality, the country is part of the European Union, which has shown great interest in applying a gender perspective to trade. In this area, HCE recommends ensuring balanced representation of men and women in the teams negotiating trade agreements, which should incorporate a gender perspective, preferably via a specific chapter on the subject. HCE also suggests that France consult local civil society organizations in the countries with which it negotiates trade agreements to ensure that the terms agreed will not be detrimental to women's economic development and women's rights more broadly (HCE, 2020).

In July 2023, HCE issued a second report which largely repeated the recommendations of the 2020 text, again highlighted the vagueness of French feminist policy and the lack of any reference to trade, and renewed the recommendation to increase the human resources that support France's feminist strategy, this time alluding to the appointment of female ambassadors in countries such as Germany. In addition, HCE suggested that an operational manual for implementation should be prepared and impact indicators identified (HCE, 2023).

This said, it is important to note that the reason why the areas of opportunity in France's International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018–2022) are known in detail is because there is a monitoring and evaluation mechanism in place to track and disclose this information. In 2021, moreover, HCE created a set of indicators to measure the progress of French feminist diplomacy. This promising and institutionalized practice provides an opportunity for growth and innovation that other feminist foreign and cooperation policies still lack.

In the area of policies on women, peace and security, lastly, France has a national action plan for the period 2021–2025. This plan, the third that the country has produced, is designed to ensure consistency between these policies on women, peace and security and the International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018–2022) (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2021b). The French national action plan seeks to put the necessary capabilities in place for women to be included in conflict resolution, strengthen programmes for overcoming gender equality challenges in conflict and post-conflict settings, collect sex-disaggregated data and investigate instances of sexual violence in these settings. Although it does not have an allocated budget, it envisages concrete actions in relation to each objective and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism involving representatives of civil society (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, 2021b).

## D. Luxembourg

In 2018, the Government of Luxembourg announced that it would implement a feminist foreign policy. In 2021, at the Generation Equality Forum, it provided further details and committed to formulating an action plan on feminist foreign policy to mainstream gender equality in all activities of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021). At the time of writing, however, this plan is not yet in the public domain. The only official document in which the term “feminist foreign policy” was found is the Coalition Agreement 2018–2023, which states that:

Luxembourg will promote gender equality in international and European forums and support women more specifically. In political dialogue with partner countries, Luxembourg will undertake to strengthen the social and political role of women and equal opportunities, in particular as regards access to education, employment and basic health services, as well as land and property rights. Luxembourg will uphold women’s sexual and reproductive rights in its international and European policy. Furthermore, the defence of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people will be an integral part of Luxembourg’s foreign policy (Government of Luxembourg, 2018a, pp. 210–211).

Other than the Coalition Agreement, no official documents detailing Luxembourg’s feminist foreign policy and setting out its objectives and activities were found, so the best guide to its content are statements by high-level officials. It seems that the principles, objectives, actions, mechanisms and evaluation and monitoring processes of Luxembourg’s feminist foreign policy are still being developed.

In a speech to Parliament in 2019, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Jean Asselborn, explained that, for Luxembourg, feminist foreign policy meant recognizing women’s rights as human rights and systematically defending them as such, including political and economic rights and the right to sexual self-determination. He also stated that this policy strengthened the participation and representation of women at all levels, both in diplomacy and cooperation and in defence and civilian missions abroad. However, he did not mention the procedures by which these objectives would be achieved. The Minister himself recognized that only 13 of 40 people of ambassadorial rank were women (33%), so there was still some way to go to achieve parity in decision-making positions (Asselborn, 2019).

In the area of women, peace and security, Asselborn mentioned the adoption in 2018 of the “Women and Peace and Security” National Action Plan 2018–2023 to follow up Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which was to be operative until 2023 under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs in collaboration with other ministries (Asselborn, 2019). This is the first national action plan adopted in Luxembourg and is led by the Ministries of State, Foreign and European Affairs, Education, Children and Youth, Equal Opportunities, Justice, Health, Internal Security, and the Family and Integration. The plan was developed in partnership with civil society, which is involved in its follow-up. The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plan on an annual basis, in accordance with a matrix of specific objectives, actions, indicators and responsible institutions. However, the national action plan does not have an allocated budget (Government of Luxembourg, 2018b).

In 2021, Luxembourg formulated a new gender-focused international development cooperation strategy and adopted a policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, explicitly framed within the country's feminist foreign policy (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021). This strategy is based on the principles of intersectionality, accountability, comprehensiveness, and contextualization and ownership. The main issues addressed are sexual and reproductive rights; education and employment; economic autonomy; equal participation of men and women in political, public and economic decision-making; and preventing and combating gender-based violence (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg, 2021). However, it should be noted that development cooperation with a gender perspective is not the same as a feminist international cooperation strategy.

According to OECD data, Luxembourg's specific ODA for gender agendas trended upward from 2011 to 2019, fell sharply in 2020 and then recovered moderately in 2021. Data for 2021 show that Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali are the main destinations for Luxembourg's ODA with a gender perspective. The sectors receiving the largest amounts of funding that year were education, health, humanitarian assistance, and agriculture, forestry and fisheries (OECD, 2023a).

## E. Mexico

Mexico's feminist foreign policy was born in 2020, building on previous achievements in gender equality and women's autonomy in which Mexico played an important global and regional role. According to García Morales (2021), feminist principles began to formally manifest themselves in the multilateral, bilateral, domestic, consular and international cooperation dimensions of Mexico's foreign policy structures even before the country established its feminist foreign policy. For example, the first Programme for Equality between Women and Men 2015–2018 (PROIGUALDAD), which proposed that the gender agenda be mainstreamed in the work of the Foreign Ministry and throughout the federal government, was created in 2009.<sup>5</sup> With regard to the consular dimension, the first dedicated one-stop shop or window for women (Ventanilla de Atención Integral para la Mujer) was established in 2015 to provide consular attention with a gender perspective; these windows currently operate in 53 consulates in the United States, 6 Mexican representations in Canada and 29 Mexican representations in Europe. In addition, the Mexican Foreign Service Act was amended in 2018 to incorporate a gender perspective in the working conditions of diplomatic personnel (Ramírez and Mejía, 2021).

Mexico's feminist foreign policy was officially announced in January 2020 during the thirty-first annual Meeting of Ambassadors and Consuls and presented during the fourteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago, at a side event organized by Mexico. Mexico thereby became the first country in Latin America and the Caribbean and the global South to decide to adopt such a policy.

An article written by the then Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Martha Delgado, for *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* provides information about the aims of Mexico's feminist foreign policy. She detailed the logic of the policy, clearly reflecting the link identified by the country between this foreign policy change and the fulfilment of the United Nations SDGs. She also noted that Mexico's feminist foreign policy had five main objectives: (i) to cement Mexico's international leadership on gender; (ii) to make organizational improvements in the interests of a more egalitarian working environment in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; (iii) to eradicate gender-based violence within the Ministry; (iv) to give visibility to female leadership in the Ministry; and (v) to exploit the complementarity of gender actions with other international agendas, such as the economic, cooperation, cultural and tourism agendas (Delgado, 2020).

Mexican foreign policy explicitly highlights the importance of the intersectional approach in its implementation. Moreover, unlike the feminist foreign policies that preceded it, Mexico's has shown an interest in using diplomacy not only to promote gender equality abroad, but also to help solve the structural problems that prevent Mexican women, adolescent girls and girl children from fully enjoying their rights,

<sup>5</sup> This in its role as the special programme of the Government of Mexico containing the main strategies and actions that the entities and agencies of the federal public administration should implement to guarantee women's rights and reduce violence against women.

including by combating gender-based violence within the country (Office of the Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of Mexico, 2020). In Mexico, in other words, foreign policy is viewed as a tool that can be used to pursue urgent agendas within the country. For that reason, Rubio, De Lima and Ruiz-Giménez (2021, p. 21) note that, of all the feminist foreign policies they had the opportunity to analyse in their study, Mexico's is the one "that includes the greatest number of domestically focused measures".

Mexico's feminist foreign policy also focuses on increasing women's representation within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mexico has devoted much of its feminist foreign policy-related communication activity to improving women's working conditions in the Foreign Ministry and Mexico's representations abroad and to achieving greater parity in senior foreign policy positions (Ramírez and Mejía, 2021). Although there are no indicators of the success of these measures, the country has focused on training the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in gender issues and conducting internal awareness-raising campaigns, which is extremely important for gender mainstreaming in foreign policy (Office of the Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of Mexico, 2020).

Since adopting its feminist foreign policy, Mexico has continued and intensified its participation and leadership in international gender initiatives, including the Generation Equality Forum mentioned above, which it led jointly with France in coordination with UN-Women. During the Forum, Mexico made seven national commitments and six collective commitments, chief among them the commitment to launch the Global Care Partnership. In the framework of the Forum, Mexico also promoted the creation of a Group of Friends for Gender Equality, with the participation of high-level officials from 21 countries.<sup>6</sup>

It is also important to highlight Mexico's role in climate change negotiations, in particular its participation in developing the Lima work programme on gender, and its action plan under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2020 (twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 25)). In 2022, during COP 27, Mexico organized a side event called "Feminist foreign policy and human rights: a path towards climate justice" and announced its National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change, with the aim of mainstreaming gender in national actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation and the implementation of its nationally determined contributions (Government of Mexico, 2022a).

In the framework of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Government of Mexico also announced the creation of the Ellas Fund, which was to work jointly with UNDP and seek to mobilize US\$ 50 million for projects related to women's economic integration in Latin America and the Caribbean (Government of Mexico, 2022b). Through the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES), furthermore, Mexico became the first country to provide financing to the Regional Fund for Women's and Feminist Organizations and Movements (UN-Women, 2021a). In addition, Mexico will host the sixteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2025, coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations World Conference on Women (ECLAC, 2023h).

Although Mexico's announcement of the adoption of a feminist foreign policy and the actions carried out in this area have been publicized inside and outside the country, no official document has been published as yet to explain the mechanisms for the policy's implementation, of the kind published in countries such as Sweden, Canada and Spain. The only document available is a presentation that describes in general terms Mexico's diplomatic and foreign policy priorities. In this presentation, Mexico sets out a plan of foreign policy activities to be accomplished by 2024, mostly promotional events at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and workshops for its staff (Office of the Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of Mexico, 2020).

In 2023, though, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Alicia Bárcena Ibarra, participated in the Feminist Foreign Policy meeting held in the framework of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Week,

<sup>6</sup> These countries were Argentina, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lebanon, Mexico, Norway, Panama, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Uruguay. This group discussed strategies for promoting coordinated action in multilateral forums to accelerate gender equality and promote the human rights of women and girls through the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and other international commitments (INMUJERES, 2021).

where she spoke of a commitment to mainstreaming gender equality in all policies and aspects of Mexican foreign policy. She recognized that there had been some setbacks which had caused disenchantment among women, and accordingly urged a redoubling of efforts and participation to break the statistical silence, disaggregate data, close gaps in economic autonomy and promote parity in all diplomatic positions, zero tolerance of violence and the inclusion of a specific chapter on gender in all international treaties and conventions (Government of Mexico, 2023a).

Mexico also announced its first national action plan Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security in 2021, when it held a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. This plan involves the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence, the Navy, the Ministry of Security and Citizen Protection and INMUJERES (Government of Mexico, 2021). Like most such plans, it is organized around the four pillars of the Security Council resolution. The plan includes 4 thematic areas and 10 strategic objectives, for each of which lines of action, activities, targets and indicators have been identified. The main objective of the Mexican national action plan is to “promote the substantive participation of women as real and effective actors in conflict prevention at all levels and in United Nations efforts to maintain, reconstruct and consolidate peace” (Government of Mexico, 2021, p. 5). It is also part of the Women Peacebuilders (MUCPAZ) model, which is implemented within Mexico by the Ministry of Security and Citizen Protection and INMUJERES.

Although trade is not explicitly mentioned in Mexico’s feminist foreign policy, the country, along with the United States and Canada, included gender provisions in a free trade agreement for the first time. The Agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada (USMCA), signed in 2019, contains references to gender in the labour chapter and the chapter on small and medium-sized enterprises (Celorio and Carrera, 2021). At the same time, the Ministry of Economy has carried out a number of activities to promote the integration of small businesswomen into international trade, in parallel with the feminist foreign policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (INMUJERES, 2020). In the framework of the Pacific Alliance, likewise, the Pacific Alliance Presidential Declaration on Gender Equality was signed in 2020, followed by its road map, both proposed by the Technical Group on Gender in which the Pacific Alliance countries (Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru) recognize the fundamental role of women as business owners, entrepreneurs, workers and consumers in the growth and development of the countries (Pacific Alliance, n.d.).

Because Mexico is not a member of DAC, there are no comparable data available on the amounts and percentages of international development cooperation earmarked for gender equality. Nor is this information available in the publicly accessible documents setting out the objectives of Mexico’s feminist foreign policy. Three years into this policy, neither the budgets nor the action, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of this agenda have yet been published, something that is necessary for the general public and interested civil society organizations to be able to easily measure Mexico’s progress. In particular, it would be important to know how feminist foreign policy has permeated South-South and triangular cooperation practices. Where cooperation is concerned, however, the adoption of the gender mainstreaming handbook titled *Guía para la transversalización de la perspectiva de género en programas y proyectos de cooperación internacional para el desarrollo*, which came out of the AMEXCID Cooperation Programme and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is recognized as good practice (UNDP, 2023).

The Chile-Mexico Joint Cooperation Fund also deserves a mention within the framework of international cooperation. This instrument is part of the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2006 by the two countries, is intended to finance the implementation of bilateral and trilateral development cooperation projects and contains a large gender component, as this is a priority area agreed by the two countries (Government of Mexico, 2023b).

Many of the effects of the implementation of the feminist foreign policy in Mexico are already visible. Mexico’s decision makes it the first country in Latin America and the global South to adopt a feminist foreign policy and reflects the intention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to improve the living conditions of women, adolescent girls and girl children and to accelerate progress towards gender equality within and beyond the country. It also sets an example for other countries to follow.

## F. Spain

Spain's Law No. 1/2023 on Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity, passed in February 2023, was a milestone for international development cooperation, since it made Spain the first country to create a State policy on feminist cooperation. The law defines "gender equality, pursued from a feminist perspective, as an essential, cross-cutting and distinctive element of Spanish cooperation" (Ministry of the Presidency, Justice and Relations with the Courts of Spain, 2023). It also treats gender equality and the protection of women's and girls' rights from an intersectional perspective as two of its principal objectives. In this document, Spain committed to allocating at least 0.7% of GNP to ODA by 2030, with intermediate targets set in the Spanish Cooperation Master Plans. Law No. 1/2023 emphasizes cooperation on climate change and includes the effort to combat violence against women among the purposes of and commitment to what it calls the "twofold gender approach", i.e., the transformative feminist approach, and a focus on intersectionalities (Ministry of the Presidency, Justice and Relations with the Courts of Spain, 2023).

The history of Spain's most recent cooperation law and its emphasis on gender equality goes back more than 15 years, with policies and laws such as Organic Law No. 3/2007 for the Effective Equality of Women and Men and the Spanish Cooperation Strategy for Gender in Development (Ministry of the Presidency, Justice and Relations with the Courts of Spain, 2007). This is further reflected in Law No. 2/2014 on State Action and External Service and in Master Plans II, III, IV and V, adopted between 2005 and 2021, which set in train a constant process of gender mainstreaming in the strategies, methodologies, strategic planning guides and agreements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation (Ministry of the Presidency, Justice and Relations with the Courts of Spain, 2014; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2023a). Thus, Spain has progressively demonstrated its commitment to women's rights and autonomy within and beyond its borders.

On 8 March 2021, the President of Spain announced Spain's feminist foreign policy, which had a major impact on its international development cooperation policy and other core aspects of its international action. That same day, Spain published the core document that would guide its global presence on feminist principles: the handbook entitled *Política Exterior Feminista: impulsando la igualdad en la acción exterior española (Feminist Foreign Policy: pursuing equality in Spain's external action)* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021). The document details the policy's rationale and the means to be used by the country in all spheres of its international relations to promote the rights of women and girls in their diversity. According to the text, the guiding principles of Spain's feminist foreign policy are a transformative approach, committed leadership, ownership, inclusive participation and partnership building, and intersectionality and diversity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021).

Both in documents and at events, the Spanish authorities frequently mention that, for Spain, having a feminist foreign policy is a matter of consistency with its domestic goals and principles. The document setting out Spain's foreign policy strategy states that the country wishes to maintain the same level of commitment to gender equality in all its public policies, including foreign policy, and thereby strengthen its consistency and credibility in this area. Furthermore, it points out that Law No. 2/2014 on State Action and External Service (the predecessor to Law No. 1/2023) already identified the promotion of equality between men and women and the elimination of gender-based violence as core interests of Spain (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021).

As in Canada, it is argued in Spain that gender equality promotes the development of society as a whole, since it fosters economic growth and productivity. It is also recognized as a precondition for sustainable peace and prosperity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021). The first step proposed to implement a feminist foreign policy is the mainstreaming of gender in foreign policy. Like Sweden, France and Mexico, Spain also emphasizes the need to improve the representation of women in high-level positions in the diplomatic corps and other foreign policy-related positions. Specifically, the goal is for 25% of ambassadors to be women worldwide and 15% in the G20 countries, up from the current figures of 15% overall and no female ambassadors in the G20 countries.

The need to create feminist foreign policy coordination posts is also recognized, and Spain has created the position of Special Ambassador for Feminist Foreign Policy and appointed gender focal points in its representations and missions to international organizations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021).

At the same time, Spain has emphasized the need to collaborate with actors outside the Spanish government and the usual interlocutors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, such as NGOs, the private sector, and universities and research centres (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021). For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation assembled a consultative group of focal points from the different State secretariats of the Ministry and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) to develop the feminist foreign policy. Subsequently, it set up a high-level consultative group of feminist experts from the public administration, civil society and think tanks to draft what would become the Feminist Foreign Policy Action Plan 2023–2024 (detailed below).

Furthermore, once its feminist foreign policy had been inaugurated, Spain started treating the multilateral and regional organizations in which it participates, such as the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the European Union, as forums for advancing its gender equality goals. Moreover, an innovative feature of Spain's foreign policy is that it identifies bilateral and regional foreign policy as fields of action that need to be exploited to achieve its goals (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021). The collaboration on gender equality between the Spanish authorities in charge of international development cooperation and ECLAC is detailed in box 4.

#### Box 4

##### **The collaboration between the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) on data and information for gender equality**

In 2006, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) concluded a cooperation framework agreement with annual work plans. Gender equality is one of the priorities of the collaboration.

AECID provided substantial support for the implementation and development of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (OIG). OIG is a tool created by the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC at the request of governments attending the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2007). Its purpose is to help strengthen national machineries for the advancement of women, disseminate official information from the region's governments and facilitate the monitoring of international agreements on women's rights. It also contributes to the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda adopted at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

OIG coordinates actions with the national machineries for the advancement of women and the national statistical institutes of the region's countries and with United Nations, intergovernmental and cooperation agencies engaged in this task. It publicizes areas of progress with gender equality and the autonomy of women, adolescent girls and girl children and areas where more work is needed in the countries of the region (ECLAC, 2023g).

OIG provides critical resources for formulating public policies and monitoring the implementation of the countries' gender equality commitments, namely:

- Gender statistics and indicators
- Legislative and policy repositories
- Reports and studies
- Georeferenced care maps
- Profiles of countries with statistical information and of national policies.

This collaboration makes it possible to produce regular analyses, publications and reports on the progress made by public policies for the attainment of gender equality and women's autonomy in the region and the challenges they face.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Quito Consensus", Quito, 2007 [online] <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/25284b6d-993c-4bc1-b9ec-bb5aa6ef1d90/content>; Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en>.

The agenda on women, peace and security was integrated into Spain's feminist foreign policy through thematic priority (a) of line of action 4 of the document *Política Exterior Feminista: impulsando la igualdad en la acción exterior española*, referring to the second national action plan adopted in Spain to follow up on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, which ran until the end of 2023 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021). On the trade front, *Política Exterior Feminista: impulsando la igualdad en la acción exterior española* states that the country will continue to follow up on the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment, approved in the framework of WTO, and will support the inclusion of gender chapters in all trade agreements negotiated by the European Union. In addition, there are plans to boost women's access to digital media, such as e-commerce, in order to reduce the gap between men and women in international trade participation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021). On gender and climate change, Spain will follow up on the commitments of the Initiative on Gender and Climate Change adopted during the 2019 Climate Action Summit and strive towards implementation of the Lima Work Programme on Gender and the Gender Action Plan that came out of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, also held in 2019 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021).

From the outset, Spain's feminist foreign policy has provided for monitoring mechanisms with a view to fostering learning and continuous improvement. This connects with a culture of evaluation in the field of gender policies: since 2013, the AECID Evaluation Policy has included cross-cutting gender, human rights, diversity and sustainability priorities, and Spain contributed significantly to the new DAC evaluation manual with a gender and human rights approach (OECD, 2023b; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2013). Feminist foreign policy will be monitored by means of annual reports that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation itself will publish, present in Parliament and discuss with civil society (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021). Likewise, the creation of the High-level Advisory Group will allow it to establish priorities and avenues for future action.

Given that at the time of writing these reports have yet to be produced and published, since it is considered too early to start the evaluation process, it has not been possible to use them as inputs to evaluate Spain's feminist foreign policy. However, their future publication could foster accountability, learning and improvement processes conducive to an increasingly feminist foreign and cooperation policy.

In October 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation took a further step in the institutionalization of feminist foreign policy by announcing the Feminist Foreign Policy Action Plan 2023–2024. The purpose of this plan is to guide and coordinate implementation of the feminist cooperation handbook published in 2021 by identifying specific actions to achieve its aims and assigning specific responsibilities to the authorities concerned. The actors involved are not confined to departments and agencies within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, but are also found in other ministries with the capacity to influence women's rights through international action (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2023a).

The activities in the proposed Feminist Foreign Policy Action Plan 2023–2024 are divided into four main areas of work. The first is the feminist foreign agenda, which includes objectives for achieving gender equality at the multilateral, regional, bilateral and European Union levels. Actions in this area include some innovative and timely measures aimed at tackling the climate crisis from a feminist perspective, supporting the implementation of a European care strategy, establishing a feminist global health strategy and strengthening Spain's mechanisms for bilateral cooperation with other countries that have feminist foreign policies.

The second area, equality in the foreign service, sets out the measures to be taken to ensure that gender equality permeates the institutional structures of Spain's actions abroad. These include measures to promote gender parity in appointments to executive positions, facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life for staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation and protect these from sexual harassment and gender-based violence. The third area is the coordination and harmonization of actors, with the creation of a High-level Advisory Group responsible for seeking out opportunities to

advance feminist foreign policy objectives and support accountability processes. Last but not least, the fourth area concerns accountability and includes the establishment of monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms that support the rest of the plan.

With regard to international development cooperation and humanitarian action, Spain committed itself in the feminist foreign policy handbook to ensuring that at least 85% of its development cooperation actions had the empowerment of women and girls as a principal or significant objective, in accordance with the mandates of Gender Action Plans II and III and the Action Plans for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in the External Action of the European Union (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021). In line with this, the Feminist Foreign Policy Action Plan 2023–2024 states that Spain will increase funding for development cooperation and humanitarian action programmes that have women's empowerment and gender equality as their principal or a significant objective.

Some of Spain's commitments have already translated into increased funding for feminist agendas. One piece of encouraging news is that the AECID budget for cooperation and humanitarian action initiatives with a gender focus increased by 50% in 2022 over 2021 (AECID, 2023). In September 2022, Spain committed to allocating 100 million euros over the next three years to organizations concerned with women's rights, in particular sexual and reproductive rights (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2022b). When it comes to institutionalizing feminist cooperation, AECID has a gender mainstreaming handbook that provides its teams with general and specific guidelines and with tools to analyse the impact of its cooperation initiatives on gender equality and women's human rights (AECID, 2015).

Despite its undeniable and growing commitment to gender equality on the international scene in recent years, Spain's international development cooperation earmarked for gender projects experienced some ups and downs in earlier years (in absolute though not relative terms). In 2009 and 2010, Spain increased its ODA very significantly and was one of the main donors involved in the creation of UN-Women and gender programmes that were emblematic for the United Nations in those years, such as the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, the United Nations Fund for Gender Equality and the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, with more than 70 million euros for the gender window (UN-Women, 2015). This was followed by a negative trend in absolute terms from 2010 to 2015 as Spain went through a financial crisis and its total ODA diminished. After a slow recovery until 2018, there was a small decrease between 2019 and 2021 and fresh growth in 2021. Given these fluctuations, Law No. 1/2023 on Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity is a positive sign which could translate into a continuation of the 2021 growth in Spain's overall ODA, and in ODA with gender equality as a significant or principal focus in particular.

The top recipients of Spain's gender-targeted ODA in 2021 were, in descending order, Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Morocco. That same year, the sectors receiving most funding from Spain were health, government and civil society, humanitarian assistance, and agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Since 2021, AECID has had the ELLAS+ Fund, which finances projects to promote women's political participation, while the AECID Humanitarian Action Office has a vertical gender fund with 20% of its budget earmarked for gender and anti-violence initiatives in humanitarian action (AECID, 2022a). Since 2022, the Spanish cooperation system has also been funding care policies, with more than 15 projects under way as of September 2023 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2023a). In May 2023, moreover, the consultation sessions for the sixth Master Plan for Spanish Development Cooperation 2023–2026 were held, and the commitment to feminist cooperation was unanimously reconfirmed by all Spanish development cooperation actors (AECID, 2022b).

In the area of women, peace and security, Spain's second national action plan to follow up on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) takes both a domestic and an external perspective on the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda (Government of Spain, 2017). For example, it mentions the task of complementing Spain's two plans to combat trafficking in women and sexual exploitation, the

national plan to combat violent radicalization and the strategic plan for equal opportunities, as well as the State Covenants against Gender Violence (2017 and 2019) and the successive strategic plans for equal opportunities. This second national action plan was developed by an interministerial working group, with the participation of civil society. Spanish civil society and local NGOs play a central role in its implementation. The plan has a detailed implementation matrix describing each general objective and specifying its goals, actions and indicators and those responsible for achieving it (Government of Spain, 2017).

Although the field of trade is less developed than others in Spain's feminist foreign policy framework, the country is party to trade agreements with gender provisions as a member of the European Union and endorsed the 2017 WTO Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2021).

## G. Libya

Following the Generation Equality Forum in Paris in 2021, Libya's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Najla Mangoush, who is also the first woman to hold that position in the country, announced a commitment to develop a feminist foreign policy to help overcome the security, conflict and economic growth challenges Libya faces. In her speech in Paris, Mangoush linked this approach to the United Nations women, peace and security agenda (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021).

According to the Minister, the initiative will support issues critical to Libya, such as conducting free, fair and transparent elections; reducing the flow of arms and the presence of foreign fighters; countering terrorism and preventing extremism; combating forced displacement; implementing the women, peace and security agenda; and developing the country's first national action plan, with the creation of a model of shared responsibility that puts people at the centre of decision-making. In 2021, UN-Women and the Libyan Ministry of State for Women's Affairs agreed to collaborate to draft this national action plan. As of September 2023, however, it has yet to be published (Thompson, Ahmed and Khokhar, 2021).

No official documents or statements elaborating on Libya's feminist foreign policy were found. Nor does the country have any cooperation strategies focused on gender equality, and it has never released a national action plan that provides official or institutional information on the characteristics of its feminist foreign policy.

## H. Germany

In late 2021, Germany's Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Annalena Baerbock, announced that the country would adopt a feminist foreign policy and, to this end, would begin a process of consultation with international partners, experts and representatives of civil society. She also emphasized that the input of Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs staff, both in Germany and abroad, would be crucial in developing this strategy (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, 2023). At the time, the Minister also stated that Germany's feminist foreign policy would have a human security focus and would include aspects such as health services, economic and social development, conflict prevention and women's rights (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, 2022).

In parallel, the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Svenja Schulze, announced in 2021 that the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) would pursue a feminist international development cooperation policy with the aim of eradicating structural inequalities and discrimination caused by racist structures and unequal power relations (BMZ, 2023a). Planning and preparation for these two synergistic and complementary policies took place in 2022.

In early March 2023, the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany published a document setting out guidelines for the feminist foreign policy announced in late 2021 (Federal Ministry for Foreign

Affairs of Germany, 2023). This policy will aim to carry out gender-transformative work and balance principle and pragmatism, addressing foreign policy dilemmas and focusing its activities on gender equality and human security with a view to fostering a change of culture in foreign policy. The policy goals match the three "Rs" originally identified in Sweden's feminist foreign policy (rights, representation and resources) (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, 2023).

German foreign policy is based on 10 guidelines covering a range of issues where gender mainstreaming in the country's foreign relations is envisaged. These include peace and security, humanitarian assistance, sexual and reproductive health, climate change, trade and investment promotion and LGBTIQ+ inclusion. Three of the guidelines entail changes within the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany that favour gender equality. These changes include increasing the proportion of women in senior positions to 50% by 2025, introducing flexible working hours in the interests of work-life balance, introducing a policy of zero tolerance for sexual harassment in the workplace, training staff to develop competencies in the area of women's rights and gender equality, and creating foreign service positions that do not require international rotation. It was also announced at that time that a diplomatic post with responsibility for feminist foreign policy would be created, and this is now operative (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, 2023).

To implement this policy, the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany plans to coordinate and work with other federal ministries, as well as with international partners and representatives of civil society. At the European level, it will also initiate a dialogue with European Union foreign ministers on feminist-oriented foreign and security policies. Thus, this strategy adopts a holistic and multiscale governance perspective, from the national to the regional level (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, 2023).

With regard to the budget, Germany's feminist foreign policy states that a gender budgeting tool will be created and gender categories will be revised in accordance with OECD criteria for all projects implemented by the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, so that 85% of project funding goes to activities with a gender perspective and a further 8% to gender-transformative projects by 2025. The strategy includes follow-up mechanisms such as the establishment of a critical discussion forum with feminist foreign policy experts from academia and civil society. Other implementation tools in this policy include networks of partner organizations (called "multipliers" in the document) and mainstreaming (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, 2023).

Also in early March 2023, BMZ published a strategy paper for its feminist international development cooperation policy which states that Germany aims to foster strong and just societies globally, focusing its work on the three pillars referred to and addressing the levels of implementation, cooperation and institutions. The document was drafted through an extensive process of consultation with civil society organizations and experts from the global North and South. In addition, this strategy was coordinated with the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany and other German ministries (BMZ, 2023b).

According to BMZ, the feminist international development cooperation policy will be anti-colonial and anti-racist, gender-transformative and intersectional. Furthermore, it recognizes the differential impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on women, particularly in view of the disproportionate burden of care work that falls on them. Furthermore, given its coordinating and organizing capacity, and in order to increase support for feminist international development cooperation policies, the ministry will specifically pursue partnerships with multilateral forums, development banks, international funds and working groups, and civil society as recipients of its funds (BMZ, 2023b).

With regard to the budget, BMZ has committed to ensuring that, by 2025, 93% of the funding of newly commissioned projects will be spent on activities that promote gender equality. As a comparative starting point, the ministry reported that this figure was about 64% in 2021. Thus, by 2025, 85% of funds should be allocated to projects with gender equality as a significant objective and 8% to projects with gender equality as the principal objective (BMZ, 2023b). Lastly, the performance and progress of the

strategy's implementation will be assessed through various monitoring and evaluation instruments that have not yet been announced. BMZ will engage in a process of reflection on the status of the strategy's implementation and the evaluation of its success in 2025 (BMZ, 2023b).

With regard to international cooperation, by 2021 Germany already surpassed other DAC members with feminist international policies in the amount of ODA it devoted to activities in which the principal or a significant objective was gender related. Overall, this type of ODA has trended upward. As of 2021, in relative terms, Germany lagged behind a number of countries with comparable objectives in that it allocated only 50% of its ODA to projects with gender equality as the principal or a significant objective (OECD, 2023b). This figure should be interpreted in the light of Germany's situation as one of the few countries in the global North to already have met the target of spending 0.7% of GNP on international development cooperation and of the country's new commitment to increasing the proportion to 0.9% by 2025 (BMZ, 2023b).

According to OECD data for 2021, Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Türkiye and Colombia, in descending order, were the top recipients of German ODA with gender objectives. The sectors that received the most funding through this channel in 2021 were government and civil society, economic infrastructure and services, humanitarian assistance, other social infrastructure, and education (OECD, 2023b). Box 5 elaborates on another facet of Germany's international cooperation with a gender perspective: the collaboration between the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and ECLAC.

**Box 5**  
**Strategy for collaboration on feminist international development cooperation policies**  
**between the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**  
**and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)**

In 1980, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) established a strategic partnership that is implemented through ECLAC-BMZ/GIZ cooperation programmes.

As a result of the commitment by BMZ to developing a truly transformative feminist international development cooperation policy, in 2022 GIZ and the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC agreed to embark on a collaborative process to reorient Germany's strategy for international development cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean. The main objective is to formulate recommendations and establish criteria for reconfiguring Germany's bilateral official development assistance (ODA) in order to align it with the visions and objectives that the region has set for itself in the area of gender equality and women's rights and autonomy through the Regional Gender Agenda.

To this end, the German cooperation authorities and ECLAC have held various workshops, events and meetings participated in by representatives of the governments of Germany and Latin American and Caribbean countries, ECLAC officials and members of civil society organizations, in particular women's and feminist organizations and think tanks. On these occasions, discussions have been held on the criteria and priorities that should underpin Germany's international cooperation actions aimed at implementing the Regional Gender Agenda. One such discussion took place during a side event at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held in Buenos Aires in November 2022 (ECLAC, 2022b). The ECLAC Division for Gender Affairs was also represented at the German Week on Latin America and the Caribbean, in the dialogue "Designing a feminist policy for development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Expert dialogue with Minister Svenja Schulze", held in March 2023 (ECLAC, 2023b).

With the help of a German think tank, ECLAC and GIZ analysed the portfolio of German cooperation projects with gender objectives implemented in selected countries of Latin America and the Caribbean between 2017 and 2022, with the aim of formulating recommendations for BMZ on possible improvements. This is the first time a North-South cooperation initiative with Latin America and the Caribbean has explicitly sought to align a country's international development cooperation policy with the Regional Gender Agenda agreed over the past 45 years at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Reseña. Evento paralelo: 'Políticas feministas de cooperación para el desarrollo: perspectivas y prioridades en América Latina y el Caribe'", Santiago, 2022 [online] [https://conferenciawomen.cepala.org/15/sites/crm15/files/resumen\\_giz\\_politicas\\_feministas\\_de\\_cooperacion\\_para\\_el\\_desarrollo\\_perspectivas\\_y\\_prioridades\\_en\\_america\\_latina\\_y\\_el\\_caribe.pdf](https://conferenciawomen.cepala.org/15/sites/crm15/files/resumen_giz_politicas_feministas_de_cooperacion_para_el_desarrollo_perspectivas_y_prioridades_en_america_latina_y_el_caribe.pdf); "CEPAL destaca en el marco de la Semana Alemana sobre América Latina y el Caribe que las políticas internacionales que se denominan feministas deben ser transformadoras", Santiago, 29 March 2023 [online] <https://www.cepala.org/es/notas/cepala-destaca-marco-la-semana-alemana-america-latina-caribe-que-politicas-internacionales-que>.

An important development was the announcement in July 2023 of Germany's most recent strategy for international cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean (BMZ, 2023c). In addition to a clear focus on environmental conservation and the fight against climate change, it emphasizes the feminist character of this cooperation, since one of the three priorities of the strategy is to promote just societies through a feminist international development cooperation policy. The main issues addressed on this point are the eradication of gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment and decision-making autonomy, including in the area of land policy and land rights and use. It also recognizes that women and indigenous peoples in the region are particularly affected by environmental degradation because their livelihoods are often directly and disproportionately dependent on access to natural resources (BMZ, 2023c).

In addition to its track record in international cooperation with a gender focus, Germany has extensive experience in the area of women, peace and security. The German government's third and most recent national action plan was adopted in 2021 and runs until 2024. It contains six priority areas, namely: (i) crisis prevention; (ii) participation; (iii) protection and support; (iv) humanitarian assistance, crisis management and reconstruction; (v) strengthening of the women, peace and security agenda; and (vi) institutional capacity-building and integration (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, 2021). The national action plan was developed in cooperation with the Federal Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; Interior and Community; Justice and Consumer Protection; Defence; and Economic Cooperation and Development. This reveals a whole-of-government approach that is essential for the objectives of the women, peace and security agenda to be met. Furthermore, this strategy was developed in consultation with civil society in Germany and other countries and with experts in the field. The document contains a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan that describes the implementation mechanisms for the activities and their indicators and includes the budget for some of them (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, 2021).

Although trade is less developed than other fields in Germany's feminist international policy framework, the country is a party to trade agreements with gender provisions as a member of the European Union and has supported the incorporation of gender considerations in international arrangements, an example being the Commission on the Status of Women. Furthermore, the fifth directive of Germany's feminist foreign policy strategy includes activities to promote women's participation in trade at WTO and some of its foreign missions (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany, 2023).

## I. Kingdom of the Netherlands

In May 2022, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of International Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands sent a letter to the Dutch Congress to announce that the country would adopt a feminist foreign policy and to explain its value added (Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 2022b).

Shortly before, the country had asked the consultancy Ecorys to analyse the feminist foreign and cooperation policies of Canada, Spain, France, Luxembourg and Sweden to determine their impact. This document concluded that feminist policies improved understanding of gender, intersectionality and power relations in the ministries implementing them, increased the quality and effectiveness of their gender work and boosted diversity and inclusion within the ministries themselves (Ivens and van Paassen, 2021).

The feminist foreign policy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is based on the paradigm of the "four Rs" (rights, representation, resources and reality check). The publications that set about determining the content of this policy also explain that lack of access to abortion, the excessive burden of care and domestic work on women and the impact on them of natural disasters and armed conflicts are some of the problems it seeks to address (Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 2022b).

The areas that the feminist foreign policy should cover have also been outlined, among them: including the equality and parity agenda in bilateral discussions with other countries; including gender analysis as a standard part of strategy development and policymaking procedures; considering the effects of grant allocation or policy formulation and implementation on women, LGBTIQ+ people and minorities; involving and consulting

civil society organizations, including women's organizations, in policymaking and decision-making; conducting interim evaluations of feminist policies to gauge their effects on women and LGBTIQ+ people and adjusting them if necessary; and increasing the capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to implement feminist policy through training and knowledge development (Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 2022b).

In May 2023, the progress made in the first year of the Dutch feminist foreign policy was reported. It included a conference held in collaboration with the International Criminal Court and the European Commission on international accountability in Ukraine, which addressed sexual violence in the context of armed conflict; the inclusion of a gender expert in the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 27) in 2022; the MenEngage initiative, which seeks to open up spaces for dialogue so that men can participate in the promotion of gender equality; and various activities to commemorate International Women's Day (Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 2023a).

However, the feminist foreign policy and the feminist international development cooperation policy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are still a work in progress. In the second half of 2022, a consultation process on what the feminist foreign policy should look like began, involving staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of the Kingdom of the Netherlands' representations abroad and youth representatives, among other partners (Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 2023a). Consequently, it is not yet possible to analyse Dutch feminist policies in depth.

In September 2023, the Kingdom of the Netherlands was in the third year of its 2021–2024 National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security. This plan, the fourth national action plan adopted in the country, was developed by way of a consultation process involving the Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Defence; Justice and Security; and Science and Culture, together with the police service and more than 60 civil society organizations. Its five strategic objectives are aligned with the women, peace and security agenda and prioritize gender mainstreaming. They are: (i) participation; (ii) prevention; (iii) protection; (iv) relief, reconstruction and recovery; and (v) mainstreaming of the women, peace and security agenda. All goals have quantitative and qualitative indicators to assess progress towards their attainment, and responsible persons or entities have been designated for each goal. Progress towards the goals is reported annually, and meetings focused on learning are held every two years with actors important to the themes of the plan. The national action plan has an allocated budget and indicators directly related to its funding (NAP 1325, 2021).

International development cooperation is part of the feminist foreign policy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, since the Directorate-General for International Cooperation is under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This could increase the percentage of ODA allocated to gender equality initiatives, which in 2021 already accounted for about 78% of bilateral cooperation. Overall, the level of ODA that the Kingdom of the Netherlands dedicates to initiatives with gender equality as a principal or significant objective has trended upward since 2009, although in 2019 and 2020 it experienced moderate reductions (OECD, 2023b).

According to the latest DAC report on ODA, data available for 2021 show that trends have changed and most Dutch ODA with a gender perspective goes to government and civil society initiatives; agriculture, forestry and fisheries; and population policies and sexual and reproductive health issues. The top recipients that year, in descending order, were Ethiopia, Mali, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Yemen (OECD, 2023b).

Although the trade area is less developed than others in the feminist foreign policy framework of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the country is part of trade agreements with gender provisions because of its membership of the European Union (Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 2022b).

As mentioned, it would be premature to study the progress of the Kingdom of the Netherlands' feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy, since its specific objectives and methods of implementation, funding and evaluation have yet to be determined. However, the country's earlier commitments to gender equality agendas, the resources devoted to them so far and the speeches of ministers to the Senate paint a promising picture.

## J. Chile

On 30 June 2022, during an official visit to Madrid, the then Chilean Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antonia Urrejola, announced for the first time that Chile would sign a cooperation agreement with Spain to build Chile's feminist foreign policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2022a). Subsequently, the Chilean authorities stated that their priorities in the multilateral arena would include continuing to work to eradicate violence against women and girls in the framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to pursue progress with sexual and reproductive rights, in particular the rights of LGBTIQ+ people. Regulatory and legislative changes would allow the working terminology used in the Foreign Ministry to be adapted and more women to be incorporated into decision-making at all levels (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2022a). In May 2022, furthermore, it was mentioned in the Chilean diplomatic academy that the areas of action of Chile's feminist foreign policy would be the multilateral, bilateral, consular, commercial, cooperation and institutional spheres. In addition, it was stated that work would be carried out to set up a technical advisory board for the development of this feminist foreign policy (Andrés Bello Diplomatic Academy, 2022).

In April 2022, ProChile, the Chilean trade promotion agency attached to the Undersecretariat for International Economic Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, released its Gender Agenda 2022, with the intention of closing gender gaps in Chile's international trade. In particular, it was mentioned that this agenda envisaged "concrete actions aimed at contributing to the country's recovery, through the participation of women and indigenous peoples in foreign trade, to contribute to the diversification of exports, bringing the benefits of export activity to more people" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2022b).

These 2022 declarations indicated that Chile's feminist foreign policy would have a comprehensive, multidimensional and intersectional approach to governance that would include the fields of diplomacy, international cooperation, trade, consular activity and a reorganization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to achieve gender equality internally. That same year, the Chilean government announced that participatory processes would be carried out to ascertain the concerns of Chilean foreign policy officials, as well as those of the academic sector and Chileans abroad, in order to finally initiate Chile's feminist foreign policy in 2023 (SEGIB, 2022).

Thus, Chile's feminist foreign policy was officially inaugurated on 12 June 2023 at an event attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alberto van Klaveren, and the Undersecretaries of Foreign Affairs, Gloria de la Fuente, and of International Economic Relations, Claudia Sanhueza (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023a). On that occasion, a document detailing Chile's feminist foreign policy strategy was published, including its main objectives, the authorities involved and the implementation mechanisms. According to this text, the decision to adopt a feminist foreign policy was rooted in the Chilean government's political determination to place gender equality at the heart of public policy. It also recognizes the need to establish feminist foreign policy as a State policy and describes the strategy as a living and constantly evolving document which should command broad participation by different sectors of government and society (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b).

The document makes it clear that Chile frames its feminist foreign policy within a human rights approach in a way that is consistent with its international obligations. Among other mechanisms, reference is made to the United Nations Charter, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the Convention of Belém do Pará and Chile's commitment to the fulfilment of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Regional Gender Agenda (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b). The text also addresses the need for interinstitutional cooperation to ensure the effectiveness of feminist foreign policy. It mentions that the coordination of feminist policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by constitutional mandate, and that this will require permanent dialogue and interaction with other ministries, especially the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b).

The thematic priorities identified in the core document of Chile's feminist foreign policy are: human rights and the strengthening of democracy with a focus on gender equality; the eradication and elimination of gender-based violence; the empowerment and increased representation of women in decision-making; the women, peace and security agenda; and areas such as trade and gender, climate change and gender, and the digital and science, technology and innovation agenda (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023a). Furthermore, it makes clear that the spheres of action include the multilateral, bilateral and regional integration fields.

In the multilateral sphere of Chile's feminist foreign policy, the actions planned include activities to publicize the country's feminist foreign policy work, the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in multilateralism and the equal representation of women at all hierarchical levels in multilateral spaces (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b). Where the bilateral agenda is concerned, meanwhile, there will be efforts to diversify bilateral dialogues, with an emphasis on deepening collaboration on gender issues and prioritizing neighbouring countries in the region. Efforts will also be made to strengthen the sharing of experiences with countries that have adopted feminist foreign policies. With regard to regional integration, it is proposed that Chile participate in integration and consultation mechanisms such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Pacific Alliance in order to identify issues of shared interest and coordinate common positions in global discussions and forums on gender equality (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b).

The document on Chile's feminist foreign policy also explains that, although it will be headed by the Undersecretariats of Foreign Affairs and International Economic Relations, other areas of the Chilean Foreign Ministry will also play an important role. In the consular sphere, for example, cases of gender-based violence will be dealt with more effectively through protocols and training in initial response and crisis management (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b). The National Directorate of State Borders and Boundaries and the General Directorate of Export Promotion also have an important role to play in this policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b).

With regard to feminist cooperation, in 2023 the Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID) adopted a new international cooperation strategy that reinforces the gender mainstreaming this agency has been implementing since 2015, by adding gender to the thematic focuses of the cooperation it manages. The new AGCID International Development Cooperation Strategy 2023–2026 identifies four guiding criteria: (i) inclusive and sustainable development, (ii) human rights and gender equity, (iii) the "turquoise policy" for the environment and (iv) neighbouring Latin American countries. This strategy is aligned with the feminist foreign policy as regards the intensification of the country's bilateral and multilateral links, especially through partnerships for development, such as the current link with the European Union. However, it should be noted that it will also promote the establishment of new partnerships. The strategy will additionally focus on the search for new forms of financing, access to technical cooperation and human capital formation, always seeking to fulfil the objective of leaving no one behind (AGCID, 2023).

Where international trade is concerned, efforts will be made to generate more opportunities for women by introducing new programmes and enhancing the ProChile gender and trade initiatives (such as the *Mujer Exporta* and *Activa Empresarias* programmes). ProChile will also promote the sharing of experiences and good practices with other countries, in order to tackle the gender gap in different areas of international trade, including the role of women as exporters, workers and consumers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023a). On other related issues, more opportunities will be created for women in international trade by incorporating and enhancing gender provisions in trade agreements. The effects of international trade on gender issues and the cooperation activities needed to close gender gaps will also be analysed (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b).

Chile's feminist foreign policy strategy recognizes the need for a sound institutional framework and the allocation of specific budgetary resources. Accordingly, there is a plan to review and amend manuals and procedures, create a gender affairs division responsible for coordinating feminist foreign policy in

the Foreign Ministry and collaborate with international organizations to obtain suggestions for necessary changes in regulations and protocols. Reference is also made to a future review of manuals and procedures relating to ill-treatment and sexual and other harassment in the workplace, and to improvements in training on gender issues via the diplomatic academy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b). In this area, and in line with the objective of increasing the participation of women in decision-making spaces and at all levels of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile also proposes to participate in certification processes to validate the Foreign Ministry's compliance with high standards of gender equality and work-life balance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b).

The document underlines the importance of resource allocation, not only to give continuity to the new government structure that will be created for feminist foreign policy, but also to fund gender equality programmes and initiatives (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b). Lastly, it establishes that the Undersecretariat of Foreign Affairs will be in charge of formulating and implementing an action plan for feminist foreign policy, including the construction of a follow-up and implementation mechanism consistent with the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 2022–2026 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b).

Although this thorough-going feminist foreign policy is a new process in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, it has built on earlier gender mainstreaming processes in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that already pointed to the potential of Chile's feminist international policy. Because it is not a member of DAC, despite being classified as a high-income country, it is not possible to analyse Chile's international cooperation on gender issues in comparison with other countries. However, the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the 2015 Chilean International Development Cooperation Policy sets a precedent for the consolidation of feminist principles in the country's international assistance (AGCID, 2015).

Another important earlier development was Chile's pioneering role in mainstreaming gender in international trade. Chile was the first country to incorporate a chapter centred on gender issues in a bilateral trade agreement (with Uruguay in 2016). This innovation has continued in successive agreements with Argentina, Brazil, Canada and Ecuador and, most recently, in negotiations with Paraguay, the European Union and Singapore (as a Pacific Alliance partner State). With this progressive and inclusive approach, Chile has taken a leading role in shaping an international trade policy aimed at ensuring a more equitable distribution of the benefits of trade and investment. Chile has also taken a step forward in inclusiveness with the incorporation of a chapter on digital inclusion into the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement in collaboration with New Zealand and Singapore (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023b).

In the area of women, peace and security, the document *Mujeres, seguridad y paz: Segundo Plan de Acción Nacional para la implementación de la resolución del Consejo de Seguridad de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas 1325/2000* is the clearest example of Chile's position. It was drafted by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, National Defence and Women and Gender Equity in consultation with civil society organizations and research centres. The main objectives of the plan are to mainstream the gender perspective in all efforts to prevent conflict and combat gender-based violence; to promote women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations; to protect the well-being of women and girls, including their sexual and reproductive health and economic autonomy; and to increase women's access to assistance on the basis of their specific needs. The plan also envisages national initiatives to increase the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions related to conflict prevention and gender mainstreaming (Government of Chile, 2015).

Chile's national action plan includes a monitoring framework and a set of indicators to assess progress. These evaluations are carried out annually. It does not include an allocated budget, but states that participating institutions are responsible for financing their activities out of their annual budgets (Government of Chile, 2015). It has been announced that Chile will soon present its third national action plan, which will be developed from the multisectoral work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity and the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security.

## K. Colombia

The Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed in 2016 and better known as the peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), is an important precedent for the incorporation of feminist principles into Colombia's peace, security and development policies. This landmark peace agreement stands out as the first of its kind to give a central place to the gender perspective in the cessation of armed violence (Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, 2018), the one that contains the most gender measures and the one in which the most women negotiators participated (along with the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan of 2018). This effectively demonstrates that conflict resolution is not gender-neutral (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

The final document brings together 100 measures with a gender perspective on a range of issues, including comprehensive rural reform; political participation; the problem of drug trafficking; the comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition; and implementation and verification. Women participated substantively in the different negotiating steps, making up 46% of the participants in the discussions and 60% of the victims' delegations (UN-Women, 2018). This achievement would not have been possible without the contribution of the Colombian women's movement, which has historically been committed to the peacebuilding process, and heralds a feminist foreign policy that also takes account of the perspectives of women in their diversity.

On 21 September 2022, the President of Colombia, Gustavo Petro, took another step forward in advancing feminist perspectives in the actions of the Colombian government. In the framework of the General Assembly of the United Nations, he announced that the country would construct a feminist foreign policy (Infobae, 2022). To this end, he affirmed that the Colombian academic sector would be consulted and that good practices from the experiences of other countries with similar policies would be considered.

Further details of the content of the initiative were provided at an event entitled "National dialogue for the formulation of a feminist foreign policy", broadcast online from the Colombian Foreign Ministry in November 2022 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, 2022). It was stressed that Colombia's feminist foreign policy would aim to be transformative, addressing the structural causes of inequality and building on the premises of pacifism, participation and intersectionality. In the same conversation, the then Vice-Minister for Multilateral Affairs indicated that Colombian embassies and consulates had been instructed to incorporate a gender perspective into all agreements and initiatives they were part of, and that Colombia would be putting forward women candidates to international organizations. These instructions cover areas not traditionally considered part of diplomacy, such as disarmament and climate change response (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, 2022). In July 2023, the Colombian Foreign Ministry announced that it had formally initiated the design of its feminist foreign policy. Shortly before, the Ministry had appointed Diana Parra as its advisor for gender equality and the implementation of Colombia's first feminist foreign policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, 2023a). At the time of writing in September 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was conducting consultations and national dialogue for the policy.

Alongside Colombia's new feminist foreign policy, in September 2022 President Petro also stated his intention to create a national action plan to follow up on Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), in consultation with women's movements up and down the country (Infobae, 2022). This will be the first plan for fulfilling the women, peace and security agenda to be adopted in Colombia. An important detail is that this national action plan is to be based on an extensive year-long consultation process.

Thus, the last of six regional forums was held in August 2023, and the national forum that concluded this process took place at the end of September the same year. In addition, seven forums for different population groups and seven territorial forums were held for the same purpose. In all, it is estimated that around 1,500 women in all their diversity participated in these forums and gave their views (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, 2023b).

Colombia is not a member of DAC, so it is not possible to analyse the resources it has allocated to international development cooperation for gender agendas in comparison with the other countries examined in this study. At the time of writing, the impact that Colombia's foreign policy will have on international trade, international development cooperation and climate change measures is not yet known. However, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, the peace agreement and the announcements made to date offer clues to the ambition and scope this new feminist international policy could have.

## L. Argentina

On 2 February 2023, Decree No. 881/2022 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina was published, announcing the country's interest in "implementing a feminist international policy strategy aimed at achieving a broader approach to be applied to all external actions of the Argentine Republic, coordinating external action and domestic policies" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, 2023a). The decision to adopt a feminist foreign policy was based on the international commitments accepted by the country under the American Convention on Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Cairo Programme of Action, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, the SDGs and the Regional Gender Agenda, in particular the Buenos Aires Commitment of 2022 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, 2023a).

The same decree underlines the need to devote adequate resources to such an ambitious policy, notes that its approach will be cross-cutting and mentions some of the areas in which it will have an impact, including international development cooperation and economic, diplomatic, cultural and educational challenges. The communiqué of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina seemed to indicate that this meant the allocation of adequate human resources, specifically the appointment of a special representative for feminist foreign policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, 2023a).

Indeed, Argentina created the position of Special Representative for Feminist Foreign Policy, with functions including coordination of work for women's equality, rights and autonomy within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, and the pursuit of joint actions with other areas of the public administration whose activities influence the results of the feminist foreign policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, 2023a).

Argentina is not part of DAC, so it is not possible to analyse the resources it has allocated to international development cooperation for gender agendas in comparison with the other countries examined in this study. However, Argentina has adopted national action plans in the past, and these give an idea of what its feminist foreign policy might offer in the future in the area of women, peace and security.

Argentina's first national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) to follow up on the women, peace and security agenda was designed in 2015 and ran until 2018. This document was developed with the participation of civil society and the cooperation of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship; Security; Justice and Human Rights; Interior; Labour, Employment and Social Security; Education; Health; Economy; and Defence. The plan also established a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The second national action plan was launched in 2022 and will run until 2025. The multiplicity of actors involved in the plan indicates a willingness to collaborate at the interministerial level in pursuit of agendas that require the participation of several arms of the executive branch (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, 2023b).

On 10 December 2023, after 11 months of effort, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina ended its feminist foreign policy and terminated the work of the Special Representative for Feminist Foreign Policy.

**Table 3**  
**Characteristics of feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies, September 2023**

Country	Start year	Type	National strategy	Operating manual or action plan	Reports to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)	Ambassador or special envoy for the feminist policy	National action plan to follow up on resolution 1325 (2000)	Gender provisions in foreign trade agreements	Monitoring and evaluation mechanism
Sweden	2014 (discontinued in 2022)	Feminist foreign policy including international development cooperation	Swedish Foreign Service Action Plan for Feminist Foreign Policy 2015–2018 (discontinued)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (not current)	Yes	Yes
Canada	2017	Feminist international development cooperation policy	Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy	No	Yes	Yes	Yes (not current)	Yes	Yes
France	2018	Feminist foreign policy including international development cooperation	Stratégie Internationale de la France pour l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes (2018-2022)	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Luxembourg	2018	Feminist foreign policy including international development cooperation	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Mexico	2020	Feminist foreign policy including international development cooperation	La Política Exterior Feminista del Gobierno de México	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Spain	2021	Feminist foreign policy including international development cooperation	Política Exterior Feminista: impulsando la igualdad en la acción exterior española	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Libya	2021	Feminist foreign policy	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Germany	2021	Feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy	Guidelines for Feminist Foreign Policy: a foreign policy for all Feministische Entwicklungspolitik: Für gerechte und starke Gesellschaften weltweit	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Country	Start year	Type	National strategy	Operating manual or action plan	Reports to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)	Ambassador or special envoy for the feminist policy	National action plan to follow up on resolution 1325 (2000)	Gender provisions in foreign trade agreements	Monitoring and evaluation mechanism
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	2022	Feminist foreign policy	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Chile	2022	Feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy	Política Exterior Feminista Estrategia de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo de AGCID 2023–2026	No	No	No	Yes (not current, renewal pending)	Yes	No
Colombia	2022	Feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy	No	No	No	No	No (preparation announced)	Yes	No
Argentina	2023 (discontinued in December 2023)	Feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, *Handbook: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy*, Stockholm, 2019; Government of Canada, *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy*, Ottawa, 2017; Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, "Stratégie Internationale de la France pour l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes (2018-2022)", *Rapport de Stratégie*, Paris, 2018; Office of the Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of Mexico, "La Política Exterior Feminista del Gobierno de México", Mexico City, 2020 [online] [https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/576095/Presentacio\\_n\\_PEF\\_baja.pdf](https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/576095/Presentacio_n_PEF_baja.pdf); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, *Política Exterior Feminista: impulsando la igualdad en la acción exterior española*, Madrid, 2021; Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, "Guidelines for Feminist Foreign Policy: a foreign policy for all", Berlin, 1 March 2023 [online] <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/ffp-guidelines/2585074>; Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Mexico (BMZ), *Feministische Entwicklungspolitik: Für gerechte und starke Gesellschaften weltweit*, Berlin, 2023; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, *Política Exterior Feminista*, Santiago, 2023; Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID), "Estrategia de la Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo de AGCID 2023-2026", Santiago, 2023 [online] [https://www.agci.cl/images/centro\\_documentacion/Estrategia\\_de\\_Cooperacion\\_AGCID\\_2023\\_2026.pdf](https://www.agci.cl/images/centro_documentacion/Estrategia_de_Cooperacion_AGCID_2023_2026.pdf).

## V. Recommendations and opportunities

Thanks to the impetus provided by global, regional and national women's and feminist movements and the political will of the international community and national governments, a complex global web of norms, institutions and policies dedicated to gender equality and women's rights from a feminist perspective has been consolidated over the past seven decades. Gender mainstreaming has advanced as part of the transformation of international relations mainly during the last five decades, with landmark events including the United Nations World Conferences on Women and the Regional Conferences on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, the birth and development of the women, peace and security agenda and the increasing integration of the gender equality perspective into aspects related to financing for development and the international financial architecture, climate action, international trade, humanitarian response, international migration, the urban agenda, water and all aspects of Our Common Agenda at the United Nations to address global and local challenges from the perspective of feminist transformation, interdependence and human ecodependence.

In the last decade, a significant step in the same direction has been taken at national level as well. A growing number of countries (12 at the time of writing) have set more ambitious goals for gender equality and the rights of women, adolescent girls and girl children in their diversity by institutionalizing feminism as a priority in their foreign affairs and international cooperation agendas and initiatives. By adopting a feminist policy, governments commit themselves to promoting women's rights and gender equality with a higher standard of gender mainstreaming: the feminist transformation of the State, politics, the market, communities and people in all their diversity.

As discussed in the definition that orients this study, in addition to transforming institutions and politics from a feminist perspective in order to achieve an inclusive and sustainable common future, feminist policies need to accelerate the effort to overcome structural gender inequalities and achieve autonomy for women and girls in all their diversity and in all spheres. In line with what has been proposed by ECLAC, such policies would contribute to a renewed multilateralism centred on the care society and the achievement of substantive equality in the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development, as well as the right to peace for current and future generations.

A declaration at the highest level of government of the intention to pursue a feminist foreign policy or a feminist international development cooperation policy can in itself bring about desirable changes that advance women's rights and autonomy in the countries where it is made. The institutional framework may still be incipient, but this study shows that the declaration of a feminist intent itself can open up a space for different groups in civil society, academia and citizens in general to demand greater advances in gender equality and to participate in achieving them. For example, failure to put in place the necessary content, resources and institutional framework for these policies can act as a warning sign for feminist activists and networks. Thus, the adoption of feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies, in synergy, has had a deliberative and democratizing effect and led to greater accountability. Among other things, these policies have prompted the creation of NGOs dedicated to promoting a gender perspective in international action, increased academic interest in studying their potential and effects and encouraged the formation of networks and working groups of governments at the United Nations globally and regionally.

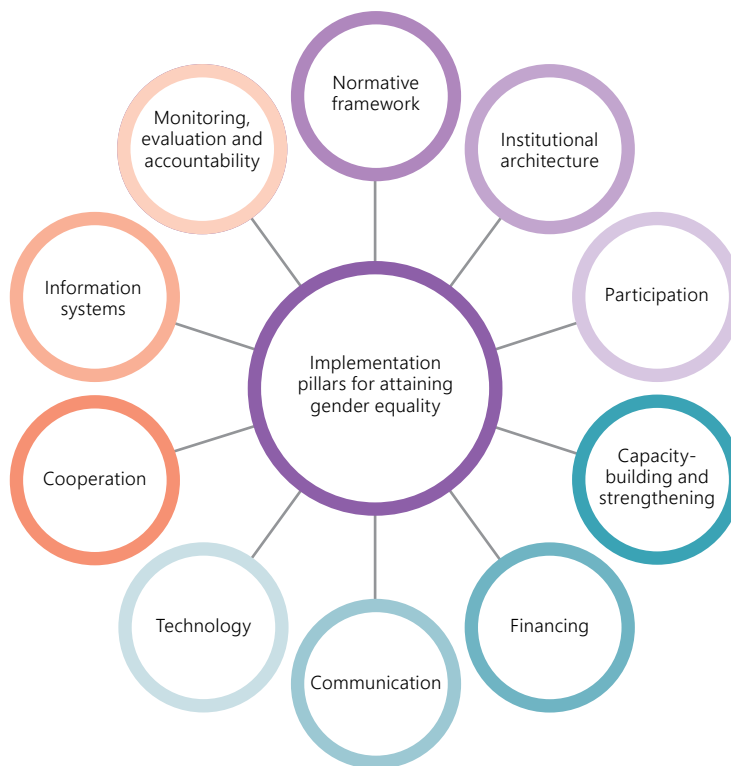
Nonetheless, substantive change in the direction of gender equality and secure enjoyment of the rights and autonomy of women, adolescent girls and girl children in their diversity requires policies that transcend declarations of principle and question and challenge the cultural, social, economic and political norms and practices which perpetuate gender inequality and social inequalities with an intersectional approach. The value of feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies lies in their ability to drive a deep structural transformation of power relations between countries and people and of institutions and society as a whole on the path towards feminist transformation.

In particular, feminist policies should be consolidated as progressive, comprehensive and cumulative State policies by means of appropriate institutions, adequate resources and budgets, the adoption of specific measures consistent with the women's rights framework and international human rights agreements, and the establishment of clear impact indicators and effective participation, evaluation and accountability mechanisms. Feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies should also translate into measurable changes tending towards full and meaningful social, political and economic participation for women in their diversity, the exercise of their right to a life free of violence and discrimination and an unequivocal commitment to gender equality at all levels and in all branches of government.

This paper promotes the idea of the "seven Rs" for feminist foreign policy, supplementing the "four Rs" proposed by Sweden (rights, resources, representation and reality check) with a further three, namely resistance, research and results. The last of these is crucial in the region, as it relates to the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda, made up of the agreements between States at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, together with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of international and regional human rights instruments. Although there is still a long way to go, the trend shows that countries pursuing feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies are moving in that direction.

In a context of cascading crises that is not merely delaying the closing of gender inequality gaps but is actually widening and deepening them, the implementation of feminist foreign and development cooperation policies is a fundamental pillar in the construction of a more egalitarian and peaceful world. On the basis of our analysis of foreign policy and international development cooperation instruments and frameworks and of communiqués, official reports and strategic documents produced by the countries' foreign ministries and international cooperation entities in relation to their feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies as at 30 September 2023, and in line with the 10 implementation pillars of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 (see diagram 2) approved by the member States of ECLAC at the thirteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, together with the Santiago Commitment and the Buenos Aires Commitment approved subsequently, as part of the Regional Gender Agenda agreed at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, we now present the final reflections of this study.

**Diagram 2**  
**Implementation pillars of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030**



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030* (LC/CRM.13/5), Santiago, 2017.

While the list below is not exhaustive, it offers a guide for countries wishing to implement foreign and development cooperation policies consistent with the feminist principles established over more than 45 years in the Regional Gender Agenda and illustrates some promising practices that are currently being implemented.

### **A. Pillar 1. The normative framework: State commitment**

The adoption of a feminist approach in foreign and development cooperation policies represents a crucial turning point. It is vital for this approach to be enshrined in international and national normative frameworks, so that feminist policies become State policies and transcend changes of government. The passing of national laws to buttress the goals and instruments of feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies is a powerful tool for promoting the tangible and sustainable changes that substantive equality requires. Spain's Law No. 1/2023 is an important example of this.

Moreover, the adoption, ratification and full implementation of the international and regional normative framework for gender equality and the human rights of women and girls in their diversity are a necessary first step for countries seeking to pursue feminist international policies. This implies systematic implementation and reporting on the application of the relevant international treaties, conventions, agreements and consensuses at all levels and in all branches of government. The international and regional framework to be followed includes the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (1994), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development, the Regional Gender Agenda agreed at the Regional Conferences on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), as well as related resolutions on women, peace and security and ILO conventions.

Over and above these commitments, countries with feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies have demonstrated their potential and their determination to continue establishing agreements, consensuses and mechanisms to guarantee the rights of women and girls in their diversity and gender equality in multilateral, regional and bilateral spaces.

## **B. Pillar 2. The institutional architecture: foundations for action**

The institutionalization of feminist foreign policies is an essential requirement to ensure the continuity of the progress and structural change they seek to bring about. According to Sepúlveda, Joquera and Borda (2023, p. 1), “the central issue to be resolved in current and future [feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies] in Latin America is the laying of solid institutional, administrative and legal foundations so that the political mandate which sustains them is lasting, despite changes in political authorities”.

The preparation of a framework or strategy document that explains the meaning of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy and lays down objectives, goals and political and technical guidelines provides government institutions in charge of foreign policy and international cooperation with precise goals to be achieved in a concerted manner in all areas. This not only creates synergy in domestic initiatives, but also provides a measurable standard for civil society (and women’s and feminist organizations in particular) and citizens at large to assess progress and participate in accountability processes. As of September 2023, the countries where the importance of having such a framework document had been recognized and acted upon were, in chronological order, Sweden, Canada, France, Mexico, Spain, Germany and Chile. It is hoped that other countries where consultative and planning processes are still ongoing will follow suit.

In addition to the publication of strategies, the development of operational manuals, tools and technical documents that assign specific responsibilities to different areas of ministries and agencies involved in the implementation of feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies is essential. Examples such as the operational manuals of Spain and Sweden demonstrate that specifying responsibilities and actions facilitates consistency and effectiveness in implementation. Such tools allow the feminist perspective to permeate all institutional structures and become a cross-cutting priority objective of development and foreign policy.

The national action plans to follow up on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions also constitute a fundamental element in the institutionalization of feminist foreign policies, specifically in the field of international security and the women, peace and security agenda.

The sustainable implementation of feminist policies requires that they do not rely solely on the commitment of one government or ministry, but are firmly rooted in institutional structures and formal decision-making processes, in the civil service and in the training and development of the people who make up the institutions. To this end, their mechanisms and procedures should be clear and accessible, foster ownership and create affirmative action measures and incentives that encourage the application of a feminist perspective in foreign policy and international cooperation. The appointment of specific teams with responsibility and authority to implement a cross-cutting feminist foreign policy or feminist international cooperation policy across all the core themes and pillars of the institutions in charge of these portfolios is an approach that has been highlighted throughout this analysis. The example of countries that have appointed ambassadors or special envoys for gender equality, such as Argentina, Canada, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, highlights the importance of having a specialized diplomatic authority and staff dedicated to feminist foreign policy.

To build truly inclusive and representative feminist international policies, women's full participation must also be palpable at all levels of government and the foreign service. This means ensuring substantive equality in government institutions, which translates into a deliberate and sustained increase in the number of women in decision-making positions within ministries and entities, the elimination of discriminatory practices and the achievement of work-life balance, taking into account the overburden of unpaid care work that usually falls on female staff. Fortunately, this is a goal of the great majority of the feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy strategies that have been created to date.

In addition to these actions at the ministries and entities in charge of foreign policy and international cooperation, it is advisable to maintain continuous communication and establish joint strategies with internationally active areas of the national government whose work has an impact on women's rights and autonomy. In particular, it is of the utmost importance to work and collaborate with national machineries for the advancement of women.

Another recommendation is to consolidate shared projects and programmes with the departments and ministries in charge of international trade, foreign investment, national and international security, fiscal policy, and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, among others. In this area of institutionalization of feminist perspectives, the inclusion of gender provisions in trade agreements, pioneered by Chile and continued by Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, the United States, Mexico, Paraguay and the European Union, among others, is of particular note. The joint work that Chile, New Zealand and Canada undertook in signing the Global Agreement on Trade and Gender is equally important (OAS, 2023).

Actions should also be coordinated with subnational authorities to give feminist foreign policy a multiscale approach. Different examples of interministerial cooperation have been mentioned over the course of this text, especially with regard to national action plans, which can be strengthened and extended to other areas of international policy.

Progress with the institutionalization at the global level of networks of countries with feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies is also desirable in order to pursue the objectives of these policies in multilateral spaces, foster mutual learning and encourage other countries to adopt their own feminist policies. The leadership of France and Mexico with the creation of the Generation Equality Forum is a particular case in point. In this area, mention should also be made of the role of Argentina, which in September 2023 convened the High-level Meeting on Feminist Foreign Policy for Latin American and Caribbean governments that had adopted or planned to adopt feminist foreign policies, which resulted in a declaration of conclusions and proposals. In addition, it is important to mention the formation of the Feminist Foreign Policy Plus (FFP+) group, with the participation of Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, France, Israel, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mongolia, Rwanda, Spain, Sweden and Tunisia. This group held a high-level meeting during the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, held in September 2023, and adopted a political declaration on feminist approaches to foreign policy (UN-Women, 2023b). These spaces continue to grow. For example, the Kingdom of the Netherlands held a high-level international meeting on feminist foreign policy in November 2023, with resource mobilization as the main theme (Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 2023b). Similarly, Mexico will host the third International Conference on Feminist Foreign Policy in 2024.

### **C. Pillar 3. Participation: diverse voices for inclusion and intersectionality**

The active and meaningful participation of civil society and citizens in feminist policymaking and policy implementation is not only desirable but essential to ensure legitimacy and success. Open consultations, which lead to greater transparency and participation, together with valuable expert input and inclusive dialogues with different sectors of civil society, in particular women's and feminist organizations, not only

enhance but strengthen the basis for these policies. The work of countries such as Canada, Colombia and Germany has shown that online public consultations and constructive dialogues enhance and strengthen feminist foreign policies.

Since civil society participation plays a decisive role in strengthening feminist international policies, it is of vital importance to decisively include and support women's and feminist organizations. This means backing their organizational development and their national, regional and global networks with financial resources in a way that respects their organizational independence and ensures their presence in decision-making spaces. Active participation by them and ongoing support for their work in specific territories and regionwide are fundamental pillars of the effort to bring about tangible and lasting change. It is also essential to protect and assist women human rights defenders and those who uphold women's rights, using all available foreign policy tools and making the maximum use of international and regional initiatives. In this area, particularly valuable work is being done in Latin America and the Caribbean by the Regional Fund in Support of Women's and Feminist Organizations and Movements, set up at the initiative of the member States of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and supported by ECLAC and UN-Women (Regional Fund in Support of Women's and Feminist Organizations and Movements, 2023). It is also important to note the financial support given to the fund by Mexico and Colombia, in line with their feminist foreign policies.

In designing feminist policies, lastly, the staff of ministries, and particularly of national machineries for the advancement of women and entities in charge of foreign affairs and cooperation, need to be systematically consulted with a view to facilitating genuine, thorough and effective ownership of policy content. To support this process, it is imperative to invest in comprehensive training for public service staff in key aspects of feminist policies, ensuring that they understand, internalize and commit themselves to gender objectives. Within this training framework, certain key topics such as gender equality, gender-based violence and intersectionality could become fundamental pillars of diplomatic and civilian training programmes. This is explored in greater detail below.

#### **D. Pillar 4. Capacity-building and strengthening: knowledge for change**

Capacity-building and strengthening are fundamental to ensuring effective implementation of feminist policies. Action plans, budgeting tools, implementation guides and other documents that spell out precise responsibilities and specific standards for each area involved are essential to maintain consistency and effectiveness in implementation.

Ongoing training of staff in key aspects of feminist policies could lead to thorough understanding and successful implementation, while the feminist civil service develops. Training, capacity-building and evaluation of all staff in ministries and entities in charge of foreign policy and international development cooperation would appear to be essential to enable them to apply a feminist gender approach in their daily work, producing technical and political staff capable of constructing narratives, proposals and tools to consolidate the feminist perspective in the fields of both international relations and cooperation. A great deal of attention has been paid to this in a number of countries, including Germany, Canada, Spain, France, Mexico and Sweden.

This is especially important considering that, to be effective, feminist international policies would have to transform all the departments of the ministries and entities responsible for them, as well as multilateral, bilateral and regional agencies. Feminist transformation through international action does not only encompass the fields of diplomacy and cooperation, and is not limited to multilateral initiatives, but extends to many other aspects, such as international trade, foreign investment, climate change, consular care, migration policies and international security policies, among others. As noted throughout this text, it is now essential to expand the frontiers of possible gender transformations beyond the fields in which

the topic has traditionally been dealt with so that they touch all areas of development cooperation and foreign policy. Staff in charge of all these agendas should be equipped with the tools they need to apply a transformative feminist and gender perspective to their work in a cross-cutting and systematic way.

Given the range of issues that feminist international policies need to take into account, the transfer of knowledge and experiences between countries is also an invaluable resource for adapting successful approaches to diverse contexts. The sharing of experiences and provision of technical assistance at the national and international levels can enhance the ability of those involved to achieve tangible results. Collaboration between nations, like that between Spain and Chile in the planning of the latter's feminist foreign policy, has proven to be a valuable capacity-building resource.

## **E. Pillar 5. Financing: significant resources for equality**

Adequate and sustainable financing is essential for the success of feminist policies. Budget allocations consistent with international commitments and human rights frameworks are crucial if goals related to gender equality and women's and girls' rights are to be achieved. Dedicated multi-year budgets are essential to secure the resources and stability necessary to carry out the actions required for feminist foreign policy objectives to be achieved and feminist international development cooperation policies to be implemented.

Given the limited fiscal space in Latin American and Caribbean countries, the use of innovative financing mechanisms can help to secure adequate and sustainable resources for long-term implementation. As will be mentioned, strengthening and progressively increasing the volume of resources dedicated to North-South, South-South and triangular international cooperation is also crucial for implementing feminist foreign policies and programmes centred on women's rights and autonomy and adapted to specific contexts.

Transparent funding and accountability are crucial to maintaining public confidence in feminist policies. Regular reporting on the use of resources and the results achieved can become effective mechanisms for democratizing international feminist policies and ensuring commitments are met. Accordingly, gender markers need to be created as part of budgets or methodologies so that government departments can measure and track investment in activities aimed at achieving gender equality goals. The gender budgeting tools created in Sweden and the measures that Germany is adopting in this area are good examples.

These recommendations are consistent with the findings of the 2023 Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up, which identified the need for United Nations Member States to increase investment in gender equality and strengthen budgeting with a gender perspective. The Forum made recommendations aligned with some of the core goals of the Regional Gender Agenda that need resources to be met, such as recognizing and valuing care work, increasing investment in social protection with a gender perspective and reaffirming the importance of sex-disaggregated data to inform evidence-based public policies (United Nations, 2023e). Likewise, the Secretary-General of the United Nations recently called on ODA donor countries to dedicate at least 1% of their assistance to direct support for women's peace organizations and called on these countries in the global North to allocate 15% of their ODA to gender equality (United Nations, 2023a).

Countries with feminist foreign policies can contribute to the reform of the international financial and tax architecture for sustainable and inclusive development through their own economic governance, debt relief, the creation of regulatory frameworks to combat tax evasion and avoidance and increased international public funding for feminist transformation with a view to fostering the care society and gender equality.

## F. Pillar 6. Communication: social change and public awareness

Effective communication is essential to disseminate feminist policies and promote social change in the direction of gender equality. Strategic communication plans and campaigns in traditional media and on digital platforms can raise awareness and mobilize society at large. Ensuring that feminist foreign policies are visible in multilateral arenas is also an important strategy for putting feminism at the centre of foreign policy and international development cooperation policy. While the Generation Equality Forum in France and Mexico is one example of how this goal can be achieved, it is not the only one. A large proportion of countries with feminist international policies have already demonstrated their activism on this issue in United Nations forums, the G7, the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Security Council, among other venues.

In 2023, Spain and Chile were the first sponsors of the International Day of Care and Support in a General Assembly resolution (A/RES/77/317), “in order to raise awareness of the importance of care and support and its key contribution to the achievement of gender equality and the sustainability of our societies and economies, as well as of the need to invest in a resilient and inclusive care economy, including the development of strong and resilient care and support systems” (United Nations, 2023b, page 3).<sup>7</sup> In the same vein, Argentina sponsored the recent resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/54/L.6/Rev.1), the first on the subject, which among other things urges States to “implement all measures necessary to recognize and redistribute care work among individuals, as well as families, communities, the private sector and States, in a manner that promotes gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights by all” (United Nations, 2023g, page 3).<sup>8</sup> These examples show how multilateralism can be coupled with clear and convincing messages about the goals and achievements of feminist international policies and potentially reach a wide audience.

At the national and regional levels, campaigns by countries with feminist policies could address critical issues such as equal pay, sexual and reproductive rights, the care society, the intersections between climate change and gender inequality, and the prevention of gender-based violence against women and girls. Social networks and digital media can also be powerful tools for building public awareness and activism around feminist goals through international action by governments in the region and globally.

## G. Pillar 7. Technology: feminist transformation in the digital age

Recent years have seen exponential growth in the field of digital technologies. These changes have had significant effects on society and the economy and changed production, management and governance systems. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the transition to digitalization, which represents both an opportunity and a challenge for the region. Digital technologies can foster inclusive growth and facilitate structural transformation centred on gender equality as a way of recovering from cascading crises. For women in their diversity to benefit from digitalization, however, it is indispensable to create safe and equal conditions for them in the digital sphere and to provide opportunities for the development of relevant skills in a constantly adapting environment (ECLAC, 2023f).

Given the current international and regional context, which requires public policies to be reviewed and adjusted, it is crucial to address feminist policies as well. Latin America and the Caribbean has committed itself to narrowing the digital divide and ensuring that women have an active role in technological development. The sixty-fourth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in February 2023, agreed to strengthen cooperation in areas related

<sup>7</sup> Argentina, Armenia, Colombia, Equatorial Guinea, Georgia, Germany, Mexico, the Philippines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and Zambia subsequently joined them.

<sup>8</sup> Supported by Albania, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.

to technological transformation and the digital ecosystem in North-South, South-South and triangular modalities. These agreements seek to promote gender equality and ensure the equal representation of women in key areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The importance of supporting the labour participation of women in their diversity and female digital entrepreneurship, especially in areas such as e-commerce, was also underlined (ECLAC, 2023e). The region's recommendations were presented by Argentina at the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in March 2023, whose priority theme was "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls".

In this framework, it is essential to use the tools of foreign policy and international cooperation to boost women's digital inclusion. This means ensuring equitable access to technology, providing training in digital skills and promoting women's active participation in high value added fields such as science and technology. Feminist international development cooperation, in its different modalities, can be a valuable tool to achieve this.

The High-level Symposium "Women 4 Ethical AI: Feminist Contributions in Artificial Intelligence: Epistemological and Ethical Justice of Equality" was held in the region jointly by the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The symposium addressed the relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) and different areas such as care, the environment, the participation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and health, in order to develop recommendations with a gender and human rights perspective for the Ministerial and High Authorities Summit on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Chile at the end of October 2023. The Santiago Declaration adopted at the end of the summit calls "for countries to pursue initiatives and policies to foster the design, development and inclusive use of AI, with emphasis on inclusion, gender equity and the closing of gaps with an intersectional perspective" (Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation of Chile, 2023, page 3).

It is also important to strengthen policies and regulation related to digital financial technologies in the region by establishing clear rules for the use and recording of data, privacy protection and financial and digital education. Similarly, within the framework of the United Nations Technology Facilitation Mechanism, measures are needed to promote technology access and transfer on favourable terms consistent with human rights and gender equality. Lastly, it is imperative that the international community take coordinated action to ensure equitable and affordable access to information technologies, ensuring that the benefits are widely shared and contribute to sustainable development in the region.

It is therefore suggested that foreign policy and international cooperation tools be used, as these are particularly relevant when it comes to boosting women's digital inclusion. This will be achieved through policies that ensure their equal access to technology, provide training in digital skills and enhance their presence in STEM areas, known for their added value. North-South, South-South and triangular international development cooperation, be it technical, scientific or financial, can support this work.

## **H. Pillar 8. International cooperation: collaboration and solidarity**

International cooperation is essential to address global and regional challenges related to gender equality and the rights of women, adolescent girls and girl children in their diversity. By working together, countries can strengthen the implementation of feminist policies through the sharing of good practices, mutual learning and the formation of technical and strategic partnerships, not to mention financial cooperation. This last point is particularly important in Latin America and the Caribbean, since high debt and inadequate tax collection in some countries of the region make it necessary to increase resources specifically earmarked for the Regional Gender Agenda through North-South, South-South and triangular international cooperation.

With regard to North-South cooperation, it is crucial for developed countries to meet their official development assistance (ODA) commitments, in particular the target of allocating 0.7% of GNP for this purpose. Countries with feminist foreign and cooperation policies in Latin America and the Caribbean can strengthen their collaboration with developed nations that have also come out in favour of feminism, seeking to establish joint targets that increase ODA resources and direct them towards the most critical areas of the gender agenda in the region.

Indeed, many countries in the global North with feminist international policies have committed to increasing the proportion of ODA directed to gender issues. Latin American and Caribbean countries with feminist international policies could take advantage of these commitments to strengthen gender equality domestically and help other nations in the region and the rest of the global South to overcome structural challenges through triangular cooperation. For example, the biregional pact for care between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union seeks to foster cooperation on public policies and comprehensive care systems with a gender approach. Originally mooted at the EU-LAC Gender Equality Forum in Berlin in May 2023, this pact was promoted by Argentina, Germany, Mexico and Spain. At the sixty-fifth Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held on 11 and 12 October 2023, the member States of ECLAC encouraged the Commission to continue pursuing a biregional care pact between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union in coordination with UN-Women, the EU-LAC Foundation and other civil society organizations from both continents, as well as with all governments and agencies committed to the Regional Gender Agenda, with the aim of promoting cooperation on public policies and comprehensive care systems with a gender perspective between the countries of the two regions, in the framework of the implementation of the Buenos Aires Commitment and the European Care Strategy (ECLAC, 2023a).

As noted above, South-South and triangular cooperation has the added benefit of promoting technical cooperation between nations with similar development challenges and processes. Therefore, feminist foreign and cooperation policies in Latin America and the Caribbean have the potential to catalyse cooperation strategies between countries with similar gender equality challenges and shared goals to secure women's human rights and autonomy.

Lastly, the transnational nature of tax avoidance and evasion represents a significant challenge for the public financing of gender equality policies in the Latin America and Caribbean region. International and regional collaboration through feminist foreign policies can be crucial to overcome this obstacle by establishing mechanisms to combat avoidance practices, as proposed in the eighth pillar of the Montevideo Strategy. The summit organized by the Colombian Ministry of Finance and Public Credit and supported by the Governments of Colombia, Brazil and Chile with the assistance of ECLAC is a promising step in this area, given its aim of creating a permanent tax coordination arrangement among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean that can become a space for discussion on tax issues affecting the countries of the region (ECLAC, 2023d).

A triangular cooperation programme is currently being designed to strengthen feminist foreign and international cooperation policy through a community of practice between Germany, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and ECLAC, with the support of GIZ and BMZ, to be implemented over the next two years (2024–2025).

## **I. Pillar 9. Information systems: breaking the statistical silence for equality**

Robust statistical information systems are essential for collecting, analysing and sharing information on gender inequalities and progress towards equality. Integrating intersectionality into these systems is vital, as the data provide insight into the multiple facets of inequality experienced by women in their diversity and allow possible solutions to be identified.

Gender indicators and continuous monitoring mechanisms can be used to assess the impact of public policies on women, account for the work done and encourage adjustments where necessary.

The availability of reliable, up-to-date information, including aspects such as women's time use and the distribution of care responsibilities, is therefore crucial for making informed decisions, assessing progress towards gender equality and using data to gradually overcome the challenges and setbacks that the cascading crises of recent years have represented for women in Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions of the global South.

In this context, mention should be made of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (OIG), a tool created by ECLAC in response to a request from governments at the tenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2007). Its purpose is to help strengthen national machineries for the advancement of women, disseminate official information from the region's governments and facilitate the monitoring of international agreements on women's rights. It also contributes to the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda adopted at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. From the outset, the development and operation of OIG has been supported by AECID.

Feminist foreign policies and feminist international cooperation strategies also have the potential to channel funds and technical support to national statistical institutes and machineries for the advancement of women in the region and other developing countries, facilitating the standardization of sex-disaggregated data and intersectional gender analyses and the establishment of these as a cornerstone in the design of national, subnational, regional and international public policies with a gender perspective.

## **J. Pillar 10. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability: measuring for progress**

To ensure that feminist policies achieve the desired results once in place, it is important to carry out constant monitoring and systematic evaluations.

There are several reasons for this. First, transparent monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms allow civil society, women's organizations and the general public to assess progress and call for change where necessary, thus strengthening the institutional structures supporting the policies themselves. Second, regular reporting on the progress and challenges of feminist foreign policies and feminist international cooperation policies can provide incentives for policymakers to generate concrete impact, adapt strategies that are not working well and strengthen those that are. In other words, monitoring and evaluation procedures are extremely valuable because of their ability to identify opportunities for improving and refining international policies focused on gender equality. These processes can lead to the establishment and revision of specific short-, medium- and long-term goals with a view to increasing the effectiveness of feminist foreign policy. Third, the regular review and adaptation of plans and programmes can be critical in the face of changing dynamics generated by external shocks, as demonstrated by the multiple crises that Latin America and the Caribbean recently faced and the different strategies that were needed to deal with them.

Two types of monitoring should be highlighted in this area. First, internal evaluations can drive appropriate accountability in the ministries and entities in charge of these policies. In Spain, for example, as mentioned above, reports will be submitted to Parliament, while in Sweden, annual reports were produced and influenced the planning of feminist foreign policy for the following years. In addition, it is possible to carry out independent evaluations whose results are made public. In France, for example, such evaluations are carried out through the High Council for Gender Equality.



## VI. Conclusions

Feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies have made remarkable progress in the last decade. However, there are areas for improvement in line with the recommendations made above. For example, greater integration and coordination in areas such as peace and security, trade, climate action, diplomacy and international cooperation is essential for coherent and effective feminist strategies to be established. Contradictory practices are still observed in some countries, such as promotion of the women, peace and security agenda alongside the trade in arms used in conflicts, or the failure to address certain issues that are strategic for feminism in feminist international policies, such as the international financial architecture and the challenge of financing equality or international migration.

At the same time, closer and more active collaboration with civil society and the women's and feminist and LGBTIQ+ movements is crucial to the success of these policies in countries where these actors were not adequately involved in their design, implementation and evaluation stages. These organizations are essential to ensure that policies reflect feminist interests and debates. The allocation of adequate financial, technological and human resources is equally indispensable to achieve meaningful impact. The availability of specific, long-term budgets and staff to carry out feminist projects, programmes and policies is fundamental to ensure their sustainability and represents an opportunity for the countries analysed in this study. In relation to staffing, it is noted that most of the countries studied here still have a long way to go before they achieve parity and substantive representation for women in foreign policy and international development cooperation decision-making and in the diplomatic service. Continuing the work begun in this direction, while engaging men as allies in the feminist transformation, is surely a necessary condition for achieving the goals set out above.

The last decade has seen significant progress at the national level on gender equality and women's rights, with the institutionalization of feminism as a cornerstone of foreign policy and international development cooperation in a dozen countries. This explicit commitment to a feminist approach has largely transcended mere declarations and has become a powerful catalyst for challenging entrenched norms and fostering fundamental transformations in the conduct of foreign policy and international development cooperation policy. While much remains to be done, it is undeniable that the countries adopting these policies are moving towards a future of greater parity and solidarity, supported by a multifaceted and transformative approach that encompasses normative, institutional, citizen participation, financing and international collaboration aspects, and that these policies have already brought about tangible changes.

In a multipolar world characterized by continuous challenges and cascading crises, feminist policies are a valuable resource that enriches and enhances the international community's more than seven decades of efforts to secure the human rights and autonomy of women in their diversity. These policies also have the potential to advance the care society and the achievement of substantive equality in the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development, as well as the right to peace for current and future generations. The care society gives a central place to the feminist principle of the sustainability of life and the contribution of the region's indigenous peoples to "good living", while recognizing the interdependence between people and people's dependence on nature. This propositional horizon requires a collective, multiscale construction (ECLAC, 2022a). At issue are the feminist imperative and the feminisms of a better world for all, in accordance with the objective of leaving no one out and no one behind. As the well-remembered and inspiring activist Berta Cáceres suggested from the perspective of feminism and the defence of human rights: "Let us then build societies capable of coexisting in justice and dignity and working for life. Let us come together and continue in hope to defend and care for the blood of the earth and of its spirits" (Cáceres, 2015).

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