EGM/CSW71/2026/REPORT
October 2026
ENGLISH ONLY

Expert Group Meeting Report

Seventy-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women

'Gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and their human rights across the Sustainable Development Goals: Assessing progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda'

Virtual, 30 June–2 July 2026

Gender Equality, the Empowerment of All Women and Girls and Their Human Rights Across the Sustainable Development Goals: Assessing Progress towards the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*

* This is an independent report of the expert group. The views expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.

Contents

Acknowledgments **2**

Expert participants **2**

Executive summary **2**

I. Introduction **3**

II. A different world from 2015 ..... **4**

A. Democratic erosion, authoritarian resurgence and "patriarchal populism" 4

B. Restricted civic space 5

C. The rise of anti-rights movements and organized "norm spoiling" 5

D. Widespread armed conflict 6

E. Ecological crisis 6

F. Concentrated wealth, corporate power and financialization 7

G. Fiscal pressures and unequal global economic arrangements 8

H. Digital transformation 8

I. Weakening multilateralism and the United Nations' uncertain future 9

III. Taking stock of the Sustainable Development Goals: Opportunities, gaps and lessons **9**

A. Opportunities and gaps in the Sustainable Development Goals' advancement of gender equality 10

B. Why transformative change remains elusive 17

IV. Priorities for accelerating progress to 2030 ..... **20**

I. Close the financing gap for gender equality 20

A. Translate commitments into coordinated implementation 21

II. Strengthen local implementation and multilevel governance 21

III. Strengthen accountability for implementation 21

B. Invest in data and evidence systems that support action 22

C. Protect and resource feminist movements and women's rights organizations 22

V. Beyond 2030: From incrementalism to transformation **22**

A. From inclusion to justice 23

B. Reimagining global economic governance 25

C. Transforming knowledge and evidence systems 27

D. Fostering coalitions and solidarity 28

VI. The role of the United Nations in the post-2030 agenda **28**

A. Protecting and renewing multilateralism 28

B. The United Nations as a convenor and compass 30

C. Investments in institutions and movements 30

VII. Conclusion **31**

Bibliography **32**

Acknowledgments

The preparation of this report was led by Foteini Papagioti and Melissa Upreti, co-chairs of the expert group meeting. The co-chairs are sincerely grateful to all expert group meeting participants for their substantive contributions and to Brenda K. Kombo, who served as substantive rapporteur and drafted the report.

Expert participants

Bemnet Agata (Tax Justice Network), Esther Waweru (Equality Now), Foteini Papagioti (International Center for Research on Women – Americas), Francesca Perucci (Open Data Watch), Gisela Zaremberg (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales – Mexico), Gita Sen (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), Gloria Novović (King's College London), İpek İlkkaracan (Istanbul Technical University), Joy Belmonte (Quezon City), Khalida Azhigulova (international PSEAH consultant and investigator of gender-based violence incidents), Lina Abou-Habib (American University of Beirut), Melissa Upreti (formerly, United Nations Working Group on discrimination against women and girls), Naila Kabeer (The London School of Economics and Political Science), Norah Madaya (Civil Society for Budget Advocacy Group – Uganda), Rabeb Aloui (Women's Major Group to UNEP – Africa Focal Point), Rebecca Sanders (University of Cincinnati), Rosalee Gonzalez (Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas – North America), Salma Nims (formerly, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), Saowalak Thongkuay (ASEAN Disability Forum), Sharon Bhagwan Rolls (Pacific Women Mediators Network), Sivananthi Thanenthiran (Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women), Solange L. Baptiste (ITPC Global) and V. Eudine Barriteau (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women).

Executive summary

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has provided a landmark shared global framework for advancing gender equality, establishing it as both a standalone goal (Sustainable Development Goal 5) and a cross-cutting priority across all goals. As 2030 approaches, progress on gender equality has fallen short or even regressed in some contexts. Yet it remains more urgent than ever. Against this backdrop, UN Women convened an expert group meeting from 30 June to 2 July 2026 to assess progress, identify enabling and constraining factors, and draw lessons for accelerating implementation and shaping the post-2030 framework. This report reflects discussions and input from the group of experts and aims to inform the drafting of the Secretary-General's report on the priority theme for the 71st session of the Commission on the Status of Women and to influence and expand the global normative frameworks relevant to the priority theme.

The global context has changed fundamentally since 2015. Democratic erosion has become more widespread across the world, civic space is restricted, civil society and service providers have been severely affected by deep funding cuts, and anti-rights actors are successfully engineering regression in established gender equality norms. Conflict, ecological devastation, growing inequalities, fiscal constraints, digital transformation and growing threats to multilateralism are reshaping the conditions under which gender equality is pursued and undermining progress. These shifts are shaped by State choices and failures, underscoring the responsibility of governments to act and the necessity of a multilateral system grounded in solidarity and mutual respect to create the conditions for advancing gender equality and women's and girls' human rights.

Nevertheless, the Sustainable Development Goals have generated important gains. They established a universal framework for gender equality, contributed to strengthening global norms, fostered the development of new methodologies and improved the availability of gender data, established new openings for gender mainstreaming and created new spaces for advocacy and policy action. They also brought greater attention to issues that are critical to gender equality including care, and helped strengthen the focus on other key issues such as violence against women and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The 'leave no one behind' principle strengthened recognition of intersecting inequalities and increased visibility of marginalized groups.

Implementation has also yielded important lessons. Gender equality is more likely to advance where it is institutionalized across government systems, supported by robust coordination mechanisms, gender-responsive planning and budgeting, and shaped by meaningful participation of civil society, particularly women's rights and feminist organizations, movements and coalitions. Experiences from national and local contexts demonstrate the importance of multilevel governance, participation and accountability, while regional cooperation has provided additional platforms for accountability and collaboration. However, civil society participation remains unduly restricted, and data collection systems do not adequately capture real lived experiences and yield transformative action.

The limitations of the Sustainable Development Goals also reflect deeper structural constraints as well as a lack of political will and inadequate prioritization by governments who bear the primary responsibility for their achievement. Only a small number of gender equality targets are on track for achievement by 2030. Gender mainstreaming has frequently become a procedural exercise rather than a pathway to structural change. The leave no one behind principle has not gone as far as strengthening the voice, influence, or political positioning of marginalized groups. Financing gaps, weak accountability and limited political commitment continue to constrain implementation. These challenges are linked to a broader economic model that has prioritized the concentration of wealth while being sustained by systemic inequality.

The successor framework to the 2030 Agenda must move from incrementalism to systemic transformation, shifting from inclusion to inclusion coupled with justice, grounding gender equality goals and accountability mechanisms in human rights standards and principles that are enforced in practice, and dismantling the structures that produce and reproduce exclusion and inequality while building new ones that are designed to ensure gender-just, equitable and sustainable development for all. It must reconceptualize global economic governance, strengthen gender-responsive financing and accountability, expand and foster civic space, support and engage with feminist and women's rights movements and coalitions, and reimagine multilateralism based on a decolonial approach and solidarity. In this moment of profound constraint and opportunity, the post-2030 agenda must generate new visions, strengthen collective action and replace dependency with solidarity, building on past gains while creating the foundations for a more just, gender-equal and sustainable future.

I. Introduction

Over the past decade, United Nations Member States have collectively pursued a global agenda to improve human well-being, promote shared prosperity and protect the planet. Adopted by 193 United Nations Member States in September 2015, this 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development placed gender equality at the heart of sustainable development and developed a "twin track" approach that combined a strong stand-alone goal, namely Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, with mainstreaming across many of the SDGs and targets. As the 2030 deadline approaches, there is increasing recognition that progress has been uneven, sluggish, and has even stalled or regressed in many places. Gender equality is one of the areas where advances have fallen short of global ambition.[1] Against this backdrop, UN Women convened an expert group meeting (EGM) to support substantive preparations for the 71st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 71), whose priority theme is "Gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and their human rights across the Sustainable Development Goals: Assessing progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda".

The EGM was convened to develop practical, evidence-based and action-oriented recommendations to inform the drafting of the Secretary-General's report on the priority theme for CSW 71 and to influence and expand the global normative frameworks relevant to this theme. More specifically, the objectives of the EGM were to:

i. Assess what difference the 2030 Agenda has made on the ground for gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and their human rights;

[1] United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026*, 18–19, 44.

ii. Identify policies, institutions, processes, and partnerships that have enabled or hindered progress; and
iii. Draw forward-looking lessons for accelerating implementation to 2030 and shaping a more ambitious post-2030 framework.

These objectives framed a focused discussion on the evolving global context for gender equality and the implications for policy, practice, and international cooperation.

Held virtually from 30 June to 2 July 2026, the EGM brought together experts with diverse expertise and perspectives from their roles within various institutions including local and national government, academia, research institutions, and civil society organizations and networks across the globe. Some experts brought expertise engaging with United Nations agencies and within the United Nations system. Several also identified themselves as members of the "Beijing Generation", bringing personal experiences of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the global movement for gender equality that it galvanized in 1995. Foteini Papagioti and Melissa Upreti served as the EGM co-chairs. Along with the expert participants, representatives of United Nations system organizations with relevant mandates and expertise participated as observers. The full list of participants is available on the UN Women website.[2]

The following sections of the report share the key insights, observations and recommendations from the Experts on the priority theme of CSW 71.

II. A different world from 2015

Agenda 2030 is being implemented in a fundamentally different context than the one in which it was conceived and adopted. Any honest assessment of progress and any credible vision for a successor framework must begin by acknowledging that conditions for enabling gender equality have eroded dramatically in the last decade. We are witnessing something more critical and dramatic than slow progress in the achievement of gender equality through the SDGs. Every condition that once made this progress possible is currently disappearing.[3] These developments are not temporary setbacks. They are reconfiguring the conditions of possibility for gender equality. As such, Member States must grapple with the unfinished business of achieving the SDGs within a profoundly altered geopolitical, economic, technological and environmental landscape recognizing that failures of political will, governance and collective action have contributed to the erosion of conditions necessary for advancing gender equality. They must reassess the assumptions that underpinned the SDGs and consider how a successor framework can respond to contemporary realities.

A. Democratic erosion, authoritarian resurgence and "patriarchal populism"

In 2024, the number of autocracies worldwide surpassed the number of democracies for the first time since 2002.[4] Today, only 29 countries qualify as liberal democracies, conditions more conducive to respecting human rights. Meanwhile, 74 per cent of the world's population (i.e., 6 billion people) live under some variety of autocracy.[5] This is the highest proportion witnessed since 1978. As democratic institutions, practices and civic space erode, women's rights have suffered and remain increasingly under threat. The strong connection between robust democracy and feminist political space means that democratic backsliding substantially constrains the conditions under which feminist political space can exist and flourish. Although national gender machineries have been established in many contexts as a result of sustained activism, their ability to fulfill their mandates

[2] UN Women, "CSW71 – Expert Group Meeting," 2026, https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/csw71-2027/preparations/expert-group-meeting.
[3] Intervention by Gisela Zaremberg, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[4] V-Dem Institute, *Democracy Report 2025: 25 Years of Autocratization - Democracy Trumped?* (University of Gothenburg, 2025), 12, https://gup.ub.gu.se/publication/358386.
[5] V-Dem Institute, *Democracy Report 2026: Unraveling the Democratic Era?* (University of Gothenburg, 2026), 10, https://www.v-dem.net/publications/democracy-reports/.

has been constrained by a range of structural and other barriers. Even in certain contexts where such machineries historically provided critical entry points for advancing gender equality, increasing authoritarianism has weakened their independence, restricted their ability to influence policy and reduced the space available for meaningful engagement with feminist actors.

This global democratic recession has been accompanied by the rise of "patriarchal populism", a "virulent" and transnational form of right-wing populism characterized by a fusion of anti-elite rhetoric, anti-feminism and misogyny.[6] Its adherents portray gender equality advocates – including feminists, LGBTIQ+ advocates and proponents of so-called "gender ideology" – as elite "globalists" threatening family stability, social order and national survival. Through this ideological framing, patriarchal populists justify restrictions on women's and LGBTIQ+ rights, while pursuing strategic and coordinated efforts to undermine inclusive democratic space.

B. Restricted civic space

Restricted civic space is a defining feature of democratic backsliding and a significant constraint on progress towards gender equality. Mirroring democracy indices, data on civic space describes 73 per cent of the world's population as living in countries with "repressed or closed civic space", while approximately 31 per cent live in countries in which civic space is effectively "closed".[7] As governments expand their use of repressive legislation and surveillance technologies to restrict freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association, women's rights organizations and feminist movements, which have been instrumental in advancing gender equality, face growing obstacles to organizing, mobilizing and advocating for change not only in their countries but also in multilateral spaces such as the CSW, where civil society has been progressively excluded from meaningful participation. In many parts of the world, the closure of civic space has been marked by violent repression, including by State actors, and drastic funding reductions.

C. The rise of anti-rights movements and organized "norm spoiling"

The global anti-rights movement has further developed in the last decade as a coordinated and well-resourced coalition of State and non-State actors actively working to roll back progress on women's rights.[8] They try to shift public opinion on gender equality by generating moral panics around the perceived decline of the "family" or "nation", work to weaken or sideline gender equality policy and challenge the legitimacy and operating space of actors that sustain gender equality agendas.[9] Through sophisticated strategies of "norm spoiling", these actors also seek to weaken or undermine established international human rights norms, particularly those relating to gender equality, sexual and reproductive health rights, and LGBTIQ+ rights.[10] Their tactics include removing or diluting women's rights language in international agreements, obstructing or delaying multilateral

[6] Rebecca Sanders and Laura Dudley Jenkins, "Patriarchal Populism: The Conservative Political Action Coalition (CPAC) and the Transnational Politics of Authoritarian Anti-Feminism," *The International Spectator* 58, no. 3 (2023).

[7] CIVICUS, *People Under Attack 2025* (CIVICUS Monitor, 2025), https://civicusmonitor.contentfiles.net/media/documents/GlobalFindings2025.EN.pdf.

[8] United Nations Human Rights Council, Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls. (2024). Escalating backlash against gender equality and urgency of reaffirming substantive equality and the human rights of women and girls. A/HRC/56/51, 15 May 2024, https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5651-escalating-backlash-against-gender-equality-and-urgency. Ackzell, A. E. and K. Schnellecke (2026). Strategic Responses to Backlash Against Gender Justice. Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), https://cdn.unrisd.org/assets/library/reports/2026/strategic-responses-to-backlash-against-gender-justice.pdf. Constanza Tabbush, *Understanding Backlash against Gender Equality: Evidence, Trends and Policy Responses*, ed. Laura Turquet, with Brianna Howell (UN Women and UN Research Institute for Social Development, 2025), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/09/understanding-backlash-against-gender-equality-evidence-trends-and-policy-responses.

[9] United Nations Human Rights Council, Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls. *Escalating Backlash against Gender Equality*; Anna Ackzell and Katia Schnellecke, *Strategic Responses to Backlash Against Gender Justice*; Constanza Tabbush, *Understanding Backlash against Gender Equality*.

[10] Rebecca Sanders and Laura Dudley Jenkins, "Control, Alt, Delete: Patriarchal Populist Attacks on International Women's Rights," *Global Constitutionalism* 11, no. 3 (2022): 401–29; Rebecca Sanders, "Norm Spoiling: Undermining the International Women's Rights Agenda," *International Affairs* 94, no. 2 (March 2018): 271–91.

negotiations, blocking consensus or leveraging donor relationships to pressure recipient countries to change their policies.[11]

Although opposition to feminism is not a new phenomenon, global anti-rights actors pose a new challenge because they have "adapted, co-opted, and out-organized feminist gains".[12] Evidence suggests that in some contexts, the COVID-19 pandemic gave them greater impetus as they drew on COVID-19 conspiracy theories as well as conservative family values to bolster their arguments.[13] Expanding their efforts beyond "norm spoiling" or "norm breaking", anti-rights actors now engage in "norm making", whereby they actively develop and promote alternative normative frameworks.[14] This is evidenced, for example, in anti-rights mobilization around the proposed African Charter on Family, Sovereignty and Values, and the Geneva Consensus Declaration.[15]

D. Widespread armed conflict

Armed conflict is no longer exceptional; it has become commonplace.[16] Global military expenditure increased by 41 per cent between 2016 and 2025, reaching approximately $2.9 trillion in 2025.[17] Since gender inequality accompanies conflict, the well-resourced, growing militarization by both State and non-State actors has made gender inequality a structural condition.[18] In 2024, an estimated 676 million women and girls were living in proximity to deadly conflict, making this the highest recorded level of conflict proximity since the 1990s.[19] Not only are conflicts more frequently fought in civilian spaces, but their prolonged duration and escalating intensity have heightened women and girls' exposure to gender-specific forms of harm, including conflict-related sexual violence, reproductive violence and harmful practices.[20] At the same time, the collapse of essential services leaves women holding communities together, including through their unpaid care work. Feminist and women's rights activists and organizations also play a critical role as they shift their focus to humanitarian work. While this work is often grounded in feminist principles and local knowledge, it shifts both attention and limited resources to meeting immediate survival needs, potentially constraining efforts to advance long-term structural change, and often at the cost of activists' well-being and heightened risk of burnout.[21]

E. Ecological crisis

The severity of the ecological crisis cannot be overstated. Climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and pollution are already reshaping the conditions under which peace, security and gender equality are pursued, with the most marginalized women, girls and gender diverse people bearing the greatest costs. For many communities, particularly in small island States, these crises threaten not only livelihoods and ecosystems, but also human security, cultural continuity and self-determination.[22] For women and girls, they are also drivers

[11] Sanders and Jenkins, "Control, Alt, Delete."
[12] Lina Abou-Habib, "Thirty Years after the Beijing Platform for Action: Experiences of Institutionalisation, Emerging Generations of Feminists, the Rise of Global Anti-Rights Trends, and Contemporary Fault Lines," *Gender & Development* 33, no. 3 (2025): 865.
[13] Gisela Zaremberg, Constanza Tabbush, and Elizabeth Jay Friedman, "Feminism(s) and Anti-Gender Backlash," 529.
[14] Intervention by Rebecca Sanders, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[15] Intervention by Esther Waweru, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[16] Intervention by Lina Abou-Habib, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[17] Xiao Liang et al., *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2025* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2026), 1, https://www.sipri.org/publications/2026/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2025.
[18] Intervention by Lina Abou-Habib, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[19] Ginette Azcona et al., *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2025* (UN Women, Women Count, and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2025), 3, https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2025.
[20] United Nations Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General*, S/2025/556 (2025), https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/report/united-nations-security-council-women-and-peace-and-security-report-of-the-secretary-general/n2523645-1.pdf.
[21] Intervention by Lina Abou-Habib, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[22] Intervention by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.

of inequality and insecurity.[23] These risks are compounded by persistent gaps in global climate governance. Although the Preamble to the Paris Agreement references human rights and gender equality, they were not incorporated into its operative provision (Article 2), which has contributed to continuing challenges addressing the gendered impacts of climate change.[24] Yet, in a worst-case climate change scenario, up to 141 million more women and girls could be plunged into extreme poverty (i.e., living on under $2.15 per day) by 2050.[25] Despite the urgency, the first global stocktake of the Paris Agreement concluded that the world is off course from achieving the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.[26] The recent Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice, overwhelmingly endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, offers some hope for greater accountability of Member States to act decisively to avert further disaster.

F. Concentrated wealth, corporate power and financialization

The current architecture of global trade and finance has enabled a profound redistribution of resources.[27] Since the late twentieth century, economic systems in many countries have undergone significant transformations, including the weakening of governments' role in promoting economic growth through employment, industrial policy and public investment alongside growing financialization and, more recently, digitalization.[28] These transformations have been driven by policy choices that have altered the relationship between States, markets and societies. As a result, wealth and income have increasingly become concentrated, while corporate actors exert growing influence over global governance and public policy. At the same time, this shift has weakened governments' fiscal and policy space to invest in human rights, including gender equality, even as such investments had previously been understood as contributing to economic growth.[29]

The scale of the concentration of wealth and power is unprecedented. A small global elite controls a disproportionate share of economic resources, with wealth and power increasingly concentrated among financial and technology corporations that dominate digital infrastructure, data and artificial intelligence. The wealthiest 10 per cent of the global population hold approximately 75 per cent of global wealth, while the bottom 50 per cent hold only 2 per cent.[30] Income and political influence are also increasingly concentrated among a small number of actors, widening the divide between "the few" and "the many".[31] These elites operate across public and private sectors as flexible networks or "flexi nets".[32] These can be thought of as "small, tightly knit networks, acting as resource pools, able to prescribe, coordinate, implement, promote and justify particular

[23] Pasifika Peace Talanoa, *Advancing Gender Equality, Inclusive Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Human Security*, GPPAC Pacific Civil Society Expert Group Briefing Papers (2026), https://pasifikapeacetalanoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Pasifka-Peace-Talanoa_-Advancing-Gender-Equality-Inclusive-Peacebuilding-Conflict-Prevention-and-Human-Security-01_2026.pdf; Pacific Women Mediators Network, *Defining Our Climate Security*, July 2025, https://pasifikapeacetalanoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Defining-our-Climate-Security_Policy-Brief-3_210825.pdf.

[24] Gita Sen, *The SDGs and Feminist Movement Building*, no. 27 (UN Women, 2018), 21, https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/discussion-paper-the-sdgs-and-feminist-movement-building.

[25] UN Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2026* (forthcoming).

[26] UNFCCC, "Why the Global Stocktake Is Important for Climate Action This Decade," accessed July 11, 2026, https://unfccc.int/topics/global-stocktake/about-the-global-stocktake/why-the-global-stocktake-is-important-for-climate-action-this-decade; UN Environment Programme, *Limiting Overshoot - Navigating Exceedance of 1.5°C and Pathways towards Return* (2026).

[27] Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1996).

[28] Intervention by Sivananthi Thanenthiran, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

[29] Naila Kabeer and Luisa Natali, "Gender Equality and Economic Growth: Is There a Win-Win?," *IDS Working Papers* 2013, no. 417 (2013): 1–58, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2040-0209.2013.00417.x.

[30] Lucas Chancel, Ricardo Gómez-Carrera, and Rowaida Moshrif, *World Inequality Report 2026* (World Inequality Lab, 2025), 38, https://wir2026.wid.world/insights/.

[31] Intervention by Gisela Zaremberg, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

[32] Gisela Zaremberg, "¿Redes flexibles? un análisis de elites político-religiosas conservadoras anti-género en México," *Acta Sociológica*, no. 92 (2023): 91–126.

policies in order to serve their own, not their organizations', agendas".[33] This characteristic enables elites to shape policy agendas and regulatory environments in ways that reinforce their influence while weakening democratic accountability.

G. Fiscal pressures and unequal global economic arrangements

Shrinking fiscal space is constraining governments' ability to invest in gender equality and fulfil human rights. Rising debt burdens and debt servicing costs divert resources away from public services and social infrastructure. According to the 2025 Jubilee Report, 3.3 billion people reside in countries spending more on debt interest payments than health, while 2.1 billion reside in countries where interest payments exceed education spending.[34] Illicit financial flows further undermine domestic resource mobilization. Africa, for example, is estimated to lose approximately $88.6 billion annually.[35] Despite international financial institutions' references to "gender"[36] and the widespread recognition that women are forced to be the "shock absorbers" of austerity, these institutions continue to promote fiscal consolidation in many contexts. Within their "creditor-centred" approach,[37] women experience the "'triple jeopardy' of gendered austerity…, [namely] diminished access to essential services, loss of livelihoods and increased unpaid work and time poverty".[38] Fiscal pressures also encourage many governments to rely more heavily on regressive forms of taxation, such as consumption-based taxes, which tend to disproportionately affect women.[39] These dynamics do not represent a problem of resource scarcity, but of how resources are generated and allocated.[40]

Beyond debt and austerity, unequal global economic arrangements continue to constrain the resources available for gender equality. Inequitable trade relations lock countries in the Global South into extractive export models with limited returns, while investment and intellectual property rules privilege corporate interests over public welfare. Official development assistance (ODA), meanwhile, has dramatically declined and become increasingly fragmented, with donors falling short of commitments and channelling funds through short-term, project-based mechanisms that undermine national ownership and focus on "incremental"[41] rather than transformative change. Although there is growing discussion of a "post-aid" world, ODA remains a vital source of financing for many low- and middle-income countries, particularly for gender equality and essential public services. Its continued importance coexists with longstanding critiques that it has often operated through neocolonial logics.[42]

H. Digital transformation

Digital transformation presents both opportunities and profound risks. Artificial intelligence is reshaping labour markets and is expected to cause job losses on an unprecedented scale, with significant implications for equality.

---

[33] Paul Stubbs and Janine Wedel, "Policy Flexians in the Global Order," in *Actors and Agency in Global Social Governance*, ed. Alexandra Kaasch and Kerstin Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 215, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198743996.003.0011.

[34] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *A World of Debt 2025: It Is Time for Reform* (2025), https://unctad.org/publication/world-of-debt.

[35] Chloé van Biljon et al., *Bled Dry: How Tax Abuse, Illicit Financial Flows and Debt Affect Women and Girls in Africa* (Tax Justice Network, Alternative Information & Development Centre, and Center for Economic and Social Rights, 2025), 6.

[36] ActionAid International, Education International, and Tax and Ed Alliance, *Still Cooking with a Failed Recipe: A Review of IMF Country Advice on Social Spending, Public Services, Debt, Tax and Gender Equality* (2026), 8, https://actionaid.org/publications/2026/still-cooking-failed-recipe.

[37] Intervention by Bemnet Agata, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

[38] Bhumika Muchhala, *A Feminist Political Economy Lens Towards Equity and Justice in the Global South* (Penang: Third World Network, 2024), 6.

[39] Chloé van Biljon et al., *Bled Dry*, 12.

[40] Intervention by Bemnet Agata, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

[41] Intervention by Gloria Novović, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.

[42] Jennifer del Rosario-Malonzo, "Undoing (Neo)Colonialism in Development Co-Operation," *IBON International*, September 23, 2024, https://iboninternational.org/2024/09/23/towards-undoing-neocolonialism-in-development-co-operation/; John Ringson and Manamela Matshabaphala, "Beyond the Aid Paradigm: Neocolonialism, Recolonisation and the Future for Africa's Development," *Southern African Journal of Policy and Development* 8, no. 2 (December 2025).

Moreover, artificial intelligence-based systems tend to reproduce, and sometimes even amplify, existing biases,[43] thereby reinforcing or even deepening discrimination and marginalization. On the one hand, the digital gender divide means that women and girls, particularly those located at the intersection of multiple inequalities, are being left behind as technology users, creators and entrepreneurs.[44] On the other hand, women, girls and gender diverse people who use digital technology are exposed to new forms of violence and harassment. Further compounding this complexity, the growing influence of algorithms and bots in shaping public discourse creates new challenges for feminist advocacy. Nevertheless, digital transformation is advancing with limited public oversight, begging the questions: "who benefits, who pays the cost and whose future is being decided?"[45] Meanwhile, artificial intelligence infrastructure represents new forms of extraction with social and environmental consequences, particularly in the Global South.[46]

I. Weakening multilateralism and the United Nations' uncertain future

Multilateralism, as it has been known and practiced, is under immense strain. The postwar international order – including the human rights framework and the social contract underpinning welfare states – is being eroded. At the same time, political mediation has weakened as parties, trade unions and other representative institutions have lost capacity to translate social demands into institutional change.[47] The United Nations is at the centre of these transformations. It is navigating a period of profound change marked by growing geopolitical fragmentation, declining trust in multilateralism, financial pressures and its own political and institutional challenges. This presents challenges, possibilities, as well as uncertainties.

III. Taking stock of the Sustainable Development Goals: Opportunities, gaps and lessons

Over the past decade, the SDGs have served as a globally agreed normative framework, providing new policy spaces, political legitimacy and accountability mechanisms for advancing gender equality and women's rights. They have advanced the mainstreaming of gender equality across the sustainable development agenda, expanded recognition of structural gender equality issues, brought greater attention to intersecting forms of inequality through the leave no one behind principle, and improved the availability of gender data. Although these achievements have not translated into the transformative progress envisaged in 2015, we should not lose sight of the "shoots and roots that have been created".[48] Experts noted that these are positive and incremental developments that have laid foundations for future progress, including multistakeholder governance systems in Jordan; innovative care initiatives in Brazil, the Philippines and Uruguay; more holistic approaches to gender-based violence in different contexts; and stronger data systems and citizen data in Kenya and Uganda. These are all the more notable given the challenging context outlined above. This section takes stock of what the SDGs have contributed to gender equality, considers where they have fallen short and draws lessons to inform both efforts to accelerate progress and the design of a successor framework. The section ends with a structural diagnosis of why the SDGs have not fostered transformative change, based on discussions at the expert group meeting.

---

[43] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence, *Challenging Systematic Prejudices: An Investigation into Bias against Women and Girls in Large Language Models* (UNESCO/IRCAI, 2024), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388971.

[44] UNIDO, *Gender, Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence* (2023), https://hub.unido.org/sites/default/files/publications/GENDER%2C%20DIGITAL%20TRANSFORMATION%20AND%20AI%20REPORT.pdf.

[45] Intervention by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.

[46] Intervention by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, June 2026.

[47] Intervention by Gisela Zaremberg, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

[48] Intervention by Gita Sen, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.

A. Opportunities and gaps in the Sustainable Development Goals' advancement of gender equality

Building a shared global framework for action and accountability

The 2030 Agenda represents a landmark achievement. Developed through an unprecedented participatory process, it established a universal framework grounded in human rights and centred on gender equality. The 2030 Agenda reflected a broader understanding of development which recognized the interconnected nature of social, economic, environmental and institutional challenges. It provided a roadmap for implementation of commitments elaborated in instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Together these instruments form a core normative foundation for advancing gender equality and human rights. By translating political commitments into 17 SDGs, 169 targets and 234 indicators against which progress could be assessed, the framework created new foundations for monitoring and accountability.

Although the implementation of gender equality commitments has brought about important gains, it has not fostered change at the pace or scale required to achieve the ambition of the 2030 Agenda. Only 15 per cent of the 139 SDG targets with reliable trend data are currently on track to be achieved by 2030.[49] None of the SDG 5 targets are on track to be reached by 2030.[50] In fact, if progress continues at the current pace, achieving SDG 5 will take 171 years.[51] Even where gains have been achieved, they remain fragile and unevenly distributed. The COVID-19 pandemic set back progress on many goals, particularly in the Global South.[52] Beyond the pandemic-related setbacks, progress on gender equality has been reversed in many contexts, with limited collective response from Member States, many of which are critically constrained by lack of fiscal space to invest in development. Together, these developments further expose the persistent gap between normative commitments and lived realities, with legal and policy advances often failing to translate into substantive equality.[53]

Mainstreaming and institutionalization of gender equality

One of Agenda 2030's significant innovations was to position gender equality as both a standalone goal – SDG 5 – and a cross-cutting priority across the entire agenda. This twin-track approach gave new impetus to gender mainstreaming by strengthening ownership of gender equality commitments[54] and creating entry points for integrating gender perspectives across sectors. It also highlighted the links between gender inequality and issues such as peace and security and environmental sustainability. In this way, the SDGs helped governments "move beyond treating gender equality as a standalone issue"[55] by connecting it to broader development priorities that had often been addressed separately. At the same time, they catalysed discussions about "local gender expertise", creating more space for diverse actors to contribute to policy processes across sectors. This helped strengthen intersectional approaches and collaboration among institutions and across regions.[56]

Uganda and Jordan provide examples of how SDG implementation can strengthen institutional arrangements for gender equality. In Uganda, integrating the SDGs into national development frameworks, sectoral and district plans supported coordination across ministries responsible for planning, finance, gender, statistics and local government. Gender-responsive planning and budgeting became increasingly embedded in routine

[49] United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026*, 4.
[50] Antra Bhatt et al., *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2026* (UN Women, 2026), 2, https://www.unwomen.org/en/resources/gender-snapshot.
[51] Antra Bhatt et al., 2.
[52] United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026*.
[53] Intervention by Rabeb Aloui, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[54] Intervention by Gloria Novović, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[55] Intervention by Rabeb Aloui, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[56] Intervention by Gloria Novović, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.

planning and budget processes.[57] In Jordan, the SDGs provided an entry point for multistakeholder coordination around the first National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security, bringing together government institutions, civil society, parliamentarians, United Nations agencies, private sector actors and other partners while aligning national priorities to the SDGs, CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.[58]

Institutionalization has also occurred at the local level where municipal governments have translated SDG commitments into routine governance. In Quezon City, Philippines, almost two decades of investment in participatory governance, digital administration and collaboration with 3,000 accredited civil society organizations (CSOs) enabled gender equality to become embedded across budgeting, planning, service delivery and data systems. The experience of this urban centre of 3.3 million residents illustrates how local governments can integrate gender equality across sectors rather than treat it as a standalone programme, while using disaggregated data and partnerships to reach groups that have historically been overlooked. However, the Mayor of Quezon City, Joy Belmonte, cautioned that successful institutionalization depended on enabling conditions including fiscal space, administrative capacity, strong partnerships and sustained political commitment. In other localities where these conditions are not met, "gender transformative governance remains the exception, and it is left almost entirely to the values of whoever happens to hold office".[59]

Unfortunately, these promising examples do not reflect the broader reality. Implementation has revealed persistent challenges in understanding and applying what mainstreaming requires.[60] In many contexts, mainstreaming has been reduced to overly procedural compliance, with gender considerations added superficially to existing policies and programmes without necessarily changing institutional priorities, decision-making processes or resource allocation. The implementation experience reveals that "mainstreaming is necessary but not sufficient".[61] It requires political commitment, institutional capacity, cross-sector coordination and mechanisms to ensure that gender considerations shape priorities and actions. Gisela Zaremberg highlighted a broader paradox: "Gender mainstreaming without feminist movements risks becoming technocratic, a checklist, a report, a bureaucratic language, but feminist movements without institutional pathways risk exhaustion".[62] Transformative mainstreaming requires both institutional pathways that embed gender equality within decision-making processes and sustained engagement with feminist movements.

Political legitimacy and feminist mobilization

The SDGs provided feminist activists and women's rights advocates with an important source of political legitimacy and a strategic entry point for engagement with governments. As a globally endorsed set of commitments, the framework served as a reference point from which advocates could advance demands and hold decision-makers to account. It provided advocates inside and outside governments and the United Nations system with leverage to insert gender equality into planning and policymaking processes that would otherwise have treated it as optional or peripheral.[63] In contexts such as Tunisia, the SDGs helped strengthen rights-based advocacy and supported efforts to position gender equality within broader development debates.[64] In Kenya, they provided leverage for advancing gender-responsive planning and strengthening engagement with national institutions.[65]

National gender machineries were established as a result of demands from feminist and women's rights movements. In contexts where they retained some measure of independence and capacity, these machineries

[57] Intervention by Norah Madaya, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[58] Intervention by Salma Nims, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[59] Citation for full paragraph: Intervention by Joy Belmonte, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[60] Intervention by Gita Sen, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[61] Intervention by Foteini Papagioti, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[62] Intervention by Foteini Papagioti, June 2026.
[63] Intervention by Salma Nims, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[64] Intervention by Rabeb Aloui, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[65] Intervention by Esther Waweru, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.

used the SDGs to strengthen their institutional positioning and push for gender responsive planning and budgeting. Even where authoritarian governments co-opted these machineries and reduced them to "echo chambers",[66] civil society could leverage the SDGs to forge new partnerships with progressive parliamentarians and local governments.[67]

Women's rights and feminist movements have been central to the progress achieved in advancing gender equality through the SDGs. They have served as advocates, watchdogs, co-implementers, translators and sources of political imagination. Decades of women's rights and feminist organizing and advocacy not only made gender a central global development priority to begin with, but also reframed debates about care, contributed to the development of more holistic responses to gender-based violence, brought the perspectives of diverse women and girls to global spaces, developed intersectional approaches, built alliances with other social justice movements and much more. However, as Rosalee Gonzalez put it: "These gains matter, but they are not secure".[68] As described above, the relationship between feminist movements and institutions has become more complicated as the global context has changed. Kazakhstan provides a striking example. Legal protections against domestic violence were strengthened, weakened through periods of decriminalization, and later reinstated through sustained civil society advocacy, underscoring both the fragility of legal gains and the importance of continued feminist mobilization.[69]

Feminist and human rights movements remain among the most important democratic forces defending equality and rights, while operating in contexts where the institutions that have historically provided pathways for positive change – including public institutions, welfare systems and multilateral spaces – are under increasing pressure. Sustaining activism in such an environment creates significant challenges, including exhaustion and shrinking space for engagement. As such, movements are confronted with a question: "What kind of institutional and non-institutional activism is possible under these conditions?"[70]

Leave no one behind and intersectional inequality

The leave no one behind principle was one of the 2030 Agenda's most significant normative innovations. It shifted the focus from "assessing average and aggregate progress"[71] to considering whether those facing the greatest disadvantage were being reached. In doing so, it recognized that inequality is multidimensional and that gender inequality intersects with other forms of discrimination and exclusion. The principle expanded attention to groups that received limited attention in earlier global development frameworks, including persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, refugees, displaced people and others experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Beyond that, it encouraged greater use of disaggregated data and intersectional analysis to reveal persistent disparities in areas such as maternal mortality, where even within countries, outcomes continue to differ sharply by race, ethnicity, class and caste.[72]

However, the leave no one behind principle has not consistently translated into structural change. The implementation experience confirms that disaggregating data or identifying marginalized groups does not, in itself, redistribute resources, alter decision-making power, strengthen rights protections or address the underlying causes of inequality. As Rosalee Gonzalez observed, "Leave no one behind allows the international system to name exclusion, but it does not always require States to confront the structures that produce that exclusion."[73] This requires going beyond identifying Indigenous women, for example, as a vulnerable group,

---

[66] Intervention by Lina Abou-Habib, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[67] Intervention by Ipek Ilkkaracan, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[68] CSW71, 1 July 2026.
[69] Intervention by Khalida Azhigulova, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[70] Citation for full paragraph: Intervention by Gisela Zaremberg, CSW71, 1 July 2026.
[71] United Nations Sustainable Development Group, *Leaving No One Behind: A UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams (Interim Draft)* (2019), 8, https://www.jointsdgfund.org/article/leaving-no-one-behind-unsdg-operational-guide-un-country-teams-interim-draft.
[72] Intervention by Naila Kabeer, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[73] CSW71, 30 June 2026.

and considering issues around land rights, collective rights and self-determination.[74] After all, "Being counted is not the same as being protected, and being consulted is not the same as exercising self-determination".[75]

Structural approaches to eliminating gender-based violence and strengthening sexual and reproductive health and rights

A key advance in the SDGs was a focus on global priorities such as gender-based violence, unpaid care and domestic work (further discussed below) and sexual and reproductive health and rights as central sustainable development issues rather than matters confined to the private sphere. By anchoring these issues within SDG 5 and connecting them to health, education and economic development, feminist and women's rights organizations pushed States to "shift from reactive policing" of gender-based violence to more integrated and structural policy responses.[76] For civil society actors across the globe, the SDGs provided a platform to press for comprehensive services including access to sexual and reproductive health care, legal and policy reforms, stronger institutional responses and greater accountability. In the African context, for example, women's rights activists and advocates mobilized both the SDGs and the Maputo Protocol[77] as they used strategic litigation, shadow reporting and regional advocacy to force States to recognize the systematic nature of gender-based violence and translate global commitments into national and regional action.[78]

Constructing national and international coalitions for social reproduction and care work

The SDG's recognition of unpaid care and domestic work as a structural gender equality issue was "a historical normative breakthrough".[79] SDG 5.4 established recognition, reduction and redistribution of such work as a policy target, while providing some implementation guidance. Through feminist scholarship, advocacy and policy research, much of which has been supported by the United Nations, the understanding of care has evolved beyond the original framing of SDG 5.4. Initially, care was characterized as a constraint on women's employment, education and participation in decision-making as well as a driver of gender gaps in these areas. However, it is now recognized as a structural issue central to social reproduction, economic development and gender equality. This shift has introduced the broader "system of the care economy" which includes both paid and unpaid care work, the rights of caregivers and care recipients, and the role of care in advancing inclusive and sustainable development.[80]

The SDGs also provided a platform for developing national, regional and international coalitions around care. Care became a unifying agenda that brought together actors working on labour, health, education, social protection, disability rights and other fields. It created new opportunities for collaboration across governments, civil society, trade unions and the United Nations system, while strengthening links between feminist movements and broader struggles for social and economic justice. At the global level, the Human Rights Council has recognized care as a human right,[81] and UN Women, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other actors are developing tools and instruments to assist governments in advancing care policies.[82]

Evidence, participation and accountability

The SDGs significantly strengthened the global gender data architecture by accelerating the establishment of new data standards and methodologies. Compared with the Millennium Development Goals, which contained

---

[74] Intervention by Rosalee Gonzalez.
[75] Intervention by Rosalee Gonzalez.
[76] Intervention by Esther Waweru, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[77] The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.
[78] Intervention by Esther Waweru, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[79] Intervention by Ipek Ilkkaracan, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[80] Citation for full paragraph: Intervention by Ipek Ilkkaracan.
[81] Intervention by Ipek Ilkkaracan.
[82] Ipek Ilkkaracan, *A Guide to Public Investments in the Care Economy: Policy Support Tool for Estimating Care Deficits, Investment Costs, and Economic Returns* (ILO and UN Women, 2021), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/04/policy-tool-care-economy.

relatively few gender-specific indicators, SDG 5 created a framework for tracking gender equality across multiple dimensions. The SDGs also stimulated greater investment in gender statistics, expanded data coverage and strengthened collaboration between national statistical offices, governments, civil society and international organizations. As a result, substantial methodological progress has been made over the years. At the onset, only two indicators were tier 1.[83] However, now 9 out of 14 indicators are in this tier.[84]

Beyond expanding the availability of data, the SDGs helped shift perspectives about what should be measured. They encouraged greater attention to sex-disaggregated and intersectional data in order to make inequalities more visible and strengthen the evidence base for gender-responsive policymaking and accountability. Inspired by the SDGs and supported by United Nations agencies, Latin American Member States, for example, prioritized collecting data on femicides[85] based on indicators that were collaboratively developed by various actors within the United Nations system.[86] This has brought more visibility to a previously overlooked form of violence.[87]

Nevertheless, persistent gaps reveal deeper systemic shortcomings in how gender evidence is prioritized, resourced and institutionalized. These gaps leave many critical aspects of women's and girls' experiences – such as unpaid care, gender-based violence, decision-making power and intersecting forms of discrimination – insufficiently captured. Coupled with this, implementation has underscored that evidence, participation and accountability are mutually reinforcing elements of effective gender equality governance. Data and reporting do not necessarily translate into actionable evidence, participation does not necessarily shift power and accountability mechanisms do not necessarily compel action.

SDG implementation has also exposed what Francesca Perucci described as a persistent "tension between monitoring accountability versus actionable data". Monitoring data is essential for tracking commitments against agreed indicators in order to assess progress, while other forms of evidence, including citizen data and contextual analysis, are needed to inform policy choices, resource allocation and implementation. The latter provides the actionable data needed to understand lived realities and guide decisions. Gender indicators strengthened global tracking and increased visibility of inequalities, but the evidence required for policy design, budgeting and service delivery remains limited. This distinction is particularly important for marginalized groups. The most significant evidence gaps remain in data that capture intersectional inequalities, marginalized groups and hard-to-reach populations. This is the very evidence needed to understand how policies affect different groups and to design effective responses. Data systems often continue to prioritize internationally comparable indicators over locally relevant information that can reveal how inequalities are experienced in practice.[88]

The challenge is not simply generating more data, but strengthening the capacity to interpret and use evidence. Gloria Novović emphasized that "We have quite a lot of data. What we lack is analysis."[89] National statistical systems often face constraints in analytical capacity, while policymakers may lack sufficient understanding of

[83] Meaning: "Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant." UNDESA Statistics Division, "IAEG-SDGs — Tier Classification for Global SDG Indicators," Sustainable Development Goals, accessed September 14, 2026, https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/.
[84] Intervention by Francesca Perucci, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[85] Intervention by Melissa Upreti, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[86] UNODC and UN Women, *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Gender-Related Killing of Women and Girls (Also Referred to as "Femicide/Feminicide")* (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women, 2022), https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/Statistical_framework_femicide_2022.pdf.
[87] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, "ECLAC: At Least 19,254 Femicides Have Been Registered in the Last Five Years in Latin America and the Caribbean," November 24, 2025, https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/eclac-least-19254-femicides-have-been-registered-last-five-years-latin-america-and.
[88] Citation for full paragraph: Intervention by Francesca Perucci, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[89] CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.

statistical methodologies. Meanwhile, questions remain about whose knowledge is recognized as authoritative, particularly where official statistics do not capture lived experiences or community-generated evidence.

Citizen data has highlighted how communities can fill information gaps, improve representation and make development initiatives more responsive to local realities. In many contexts across the globe, "citizen data is really pushing boundaries. They've proved that better, more inclusive data is possible."[90] In Kenya[91] and Uganda,[92] for example, citizen data initiatives have demonstrated how communities and civil society can complement official statistics by capturing lived experiences and informing SDG localization, monitoring, planning and decision-making.

Although the SDGs established participation as a fundamental principle, experience has shown that meaningful participation remains uneven in practice. In many contexts, CSOs and communities are "often invited to validate decisions after they are made, rather than being recognized as a co-designer, monitor and political actor in accountability itself".[93] These groups are often treated as beneficiaries or stakeholders rather than decision-makers with knowledge, expertise and rights. As Solange Baptiste noted: "The most affected are the least heard".[94] Meaningful participation is not solely a procedural issue, but a critical question of democratic rights. It requires mechanisms through which communities can influence decisions, shape priorities and participate in implementation. It should go beyond consultation and create room for co-creation of development agendas.

The SDG accountability architecture created important opportunities for review, particularly through voluntary national reviews and global monitoring processes. In Kenya, the African Women's Major Group and national coalitions such as the SDG Kenya Forum successfully used shadow reports to counter State reports. Their engagement ultimately led the Government of Kenya to make concrete commitments on gender-based violence including introducing a dedicated gender-based violence module in national demographic surveys and scaling up the integrated police response to gender-based violence.[95]

However, the implementation experience generally attests to the limits of accountability systems that are often "State-led, technical and fragmented"[96] and which rely primarily on voluntary reporting.[97] Reporting can make inequalities more visible and open political space for feminist movements, but "[v]isibility is useful only if it helps shift power".[98] While reporting mechanisms have increased visibility and generated important evidence, they cannot compel action. Experts noted a "reductionist trend" of Member States treating reporting, declarations and data collection as measures of success, thereby diluting the transformative ambitions of the gender equality agenda.[99] As Foteini Papagioti observed, such actions "create this illusion of activity, of progress, of shared commitment, of political will and there's so limited substance".[100] The result is an expanding cycle of declarations, reporting requirements and data collection that places growing demands on national gender machineries, CSOs and United Nations entities, while yielding comparatively limited institutional change. Weak accountability mechanisms have enabled governments to report on progress without being held accountable for implementation failures. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls contended: "The test is simple: Will gender equality remain a promise scattered across reports or become a shared responsibility that is funded, reviewed, defended and delivered?"[101] Too often, this has not been the case.

---

[90] Intervention by Francesca Perucci, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[91] Intervention by Esther Waweru, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[92] Intervention by Norah Madaya, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[93] Intervention by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[94] CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[95] Intervention by Esther Waweru, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[96] Intervention by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[97] Intervention by Esther Waweru, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[98] Intervention by Rosalee Gonzalez, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[99] Intervention by Lina Abou-Habib, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[100] CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[101] CSW71 EGM, 3 July 2026.

The experience of SDG implementation suggests that evidence, participation and accountability cannot be reduced to procedural requirements or treated as ends in themselves. Data and reporting can create visibility, but they do not by themselves shift power or ensure that commitments are translated into action. Effective implementation is a function of whether those most affected by inequality have a meaningful role in shaping decisions, producing knowledge and holding institutions accountable.

Multilevel and integrated governance

Implementation of the SDGs has generated important insights across different levels of governance – from local governments and national institutions to regional platforms. These experiences demonstrate that progress on gender equality does not follow a single pathway. Rather, transformative change has emerged where actors have been able to translate global commitments into locally meaningful action, build coalitions across institutions and adapt strategies to different political contexts. The experiences also highlight the necessity of strengthening coordination across local, national, regional and global levels of governance and across sectors, since interconnected challenges cannot be addressed effectively through fragmented institutions or isolated policy responses.

Local governments have often emerged as important sites of innovation, particularly where national frameworks have been insufficient or unevenly implemented. Quezon City leadership's example of "governing with intention"[102] illustrates how subnational governments can translate global commitments into locally relevant approaches when enabling conditions exist. Similarly, Bogotá has developed care blocks and municipalities in Brazil have also developed innovative care plans.[103]

National experiences demonstrate that the pathway from global commitments to implementation is shaped by how actors navigate and connect different levels of governance. Where national governments have retained capacity and political space, they have provided important entry points for translating global commitments into government processes. Experiences from Uganda and Jordan demonstrate the importance of linking national coordination structures with sectoral implementation and ensuring that ownership is shared across government.

Regional cooperation has provided another important pathway for advancing gender equality. In Africa, the SDGs complemented the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Maputo Protocol, providing a framework that strengthened advocacy and accountability.[104] Regional cooperation has also supported practical responses to shared challenges. At the same time, regional economic communities are working to harmonize gender indicators, while initiatives between Kenya and Uganda sought to improve the quality and comparability of citizen data across borders. [105]

Relatedly, SDG implementation has strengthened recognition that gender equality is interconnected with progress across multiple areas of sustainable development and encouraged more coordinated approaches to policy design and implementation. The challenges addressed by the SDGs often cut across administrative boundaries, yet governments remain largely organized through sectoral institutions. A woman with a disability living in a rural community experiences this discrimination simultaneously and is likely to require responses from multiple sectors, including health, social protection, education and local government. However, the "disconnection between integrated lives and fragmented institutions has become one of the greatest implementation challenges of the SDGs".[106] Experience has shown that integration requires more than recognizing connections between issues. It requires institutional communication, coordination and shared

[102] Intervention by Joy Belmonte, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[103] Intervention by Ipek Ilkkaracan, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[104] Intervention by Esther Waweru, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[105] Intervention by Esther Waweru.
[106] Citation for full paragraph: Intervention by Saowalak Thongkuay, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

responsibility for outcomes that no single sector can achieve alone. In contexts like Tunisia, the SDGs have promoted gender mainstreaming, but coordination between ministries and agencies remains a challenge.[107]

The global HIV response provides an example of the potential of more integrated approaches. Women and girls continue to bear a disproportionate burden of the epidemic, making up 53 per cent of the people living with HIV and 45 per cent of new infections worldwide and 63 per cent in Africa in 2024. The structural drivers of this disparity include gender-based violence, limited bodily autonomy, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and unequal access to educational and economic opportunities. Recognizing links between SDG target 3.3 and SDG 5, the HIV response has increasingly been framed around the principle that advancing gender equality is essential to ending AIDS. The Education Plus Initiative illustrates how this integrated approach has been translated into practice. This initiative brings together African governments, the African Union, CSOs, adolescent girls and young women, United Nations agencies and donors within an initiative that combines efforts to keep girls in secondary school with measures to expand comprehensive sexuality education, prevent gender-based violence, strengthen sexual and reproductive health and rights, and promote girls' economic empowerment. By addressing the structural drivers of HIV vulnerability instead of treating HIV as a standalone health issue, the initiative demonstrates how coordinated action across education, health, gender equality and social protection can generate mutually reinforcing outcomes.[108]

SDG implementation also demonstrates the importance of connecting different areas of global governance. Human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies and United Nations special procedures, provide important bridges between international commitments and national implementation. They have recognized the attainment of the SDGs as a cross-cutting thematic issue and are well-positioned to take critical stances on human rights and development issues, drawing on their experience regularly engaging with Member States. Their work helps connect development commitments with human rights obligations and provides tools for assessing whether progress is consistent with binding human rights standards. Stronger coordination in areas of work associated with the key pillars of development, human rights and peace and security – particularly across United Nations entities based in New York and Geneva – is needed as institutional divisions frequently limit more coherent prioritization and responses and opportunities to leverage the full range of resources within the system are lost.[109]

Inadequate political commitment

Political will remains a critical determinant of progress. Governments have varied considerably in the priority they give to gender equality, with some withdrawing from progressive commitments while others adopt the language of gender equality without corresponding action. As a result, implementation has often depended more on political will than on the commitments embodied in the SDGs themselves.

The $4 trillion funding gap for achieving the SDGs,[110] for example, reflects not only limited resources, but also political choices about how public finance is mobilized and allocated. Governments tend to privilege military and conservative structures over feminist movements and gender equality.[111]

B. Why transformative change remains elusive

While the SDGs have generated important gains for gender equality, efforts to achieve them have exposed constraints that transcend implementation challenges. These constraints arise from the economic paradigms, political economy, institutional arrangements and accountability systems within which the SDGs were

[107] Intervention by Rabeb Aloui, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[108] Citation for full paragraph: UNAIDS, *From Ending AIDS to Advance Gender Equality: How SDG Target 3.3 Is Catalyzing Progress on Gender Equality across the 2030 Agenda*, UNAIDS Observer Paper prepared to inform EGM71 (2026).
[109] Citation for full paragraph: Intervention by Melissa Upreti, CSW71, 2 July 2026.
[110] Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2026: Implementing the Sevilla Commitment* (United Nations, 2026), https://financing.desa.un.org/iatf/fsdr2026.
[111] Intervention by Lina Abou-Habib, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.

developed and have operated. They have been further intensified by the erosion of enabling conditions for gender equality since 2015, as elaborated in section II. This section examines how these structural constraints have limited transformative progress, arguing that advancing gender equality will require rethinking the assumptions, models and arrangements underpinning the current framework.

Foreclosures of gender equality under growth-based paradigms

The SDGs were constructed within paradigms that have constrained the possibilities for achieving gender equality. An observation from Foteini Papagioti captured this dilemma: "I would argue that the SDGs were not undermined, per se, by the prevailing economic paradigm and growth paradigm, but they were precisely developed within it and so I think we're now reaching the sort of 'natural', for lack of a better word, limits of what we can achieve when the bigger circle around us remains unchanged and creates further opportunities for concentration of power and wealth in the hands of few."[112] At this juncture, we must go beyond accelerating progress and consider whether the paradigm itself must be transformed. After all, as Gloria Novović asked, "What exactly are we mainstreaming gender into?"[113]

Although we have witnessed growth within the prevailing paradigm, its benefits have been unevenly distributed. There is no evidence of an inherent relationship between economic growth and reduction of inequality. In fact, growth seems to be accompanied by inequality. Deregulated market approaches leave essential needs and rights "to the mercy of these markets and the oligarchs that govern them". Where provision of these rights and needs is not aligned with market incentives, people experiencing multiple inequalities are at the greatest risk of being left behind. The paradigm in which gender equality is being mainstreamed can therefore produce the very inequalities that gender equality efforts seek to address. This reveals the fundamental contradiction of pursuing "sustainable development goals within the context of an unsustainable development paradigm".[114]

From the 1980s, the "TINA syndrome", or the idea that "There Is No Alternative", has shaped economic policymaking.[115] However, this perspective has never been tenable. The limitations of the prevailing model are evident in labour markets and patterns of economic transformation. Many economies have experienced declining standard forms of employment and increasing precarity as gross domestic product (GDP) growth has not consistently translated into full and decent employment.[116] Governments have also increasingly disconnected women's rights from broader economic strategies, as economic growth is no longer understood primarily through labour force participation, but through processes such as financialization and digitalization.[117]

The implications of this paradigm extend beyond patterns of income and wealth distribution to what is recognized as economically valuable. By prioritizing market-based activity as the primary measure of economic contribution, prevailing models often render invisible the social and ecological foundations upon which economies depend. This is particularly evident in the treatment of care. Feminist economists have long demonstrated that care is not a private issue but a structural determinant of inequality and a foundation of all economic activity. Yet, within dominant economic frameworks, unpaid care remains undervalued, under-resourced and largely excluded from macroeconomic policymaking.

In addition to reflecting on better implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it is necessary to fundamentally rethink its assumptions. As urged by V. Eudine Barriteau, the current moment requires us to "think […] expansively about combating gender equality through […] economic rights".[118] This rethinking must also encompass

[112] CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[113] CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[114] Citation for full paragraph: Intervention by Naila Kabeer, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[115] Intervention by Gita Sen, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[116] Intervention by Naila Kabeer, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[117] Intervention by Sivananthi Thanenthiran, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[118] CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.

ecological relations, recognizing Indigenous and feminist perspectives of care that extends beyond human relationships to the natural systems that sustain life.

Political economy constraints on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

The erosion of enabling conditions for gender equality is compounded by political economy constraints that limit governments' ability to translate commitments into action. These constraints reflect institutional arrangements, policy choices and global economic governance structures that determine how resources are or can be generated, allocated and governed. As indicated above, high debt burdens, fiscal consolidation and constraints imposed by global economic governance structures restrict governments' capacity to expand public services, social protection and care systems essential to advancing gender equality.

Fiscal pressures are further intensified by constraints to domestic resource mobilization, including due to illicit financial flows and other forms of revenue loss. The persistent financing gap for the SDGs reflects decisions regarding taxation, public spending and economic priorities. Greater emphasis on debt repayment, fiscal restraint and market-oriented reforms has often limited investment in care systems, social protection and public services. Transformative action is also constrained by economic governance frameworks that continue to prioritize fiscal discipline and investor confidence. Finance ministries in many countries, particularly in the Global South, often operate within these frameworks, limiting the policy space available for gender equality, health and social protection priorities.[119]

Fragmented implementation and donor-driven approaches

Implementation of the SDGs has often been fragmented, undermining the integrated vision of the 2030 Agenda. Rather than advancing coordinated, cross-sectoral strategies, implementation is frequently organized through separate initiatives, institutional silos and competing priorities. Although some development partners have adjusted to nationally led planning, others engage selectively with national plans, weakening coherence around gender equality.

Short-term, project-based financing further limits opportunities to strengthen institutional capacity and sustain long-term reform. Extensive reporting requirements, data collection exercises and coordination processes also place significant demands on national gender machineries, CSOs and United Nations entities. Financing modalities frequently favour interventions with measurable short-term outputs over movement strengthening, institutional reform and other longer-term processes required for transformative change.

The shift from transformative ambition to incremental reform

The SDGs were conceived within a transformative agenda aimed at addressing inequalities. Yet, this agenda has been progressively whittled down to incremental reform. This shift is linked to broader changes in feminist advocacy and the global policy environment. Arguably, the Beijing Conference can be characterized as both a "glorious moment" and one when an "imperceptible shift happened from feminism as a political project to feminist advocacy".[120] Co-optation of gender mainstreaming by some Member States further contributed to the narrowing of the SDG's political ambition. This narrowing was also associated with the growing emphasis on participation or inclusion over structural transformation. While inclusion is critical, it does not by itself alter the institutions, power relations and economic structures that reproduce inequality.

As detailed above, this shift is also evident in approaches to measuring progress. A pervasive turn towards counting, declaratory activities and demonstrations of procedural compliance has often overshadowed assessment of whether interventions generate meaningful structural change. Donor practices can further

[119] Intervention by Gita Sen, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[120] Intervention by Foteini Papagioti, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.

reinforce incremental approaches by favouring interventions with measurable short-term results over longer-term efforts to transform institutions, redistribute power and sustain feminist movements.

Reporting without structural accountability

The SDGs strengthened reporting and monitoring, but not structural accountability. This failure reflects underlying power asymmetries between States and rights-holders, between donors and recipients, and between institutions and the communities that they are meant to serve. Likewise, it reflects how voluntary and State-led processes privilege visibility and compliance while leaving unequal distributions of power, resources and decision-making authority largely intact.

The gap between normative commitments and lived realities

Despite significant advances in global commitments to gender equality, a persistent gap remains between normative frameworks and women's and girls' lived realities. International agreements, institutional mechanisms and policy commitments have established important foundations, yet they have not consistently been translated into changes in the conditions shaping everyday lives. This disconnect is evident in the persistence of inequalities affecting economic security, unpaid care, political participation, safety and bodily autonomy. When commitments are not matched by resources, accountability and institutional change, they risk becoming detached from the realities they seek to transform.

IV. Priorities for accelerating progress to 2030

With less than four years remaining to achieve the 2030 targets, accelerating progress on gender equality requires focused action in areas where immediate gains remain possible and where investments can protect and build upon existing achievements. These efforts must be grounded in human rights principles and centred on the experiences, priorities and leadership of those who experience intersecting forms of marginalization. The sections below identify priority areas for accelerating progress while laying foundations for longer-term transformation.

I. Close the financing gap for gender equality

Strengthening financing for gender equality is essential to accelerating progress. It requires not only mobilizing additional resources, but fundamentally changing the development finance infrastructure. The broader SDG financing gap reflects significant constraints on countries' ability to invest in sustainable development, but calls attention to how resources are prioritized and allocated. Greater fiscal space is needed to sustain investments in public services, social protection, care systems and gender equality.

Immediate action is needed to protect and expand financing for gender equality, including ODA for feminist and women's rights organizations. At the national level, strengthening domestic resource mobilization, including through more equitable taxation systems, is essential to increase sustainable financing for public priorities. Addressing unsustainable debt burdens and expanding access to development finance are also critical to enabling governments to maintain investments in gender equality.

Financing approaches should prioritize women, girls and gender diverse people who experience multiple inequalities and ensure that resources reach communities, organizations and institutions working with and representing marginalized groups. Financing must move beyond short-term, fragmented projects towards longer-term investments that strengthen institutions, support feminist movements and enable sustained implementation. Gender-responsive budgeting should be strengthened to track not only allocations but whether resources contribute to measurable improvements in women's and girls' lives.

A. Translate commitments into coordinated implementation

Accelerating progress requires moving from commitments and frameworks towards coordinated implementation. Gender equality must be embedded across government priorities, planning processes and institutional mandates, with clear responsibilities for delivery and coordination across sectors. Implementation should be guided by a human rights-based approach that recognizes women and girls as rights-holders and ensures that policies address the structural barriers that produce and sustain inequality.

Strengthened collaboration is needed among governments, United Nations entities, development partners, as well as CSOs, feminist and women's rights movements to reduce fragmentation and align efforts around shared priorities. Those most affected by inequality should be meaningfully engaged in shaping priorities, monitoring implementation and assessing results. More effective coordination across ministries, institutions and levels of government will be essential to ensure that gender equality commitments are reflected in policies, budgets and implementation processes.

II. Strengthen local implementation and multilevel governance

Strengthening connections across global, national and local levels of governance should be a priority for translating gender equality commitments into sustained action. This requires institutionalizing mechanisms that enable coordination across levels of governance, clarifying responsibilities and ensuring that resources and decision-making authority are aligned with implementation needs.

Sub-national governments should be recognized as key partners in advancing gender equality and included systematically in planning, monitoring and implementation processes. Local implementation should be informed by the knowledge and priorities of communities, particularly those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination, to ensure that policies respond to lived realities. Strengthening multilevel governance requires creating more systematic opportunities for sub-national governments to contribute to multilateral policy discussions and implementation processes.

Effective multilevel governance also requires stronger coordination between national institutions, local governments, civil society organizations and international partners. Meaningful participation of affected communities should be treated as an essential component of governance rather than an optional consultation process. The United Nations can play an important convening role by creating channels through which local governments share experience, contribute to global policy discussions and strengthen accountability. Building these connections will be essential to ensuring that gender equality commitments are translated into context-specific action and that progress is sustained across different levels of governance.

III. Strengthen accountability for implementation

Accelerating progress requires accountability mechanisms that support implementation, learning and course correction. While reporting processes have created important opportunities to monitor commitments, stronger links are needed between commitments, responsibilities, resources and follow-up action.

Accountability should be grounded in human rights standards and provide meaningful opportunities for women's rights organizations and affected communities to participate in reviewing progress and identifying gaps. Accountability systems should move beyond measuring activities and outputs to assessing whether policies and investments are producing meaningful improvements in gender equality outcomes. This includes examining whether marginalized groups are benefiting from progress and whether institutions are addressing the structural barriers that prevent equality.

B. Invest in data and evidence systems that support action

Robust evidence systems are essential to ensuring that gender equality policies are informed by timely, relevant and actionable information. While gender data have improved significantly since the adoption of the SDGs, important gaps remain, particularly in capturing intersectional inequalities and the experiences of marginalized groups.

Investment is needed in national statistical systems, citizen data, qualitative evidence and integrated data systems that can inform policy design, resource allocation and implementation. Data systems should better capture the realities of marginalized groups and recognize different forms of knowledge, including community-generated evidence. Investment is also needed in tools, methods and solutions that enable decision-makers and communities to use data more effectively and enable stronger impact. Building analytical capacity is equally important to ensure that available evidence is translated into effective action. Data systems should support not only measurement of progress but also learning, planning and decision-making.

C. Protect and resource feminist movements and women's rights organizations

Sustained progress depends on the continued engagement and leadership of feminist movements and women's rights organizations. Protecting civic space and ensuring that these organizations have the resources and institutional recognition needed to participate meaningfully in governance and accountability processes remain essential. Feminist movements and women's rights organizations need to be protected from repression, violence and misogyny in all public and private spaces by individual and institutional state and non-state actors.

Feminist and women's rights organizations and movements should be recognized not only as implementation partners, but as political actors and knowledge-holders whose leadership is essential to advancing equality. Long-term, flexible funding is particularly important to enable movements to sustain advocacy, respond to emerging challenges and contribute to policy development and implementation. Supporting women's rights organizations is not only an investment in civil society but also in the broader accountability and democratic infrastructure needed to advance gender equality.

V. Beyond 2030: From incrementalism to transformation

The preceding sections have shown that the SDGs made important contributions to advancing gender equality while also revealing significant shortcomings. These shortcomings are not simply technical or implementation-related failures. Rather, they reflect deeper structural constraints that have limited what the SDGs can achieve for gender equality. Even though accelerating action through 2030 remains essential, the post-2030 moment provides an opportunity to consider what a more ambitious and transformative agenda for gender equality could look like.

The current moment presents both important openings and profound constraints. The erosion of the neoliberal consensus, this "grand, unifying model of economic practice that is presumed to be universally available, coherent and optimal", has created space to rethink prevailing approaches to development and economic governance.[121] Although this moment of "productive incoherence" may be unsettling, it also presents emancipatory possibilities.[122] It creates space for the "possibilism" Albert O. Hirschman championed,[123]

[121] George F. DeMartino and Ilene Grabel, "The Ethical Imperative of Possibilism in an Era of Despair," *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society* 37, no. 3 (2025): 259–70.
[122] Ilene Grabel, "Not Your Grandfather's IMF: Global Crisis, 'Productive Incoherence' and Developmental Policy Space," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 35, no. 5 (2011): 805–30, https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/ber012.
[123] Intervention by Gloria Novović, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.

namely, "an embrace of our unavoidable ignorance and the human capacity for innovation and problem solving as a wellspring" of transformation.[124]

This section, therefore, considers the foundational shifts that a successor framework should make in order to advance gender equality after 2030. The section is animated by the conviction that the post-2030 framework must move beyond incremental reform and address the structures that reproduce inequality in ways that centre the rights, agency and leadership of those left furthest behind.

These foundational shifts should be guided by three core principles:

i. Gender equality as a core priority and enabler of progress: Gender equality should be recognized as both a standalone priority and a fundamental enabler of progress across all areas of sustainable development. Moving beyond approaches that treat gender equality as an additional dimension of development, a successor framework should, like the SDGs, recognize its role as a key vector shaping social, economic, political and environmental outcomes.

i. Human rights as the foundation and operating framework: Human rights should provide both the foundation and the operating framework for the successor agenda, connecting gender equality commitments to existing obligations and accountability mechanisms. This requires moving beyond recognition of rights as guiding principles to their practical application in policymaking, implementation, resource allocation and monitoring as well as accountability for the failure to deliver on targets and commitments and the creation of guardrails against regression.

ii. Accountability to feminist and women's rights movements: Accountability in the successor framework should extend beyond state reporting towards approaches that recognize feminist and women's rights movements as partners in shaping, implementing and assessing development agendas. This requires moving from consultation towards shared power and structural changes to ensure shifts in decision-making power, control over resources and institutional practice.

A. From inclusion to justice

From vulnerability to rights, power, and self-determination

A more transformative understanding of exclusion begins from the acknowledgment that it "is not accidental". It is structurally produced through processes such as colonialism, racism, dispossession, militarization, poverty and the concentration of corporate power. For Indigenous women, it is produced by these historical and contemporary systems which have "pushed out, displaced, erased, criminalized and sacrificed [them] in the name of development". These processes have resulted in the loss of territories, lands, waters, forests, seeds, languages, governance systems and spiritual relationships. Recognizing these harms requires attention to collective rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, territories and resources. However, development models that measure progress primarily through economic growth have often treated such losses as the "cost of national progress", while Indigenous communities bear the consequences.[125] A rights-based approach requires deeper examination of the terms and conditions of inclusion. As Naila Kabeer asked, "Inclusion but on what terms and into what?"[126] This question points to the need to examine whether inclusion addresses underlying power relations and enables communities to shape decisions affecting their lives.

Protecting civic space and democratic participation

The erosion of democratic institutions and civic space documented in section II has profound implications for gender equality. Feminist movements have historically been central to advancing rights, shaping norms and holding institutions accountable. The current context raises fundamental questions about how feminist

[124] DeMartino and Grabel, "The Ethical Imperative of Possibilism in an Era of Despair."
[125] Citation for previous section of paragraph: Intervention by Rosalee Gonzalez, CSW71, 2 July 2026; 30 June, 2026.
[126] CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

organizing and democratic participation can be sustained as civic space contracts. Lina Abou-Habib identified the protection of feminist civic space among the "incredibly difficult, if not impossible, priorities for the post-2030 Agenda".[127] Preserving feminist civic space requires defending existing channels of participation in tandem with rethinking how political spaces are created, accessed and sustained.

The call for "taking back feminist space as a political space, as a space for knowledge production, and as a space for democratic governance"[128] points towards possibilities for renewing forms of participation and collective action. This extends to multilateral spaces where gender equality norms are negotiated. At the CSW, civil society participation has progressively narrowed, with representatives experiencing increasingly limited access to negotiations and decision-making processes. These developments highlight the importance of examining how multilateral processes can remain connected to the movements and communities that have historically driven progress on gender equality. This is increasingly important as anti-rights actors have become more visible and effective in multilateral spaces.

Shifting from intersectional analysis to intersectional governance

The SDGs advanced recognition that inequality is multidimensional and that discrimination is experienced through intersecting forms of exclusion. However, translating this recognition into governance remains a significant challenge. Public institutions often continue to operate through sectoral structures, while people's experiences of inequality cut across administrative boundaries.[129]

Transformation requires a "move from intersectional analysis to intersectional governance"[130] in order for institutions to better align with the realities of peoples' lives. This entails embedding intersectional approaches across planning, budgeting, implementation and accountability processes, while ensuring that gender equality, disability inclusion and other dimensions of inequality are addressed together rather than through parallel frameworks. Those experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination must be central to the design and implementation of future agendas. Intersectional governance also creates opportunities for stronger links between development and human rights systems. Treaty bodies and United Nations special procedures can help connect international commitments with human rights obligations and strengthen accountability with Member States.[131]

Accountability beyond reporting

The past decade of experience has shown that reporting alone cannot deliver the accountability required for transformative change. The challenge emerging from SDG implementation is how to move from accountability as documentation towards accountability as a process changing power relations, institutional practices and resource allocation. Voluntary reporting has contributed to visibility and monitoring, but its limitations are clear. It cannot compel action where political commitment is absent and may allow governments to demonstrate compliance without addressing the structures that sustain inequality.

A more transformative approach to accountability would extend beyond tracking participation and representation to assessing whether institutions are redistributing power and enabling meaningful influence over decisions. This opens up possibilities to move from State-led reporting towards shared accountability that connects governments, institutions and communities in assessing progress. Such approaches can bring together official monitoring with feminist evidence and lived experience, while linking commitments to resources, implementation processes and meaningful follow-up.[132]

---

[127] CSW71, 30 June 2026.
[128] Intervention by Lina Abou-Habib, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[129] Intervention by Saowalak Thongkuay, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[130] Intervention by Saowalak Thongkuay.
[131] Intervention by Melissa Upreti, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[132] Intervention by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.

Human rights as an operative framework

The SDG experience points to the potential of human rights to function not only as a normative foundation, but also as an operative framework for advancing gender equality. Although the indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of human rights are well-established in international law, economic rights, in particular, require particular attention, as many gender equality strategies remain disconnected from industrial, fiscal and financial policies that shape people's lives.[133] Human rights frameworks provide a foundation for moving from voluntary commitments towards obligations. CEDAW and other instruments establish State responsibilities to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of women and girls. Human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies and United Nations special procedures, can strengthen implementation by connecting development commitments with existing human rights obligations and providing guidance to Member States.[134]

Viewing human rights as an operative framework shifts attention from voluntary commitments towards obligations and implementation. Human rights, gender and equality impact assessments, together with stronger technical and financial support, provide practical pathways for assessing whether policies advance rights in practice rather than simply identifying those left behind. This perspective highlights the potential to connect development more directly to existing human rights obligations and to strengthen implementation and accountability for the failure to meet key development targets through the institutions that already exist.

B. Reimagining global economic governance

Challenging unsustainable development models

Reimagining economic governance can begin by questioning the assumptions that have shaped contemporary development models. The limitations of growth-centred models have created space to reconsider what economies are for and how progress is defined. Although GDP has historically been "a broad measure of progress",[135] efforts to move "beyond GDP" have been gaining prominence in recent years. Increasingly, scholars, governments and international organizations are exploring complementary approaches that assess whether development improves well-being, reduces inequalities, strengthens resilience and safeguards the environment. Concerned not only about the limits of GDP, but also about the economic paradigm it reflects, Kabeer and Plomien make a feminist case for the "well-being economy", [136] illustrating how gender equality can be understood as part of a broader reimagining of economic life rather than an objective pursued within existing models. These debates suggest that the current moment is opening possibilities to imagine economies organized around human well-being, equality and ecological sustainability, rather than economic growth as an end in itself.

Making macroeconomic governance a gender equality issue

The experience of the SDGs has underscored that macroeconomic governance cannot remain peripheral to gender equality. Macroeconomic institutions and policies shape employment, public investment, social protection, care systems and the fiscal space available to advance women's rights. They therefore influence who is left behind and the extent to which inequalities are reproduced or reduced. This insight broadens the gender equality agenda beyond women's labour force participation and entrepreneurship to the organization of

[133] Intervention by Eudine Barriteau, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[134] Intervention by Melissa Upreti, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[135] High-Level Expert Group on Beyond GDP, *Counting What Counts: A Compass of Progress for People and Planet* (United Nations, 2026), 2, https://www.un.org/en/beyondGDP.
[136] "Gender Justice and the Wellbeing Economy: The Feminist Case for an Alternative Economic Paradigm," Working Paper 169, London, UK: International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science, April 2026, https://www.lse.ac.uk/International-Inequalities/Publications/Working-Papers.

economies themselves and the distribution of resources, risks and opportunities. The challenge is to ask: "What does this economy look like, and does it actually work, not just for women and girls, but all of us?"[137]

Often, macroeconomic policy is presented as highly technical or removed from people's daily lives, making it difficult to connect fiscal and monetary decisions with their consequences for gender equality.[138] However, as Bemnet Agata indicated, women's rights and feminist organizations "need to change the narrative before [they] can change the policy". This points to the importance of making visible the connections between fiscal and monetary decisions and people's lived experiences, while identifying strategic entry points for feminist engagement in policymaking.[139]

Even as economic power is increasingly dispersed across public and private institutions, the State remains the primary interlocutor for advancing gender equality.[140] Rather than abandoning the State, this changing landscape invites new ways of engaging with public institutions while recognizing that power increasingly operates through interconnected public and private networks.[141]

A feminist approach to care

The growing recognition of care as a structural issue has created new opportunities to reimagine economic and social policy. Rather than remaining a sectoral concern, care increasingly provides a lens through which to rethink employment, social protection, public investment and sustainable development. Positioning care within macroeconomic governance creates opportunities to address multiple policy objectives simultaneously, including expanding decent work, strengthening social protection, reducing inequalities, and supporting more inclusive and sustainable development pathways. In the context of technological change and growing uncertainty about the future of work, investment in the care economy also offers significant opportunities for employment creation.[142]

At the same time, the growing prominence of care presents new risks. Ipek Ilkkaracan cautioned that "not every care agenda is gender transformative". In some contexts, care has become a vehicle for pronatalist and other conservative agendas in contexts of demographic decline where patriarchal populism frames care as a return to traditional family structures. These tensions demonstrate that the significance of care lies not only in expanding care policies, but in how care is understood and whether this includes an understanding of care as a right as well as a macroeconomic issue.[143]

Financing structural transformation

The financing gap for the SDGs highlights the need to reconsider both the resources available for gender equality and the institutions, incentives and relationships through which development is financed. Financing reflects political choices about whose needs are prioritized, which institutions are strengthened and what forms of development are enabled.[144] Accordingly, SDG funding shortfalls and the unresolved contestation over who decides how development is financed, point to the need to rethink ODA and international cooperation more broadly. Development cooperation can evolve towards approaches grounded in solidarity, shared responsibility and greater national ownership, moving beyond fragmented projects and externally defined priorities. Innovative financing instruments, including blended finance, thematic bonds and debt swaps may be useful, but there is a need to better understand their nuances and possibilities. Solange Baptiste proposed a shift from asking

[137] Intervention by Foteini Papagioti, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026
[138] Intervention by Bemnet Agata, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[139] CSW71, 1 July 2026.
[140] Intervention by Foteini Papagioti, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[141] Intervention by Gita Sen, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[142] Intervention by Ipek Ilkkaracan, CSW71 EGM, 30 June 2026.
[143] Citation for full paragraph: Intervention by Ipek Ikkaracan.
[144] See, e.g., Gloria Novovic, "Can Agenda 2030 Bring about 'Localization'? Policy Limitations of Agenda 2030 in the Broader Global Governance System," *Development Policy Review* 40, no. 4 (2022): e12587.

how to replace aid to considering how to "replace dependency with solidarity". Emerging approaches such as global public investment illustrate possibilities for moving beyond traditional donor-recipient relationships towards models where "all benefit, all contribute and all decide," thereby shifting power over resource allocation.[145] The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development also marked an important moment, signalling renewed attention to financing gender equality, but it is operating within a deeply challenging context.[146]

A transformed financing architecture also requires strengthening domestic public finance through progressive taxation, addressing illicit financial flows and expanding fiscal space for gender equality, care systems and social protection. Negotiations on the United Nations Tax Convention reflect growing recognition that global tax governance is central to expanding fiscal space for development and addressing inequalities in the distribution of resources and decision-making power. Financing should be assessed by whether it expands the policy space and institutional capacity needed to advance substantive equality.

C. Transforming knowledge and evidence systems

Data governance, sovereignty and ownership

The SDGs expanded the availability of gender data, while also exposing unresolved concerns about knowledge, power and ownership. Data systems shape what is visible, whose experiences are recognized and which inequalities become actionable priorities. This is particularly evident in Indigenous data sovereignty, which is not about being counted, but begs the questions, "Who defines the categories? Who controls the data and how is it interpreted? [Does] it reflect[s] our collective rights, territories, language, governance systems and lived realities?"[147] Meaningful inclusion requires that communities have ownership and decision-making power throughout the data process, including in designing the process as well as defining what is measured and how categories are constructed.[148]

These debates are increasingly shaped by changing conditions, including constrained financing for data collection and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, which carry risks of reproducing existing biases and deepening exclusion.[149] The future of data governance therefore requires an expansion of data availability coupled with examination of how data are produced, interpreted, controlled and used. Data sovereignty and inclusive governance offer pathways towards evidence systems that better reflect rights, experiences and systems of knowledge.

Inclusive and intersectional approaches to data

Despite the important advances the SDGs encouraged in data disaggregation, many people and experiences remain statistically invisible. Indigenous women, for example "often remain statistically irrelevant"[150] because they are a small population, illustrating how conventional statistical systems can overlook certain experiences of inequality. The limitations of existing data systems are closely connected to broader questions of knowledge and authority. Statistical categories, methodologies and indicators shape how inequalities are understood and which experiences become visible. The growing recognition of citizen-generated knowledge and other forms of evidence reflects changing understandings of expertise and knowledge production. These developments raise important questions about how different forms of knowledge can be interpreted together and how evidence can better capture intersectionality.

[145] CSW71, 1 July 2026.
[146] Intervention by Foteini Papagioti, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[147] Intervention by Rosalee Gonzalez, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[148] Intervention by Francesca Perucci, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.
[149] Intervention by Francesca Perucci.
[150] Intervention by Rosalee Gonzalez, CSW71 EGM, 2 July 2026.

D. Fostering coalitions and solidarity

The experience of the SDGs demonstrates that progress on gender equality has always been shaped by collective action. Feminist movements have built alliances across struggles, connecting gender justice with disability rights, Indigenous rights, workers' rights, racial justice, environmental movements and other social justice agendas. These forms of solidarity reflect a growing recognition that intersecting systems of inequality cannot be transformed through isolated efforts. As Saowalak Thongkuay noted, "the future belongs to coalitions," particularly in contexts where civic space is increasingly constrained.[151]

However, coalitions "do not happen spontaneously".[152] They require sustained relationships, shared political analysis and mechanisms for navigating differences across movements with distinct histories, priorities and forms of expertise. Their transformative potential lies not only in expanding participation, but in creating spaces where diverse actors can develop common understandings of structural problems and collective visions for change. The role of feminist movements in collaboration with other movements is to articulate a shared political project aimed at realizing structural justice.[153] Feminist autonomy remains essential, but strategic alliances provide pathways for linking gender equality with wider struggles for rights, democracy and social transformation. Drawing from Gita Sen, "The ability of feminist organizations to hold their own […] will require not only clarity of vision and a track record of analysis and advocacy but also stronger communication skills, greater organizational resilience and effectiveness, and the ability to build and nurture effective alliances in which younger people play strong roles".[154] For Gisela Zaremberg, the following five areas can help create strategic bridges for cross-movement collaboration: fiscal justice, democratic mediation, masculinities, families and faith, and digital justice.[155]

VI. The role of the United Nations in the post-2030 agenda

A. Protecting and renewing multilateralism

Protecting normative spaces

The CSW is the United Nations' primary intergovernmental forum dedicated to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. It provides a normative space where international standards are negotiated, political consensus is built, and Member States, civil society and the United Nations system engage in shaping the global gender equality agenda. However, this space is under mounting pressure. Organized anti-rights actors engage in "norm spoiling" within this space. Not only do they undertake anti-gender protests at the annual CSW, but they use media platforms and lobby Member State delegates behind the scenes.[156] At the same time, opportunities for meaningful civil society engagement have narrowed. Informal negotiations have become less accessible, while political bargaining increasingly takes place before formal sessions begin.[157] These developments have weakened opportunities for dialogue between governments, civil society and feminist movements in addition to reducing the transparency of multilateral negotiations.

Against this backdrop, the ongoing CSW revitalization process has significance beyond institutional reform. It points towards broader debates about the future of multilateralism, the protection of normative frameworks for gender equality and the role of civil society in global governance. The effectiveness of CSW depends not only on its institutional arrangements but also on its ability to preserve an independent normative mandate, sustain

[151] CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[152] Intervention by Naila Kabeer, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[153] Intervention by Gisela Zaremberg, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[154] *The SDGs and Feminist Movement Building*, 21.
[155] CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.
[156] Rebecca Holmes, "Feminist Responses to the Growing Anti-Rights Movement at the UN," *IPI Global Observatory*, October 23, 2024, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2024/10/feminist-responses-to-the-growing-anti-rights-movement-at-the-un/.
[157] Intervention by Gita Sen, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

meaningful participation by women's rights organizations and maintain the agreed conclusions as a reaffirmation of Member States' commitments to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and advancement of gender equality.[158] The future of CSW therefore carries implications well beyond the CSW itself, shaping the credibility of the multilateral system as a forum for advancing gender equality and women's rights.

As articulated by members of the UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group for Latin America and the Caribbean, "[t]he revitalization of multilateralism must be feminist or it will not be revitalization at all".[159] Although preserving normative commitments to gender equality is critical, renewing multilateralism also requires ensuring that the institutions through which those commitments are negotiated retain meaningful channels for engagement with women's rights organizations and civil society. The vitality and legitimacy of the CSW rests on its capacity to remain both a normative forum for Member States and a space in which feminist voices continue to shape global debates and political outcomes.

Supporting emerging coalitions and reform processes

Emerging coalitions of Member States demonstrate important possibilities for renewing multilateralism and reshaping global governance frameworks. The United Nations Tax Convention, spearheaded by the African Group of Member States, represents a significant shift in debates over international tax cooperation in what Bemnet Agata described as a "once-in-a-generation opportunity". The significance of the Convention lies not only in its legal form and its reclamation of tax sovereignty, but also in the way it "changes who gets to shape the rules" by creating a universal forum in which developing countries can participate more fully.[160] The leadership of African countries illustrates how Member State coalitions can challenge established patterns of decision-making and advance more inclusive approaches to global governance. At the same time, the convention was made possible through years of engagement by civil society networks and social movements and many of its "more radical ideas stemmed from the [African] grassroots".[161]

Recent financing for development processes have created additional openings for coalition-building around the structural conditions required to advance gender equality. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Sevilla Commitment are important as financing processes and as emerging efforts to reshape the rules and institutions governing global economic cooperation. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development is creating political space for continued negotiation, alliance-building and the articulation of shared priorities across Member States and movements.

The emergence of new Member State coalitions points to possibilities for a more inclusive multilateralism, where influence is shaped through broader alliances and new forms of cooperation. The United Nations provides an important institutional space for these coalitions to emerge, negotiate, and translate shared priorities into global agreements. Sustaining these openings will require ensuring that new forms of cooperation can continue beyond individual negotiations and contribute to lasting shifts in how global decisions are shaped.

---

[158] Women's Rights Caucus, *Commission on the Status of Women Revitalization: An Advocacy Brief for National Women's Rights Organizations* (n.d.), https://www.wo-men.nl/kb-bestanden/1753299585.pdf#1#1.

[159] "Position Paper of the Members of the UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group (SCAG) Ahead of International Women's Day and in the Context of CSW70," UN Women – Americas and the Caribbean, March 9, 2026, https://lac.unwomen.org/en/stories/noticia/2026/03/documento-de-posicion-de-las-integrantes-del-grupo-asesor-de-sociedad-civil-gasc.

[160] Intervention by Bemnet Agata, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

[161] Intervention by Bemnet Agata.

B. The United Nations as a convenor and compass

Sustaining feminist leadership within the United Nations system

UN Women occupies a distinctive position within the United Nations system as the entity with a dedicated mandate for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Beyond advancing gender equality within specific programmes, UN Women provides institutional leadership, supports coordination across the United Nations system and helps sustain global attention to women's rights within multilateral processes. Debates over the future of the United Nations' institutional architecture for gender equality have highlighted the importance of maintaining dedicated mandates and expertise. Experts discussed the potential merger of UN Women with the United Nations Population Fund and expressed concerns about its implications for ongoing implementation of the SDGs as well as for gender mainstreaming in the post-2030 agenda. Experts noted that robust and ongoing consultation with civil society on this issue is critical. As the United Nations system undergoes broader transformation, sustaining feminist leadership will be critical to ensuring that gender equality remains central to the United Nations' evolving agenda.

The United Nations' historical contribution to alternative development paradigms

Experts noted that the United Nations has historically provided a space for emerging approaches to development that challenge orthodoxies. From the establishment of international human rights frameworks to debates on sustainable development, social justice and the redistribution of resources and opportunities, the United Nations has contributed to expanding the conceptual foundations of development beyond growth paradigms. However, as elaborated at the beginning of the report, the institution now operates in a significantly different global context than that of its founding period. This requires reflection on what forms of international cooperation remain possible and how earlier global treaties and agreements, including CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, can inform responses to contemporary challenges.

The United Nations' value lies also in its capacity to bring diverse actors together to negotiate shared understandings, develop normative frameworks and advance new approaches to global challenges. Through treaties, treaty bodies, special procedures and other mechanisms, it has shaped both binding and non-binding standards that address discrimination and strengthen accountability. These institutional resources remain important for feminist movements and other actors seeking to influence policy. More broadly, the United Nations has provided a forum where competing visions of development, justice and equality can be debated and translated into collective frameworks for action. Its future contribution to alternative development paradigms will depend on its ability to preserve this normative role while adapting to the changing global context. In a period of uncertainty, the United Nations can serve as a "compass"[162] by helping navigate disruption, connecting diverse experiences and perspectives, and identifying possibilities for collective action.

C. Investments in institutions and movements

Strengthening coordination and collaboration across United Nations entities

The United Nations system's capacity to advance gender equality depends on effective collaboration across its diverse entities and mandates. However, institutional fragmentation continues to constrain integrated action. Work across human rights, peace and security, and development areas requires deeper and more sustained collaboration. The United Nations' comparative advantage lies in its ability to convene diverse expertise and approaches.

[162] Intervention by Gisela Zaremberg, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

Resourcing women's rights and feminist organizations and movements

The weakening of multilateralism has coincided with growing financial pressures on feminist and women's rights organizations and movements. These pressures are particularly significant because feminist movements are not only advocates, but also sources of knowledge, accountability and community-based leadership. Communities, in turn, represent essential "infrastructure" for sustaining social change. As Solange Baptiste noted, "community leadership, especially women-led organizations, is core to any global social response." [163] Unfortunately, this is often not reflected in development financing processes.

Changing patterns of development finance have intensified these challenges. The contraction of traditional aid flows has created uncertainty for organizations that have long relied on external funding, while available resources often remain constrained by short-term priorities and reporting requirements. This signals the need to think about how financing approaches can better support local organizations and sustain the movements that advance accountability and social transformation. Women's rights organizations provide essential links between global commitments and lived realities, contributing to policy development, implementation, monitoring and accountability. Sustaining this role requires recognizing movements as political actors and partners in shaping development agendas, rather than only as recipients or implementers of externally defined priorities.

VII. Conclusion

The 2030 Agenda established gender equality as a central commitment of sustainable development and created important foundations for progress. The SDGs strengthened global recognition of structural inequalities, expanded accountability and improved the visibility of groups historically excluded from policy processes. Notwithstanding, uneven progress demonstrates the limits of approaches that seek to address inequality without transforming the systems that produce it.

The post-2030 agenda must therefore move from incremental reform towards structural change, grounding action in human rights, redistributing power and strengthening the agency of feminist movements and communities. In a period of profound uncertainty, transformation will depend on the ability to reimagine economic, political and institutional arrangements and build new forms of solidarity capable of advancing gender equality.

[163] Intervention by Solange Baptiste, CSW71 EGM, 1 July 2026.

Bibliography

Abou-Habib, Lina. “Thirty Years after the Beijing Platform for Action: Experiences of Institutionalisation, Emerging Generations of Feminists, the Rise of Global Anti-Rights Trends, and Contemporary Fault Lines.” *Gender & Development* 33, no. 3 (2025): 865–88.

ActionAid International, Education International, and Tax and Ed Alliance. *Still Cooking with a Failed Recipe: A Review of IMF Country Advice on Social Spending, Public Services, Debt, Tax and Gender Equality*. 2026. https://actionaid.org/publications/2026/still-cooking-failed-recipe.

Anna E. Ackzell and Katia Schnellecke (2026). Strategic Responses to Backlash Against Gender Justice. Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), https://cdn.unrisd.org/assets/library/reports/2026/strategic-responses-to-backlash-against-gender-justice.pdf.Antra Bhatt, Guillem Fortuny Fillo, Ionica Berevoescu, Asha Meagher, Yongyi Min, Heather Page, and Sokunpanha You. *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2026*. UN Women, 2026. https://www.unwomen.org/en/resources/gender-snapshot.

Bhumika Muchhala. *A Feminist Political Economy Lens Towards Equity and Justice in the Global South*. Penang: Third World Network, 2024.

Chloé van Biljon, Jaco Oelofsen, Layne Hofman, and Martha Hungwe. *Bled Dry: How Tax Abuse, Illicit Financial Flows and Debt Affect Women and Girls in Africa*. Tax Justice Network, Alternative Information & Development Centre, and Center for Economic and Social Rights, 2025.

CIVICUS. *People Under Attack 2025*. CIVICUS Monitor, 2025. https://civicusmonitor.contentfiles.net/media/documents/GlobalFindings2025.EN.pdf.

Constanza Tabbush. *Understanding Backlash against Gender Equality: Evidence, Trends and Policy Responses*. Edited by Laura Turquet. With Brianna Howell (Research Assistant). UN Women and UN Research Institute for Social Development, 2025. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/09/understanding-backlash-against-gender-equality-evidence-trends-and-policy-responses.

DeMartino, George F., and Ilene Grabel. “The Ethical Imperative of Possibilism in an Era of Despair.” *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society* 37, no. 3 (2025): 259–70.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. “ECLAC: At Least 19,254 Femicides Have Been Registered in the Last Five Years in Latin America and the Caribbean.” November 24, 2025. https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/eclac-least-19254-femicides-have-been-registered-last-five-years-latin-america-and.

Ginette Azcona, Antra Bhatt, Guillem Fortuny Fillo, Yongyi Min, Heather Page, and Sokunpanha You. *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2025*. UN Women, Women Count, and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2025. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2025.

Gisela Zaremberg, Constanza Tabbush, and Elizabeth Jay Friedman. “Feminism(s) and Anti-Gender Backlash: Lessons from Latin America.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 23, no. 4 (2021): 527–34.

Gita Sen. *The SDGs and Feminist Movement Building*. No. 27. UN Women, 2018. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/discussion-paper-the-sdgs-and-feminist-movement-building.

Grabel, Ilene. “Not Your Grandfather’s IMF: Global Crisis, ‘Productive Incoherence’ and Developmental Policy Space.” *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 35, no. 5 (2011): 805–30. https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/ber012.

High-Level Expert Group on Beyond GDP. *Counting What Counts: A Compass of Progress for People and Planet*. United Nations, 2026. https://www.un.org/en/beyondGDP.

Holmes, Rebecca. “Feminist Responses to the Growing Anti-Rights Movement at the UN.” *IPI Global Observatory*, October 23, 2024. https://theglobalobservatory.org/2024/10/feminist-responses-to-the-growing-anti-rights-movement-at-the-un/.

Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development. *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2026: Implementing the Sevilla Commitment*. United Nations, 2026. https://financing.desa.un.org/iatf/fsdr2026.

Ipek Ilkkaracan. *A Guide to Public Investments in the Care Economy: Policy Support Tool for Estimating Care Deficits, Investment Costs, and Economic Returns*. ILO and UN Women, 2021. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/04/policy-tool-care-economy.

Jennifer del Rosario-Malonzo. “Undoing (Neo)Colonialism in Development Co-Operation.” *IBON International*, September 23, 2024. https://iboninternational.org/2024/09/23/towards-undoing-neocolonialism-in-development-co-operation/.

Kabeer, Naila, and Luisa Natali. “Gender Equality and Economic Growth: Is There a Win-Win?” *IDS Working Papers* 2013, no. 417 (2013): 1–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2040-0209.2013.00417.x.

Kabeer, Naila, and Ania Plomien. “Gender Justice and the Wellbeing Economy: The Feminist Case for an Alternative Economic Paradigm.” Working Paper 169. London, UK: International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science, April 2026. https://www.lse.ac.uk/International-Inequalities/Publications/Working-Papers.

Lucas Chancel, Ricardo Gómez-Carrera, and Rowaida Moshrif. *World Inequality Report 2026*. World Inequality Lab, 2025. https://wir2026.wid.world/insights/.

Members of the UN Women Regional Civil Society Advisory Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (2023–2025). “Position Paper of the Members of the UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group (SCAG) Ahead of International Women’s Day and in the Context of CSW70.” UN Women – Americas and the Caribbean, March 9, 2026. https://lac.unwomen.org/en/stories/noticia/2026/03/documento-de-posicion-de-las-integrantes-del-grupo-asesor-de-sociedad-civil-gasc.

Novovic, Gloria. “Can Agenda 2030 Bring about ‘Localization’? Policy Limitations of Agenda 2030 in the Broader Global Governance System.” *Development Policy Review* 40, no. 4 (2022): e12587.

Pacific Women Mediators Network. *Defining Our Climate Security*. July 2025. https://pasifikapeacetalanoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Defining-our-Climate-Security_Policy-Brief-3_210825.pdf.

Pasifika Peace Talanoa. *Advancing Gender Equality, Inclusive Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Human Security*. GPPAC Pacific Civil Society Expert Group Briefing Papers. 2026. https://pasifikapeacetalanoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Pasifka-Peace-Talanoa_-Advancing-Gender-Equality-Inclusive-Peacebuilding-Conflict-Prevention-and-Human-Security-01_2026.pdf.

Ringson, John, and Manamela Matshabaphala. “Beyond the Aid Paradigm: Neocolonialism, Recolonisation and the Future for Africa’s Development.” *Southern African Journal of Policy and Development* 8, no. 2 (December 2025).

Sanders, Rebecca. “Norm Spoiling: Undermining the International Women’s Rights Agenda.” *International Affairs* 94, no. 2 (March 2018): 271–91.

Sanders, Rebecca, and Laura Dudley Jenkins. “Control, Alt, Delete: Patriarchal Populist Attacks on International Women’s Rights.” *Global Constitutionalism* 11, no. 3 (2022): 401–29.

———. “Patriarchal Populism: The Conservative Political Action Coalition (CPAC) and the Transnational Politics of Authoritarian Anti-Feminism.” *The International Spectator* 58, no. 3 (2023).

Stuart Hall. “Introduction: Who Needs ‘Identity’?” In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1996.

Stubbs, Paul, and Janine Wedel. “Policy Flexians in the Global Order.” In *Actors and Agency in Global Social Governance*, edited by Alexandra Kaasch and Kerstin Martens, 0. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198743996.003.0011.

UN. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026*. n.d.

UN Environment Programme. *Limiting Overshoot - Navigating Exceedance of 1.5°C and Pathways towards Return*. 2026.

United Nations Human Rights Council, Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls (UNHRWGDWG). (2024). Escalating backlash against gender equality and urgency of reaffirming substantive equality and the human rights of women and girls. A/HRC/56/51, 15 May 2024, https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5651-escalating-backlash-against-gender-equality-and-urgency. UN Sustainable Development Group. *Leaving No One Behind: A UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams (Interim Draft)*. 2019. https://www.jointsdgfund.org/article/leaving-no-one-behind-unsdg-operational-guide-un-country-teams-interim-draft.

UN Women. “CSW71 – Expert Group Meeting.” 2026. https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/csw71-2027/preparations/expert-group-meeting.

———. *Progress of the World’s Women 2026*. forthcoming.

UNAIDS. *From Ending AIDS to Advance Gender Equality: How SDG Target 3.3 Is Catalyzing Progress on Gender Equality across the 2030 Agenda*. UNAIDS Observer Paper prepared to inform EGM71. 2026.

UNDESA Statistics Division. “IAEG-SDGs — Tier Classification for Global SDG Indicators.” Sustainable Development Goals. Accessed September 14, 2026. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/.

UNFCCC. “Why the Global Stocktake Is Important for Climate Action This Decade.” Accessed July 11, 2026. https://unfccc.int/topics/global-stocktake/about-the-global-stocktake/why-the-global-stocktake-is-important-for-climate-action-this-decade.

UNIDO. *Gender, Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence*. 2023. https://hub.unido.org/sites/default/files/publications/GENDER%2C%20DIGITAL%20TRANSFORMATION%20AND%20AI%20REPORT.pdf.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *A World of Debt 2025: It Is Time for Reform*. 2025. https://unctad.org/publication/world-of-debt.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence. *Challenging Systematic Prejudices: An Investigation into Bias against Women and Girls in Large Language Models*. UNESCO/IRCAI, 2024. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388971.

United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General*. S/2025/556. 2025. https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/report/united-nations-security-council-women-and-peace-and-security-report-of-the-secretary-general/n2523645-1.pdf.

UNODC and UN Women. *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Gender-Related Killing of Women and Girls (Also Referred to as "Femicide/Feminicide")*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women, 2022. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/Statistical_framework_femicide_2022.pdf.

V-Dem Institute. *Democracy Report 2025: 25 Years of Autocratization - Democracy Trumped?* University of Gothenburg, 2025. https://gup.ub.gu.se/publication/358386.

———. *Democracy Report 2026: Unraveling the Democratic Era?* University of Gothenburg, 2026. https://www.v-dem.net/publications/democracy-reports/.

Women's Rights Caucus. *Commission on the Status of Women Revitalization: An Advocacy Brief for National Women's Rights Organizations*. n.d. https://www.wo-men.nl/kb-bestanden/1753299585.pdf#1#1.

Xiao Liang, Nan Tian, Diego Lopes da Silva, Lorenzo Scarazzato, Zubaida A. Karim, and Jade Guiberteau Ricard. *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2025*. Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2026. https://www.sipri.org/publications/2026/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2025.

Zaremberg, Gisela. "¿Redes flexibles? un análisis de elites político-religiosas conservadoras anti-género en México." *Acta Sociológica*, no. 92 (2023): 91–126.