



CONCEPT NOTE



BEIJING +25: ACCELERATING THE REALIZATION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Background

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, was one of the largest-ever gatherings of the United Nations, and a critical turning point in the world's focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

2020 is a pivotal year for the accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. As the global community marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and five years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, the moment is right to achieve irreversible and measurable progress towards this universal commitment to all women and girls, everywhere.

In the lead-up to the anniversary, States have agreed to undertake comprehensive national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in implementation. Governments are called upon to collaborate with relevant stakeholders at all levels on the preparations for the 2020 review so as to benefit from their experience and expertise. The United Nations regional commissions are invited to undertake regional reviews so that the outcomes of intergovernmental processes at the regional level can feed into the Commission's 2020 review. The national and regional review processes will culminate in March 2020, when the Commission on the Status of Women will undertake the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

This new review cycle should take full advantage of, and consistently link up and align with the ongoing process of follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs, at all levels. Synergies between the two processes are critical for progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and for galvanizing the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Reviews should mobilize all women and men, of all ages, around a new and renewed dialogue for change, and actions to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against all women and girls. They should target a young generation of gender equality advocates and those who remain on the sidelines of the gender equality agenda. They should contribute to a strengthened feminist movement.

The role of UN Women

In support of comprehensive preparations at all levels, and involving all stakeholders, UN Women will put to full use its composite triple mandate of normative support, UN system coordination and operational activities; and its strengths as a knowledge hub; a partnership builder and partner and ally of civil society and women's rights organizations; and in leading advocacy and communications for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Specifically, UN Women will invest these strengths and its leadership in eight integrated work streams, namely:

- Supporting comprehensive national-level reviews
- Collaborating in regional reviews
- Engaging with civil society and support multi-stakeholder consultations
- Fostering collaboration across the UN system
- Communicating for Beijing + 25
- Mobilizing resources for accelerating gender equality results
- Building the evidence and chart the way forward and
- Leading global preparations and the conduct of 2020 CSW64, HLM GA

Support for comprehensive national-level preparations

National-level reviews are at the core of the Beijing+25 process. Those should start as soon as possible and continue through 2019. National-level reviews present an opportunity to engage the general public – women and men, girls and boys – in a national discussion on the issue. Communications campaigns, including through social media, as well as national, sub-national and local discussion forums, town hall-style meetings, and other appropriate platforms can be used to ensure broad-based outreach and inclusive engagement.

National reports should be completed in 2019, preferably by 1 May. Based on the identified gaps and challenges, States should proceed on a priority basis with taking concrete actions to close the gaps in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

UN Women, especially country offices and regional directorates, will play a key role in supporting comprehensive national-level reviews. This will include: serving as convener for different actors, mobilizing stakeholders, communicating key messages, coordinating the UN system and in particular the UN country teams, and raising resources for preparatory and implementation activities.

Social mobilization and movement building

A key work stream for UN Women in the review and appraisal process will be the mobilization of civil society including women's rights organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure their full participation and involvement in, and contribution to national-level reviews, enabling them to advocate and press for accountability and urgent action.

To align with its ambitions to support and strengthen social mobilization and movement building for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, UN Women intends to facilitate, catalyze and enable broad civil society and public engagement, drawing on its convening capacity and partnerships with civil society and stakeholders in countries and regions.

Towards this end, UN Women will support and convene country, regional and global consultations of civil society, from a *leave no one behind* perspective, to facilitate innovative forms of engaging civil society and other actors in the review process. Such consultations may focus on a particular issue of particular concern, or on a range of issues that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In convening such consultations, UN Women will aim to galvanize political accountability and action; youth ownership of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; inclusive participation to ensure no one is left behind; and the expansion of the movement for gender equality and the empowerment of women. These will be achieved in the following manner.

Ensuring political accountability and action

Towards this end, UN Women will:

- facilitate national and at least five regional multi-stakeholder consultations between 2019 and 2020
- collaborate with already-planned gatherings such as Women Deliver 2019, EPIC (Equal Pay International Coalition) conferences in Jordan (2019) and Iceland (April 2019), MenEngage Global Conference in Spring 2020, AWID Forum in 2020 to amplify discussions on B+25
- organize a global gender equality forum in the summer 2020 as a culmination of the social mobilization efforts and as a contribution to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary and accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in September 2020.

Youth ownership of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Towards this end, UN Women will:

- convene intergenerational dialogues that engage the new generation of young women leaders and activists and young men leaders and activists on gender equality and the empowerment and rights of women and girls.

Inclusive participation to ensure no one is left behind

Towards this end, UN Women will:

- ensure the participation of a diversity of voices including but not limited to women human rights defenders, male gender equality advocates, indigenous women and girls, LGBTI groups, disability rights activists, youth, labour/trade union activists, feminist media, progressive faith-based groups, among others
- strengthen the use of technology in building a strong social feminist movement
- use innovative approaches to reach those that are at risk of being left behind
- engage grassroots organizations, local governments and other local actors.

Expansion of the movement for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Towards this end, UN Women will:

- engage with a wide range of stakeholders including local governments, parliamentarians, technology companies, private sector and actors in the social justice and human rights arenas.