



# **TOWARD A FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY IN** **THE UNITED STATES**

## I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Attention to gender equality and, to a lesser extent, women’s human rights in American foreign policy has grown and evolved through recent administrations — both Republican and Democratic. At first largely concentrated in the fields of development assistance, attention has evolved to a broader embrace of gender equality across a host of social, economic, security and diplomatic realms.<sup>1</sup> Drawing on evidence that points to improved political, security and socio-economic outcomes when girls and women are healthy, educated and able to enjoy equal opportunities and access to their human rights,<sup>2</sup> a number of foreign assistance programs and foreign policy directives have been promulgated to apportion United States (U.S.) attention and resources to these issues. This has occurred alongside increasing global attention to these efforts — through a number of world conferences on women; the inclusion of a goal on gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goals and Millennium Development Goals; United Nations (U.N.) Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security; and the proliferation of successor resolutions and national action plans incorporating its tenets in domestic law and policy, to name a few.

Feminist foreign policy is the most recent policy innovation aiming for a transformative and rights-based approach across all auspices of a nation’s foreign policy. Following formal announcements of feminist foreign policies in a number of countries, starting with the launch of Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy in 2014,<sup>3</sup> followed by a Canadian Feminist Foreign Assistance Policy in 2017,<sup>4</sup> announcements by France and Luxembourg in 2019<sup>5</sup> and, most recently, the launch of a Mexican Feminist Foreign Policy in January 2020,<sup>6</sup> the time has come to consider what approach the United States could take.

A group of U.S. foreign policy experts and advocates for global gender equality<sup>7</sup> came together over the course of three days in August 2019 to sketch out an initial draft of a U.S. feminist foreign policy. This discussion benefited from a research review of other countries’ feminist foreign policies<sup>8</sup> as well as insights gathered through a series of global consultations with more than 100 feminist activists from over 40 countries as to what a global template or gold standard for feminist foreign policy should entail. The group considered ideas for feminist approaches to American diplomacy, defense, foreign assistance and trade, as well as the cross-cutting thematic issues of climate change<sup>9</sup> and sexual and reproductive health and rights,<sup>10</sup> both of which had been identified in the course of global consultation as priority issues that must be addressed. Through months of extensive consultation, the group gathered new insights on topics that had been omitted or underdeveloped at the time of drafting: humanitarian assistance, immigration policy, nuclear policy and points of intersection between feminist agendas at home and abroad.

In this 25th anniversary year of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and its resulting Declaration and Platform for Action,<sup>11</sup> this paper reflects the final product of that consultative process: a vision towards the highest standard of U.S. foreign policy that promotes overarching goals of gender equality, human rights, peace and environmental integrity, while prioritizing the articulation of concrete, SMART<sup>12</sup> recommendations. It includes a proposed definition, key principles and policy recommendations that provide a visionary approach for a fundamentally different way of conducting foreign policy in a manner that places people and planet above profit and individual interest.

## II. DEFINING A FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY FOR THE UNITED STATES

A country’s foreign policy is a statement of its values and priorities. The implementation of foreign policy, across all of its various levers, is one demonstration of how a nation lives its values.

Now more than ever, the U.S. needs **a feminist approach** — one that redefines “security” to include the ability

### AUTHORS:

Lyric Thompson of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Gayatri Patel of CARE, Gawain Kripke of Oxfam America and Megan O’Donnell of the Center for Global Development.

### RECOMMENDED CITATION:

Thompson, L., Patel, G., Kripke, G. and O’Donnell, M. (2020). *Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States*. Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women.

to live life free from violence, persecution, climate impacts and economic exploitation; fundamentally alters the way the nation conducts itself, prioritizing the importance of diplomatic solutions, cooperating with allies and international institutions; embraces a progressive, inclusive and rights-based agenda; and values the voices of people both who face the greatest barriers to exercising their human rights — including racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and patriarchal or male-dominated systems of power — and who work to change these very same systems of oppression.

**A feminist approach** requires deeper reflection and analysis of the patriarchal power structures and inequalities that exist in the world, seeking to challenge systems of oppression, marginalization and exclusion and moving beyond binary approaches to the “consultation” or “inclusion” of women and girls to ensure their meaningful engagement and decision-making power in its activities. Feminist foreign policy centers the experience, expertise and well-being of women and girls, who often face unique and specific barriers to their full human rights due to their gender identity, as well as people who face systemic barriers due to social and institutional discrimination. A feminist lens is one through which a different vision of the world is possible.

**Foreign policy** shapes how a government defines and prioritizes peace and security, structures trade, provides humanitarian aid and development assistance and works with other nations and non-state actors. Coherence across all aspects of foreign policy is paramount for a feminist approach and should also extend across domestic and foreign policy, with both realms embracing the same feminist values.

To clarify the goals of a feminist foreign policy and to promote coherence of a feminist approach across these policy domains, we propose the following definition:

**Feminist foreign policy is the policy of a state that defines its interactions with other states, as well as movements and other non-state actors, in a manner that prioritizes peace, gender equality and environmental integrity; enshrines, promotes, and protects the human rights of all; seeks to disrupt colonial, racist, patriarchal and male-dominated power structures; and allocates significant resources, including research, to achieve that vision. Feminist foreign policy is coherent in its approach across all of its levers of influence, anchored by the exercise of those values at home and co-created with feminist activists, groups and movements, at home and abroad.**

From that *definition*, a number of *key principles* and *thematic priorities* follow. Specific policy recommendations are organized according to those that apply across the *whole of the U.S. government architecture* and those that are *specific to each of the relevant levers* of foreign policy — aid, trade, diplomacy, defense and immigration — as well as according to various thematic priorities within a U.S. feminist foreign policy. Finally, recommendations for various *accountability measures* follow, in order to ensure robust implementation and learning.

III. KEY PRINCIPLES AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES FOR U.S. FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

The U.S. brings a complicated legacy to global engagement as both a colony and colonizer, with a history of struggles for racial and gender equality and environmental integrity and justice, both at home and abroad. With that past in mind, as well as the associated tensions that continue to manifest in the present day, a number of key principles should underpin a U.S. feminist foreign policy.

First, *women’s rights are human rights*. U.S. foreign policy must respect the rights recognized by international institutions and agreements, including ensuring human rights due diligence when acting jointly with other States. The U.S. should position itself on the side of those seeking to defend and promote the rights and freedoms of individuals and groups around the world. This also means walking the talk at home, through the ratification of the Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other human rights conventions.

Second, U.S. foreign policy should be *representative, inclusive, responsive and accountable* to stakeholders. Foreign policy has traditionally been informed by patriarchal, racist and discriminatory social norms and implemented through white male-dominated institutions. A feminist approach demands gender parity in representation, as well as active commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), especially with regard to gender and race. A U.S. government commitment to DEI should not exclusively focus on rhetoric and internal processes, but also on the impact of its systems, policies and public-private partnerships on historically marginalized communities. As such, this principle includes a government-wide commitment to consultation with civil society and feminist movements outside of government, as well as Indigenous peoples and their representative institutions, including and especially those in the Global South.

Third, a feminist foreign policy should take an *intersectional approach to feminism*. This approach that takes into account and seeks to address the multiple and often intersecting forms of discrimination, such as those based on gender, race, age, language, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, Indigenous identity, religion, ethnicity, citizenship, nationality or migrant status.<sup>13</sup>

This effort has also unveiled a few key **thematic priorities** that should be centered within a U.S. feminist foreign policy: bodily autonomy, peace and environmental integrity.

Recognizing that the oppression of people of color, women and gender-nonconforming individuals in the U.S. has traditionally been expressed in the regulation and restriction of bodies and rights, a feminist approach would model its inverse, starting with the basic principle of *bodily autonomy and freedom from discrimination, violence, coercion, exploitation and abuse*. A feminist approach embraces sexual and reproductive health and rights, which according to the Guttmacher Institute is defined as a “state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Therefore, a positive approach to sexuality and reproduction should recognize the part played by pleasurable sexual relationships, trust and communication in promoting self-esteem and overall well-being. All individuals have a right to make decisions governing their bodies and to access services that support that right.”<sup>14</sup> This approach should also enshrine bodily autonomy, which the Blueprint for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice defines as “achieving the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health and rights is based on the fundamental human rights of all individuals to: have their bodily integrity, privacy and personal autonomy respected; freely define their own sexuality; decide whether and when to be sexually active; choose their sexual partners; have safe and pleasurable sexual experiences; decide whether, when and whom to marry; decide whether, when and by what means to have a child or children and how many children to have; and have access over their lifetimes to the information, resources, services and support necessary to achieve all the above, free from discrimination, coercion, exploitation and violence.”<sup>15</sup> Bodily autonomy also reflects the basic principle that people have the right to live free from gender-based violence — abuse against a person based on their biological sex, gender identity or perceived gender identify, including physical, mental, emotional and economic violence, threats or coercion.

*Peace* has also emerged as a thematic priority for a feminist foreign policy, from consistent and coherent implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda to advancing disarmament and related activities more broadly. The WPS agenda requires the recognition and promotion of the participation of women and people who face structural barriers to participation in formal and informal mechanisms of conflict prevention, management, resolution and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts — keeping in mind that these same members of society experience the greatest effects of conflict. The participation of these communities in peace processes is more likely to result in successful outcomes.<sup>16</sup> This approach further requires the promotion of women’s political participation and leadership in fragile states and democratic transitions. These tenets have been shown to promote inclusive democratic societies and are essential to maintaining state and regional stability.<sup>17</sup> Conversely, approaches

to peace and security that are exclusive and do not take these voices into account propagate systemic instability and perpetuate the cycle of violence, threaten the sustainability of peace agreements and contribute to seemingly endless wars — further resulting in record levels of displacement and fragility around the globe.

Finally, feminist foreign policy must ensure *environmental integrity and justice*. Ensuring environmental integrity means that actions and policies are set in motion to maintain the integrity of biophysical processes that support all living organisms — protecting diversity, ecological functions and resilience of all ecosystems. In doing so, policy-making must also take into account environmental justice, which responds to the ways in which environmental degradation impacts safety and security, particularly for those who are most vulnerable to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination — often women, girls, gender minorities and LGBTQIA+ persons, Indigenous peoples, those with disabilities and people with a range of intersecting marginalized identities. An environmental justice approach must center the leadership and experiences of those who are historically at the frontlines of degradation and who often face systemic barriers to accessing resources, exercising human rights, mobility and shaping decisions and influencing policy.

*Climate change*, in particular, is a key challenge in today's era, and one which must be a central concern of feminist foreign policy. The climate crisis cuts across all thematic areas and levers in this report. It will — and already is — fundamentally changing how nations interface with trade, conflict, disaster preparedness and recovery and the distribution of natural resources. Threats related to the climate crisis are generally viewed as a “threat multiplier — a phenomenon that can worsen or exacerbate other sources of instability and conflict, such as competition for natural resources and ethnic tensions.”<sup>18</sup> U.S. foreign policy must come to terms with and be accountable for its environmental impact and contributions to climate change. Efforts to adapt to and mitigate climate change must cut across sectors; include specific protections for and acknowledgment of harm to communities of color, Indigenous peoples and other frontline communities around the world experiencing the impacts of climate change; and address gender inequality.

IV. CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY PRINCIPLES

Five *cross-cutting elements* are necessary to advance feminist foreign policy across government: (1) high-level leadership with a clear mandate to design and implement a feminist foreign policy; (2) commitment to gender parity, diversity, equity and inclusion, both internally among leadership and staff and externally, co-created<sup>19</sup> with feminists outside of government; (3) training and capacity-building to ensure robust implementation; (4) gender analysis underlying all aspects of foreign policy; and (5) adequate resourcing to ensure all of the above.

The full embrace of these elements would be a considerable departure from the status quo of how U.S. foreign policy is currently structured. As such, this proposal outlines architectural models that would work toward achieving these goals.

MODELS OF HIGH-LEVEL LEADERSHIP FOR FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

1. Presidential Leadership and Mainstreaming Throughout Current Structures

The President should announce that the U.S. will adopt a feminist foreign policy, to be co-created and implemented in consultation with feminists inside and outside of government, and commit to ensuring cohesion across all levers of foreign policy by elevating an intersectional approach to gender equality throughout existing structures in the White House and executive agencies. The executive branch would then adopt a coherent and unified vision for feminist foreign policy, and each agency would articulate a series of commitments to implement it — including policy, staffing, budget, legislative affairs and communications. Each agency would need to appoint its own high-

level position focused exclusively on integrating the feminist foreign policy within the agency, linked closely with policy planning processes and relevant interagency partners. High-level leadership and cohesion will spur meaningful action and ensure that the agenda is mainstreamed across all relevant agencies. It would also become a core priority for White House offices, including public engagement, legislative affairs and the National Security Council (NSC), with a corresponding emphasis among related bodies (National Economic Council, Domestic Policy Council, etc.).

2. New Structures: Creation of a Feminist Inspector General or Council in the White House

In addition to the mainstreaming and elevation of this portfolio within existing structures, a feminist foreign policy would also require a senior leadership role responsible for its coordination, resourcing and execution. In collaboration with the Secretaries of each agency and civil society leaders from the U.S. and around the world, this individual — a Feminist Foreign Policy Inspector General, perhaps — would have a mandate from the President to lead the development, implementation and reporting of a U.S. feminist foreign policy. This official would oversee a robust budget and coordinate with relevant domestic agencies. It is essential that this role have statutory authority and a public engagement function, centralizing engagement with gender-related issues and coordinating key high-level stakeholders across and outside of the government, including the NSC. This would include policy formulation, implementation and progress reporting across agencies, elevating gender equality in the executive branch and integrating gender within White House structures.<sup>20</sup> It is imperative that the incumbent for this position have an established record of promoting gender equality and other human rights in order to effectively and rigorously implement the spirit of feminist foreign policy.

It is critical that such a structure have authority, funding and a mandate to meaningfully and transparently engage with civil society, including those from countries, communities and sectors most impacted by U.S. foreign policy. Otherwise, it runs the risk of separating gender from the places where power is concentrated and key decisions are made, rather than integrating gender into the fabric of the government and working to break down the structural barriers that have perpetuated gender inequality. This function should include a mechanism for working with stakeholders outside of government, particularly women, Indigenous peoples and their representative institutions and other communities in the Global South most impacted by U.S. foreign policy. These external stakeholders would provide an essential feedback loop to advise relevant agencies on of the outcomes, goals and objectives against which progress should be measured. This is a particularly important feature to ensure that the feminist foreign policy is delivered in line with its intentions.

3. Additional Actions to Develop and Implement Feminist Foreign Policy Across Government

In addition to the above structural models for the design and implementation of feminist foreign policy, the following actions should be implemented across the whole-of-government. Agency-specific recommendations follow in the ensuing section.

- Radically increase the budget available for implementation of this work by reflecting it in the Presidential budget request, prioritizing robust appropriations for it in White House and agency legislative affairs efforts, and committing to gender budgeting with clear percentage targets that are time-bound.
- Once obtained, direct more of that funding to local women-led and gender-focused organizations; support their organizational strengthening and financial capacity; and ensure gender analysis is a mandatory part of every project the U.S. Government funds, across agencies.
- Achieve gender parity in political appointments and diversity and intersectional representation throughout all agencies and ranks of government.
- Co-create feminist foreign policy with feminists inside and outside of the government, including throughout policy implementation. This “co-creation” process should not be a one-time event but rather an iterative and reflective feedback loop that is progressively more inclusive over time — a mechanism for ensuring women and people who face social and institutional discrimination are part of decision-making processes through the lifecycle of program and policy design, implementation and evaluation.



- Adopt or expand gender policies in the White House and each agency responsible for implementing feminist foreign policy. Gender policies should be both internally and externally facing, from personnel decisions to agency program interventions. Agencies include but are not limited to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Commerce, Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Labor (DOL), Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the Peace Corps, the Department of State (State) and the U.S. Trade Representative.
- Mandate gender analysis to be standard practice in program implementation throughout the government, tailored to each agency.
- Conduct an analysis of environmental impacts and emissions resulting from U.S. foreign policy activities; include that analysis in the U.S. national climate action plans, in line with the Paris Agreement; and report the impact thereof across other Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
- When U.S. foreign policy decisions contravene the principles of feminist foreign policy, including in cases of national security, the rationale must be publicly articulated to facilitate transparency, accountability and learning.

## V. AGENCY- AND “LEVER”- SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

### FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

#### Foreign Assistance

U.S. foreign assistance helps tens of millions of people each year, often providing life-saving aid. As important as this assistance is, it still accounts for a tiny slice of the U.S. federal budget, less than one percent.<sup>21</sup> Of that, a smaller amount supports gender equality and inclusion. An infinitesimal amount finds its way to local, women-led and feminist organizations and grassroots gender equality movements — key indicators of the extent to which foreign assistance prioritizes gender equality.

A U.S. feminist foreign policy would promote gender equality through (1) robust and transparent funding to promote gender equality in international development and humanitarian assistance; (2) gender analysis of all international development and humanitarian assistance activities; (3) consultation with and direct investments in local women-led and women’s rights organizations globally; (4) full funding for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights programs; and (5) the removal of harmful conditions tied to U.S. foreign assistance.

One challenge with transparent funding is that most mechanisms for tracking foreign assistance are self-reported. How one donor government or development agency determines the impact a project has on gender equality may differ from another’s determination. For example, dollars counted towards promoting gender equality may also count towards economic growth or education, which makes it difficult to track the exact amounts spent to increase gender equality. One of the most widely used mechanisms to track aid intended to promote gender equality is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender equality policy marker. This is a qualitative statistical tool that members use to report annually on whether an aid activity “principally” or “significantly” targets gender equality as a policy objective. Some private sector entities and philanthropies have also begun to monitor their activities with this tool.<sup>22</sup> The markers have a number of strengths, including the ability to compare country (and other donor) investments against one another. However, additional details as to how donors make choices regarding their use of the markers would provide for increased external validation and understanding about the extent to which international aid meets prescribed OECD DAC definitions. In addition to the DAC recommendations below, the following accountability section enumerates several

other recommendations for reporting and prioritizing gender equality. These include support for women’s rights organizations in the form of funding and greater transparency around how projects and programs mainstream and prioritize gender equality. OECD DAC recommendations are made below, in large part, because the gender policy markers are the best form of tracking and implementing these requests most immediately.

Currently, U.S. foreign assistance has several contingencies, ranging from how goods and services are sourced and delivered to how trade agreements are shaped. These contingencies often make assistance costlier to deliver and less effective overall. It is recommended that all limiting conditions on U.S. foreign assistance be removed, such as the prioritization of U.S. private sector entities and faith-based organizations through foreign assistance. Other forms of contingencies make it difficult to establish the trust required to implement services, reach key populations and otherwise directly engage with those USAID is most meant to serve. The removal of conditions on U.S. foreign assistance would make assistance dollars go farther.

Recommendations for all agencies providing foreign assistance including USAID, State, DOD, MCC, the Peace Corps, DOJ, USDA and the Department of Labor:

- Increase investments in gender equality as measured by the OECD-DAC, as well as direct support for local women’s rights organizations.
- Prioritize co-creation and local ownership of foreign assistance, with local constituencies informing development programs from their inception through evaluation, including participatory approaches such as community scorecards.
- Allocate robust and transparent funding for gender equality in international development and humanitarian assistance and throughout foreign assistance. This should include a floor of 20 percent of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for gender equality as a principal objective (OECD-DAC marker 2) and requiring gender analysis for all of U.S. foreign assistance programs (OECD-DAC marker 1 and 2 combined, with gender equality as a principal or significant objective).
- Substantially increase direct investments in women-led and women’s rights organizations. One mechanism that should be considered in this regard is Canada’s recently-launched Equality Fund, which supports women’s rights organizations and feminist movements by providing technical assistance and financial resources, and grounding that work in the priorities identified by local organizations and the movements leading change in their communities.<sup>23</sup> Of particular interest is that the Fund itself (\$300m CAD) is managed by feminist funders — including women’s funds and gender-lens investors — and not by Canada’s development agency.
- Repeal the expanded Mexico City Policy (also referred to as “Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance” by the current administration or the global gag rule by advocates) and ensure funding for sexual and reproductive health programs and comprehensive sexuality education. This aligns with other actions raised during the August 2019 convening, including working with Congress to repeal the Helms Amendment (banning the use of federal funds for abortion as a family planning method) and National Security Presidential Directive 22 (which conflates human trafficking and sex work), as well as the foreign policy proposals outlined in the Blueprint for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice.
- Factor in operating costs for implementing feminist foreign assistance, including building staff capacity and expertise, training and accountability mechanisms.
- Align project targets to ensure achievement of the gender-related Sustainable Development Goals.

#### Humanitarian Response

In 2020, over 70 million people are displaced from their homes due to violence, conflict and persecution. More than 165 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>24</sup> Large, multi-year, protracted crises dominate the humanitarian landscape. The urgency and difficulty of this work often leads actors to prioritize speed and efficiency in order to save lives. This can lead to an approach which fails to recognize how people are differently situated in specific humanitarian contexts and therefore impacted differently. A feminist approach to humanitarian response centers the experience of women and people who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination,

surfacing different concerns, such as gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, access to education and the burden of unpaid care responsibilities in times of crisis.

A deeper analysis and action to address oppressive and patriarchal structures and bias within the global humanitarian system is not something the U.S. Government can do alone. And yet, as the single largest contributor of humanitarian aid, the U.S. Government can and should take steps now to change its own humanitarian approach, while pushing for change throughout the system.

Recommendations include:

- Implement best-practices and tools to center women, girls and people of all gender identities in humanitarian responses, such as the Inter-agency Minimum Standards for Gender-based Violence in Emergencies Programming,<sup>25</sup> the Inter-agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings<sup>26</sup> and the IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action.<sup>27</sup>
- Ensure requirements and standards for gender analysis and gender-sensitive programming are upheld, even in emergency contexts.
- Recognize that divisions among humanitarian, development, peace and conflict, diplomacy and even defense/ security strategies are artificial and unhelpful. Longer-term investments and relationship-building can help bridge these divides and improve overall results.
- Prioritize funding — and the recipients of U.S. Government support — by using a feminist analysis that looks at who is most in need and who is best placed to deliver quality support to those people. Make funds available for programming toward the prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence and for sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Create a funding model based on feminist principles that supports local organizations from communities in crisis, particularly women-led and women- and gender-focused civil society organizations; co-creates with them; and includes them in governance and leadership rather than simply as subgrantees. Many of these organizations are on the front lines as first responders and often hold community trust, critical social and cultural networks and a vested interest in long-term engagement and success.
- Increase core support and multi-year funding and simplify funding mechanisms with streamlined processes, decreased paperwork burdens, complex monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and risk-aversion to ensure the best-placed humanitarian actors can access U.S. government funding.
- Press for the U.N. “cluster” system<sup>28</sup> to coordinate and communicate in a way that does not silo gender concerns and gender equality but, instead, integrates these priorities across all clusters and in other structures.
- Demand the universal application of safeguarding minimum standards<sup>29</sup> among all humanitarian actors.
- Use diplomatic pressure to insist women and gender-diverse people are part of peace and reconciliation processes.
- Encourage the hiring of more people across the spectrum of sexual orientation and gender identities and expressions, particularly those from communities that have historically been denied access to decision-makers and decision-making positions due to discriminatory structures.

TRADE

Trade is a necessary and vital component of a nation’s economic success and growth and a key part of its engagement with other nations. At various points in the nation’s history, trade has been used as a way to grow America’s power globally, maintain world order, encourage peace, reduce domestic debt and combat autocracy. However, trade without recognition of the principles underpinning feminist foreign policy can also serve as a tool for exploitation and unregulated environmental degradation.

A U.S. feminist foreign policy would prioritize feminist trade policy through the promotion of women’s rights and

equitable and dignified labor practices up and down the value chain, as well as reduce and mitigate the harmful impacts of climate change associated with trade. Importantly, it would go beyond where other countries who have inserted a gender chapter in trade agreements have gone, including women’s rights commitments in the binding sections of deals.

A successful trade policy should be one that: (1) refrains from trade deals that will not equally benefit women due to de jure discrimination (e.g., importing goods from sectors that have legal restrictions on women’s employment); (2) prioritizes support of local actors — e.g., trade unions or workers’ rights organizations — to engage in trade negotiations and raise complaints and highlight violations; and (3) sets targets for public procurement from women-owned firms.

Mechanisms exist for analyzing gender impacts of trade throughout the value chain, such as those developed for gender analysis in MCC and World Bank projects, or a certification mechanism, such as EDGE.<sup>30</sup> Such mechanisms could track the amount of trade dollars that go towards women-owned businesses and the promotion of women’s and gender equality in the value chain — giving a competitive advantage to those private sector entities who are doing more to promote gender equality in order to foster private sector growth in this area.

Specific recommendations for trade policy and practices under a U.S. feminist foreign policy include:

- Development of new mechanisms to link gender equality to environmental and labor concerns in trade agreements.
- Incorporation of women’s human rights and gender equality in bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, specifically in the binding sections. This includes principles around debt and redress in how these objectives are met.
- Re-engagement in the Paris Agreement, which articulates some of these principles in the preamble. The U.S. should go further than the Paris Agreement, however, to operationalize these principles.
- Support for and investment in the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) gender action plan, including aims to enhance women’s participation and leadership in national delegations and on boards and bodies of the Convention, as well as enhanced gender-responsive implementation of national climate plans and policies.
- Working towards the goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion per year by 2020, the U.S. should re-commit ambitious and fair-share contributions to the Green Climate Fund and mobilize additional public resources across climate financing instruments, ensuring gender-responsive financing.
- All trade agreements should include a gender analysis, as well as a strategy for energy democracy, emissions reduction and climate change mitigation. There should be a financial commitment that is 100 percent gender responsive.
- Trade agreements should follow a “polluters pay” principle, creating clear measures that prevent US industries, particularly with regard to fossil fuels, from profiting off unregulated and uninhibited exploitation of laborers and environmental degradation.
- Trade agreements should not enforce measures that privatize government entities or dismantle health, safety and labor protections. The harm caused by these measures usually fall most heavily on women, people with lower incomes and people who already experience systemic discrimination and barriers to social protections that are rarely redressed.

DIPLOMACY

The U.S. must foster a people-centered approach on the world stage that promotes increased collaboration and cooperation among state and non-state actors. This includes championing equality, supporting the institutions and mechanisms that facilitate cooperation and non-military conflict resolution and peaceful competition, as well as mitigating the effects of climate change. A new framework for diplomacy is necessary to implement a feminist

foreign policy that is responsive to these and other concerns and will require leadership by both Congress and all elements of U.S. diplomatic action. If the U.S. is to lead the world as a moral authority or rapporteur on human rights abuses, then it must lead by example, particularly with countries where women's freedom and bodily autonomy is a concern. There are three areas for immediate and sustained action to advance feminist diplomacy in the U.S.: (1) internal State Department staffing, training and operations; (2) bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts; and (3) the design and delivery of foreign assistance funding and technical assistance.

Recommendations include:

- Appoint a high-level representative tasked with oversight of the feminist approach to diplomacy, including all external and internal (e.g., human resources) practices and reporting directly to the Secretary of State.
- Reverse the decline in funding and staffing of the State Department, prioritizing increased budgetary support for a more diverse foreign service corps, particularly with regard to race and gender, as well as for gender advisors and specific technical staff able to design and implement the tenants of feminist foreign policy.
- The Department must commit to achieving gender balance among all U.S. diplomatic personnel, including foreign service and civil service officers, political appointees, cabinet and other high-level positions. Gender balance should not be the only measure of success. The diplomatic architecture does need equal representation of women, but especially women of color, Indigenous women, trans women and other people who have historically been marginalized due to social and institutional discrimination at all levels and in all auspices of diplomacy.
- The Department must mandate training on gender, SRHR, anti-racism and implicit bias training in both early-career and ongoing professional development. In the mandatory six-week training course that all foreign service officers (FSOs) undergo, known as the A100, advancing gender equality should be a key mandatory component. In addition to FSOs, anyone working with State Department funding should undergo the gender training, and all FSOs should participate in periodic and mandatory refresher courses on gender and SRHR as a key part of professional development.
- Update departmental human resources policies to ensure that personnel policies, including family leave, childcare, deployment options and policies, promotion tracks, provisions for trailing spouses and more, build towards a more equitable and just workforce and encourage the promotion and retention of those who choose to become parents.
- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy on gender-based violence and workplace harassment, immediately eliminating policies that allow abusers to move from one post to another once accused without facing consequences related to their employment and/or promotion.
- Elevate the issue of gender equality in bilateral and multilateral meetings, requiring embassy and mission staff to understand the women's rights landscape in-country and prioritize issues most in need of attention.
- The diplomatic corps should develop and maintain consistent redlines that can be deployed in negotiations surrounding climate and other multilateral agreements.
- The U.S. government should define women's rights and gender equality-related terminology, including SRHR, and clearly articulate redlines and what is acceptable in multilateral negotiations. This should include an explicit process whereby the U.S. can remove itself from negotiations or agreements.
- The U.S. must also codify processes where there are inconsistencies between diplomacy and the overarching goals of a feminist foreign policy. This includes engagement with countries that perpetuate human rights abuses and drawing redlines around where engagement is helpful to those whose rights are abused and where, even if it serves national interests, the U.S. cannot engage with such States.
- The U.S. should implement mandatory gender analyses in order to receive State Department funding and include transparent reporting and accountability measures against those metrics, this includes ex ante estimates and ex post reports. Further to that, guidance should be issued to embassies on the status of women and girls and prioritizing the status of women and girls as a metric for evaluating the growth of any country.
- Diplomatic tools like the State Department's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices should include robust evidence on all aspects of women's human rights, including SRHR and gender-based violence. These

annual country reports are key documents for development, humanitarian and private sector actors who rely on the information they contain to make important decisions and investments.

- The U.S. must hold itself to the same standards to which it holds other state actors, reporting on human rights practices and abuses as part of the annual country Human Rights Reports. This has been done in the past in Trafficking in Persons (TIP) reports.
- The U.S. should engage and support multilateral institutions, including the Human Rights Council, treaty-bodies and regional human rights mechanisms. It should seek to promote and uphold these institutions as avenues for upholding the highest standard of human rights globally.
- All security assistance should be vetted for its effects on women and historically marginalized communities to determine its long-term costs as well as benefits.
- State Department agreements with contractors should be conditioned on their ability to demonstrate positive outcomes for women and historically marginalized communities both within their firms and in communities where they are deployed.
- U.S. sanctions regimes must actively aim to leave the health and dignity of civilian populations intact and be subject to evaluation and alteration when humanitarian consequences are found.

## DEFENSE

In order to achieve the goal of a more peaceful, equitable and healthy planet, U.S. national security and defense operations must be transformed. Peace should be the ultimate aim of defense, and leadership should embrace the goal of demilitarization and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. U.S. military interventions should be a last resort after fully utilizing the many and powerful tools available within the foreign policy apparatus: diplomacy, aid and trade.

Military action should be primarily defensive in nature and require a very high standard of need. Additionally, military action should only be undertaken with a full and democratic debate, due political process<sup>31</sup> and full disclosure of rationale, analysis of implications and clear goals and milestones for intervention. When military action is chosen, it should be carefully overseen and subject to sunset provisions aimed at preventing mission creep, civilian harm and ongoing obligations to continued military operations. Doctrine and debate around the use of force, and in particular nuclear weapons and the validity of deterrence, must center the impact of their use on humans, the environment and culture.

Furthermore, a more feminist approach to military policy commits to preventing and responding to gender-based violence in conflict and to meaningfully include women and those who face discrimination in security forces, peace negotiations and post-conflict rebuilding. It encourages a diversity of intelligence sources, including women and other historically marginalized communities, to understand the true scope of security concerns and impacts of potential actions and design responses with those interests in mind. It also requires robustly addressing gender-based violence — including sexual assault — perpetrated within the ranks of the U.S. military. The goal is to prevent assaults against service members, ensure cases are handled sensitively using a survivor-centric approach and hold perpetrators accountable.

The body of international and U.S. law that has most directly sought to advance this approach to military action is U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the ensuing “sister” resolutions that formed the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. A radical resolution when it passed in 2000, UNSCR 1325 sought to advance human security and the promotion of peace via specific protections for women's safety in conflict settings and their meaningful involvement in peacekeeping and humanitarian response, peace processes and rebuilding post-conflict.<sup>32</sup> The U.S. has sought to incorporate UNSCR 1325 into its foreign policy through the U.S. National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security, first launched in 2011 and updated in 2016,<sup>33</sup> — subsequently by the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 and mandated National Strategy on Women, Peace and Security of 2019.<sup>34</sup> Taken together, these laws and policies give the defense community the doctrinal mandate to implement UNSCR 1325 as a core part of their work. Gender analyses across both internal and external defense operations and an



explicit focus on expanding gender expertise through training and recruitment and the diversification of intelligence sources will go a long way in advancing the necessary transformation of the U.S. defense apparatus in line with various existing WPS policy frameworks.

Specific recommendations for defense efforts authorized under a U.S. feminist foreign policy include:

- Crafting a National Security Strategy (NSS) that take into account women’s and other people’s experiences of systemic discrimination, including due to gender.
- Fully implementing U.S. commitments to the women, peace and security agenda. In order to ensure that the U.S. government upholds these commitments, Congress should not release funds to agencies who are not implementing their obligations.
- Creating a new, high-level position, either reporting to the Secretary of Defense at DOD or reporting to the National Security Advisor at the NSC, that is charged with developing and overseeing implementation of a more feminist approach to defense as part of the U.S. feminist foreign policy.
- Re-engaging with the global goal of nuclear disarmament, through policies that promote arms control, strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and reaffirm U.S. commitment both not to test nuclear weapons and to draw down its own arsenal.
- Conditioning the use of contractors on their ability to demonstrate positive outcomes for women and people who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination both within their firms and in communities where they are deployed.
- Ensuring equal opportunity to meet performance standards for female and LGBTQIA+ servicemembers.
- Lifting the transgender servicemember ban.
- Retooling internal policies to ensure provision of childcare and spousal support that does not assume a male service member and female “trailing” spouse, and a total redesign of promotion and retention policies to be predicated on the successful implementation of gender equitable work and increased and diverse recruitment and promotion.
- Developing and implementing effective protocols to prevent or encourage reporting of military sexual assault or other gender-based violence, comprehensive services to survivors and robust accountability mechanisms to hold perpetrators to justice and combat impunity.
- Ensuring comprehensive coverage of and access to sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception and abortion, for people serving in the military.
- Designing and delivering meaningful and consistently implemented justice mechanisms for those within the military system, but also for those outside of the system but against whom acts of gender-based violence are committed by military personnel.
- Providing increased training on the women, peace and security agenda and its integration into military colleges and training. An introduction to WPS should be part of basic training. Additionally, there should be an independent evaluation gender training program at DOD that includes recommendations for improvement that are acted upon. In order to ensure a gender lens is incorporated across the board and not siloed or marginalized, each and every member of U.S. defense and military operations — including political appointees and contractors — should receive training in gender analysis.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

Human migration remains a global and growing phenomenon. According to the U.N., the number of international migrants reached an estimated 258 million persons in 2017, a 50% increase over the previous 17 years, with 65 million people forcibly displaced from their home countries. The U.S. is the leading country of destination, hosting 49.8 million foreign born people, including 20.7 million naturalized citizens, 13.1 million lawful permanent residents, and an estimated 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants who are parents to 4.1 million U.S. citizen children. Approximately half of all foreign-born persons in the U.S. are women.<sup>35</sup>

Under current law, one million people immigrate to the U.S. every year, more than 70% of them to join their families. Another 12% are refugees or asylees, and 12% are sponsored by employers. Five percent of immigrant visas are allocated through a “diversity lottery,” which awards visas to people from countries underrepresented in the U.S.<sup>36</sup>

Over the last four decades, women have made up approximately half of global migrant flows, both in regular and irregular channels, including asylees and refugees. The terms “feminization of migration” derives from the large increase in the number of women migrating as independent economic actors since the 1970s.<sup>37</sup>

A feminist approach to immigration requires analysis of the impact of immigration policy on women, children, people of all gender identities and Indigenous people. From this standpoint, immigration law itself tends to marginalize women, relying on outmoded models of family, migration patterns and economic mobility that often fail to account for the reality of women’s lives when migrating.<sup>38</sup> For example, temporary labor migration programs systematically exclude women from equal employment opportunities and foster gender-based employment discrimination.<sup>39</sup>

Over the last several decades, immigration law has evolved somewhat to recognize issues like gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, and persecution based on family ties — issues often raised by women and children seeking asylum. Unfortunately, many of those developments have not been codified into statutory principles and have primarily been implemented as a result of policy and administrative law developments. The nature of protections available to women, children and gender-diverse people has been drastically decreased in recent years. For example, in 2018, the U.S. Attorney General reversed long-established policy and determined that domestic violence claims would no longer be grounds for asylum.<sup>40</sup> In January 2020, the U.S. State Department issued a directive to consular officers to ask women applying for a visa whether they are pregnant, and to reject such an application if the officer deems that the woman intends to remain in the U.S. through the birth of her child.<sup>41</sup> Zero-tolerance policies attempting to refer all unauthorized migrants into criminal proceedings ripped mothers from children. The high rate of sexual abuse and other violence experienced by women and children throughout the migration process<sup>42</sup> — some at the hands of government agents<sup>43</sup> — also raises urgent concerns.

A feminist approach to immigration policy centers the experiences of women, children, people of all gender identities and Indigenous people, recognizing their agency. It ensures that responses and remedies are closely tracked to their goals and needs, rather than to policy-makers’ presumptions. To that end, the U.S. Government should:

- Rescind all policies that penalize women based on their gender, including: asylum policy changes; State Department rules on visa applications (particularly focused on their reproductive status); various rules that restrict the ability of the spouses of employment-based visa holders to work in the U.S.; and obstacles to accessing immigration relief and protections for survivors of crimes, domestic violence, and human trafficking;
- End family separation and commit to expeditiously reuniting families;
- Rescind the Migration Protection Protocols, which harm families and subject women and transgender people to violence;
- Adopt gender-sensitive approaches to all release and custody decisions with a particular focus on transgender people;
- Establish a Blue-Ribbon Commission to analyze the impact of immigration policies on women, children and transgender people, and to develop recommendations on a feminist immigration policy. The Commission should pay particular attention to the militarization of the border, the culture it creates, and its relation to violence against women, girls and people. The Commission should also analyze the impact of entry systems (like point-based systems currently favored by Canada and the U.K.), and make recommendations that eliminate immigration dependency within family units. The Commission should ensure meaningful participation of people of all gender identities as well as other civil society actors;



- Create formal mechanisms to collect gender-disaggregated data through all agencies involved in immigration policy implementation including the State Department, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Labor;
- Apply a gender lens to the allocation of funds and services in budgetary and appropriations decisions;
- Expand child-friendly practices and procedures at all points of the immigration process, including inclusion of child welfare specialists within Border processing centers, resumption of child friendly courtroom practices, and support for more rapid reunification of children under the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) custody with sponsors. End the detention of children, and adopt alternative methods of accountability for families and others who do not pose a risk to national security;
- Ensure that U.S. policy protects the rights of women migrant workers recruited abroad to work in the U.S., granting full and equal participation in the temporary labor migration programs, as well as adequate protections and other support services to facilitate reporting all forms of gender-based violence;
- Ensure asylum seekers are granted humanitarian parole whenever possible, especially when they are LGBTQIA+ or have acute medical needs;
- Ensure that the U.S. asylum system recognizes indigenous identity and provides appropriate cultural and linguistic services.

## VI. ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

Perhaps the greatest issue that has emerged from consultations to-date is the importance of accountability — ensuring that promises to advance a feminist approach are honored through full funding, the development of participatory approaches to policy formulation and implementation, the setting and reaching of specific, time-bound and measurable goals and through transparency.

For the purposes of this paper, accountability of a feminist foreign policy includes: 1) a process of commitment-making, implementation and evaluation that is evidence-based, transparent and inclusive of individuals impacted by its practice; and 2) the generation of outcomes that do no harm and are desired by and beneficial to those impacted.

Structurally speaking, a U.S. feminist foreign policy must be accompanied by a robust mechanism, backed by rigorous data and evidence, by which to publicly track progress on implementation and hold promises to account. Two key factors within this are the allocation of sufficient funds for the full implementation of the policy, and a transparent and inclusive system of reporting on progress and outcomes.

### FUNDING

As noted above, the OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker records aid activities around a three-point scoring system and notes whether the policy objective is to promote gender equality as a primary objective, significant objective or whether gender equality was not targeted as an objective.<sup>44</sup> Using the OECD-DAC marker, a recommended 100 percent of U.S. foreign assistance should have gender as a principal or significant objective, and of that foreign assistance, 20 percent must include gender equality as a primary goal. This is consistent with Sweden's achievements under its feminist foreign policy<sup>45</sup> and with recommendations by feminist activists organizing to influence the Group of 7 (G7) in 2019.<sup>46</sup>

There is an opportunity to further strengthen the policy markers by calling for additional reporting on the extent to which donors meet DAC prescribed definitions for “principally” and “significantly” targeted aid. There should

be alignment between U.S. budget creation and reporting timelines and OECD-DAC timelines to ensure that U.S. commitments intended to promote gender equality are captured accurately. Currently, the Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ), which is “the annual presentation to the Congress that justifies the entire Foreign Operations Budget Request and reflects the continuing process to provide improved strategic focus, data quality”<sup>47</sup> occurs early in the calendar year and is based on the U.S. government fiscal year, whereas the OECD-DAC timeline is not.

In addition to increased and more transparent funding for gender equality, the inclusion of groups and individuals who have been systematically excluded from decision-making processes is pivotal. Grassroots and local organizations best placed to do critical work to reduce gender inequality often lack the technical and financial resources to apply for U.S. government funding. U.S. policy should balance grassroots and community inclusion with mitigating time and resource burdens on organizations expected to represent the views of communities who experience social and institutional discrimination and face systemic barriers to participation. One model to consider in this effort is the recently established Equality Fund.

When U.S. policies and programs affect Indigenous peoples, particular attention must be given to Indigenous peoples' collective and individual rights expressed in the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These include, inter alia, rights to self-government, self-determination, development, consultation and rights related to decision making. The American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples applies to the Indigenous peoples of the Americas and also should inform U.S. policies and programs in the region.

### REPORTING

Feminist policymaking must distinguish itself from business-as-usual both in its process and outcomes. Policymakers and implementers will need to clearly articulate those policies or conditions that violate feminist principles (e.g., Tanzania's banning of girls from school when they become pregnant). Decisions about what these circumstances are, and what U.S. policy reactions should be, must be made in consultation with local actors to avoid unintended consequences and should be transparently reported on to the public as a part of regular reporting. The policy itself, as well as the reporting on it, should avoid the creation of new, siloed initiatives and explore how to streamline existing accountability processes.

We have limited evidence on the extent to which international conventions (e.g., CEDAW) and other accountability mechanisms have played a role in successfully narrowing gender gaps and improving the lives of women and girls.<sup>48</sup> To date, Sweden's reporting process on their Feminist Foreign Policy has been in the form of illustrative case studies rather than quantifiable data on outcomes across all levers of foreign policy. It is recommended that a U.S. policy take on a more robust framework for monitoring and evaluating outcomes, rather than outputs, and be made publicly available on a regular basis.

With the understanding that complex social norm change takes time, reporting is still necessary to demonstrate incremental progress where the feminist foreign policy practices are having the greatest impact and where they are not. By making these actions more visible, greater progress against is more likely. In this respect, France's policy is perhaps a good example: they have articulated actionable objectives and outcomes, indicators, key stakeholders, and an anticipated timeline for completion against five core areas. The U.S. should undertake a similar mechanism in their reporting, creating new, rather than repackaged, commitments that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

The U.S. should also encourage independent researchers and civil society representatives to examine the extent to which commitments have been met and report publicly on their findings.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This proposal has sought to outline ways in which the full power of U.S. foreign policy can be harnessed in a manner that prioritizes gender equality, environmental integrity and peace; enshrines the human rights of all; seeks to disrupt colonial, racist, patriarchal and male-dominated power structures and systems of oppression; and allocates significant resources, including research, to achieve that vision. In short, it articulates what a U.S. feminist foreign policy might look like.

These recommendations would put the United States in line with — if not even outpacing — efforts of the small but growing number of countries who have been brave enough to embrace the mantle of feminist foreign policy, including both of America’s neighbors. These proposals will continue to be refined as they benefit from further consultation, interrogation and exchange. Efforts to understand how these proposals might be legislated are also ongoing, in the hopes that all the tools that United States’ legislative and executive branches bring to bear might be tapped in this effort.

As the world embarks on a major year for women’s rights anniversaries, and a pivotal year in American national discourse, perhaps a few of these ideas might animate and inform these events and inspire the kind of bold thinking and transformative action that is so needed, advancing liberty and justice for all.

## ANNEX - LIST OF ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Agency:** An individual or group’s ability to make choices and to transform those choices into desired outcomes. Incorporating agency into policy requires contemplating issues of autonomy, choice, empowerment and meaningful engagement. A feminist lens on agency moves beyond seeing women as participants or beneficiaries; it means that women in all their diversity are experts on their own experience, agents of their own lives and actors in their community and society.

**Bodily autonomy:** Achieving the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health and rights is based on the fundamental human rights of all individuals to: have their bodily integrity, privacy and personal autonomy respected; freely define their own sexuality; decide whether and when to be sexually active; choose their sexual partners; have safe and pleasurable sexual experiences; decide whether, when and whom to marry; decide whether, when and by what means to have a child or children and how many children to have; and have access over their lifetimes to the information, resources, services and support necessary to achieve all the above, free from discrimination, coercion, exploitation and violence.

**Environmental integrity:** The sustenance of biophysical processes that support all living organisms, by protecting diversity, ecological functions and resilience of all ecosystems. Environmental integrity encompasses a deep commitment to environmental and climate justice, recognizing that when all people are protected from environmental hazards and maintain equal access in environmental decision-making processes, life on earth will not be seen as disposable and a healthy, livable future will be protected. This approach also demands that policy heeds the leadership of communities who live on the frontlines of the climate crisis and are at the forefront of creating solutions.

**Feminist foreign policy:** Feminist foreign policy is the policy of a state that defines its interactions with other states, as well as movements and other non-state actors, in a manner that prioritizes gender equality and environmental integrity, enshrines the human rights of all, seeks to disrupt colonial, racist, patriarchal and male-dominated power structures and allocates significant resources, including research, to achieve that vision. Feminist foreign policy is coherent in its approach across all of its levers of influence, anchored by the exercise of those values at home and co-created with feminist activists, groups and movements, at home and abroad.

**Gender analysis:** Assessing how the benefits of a program/project/intervention can be expanded, and the risks can be minimized, by design elements, inclusive processes, implementation and evaluation that strengthen positive impacts and avoid harm for all people regardless of gender. Gender analysis examines the different roles and status between genders, including differential access to resources, assets, education, opportunities, and services. It is also an examination of the influence of gender roles on factors such as decision-making, bodily autonomy, use and control over resources, and access to institutions.

**Intersectionality:** The multiple aspects of identity that play out in people’s lives and experiences that can compound and exacerbate oppression. An intersectional approach in policy takes account the complex ways that multiple identities intersect and influence interests, participation and outcomes.an approach that takes into account and seeks to address the multiple and often intersecting forms of discrimination such as gender, race, age, class, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, gender or sexual identity, religion, or ethnicity.<sup>49</sup>

**Sexual and reproductive health and rights:** A state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Therefore, a positive approach to sexuality and reproduction should recognize the part played by pleasurable sexual relationships, trust and communication in promoting self-esteem and overall well-being. All individuals have a right to make decisions governing their bodies and to access services that support that right.<sup>50</sup>

### ABBREVIATIONS:

**DAC:** Development Assistance Committee of the OECD  
**DOD:** U.S. Department of Defense  
**DOJ:** U.S. Department of Justice  
**LGBTQIA+:** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual and many other terms, such as non-binary and pansexual.

**OECD:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
**SRHR:** Sexual and reproductive health and rights  
**USAID:** U.S. Agency for International Development  
**USDA:** U.S. Department of Agriculture  
**WPS:** Women, peace and security

ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS:

Endorsement is an indication of solidarity within our movement and a recognition of the urgency of these policies. Endorsement does not necessarily mean that organizations have expertise or a position on or are actively working towards each priority or policy listed in *Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States*.



UNITED STATES



UNITED STATES





USA



























































UNITED STATES









































Thanks to the following individuals for endorsing:

Sundaa Bridgett-Jones,  
The Rockefeller Foundation

Keifer Buckingham,  
Open Society Foundations

Ashley Judd, Actor, Author, Activist

Raj Kumar, Devex

Kavita Ramdas,  
Open Society Foundations



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank these individuals for contributing their time and ideas to inform the following proposals:

Ana Avendaño, Oxfam America	Jennifer Klein, Time’s Up
Sundaa Bridgett-Jones, The Rockefeller Foundation	Susan Markham, Smash Strategies
Bridget Burns and Mara Dolan, Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)	Helena Minchew, International Rescue Committee
Rachel Clement, formerly of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)	Kavita Ramdas and Keifer Buckingham, Open Society Foundations
Tarah Demant, Amnesty International USA	Serra Sippel, Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
Ellen Friedman and Hanni Hanson, Compton Foundation	Jennifer Vanyur, Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Heather Hurlburt, New America	Rachel Vogelstein and Jamille Bigio, Council on Foreign Relations
Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins, Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security (WCAPS)	Cara Wagner and Michelle Dover, Ploughshares Fund

CONTACT

Lyric Thompson, Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy  
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)  
lthompson@icrw.org

REFERENCES

1. United States-Afghan Women’s Council. (2012). “10 Years & Counting.” Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. Retrieved from [https://gucchd.georgetown.edu/USAWC/USAWC\\_Booklet.pdf](https://gucchd.georgetown.edu/USAWC/USAWC_Booklet.pdf);  
The White House. (2016). “The United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.” The White House. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/National%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Women%2C%20Peace%2C%20and%20Security.pdf>;  
United States Agency for International Development. (2019). “Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally.” USAID. Retrieved from [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2155/GBV\\_Factsheet.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2155/GBV_Factsheet.pdf);  
United States Department of State. (2016). “United States Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls.” United States Department of State. Retrieved from <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/254904.pdf>;  
United States Agency for International Development. (2020). “DREAMS: Partnership to Reduce HIV/AIDS in Adolescent Girls and Young Women.” USAID. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/hiv-and-aids/technical-areas/dreams>;

2. The White House. (2019). “Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Initiative.” The White House. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wgdp/>.

3. UN Women. (2019). Progress of the World’s Women 2019-2020: Families in a Changing World. UN Women. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/progress-of-the-worlds-women-2019-2020-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3512>  
The World Bank. (2020). “Women, Business, and the Law 2020.” International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32639/9781464815324.pdf?sequence=6>  
McKinsey Global Institute. (2015). “The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women’s Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth.” McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from [https://www.mckinsey.com/~/-/media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Employment%20and%20Growth/How%20advancing%20womens%20equality%20can%20add%2012%20trillion%20to%20global%20growth/MGI%20Power%20of%20parity\\_Full%20report\\_September%202015.ashx](https://www.mckinsey.com/~/-/media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Employment%20and%20Growth/How%20advancing%20womens%20equality%20can%20add%2012%20trillion%20to%20global%20growth/MGI%20Power%20of%20parity_Full%20report_September%202015.ashx)

4. Government of Sweden. (2018). “Handbook: Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy.” Government of Sweden. Retrieved from <https://www.government.se/reports/2018/08/handbook-swedens-feminist-foreign-policy/>

5. Government of Canada. (2017). “Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy.” Government of Canada. Retrieved from [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?la%20ng=eng&lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?la%20ng=eng&lang=eng)

6. Le Drian, J. and Schiappa, M. (2019). “Feminist Foreign Policy.” Retrieved from <https://onu.delegfrance.org/Feminist-foreign-policy>.

7. Thompson, L. (2020). “Mexican Diplomacy has Gone Feminist.” Foreign Policy Magazine. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/01/14/mexican-diplomacy-feminist-foreign-policy/>

8. Sundaa Bridgett-Jones (The Rockefeller Foundation); Bridget Burns (Women’s Environment and Development Organization); Rachel Clement (International Center for Research on Women); Heather Hurlburt (New America); Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins (Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security); Gawain Kripke (Oxfam America); Susan Markham (Smash Strategies); Megan O’Donnell (Center for Global Development); Gayatri Patel (CARE USA); Serra Sippel (Center for Health and Gender Equity); Lyric Thompson (International Center for Research on Women); Jennifer Vanyur (Planned Parenthood Federation of America); and Rachel Vogelstein (Council on Foreign Relations).

9. Clement, R., & Thompson, L. (2019). “Is the Future of Foreign Policy Feminist?” Journal Of Diplomacy and International Relations, XX(2), 76-94. Retrieved from <http://blogs.shu.edu/journalofdiplomacy/2019/08/is-the-future-of-foreign-policy-feminist/>.

10. "Principles – Feminist Agenda for a Green New Deal." (2019). Retrieved from <http://feministgreennewdeal.com/principles/>.
11. "Blueprint for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice." (2019). Retrieved from <https://reproblueprint.org/>.
12. United Nations Women. (2014). "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome." UN Women. Retrieved from [https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa\\_e\\_final\\_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800](https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800).
13. Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.
14. IWDA. (2018). "What does intersectional feminism actually mean?" IWDA. Retrieved from <https://iwda.org.au/what-does-intersectional-feminism-actually-mean/>
15. Starrs, A. M. et al. (2018). "Accelerate progress—sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission." *The Lancet*, Vol. 391, pp. 2642–2692. Retrieved from [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)30293-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30293-9/fulltext).
16. "Blueprint for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice." (2019). Retrieved from <https://reproblueprint.org/>.
17. O'Reilly, M., Súllebháin, A., and Paffenholz, T. (2015). "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes." International Peace Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking.pdf>.
18. Women, Peace and Security Act, S. 1141. 115th Cong. (2017).
19. Lieberman, B. (2019). "A brief introduction to climate change and national security." Climate Connections. Retrieved from <https://www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2019/07/a-brief-introduction-to-climate-change-and-national-security/>
20. To the greatest extent legally possible.
21. The most recent example of which was the White House Council on Women and Girls, but which lacked statutory authority or budget, and which was more outward facing, situated as it was in the Office of External Engagement. Exec. Order No. 13506, 3 C.F.R. (2009).
22. McBride, J. (2018,). "How Does the U.S. Spend Its Foreign Aid?" Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/background/how-does-us-spend-its-foreign-aid>.
23. "DAC gender equality policy marker - OECD." (n.d.). OECD. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm>
24. "Funding Feminist Futures." (n.d.). Equality Fund. Retrieved from <https://equalityfund.ca/>.
25. OCHA. (2020). Global Humanitarian Overview. OCHA. Retrieved from [https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO-2020\\_v9.1.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO-2020_v9.1.pdf)
26. GBV AoR. (2019). "The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming." GBV AoR. Retrieved from <https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Interagency-GBV-Minimum-Standards-English-2019.pdf>
27. IAWG. (2018). "Inter-Agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Setting 2018." IAWG. Retrieved from <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/imported-file-87-sc-toolkit-children-and-adolescents-sexual-and-reproductive-health-rights-0>
28. IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action. (2018). "Guideline: The Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action." IASC. Retrieved from [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2018-iasc\\_gender\\_handbook\\_for\\_humanitarian\\_action\\_eng\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2018-iasc_gender_handbook_for_humanitarian_action_eng_0.pdf)
29. World Health Organization. (2007). "The Cluster Approach." World Health Organization. Retrieved from [https://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/tools/manuals/who\\_field\\_handbook/annex\\_7/en/](https://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/tools/manuals/who_field_handbook/annex_7/en/)
30. IASC. (2016). "Minimum Operating Standards: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by own Personnel." IASC. Retrieved from <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including->

- protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content-1
31. EDGE Strategy. 2020. EDGE Certification. Retrieved from [edge-cert.org/](https://edge-cert.org/).
32. The Constitution reserves the power to make war to Congress. U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl.
33. UNSCR. (2000). "UN Security Council Resolution 1325." Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/#resolution>.
34. United States Agency for International Development. (2016). "National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security." USAID. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/National%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Women%2C%20Peace%2C%20and%20Security.pdf>.
35. The White House. (June 2019). "United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security." The White House. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WPS-Strategy-FINAL-PDF-6.11.19.pdf>
36. Migration Policy Institute. (2017). "Immigrant and Emigrant Populations by Country of Origin and Destination." Migration Policy Institute. 202. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-and-emigrant-populations-country-origin-and-destination?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>
37. Migration Policy Institute. (2017). "Immigrant and Emigrant Populations by Country of Origin and Destination." Migration Policy Institute. 202. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-and-emigrant-populations-country-origin-and-destination?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>
38. Jenna L. Hennebry and Allison Petrozziello. 2019. "Closing the Gap: Gender and the Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees." *International Migration*, 57(6):115-138.
39. Olivares, M. (2015). "Unreformed: Towards Gender Equality in Immigration Law." *Chapman Law Review*. Retrieved from [https://www.chapman.edu/LAW/\\_files/publications/clr-18-olivares.pdf](https://www.chapman.edu/LAW/_files/publications/clr-18-olivares.pdf)
40. Centro De Los Derechos Del Mifrate, Inc. and Penn Law Transnational Legal Clinic. (2018). "Engendering Exploitation: Gender Inequality in U.S. Labor Migration Programs." Retrieved from <https://cdmigrante.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Engendered-Exploitation.pdf>
41. Matter of A-B, 27 I&N Dec. 316 (A.G. 2018) Interim Decision #3929.
42. Kanno-Youngs, Z. (2020). "Trump Moves to Block Visas for Pregnant Women on 'Birth Tourism,') New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/us/politics/trump-travel-ban-pregnant-women.html>
43. Burnett, J. (2019). "Rep. Ted Deutch Releases Details of Sexually Abused Migrant Children." National Public Radio. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/27/698492221/rep-ted-deutch-releases-details-of-sexually-abused-migrant-children>
44. Goldscheid, J. (2019). "Sexual Assault by Federal Actors, #MeToo and Civil Rights," *Washington Law Review*. 94:1639:1696, fn. 3.
45. DAC gender equality policy marker - OECD. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm>.
46. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2018). "Aid to gender equality and women's empowerment." OECD. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Aid-to-gender-overview-2018.pdf>.
47. Chrisafis, A. (2019, August 25). G7 leaders told to scrap discriminatory gender laws from statute books. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/25/g7-leaders-told-to-scrap-discriminatory-gender-laws-from-statute-books>
48. United States Agency for International Development. (2019). "Congressional Budget Justification." USAID. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/budget-spending/congressional-budget-justification>.
49. Warner, A. (2016). "Recognizing Rights Promoting Progress." ICRW. Retrieved from <https://n2r4h9b5.stackpathcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Recognizing-Rights-Promoting-Progress-CEDAW.pdf>
50. IWDA. (2018). "What does intersectional feminism actually mean?" IWDA. Retrieved from <https://iwda.org.au/what-does-intersectional-feminism-actually-mean/>.

51. Starrs, A. M. et al. (2018). "Accelerate progress—sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission." *The Lancet*, Vol. 391, pp. 2642–2692. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)30293-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30293-9/fulltext).



