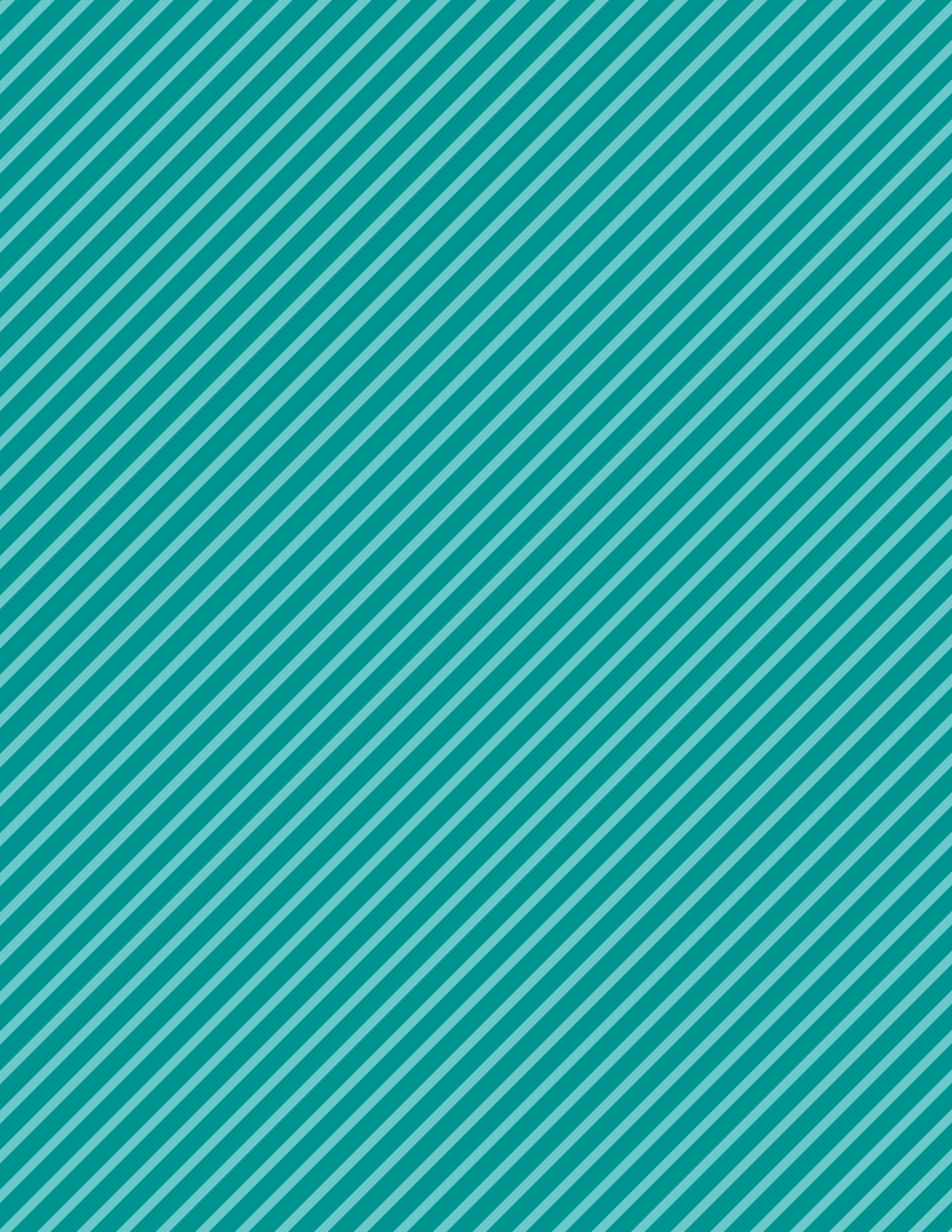


**TOWARD A FEMINIST FOREIGN
POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES:**

A MIDTERM REVIEW OF
THE BIDEN-HARRIS
ADMINISTRATION



ABOUT THE AUTHORIZING COALITION

The Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States is a collective effort to develop a vision for the highest standard of U.S. foreign policy that promotes overarching goals of gender equality, human rights, bodily autonomy, peace, and environmental integrity, while prioritizing the articulation of concrete policy recommendations. Learn more about the Coalition [here](#).

SUGGESTED CITATION

Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy (2023). *Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States: A Midterm Review of the Biden-Harris Administration*. Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After two years, the Biden-Harris administration has made substantial progress toward articulating and implementing a more feminist approach to its foreign policy. Perhaps most notable has been the creation of the White House Gender Policy Council and the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality, both of which are important firsts for the United States and feature a number of foreign policy elements.

In addition, the administration has dramatically increased its budget request for gender equality in foreign assistance — a historic \$2.6 billion — and moved to reverse many of the harmful elements of the previous administration. Affirming its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the administration has appointed special representatives and envoys to advance key issues and the lived experiences of historically marginalized communities. And, per our Coalition's repeated requests, the Biden-Harris administration has taken steps to support civil society consultation and co-creation in foreign policy decision-making spaces.

Despite this progress, the U.S. has a long way to go. To date, 13 governments have announced feminist foreign policies, U.S. neighbors and allies among them, though the Biden-Harris administration has yet to announce or adopt this mantle. While the Gender Policy Council has elevated gender equality to the highest levels of U.S. policy making, it remains notably over-tasked and underfunded. Too often, excellent gender strategies and structures are developed, but lack the resources and oversight for robust implementation. Furthermore, even with its unprecedented \$2.6 billion commitment, the U.S. lags behind other global leaders in supporting gender equality in its foreign assistance. Funding and building the resources for a feminist foreign policy are a challenge, but a critical factor for successful foreign policy that creates longer lasting peace, stronger and more inclusive economies, and a healthier and more food secure world.¹ Transparency and accountability also present areas for improvement; the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality mandated all agencies to develop implementation plans, but it is unclear what the details of these plans are or what mechanisms are in place to ensure that agencies are held accountable for their implementation.

For the future, the Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the U.S. calls on the Biden-Harris administration to continue to scale up funding for gender equality, building on the historic budget request made this year; improve and expand models of policy co-creation that give space to feminist advocates and civil society; confer more resources to the Gender Policy Council and gender expertise across agencies; and improve accountability and transparency by publicly reporting on progress and sharing what accountability mechanisms are in place.

Pursuing transformative policies may be harder with a new political configuration after the midterm elections. However, the Coalition believes there is a window of opportunity for the administration to do more. In the wake of 2022's devastating Supreme Court decision eliminating the constitutional right to abortion, a nationwide upwelling of support for women's rights and gender equality was evident. As many of our allies reach out to the U.S. to express solidarity and concern, the announcement of a feminist foreign policy is one of the most salient political and policy tools the executive branch has at its disposal to demonstrate — at home and abroad — its commitment to these issues.

INTRODUCTION

The Biden-Harris administration came into office facing multiple overlapping crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, an economic crisis, a series of military conflicts around the globe, increasing climate change disasters, and the largest population of forcibly-displaced people since World War II.²

The President recognized that addressing these crises would occupy the early phase of his term.³

Although President Biden has not committed to a feminist foreign policy, the administration did commit to be global leaders on gender equality⁴ and establish a White House Gender Policy Council to advance gender equity and equality in both domestic and foreign policy development and implementation. The President took other relevant actions in his early days, including: rescinding the Global Gag Rule, rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement, and raising refugee admissions to the U.S.⁵ In October 2021, the Gender Policy Council launched the first-ever National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality,⁶ and over the course of 2022 the Administration has been working on a number of policies on specific gender equality issues, such as gender-based violence and women's economic security.

This second evaluation by the Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the U.S. (the Coalition) unfolds as the administration faced new challenges both domestically and internationally in 2022. Domestically, the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a devastating blow to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision (Dobbs decision), which ended the federal constitutional right to abortion in the United States. Internationally, the war in Ukraine drove worldwide attention, the Taliban further denied women's rights and access to resources in Afghanistan, and growing economic, food, and climate crises undermined progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the U.S., 2022 was an election year — bringing politics to the fore — and generating tremendous energy to issues like abortion rights, which arguably helped the Democratic Party retain control of the Senate and limit Republican gains in their new House of Representatives majority.⁷

Supporters of feminist foreign policy have argued that the Biden-Harris administration should “depart from ‘business as usual’ and assert leadership in tackling global inequality”⁸ by declaring “the intention to execute a feminist foreign policy” as a strong departure from the past.⁹ This approach has been used in other countries, where new, incoming governments have announced a feminist foreign policy as a decisive break from the status quo. In line with that vision, the Coalition has promoted the principles and goals of a transformative feminist foreign policy, as outlined in our white paper, “Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States.”¹⁰ As part of the Coalition's efforts, we annually track and report on progress toward those goals.

A GROWING MOVEMENT

Since Sweden launched the world's first feminist foreign policy in 2014,¹¹ momentum has been building around the world.

To date, twelve additional governments have announced feminist foreign policies. These include many like-minded nations, and both of our neighbors: Canada, France, Mexico, Spain, Luxembourg, Libya, Germany, the Netherlands, Chile, Scotland, Colombia, and Liberia — with more on the horizon. There has also been growing multilateral collaboration among this cohort, including a “Feminist Foreign Policy Plus” group at the United Nations¹² — reflecting a new, progressive political geometry from which the U.S. is conspicuously absent. The 2022 G7, under Germany's leadership, also committed to the following: “In the spirit of feminist development, foreign and trade policies and to empower women and girls, we will strengthen the rights, resources and opportunities for women and girls in all their diversity in every sphere.”¹³

As more governments have embraced feminist foreign policies, feminist advocates continue to advance ambitious and intersectional approaches, as well as calls for greater transparency and accountability in implementation.¹⁴ For example, in its “Defining Feminist Foreign Policy” paper, ICRW points to several promising practices, including: “pushing countries to apply a feminist approach across all elements of foreign policy (aid, trade, defense, diplomacy and increasingly, immigration policy); to increase their investments in gender equality as a principal and funded goal, and allocating more funding within that envelope to feminist and women's rights organizations and movements; and to adopt a more rigorous and independent practice for monitoring, evaluation, research and learning tied to policies' intended outcomes.”¹⁵ The Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the U.S. echoes these calls, and further urges governments to take up a concerted effort, across all entities, to meaningfully consult and co-create policies and programs alongside civil society and communities that will be directly impacted.¹⁶

FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY IN THE U.S.

In 2019, a group of U.S. foreign policy experts and advocates came together to sketch out a vision for what a U.S. feminist foreign policy could look like. This discussion benefited from a research review of other countries' feminist foreign policies, 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 best practice for feminist foreign policy should entail. 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. The resulting paper, "Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States," launched in May 2020 and included a proposed definition, key principles, and policy recommendations, as well as a framework of what a feminist foreign policy should look like within the U.S. government context.¹⁷ More than 80 organizations have endorsed the paper and joined in a Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States, which continues to promote the highest standard of U.S. foreign policy that reconceptualizes global goods — people, peace, and planet — as in the national interest.



DEFINITION

The Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the U.S. defines feminist foreign policy as:

“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.”¹⁸

Feminist foreign policy lays out a new vision for foreign policy that targets institutional change across policy, leadership, funding, and — importantly — the foreign policy process itself. Change is meant to impact traditional foreign policy priorities, such as defense, diplomacy, and foreign assistance, as well as issues like trade and immigration, which have both domestic and foreign implications. A feminist foreign policy

recognizes cohesion as an essential element: the same values exercised internationally must also be exercised domestically. A feminist foreign policy also prioritizes co-creation with feminist activists, groups, and movements, particularly those most impacted by policy implementation.

A feminist foreign policy also embraces a broader definition of security, reframing it to include the ability to live life free from violence, persecution, climate impacts, and economic exploitation. Conceiving security exclusively in military terms ignores the lived experiences of people who recognize threats from many other sources, such as pandemics, extreme weather events, intimate partner violence, and online harassment and stalking.

Operationally, a feminist foreign policy prioritizes diplomatic solutions, cooperation, and alliance-building, examines the way international institutions and multilateral processes can be improved and most effective, and embraces

inclusive and collaborative processes. In addition, a feminist foreign policy needs to be practically implemented across agencies and institutions, rather than siloed in foreign aid or narrow

initiatives. A feminist foreign policy must be reflected in resources, actual budget allocations, and actors who will advance its goals.

SCORECARD METHOD

This scorecard follows the structure and methodology of the 2021 scorecard and tracks recommendations made by the Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States.¹⁹

The Coalition identifies four core areas for U.S. action:

- Policy Articulation,
- Leadership and Structures,
- Funding, and
- Accountability.

The criteria for evaluation is based on performance measured against recommendations identified by the Coalition. The recommendations span five cross-cutting pillars to advance feminist foreign policy across the U.S. 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 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.

Agency- and process-specific recommendations were made for the areas of foreign assistance, humanitarian assistance, trade, diplomacy,

defense, and immigration — the six areas of foreign policy for which recommendations were outlined in our [original paper](#), *Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States*.

Information on the Biden-Harris administration's performance was gathered through a desk-review of official statements and documents, as well as through consultation with coalition partners, feminist advocates, U.S. government officials, and issue experts.

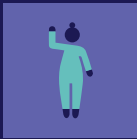
This scorecard does not provide letter grades or percentages but includes the number of recommendations that have been followed against our criteria and details what more still needs to be done. It evaluates progress against all action taken by the Executive Branch, including its many agencies and institutions — not just gender-focused offices.

The Coalition recognizes that this is an ambitious agenda that will take more than a few years to accomplish. Our agenda calls for structural and systems change across many foreign policy levers — areas in which embedded norms have long de-prioritized needs, insights, challenges, and power dynamics impacting the lives of women, girls, and non-binary individuals. As such, the Coalition understands that transformation and sustainable policy change are not immediate. Reform, co-creation, and dismantling the status quo will take time, effort, and resilience. We believe it is critical to acknowledge progress to date, as well as pinpoint gaps for improvement, all while advancing our vision for a U.S. feminist foreign policy.

REVIEW OF PROGRESS

This scorecard evaluates the Biden-Harris administration’s accomplishments implementing a more feminist foreign policy at the midpoint of this term, essentially a “midterm review.” The first two years of the administration’s work is reviewed in this report, with progress assessed across key thematic issues and the four pillars of our recommended approach.

KEY THEMATIC PRIORITIES



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BODILY AUTONOMY

On June 24, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which previously established that the U.S. Constitution “protected a woman’s right to an abortion prior to the viability of the fetus.”²⁰ This ruling is a huge setback to bodily autonomy and access to comprehensive healthcare in the U.S., and also carries tremendous international implications for the U.S. as a champion of these issues on the global stage and for allied nations who are now attuned to the prospect of similar rights rollbacks within their own borders.

Over the past two years, the Biden-Harris administration has taken several steps to advance sexual and reproductive health

and rights (SRHR) — but the impacts of the Dobbs decision necessitate more immediate, outspoken action. For instance, on January 28, 2022, the administration released a Presidential Memorandum to advance SRHR, effectively rescinding the harmful Mexico City Policy (or Global Gag Rule) that blocked U.S. global health funding to organizations that provide, counsel, refer, or advocate for abortion. The Memorandum also directed the U.S.’s withdrawal from the Geneva Consensus Declaration,²¹ an anti-abortion initiative sponsored by governments with anti-LGBTQIA+ policies. The administration also restored funding to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA),²² the U.N. agency dedicated to advancing sexual and reproductive health, and proposed a significant increase in

funding for the agency for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23). The 2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices, released in April 2022, also restored reporting on SRHR, which had been eliminated by the Trump administration.²³

Just two weeks after the Dobbs decision, President Biden signed an Executive Order Protecting Access to Reproductive Health Care Services, directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to expand access to contraception and medication abortion, offer emergency medical care, and increase public education efforts. The Executive Order also invoked greater privacy and protection efforts and called upon HHS and the Gender Policy Council to establish an interagency Task Force on Reproductive Health Care Access, among other actions.²⁴ Likewise, the HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) announced new guidance to ensure that unaccompanied minors have access to abortion while in ORR shelters awaiting family reunification.²⁵ The Department of Defense (DoD) also issued a memo that it will “continue to provide seamless access to reproductive healthcare for military and civilian patients, as permitted by federal law.”²⁶

Despite these efforts, the administration missed opportunities to implement more detailed valuable guidance to protect and promote bodily autonomy in foreign assistance. A recent brief by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) notes that the Dobbs decision “may embolden anti-abortion and anti-rights movements abroad, contribute to the global stigmatization of abortion, and cause confusion in foreign policy and international development spaces.”²⁷ Initial statements from the administration emphasized that the Dobbs

decision changed nothing for U.S. foreign policy and assistance; however, they fell short of clarifying internal guidance that U.S. policy (under the Helms amendment) does permit support for abortion services in lifesaving and other critical instances.

Announcing a feminist foreign policy or, at a minimum, visibly collaborating with feminist foreign policy countries to vocally endorse the highest and most progressive standards for rights, like SRHR, is one of the best tools that the administration has at its disposal. Now is the time for the bully pulpit: the U.S. should join the “Feminist Foreign Policy Plus” group at the United Nations, centering its commitment to sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice in its multilateral efforts.

Furthermore, as ICRW lays out, the Biden-Harris administration and USAID should more proactively provide guidance to country offices, implementing partners, and organizations that receive U.S. foreign assistance about what is permissible under U.S. policy and the Helms Amendment.²⁸

They should make clear that:

- U.S. funding can support abortions performed when a person's life is in danger, or if they are pregnant as the result of rape or incest;
- where legal under local law, U.S. funding can support and strengthen grantees' provision of counseling and information about abortion;
- the Dobbs decision does not change U.S. foreign policy; and
- SRHR remains a key domestic and foreign policy priority for the administration.

PEACE AND SECURITY

Global peace and security took a dramatic turn for the worse when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 and carried out a brutal and indiscriminate attack, including many atrocities and rampant human rights abuses. This conflict poses the latest and most visible real-time challenge to the women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda; women have largely been absent from formal and informal peace processes, and amid widespread reports of sexual violence during the conflict, an estimated 90% of refugees have been women and children.²⁹ While Ukraine captured global attention, tragic and protracted conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Somalia have come with horrifying costs to civilians and vulnerable populations. In Afghanistan, gender equality and human rights continue to deteriorate; most recently, the Taliban further restricted women's and girls' access to education, as well as employment in the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector, which is expected to have catastrophic impacts on the country's humanitarian conditions.³⁰ In Iran, the government has brutally cracked down on protestors, led by women and girls, who are calling for reforms to longstanding discriminatory laws and restrictions.³¹

In some cases, the Biden-Harris administration has actively engaged in diplomacy and humanitarian engagement to broker peace and provide improved security. For example, President Biden called for ceasefires in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and USAID Administrator Samantha Power was forceful in pushing for humanitarian access.³² In December 2022, represented by U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the United States supported a resolution removing Iran from the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). As Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield expressed, "Let's do right by women and girls around the world. Let's vote to remove Iran from the [CSW]. Let's do this for women. For life. And for freedom" — echoing protestors' rallying cry and the global community supporting them.³³

In July 2022, the administration released a report on the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Act, evaluating progress across four U.S. government agencies: the Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and USAID. The report documents several positive accomplishments, such as an increased use of gender analysis, consultation with local women leaders, and integration of WPS principles into relevant training and education programs. Regarding WPS implementation in challenging security contexts, there is little mention of ongoing efforts in Afghanistan. The report does highlight USAID and State Department efforts to engage Yemeni women and human rights leaders, as well as USAID's support for survivors of gender-based violence in Ethiopia and Somalia. However, analysis and language throughout the report generally lacks an inclusive and intersectional understanding of gender.³⁴

On another dimension of security, the Biden-Harris administration launched the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse, alongside Australia, Denmark, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, and the United Kingdom in March 2022. The partnership is meant to "bring together countries, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector to better prioritize, understand, prevent, and address the growing scourge of technology-facilitated gender-based violence."³⁵ In December, the Partnership issued a statement calling attention to the violence inflicted upon women and girls in Iran and denouncing the online harassment and abuse imposed on them by Iranian authorities and supporters.³⁶ Furthermore, in October 2021, as part of the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality, the administration announced a forthcoming "U.S. National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence," although it has not yet been released.³⁷ USAID also issued guidance to integrate gender and gender-based violence sensitivity into COVID-19 programming.³⁸ Relatedly, in December

2022, the administration released an updated U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally.³⁹ Advocates have commended the Strategy for elevating survivors' voices, promoting a consultative and transparent process, and for setting high standards for U.S. agency action.

Also, in December 2022, following reports from Ukraine on increasing cases of conflict-related sexual violence,⁴⁰ President Biden signed a presidential memorandum seeking to "combat the use of rape by both foreign governments and individuals as a weapon of war."⁴¹ This memorandum calls on government agencies to "give equal consideration of acts of sexual violence to other serious human rights abuses in leveraging sanctions and other punishment against foreign actors."⁴²

However, the Biden-Harris administration has yet to fully integrate gender equality and women's rights in all aspects of peace and security. The conflict in Ukraine has been a major setback, bringing the world much closer to nuclear conflict. **The administration still does not support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which came into force**

CLIMATE JUSTICE

2022 was another devastating year for climate disasters around the world, from severe floods across Pakistan to Hurricane Ian in the U.S. and Cuba, and ongoing droughts, wildfires, and storms causing "death, displacement, devastation, and environmental damage."⁴⁶ Since taking office, the Biden-Harris administration has amplified climate change as a key focus of U.S. foreign policy. On his first day, President Biden took action to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement. He appointed John Kerry as Special Presidential Envoy on Climate to lead international engagement with new vigor and ambition. President Biden attended the COP 26 conference in Glasgow, Scotland and more recently attended COP 27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, signaling high priority for climate change issues.

in 2022 with the support of 50 states.⁴³ Furthermore, the administration's new National Security Strategy (NSS), released in October 2022, does not systematically recognize gender equality as a core element of national security. In the NSS, the administration does pledge to use "humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding tools more cohesively," and to "invest in women and girls, be responsive to the voices and focus on the needs of the most marginalized, including the LGBTQI+ community; and advance inclusive development broadly."⁴⁴ Recognizing this potential, the Coalition urges the administration to understand and centralize gender equality and human rights in all national security efforts.

More generally, it will always be difficult to reconcile the U.S.'s extensive and disproportionate reliance on military power with a feminist foreign policy. U.S. foreign policy has long been militarized, with massive arms exports, military budget expenditure, and a high ratio of military investment versus investment in health and education. The United States, by itself, makes up more than one third of the global military budget.⁴⁵

At COP 27, the administration proclaimed that "Our Climate Future is Female" and documented a variety of initiatives "addressing the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on women and girls and empowering women and girls as climate leaders."⁴⁷ The announcement described efforts to integrate gender sensitivity into climate programming, and climate sensitivity into gender-related programming. USAID announced the creation of a new Climate Gender Equity Fund with seed funding of \$6 million meant to leverage private sector investment in women-led climate organizations and businesses advancing gender-equitable climate solutions in least developed countries.⁴⁸ USAID also announced over \$21 million to gender-responsive climate action from the Gender Equity and

Equality Action (GEEA) Fund, an increase from the \$14 million committed at COP 26.⁴⁹

Relatedly, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Biden-Harris administration's biggest climate legislation to date, committed approximately \$370 billion in climate-related investments to potentially reduce U.S. climate emissions by 40% from 2005 levels.⁵⁰ President Biden's 2023/2024 budget request included more than \$11 billion for international climate assistance; unfortunately, not approved by Congress, this funding would have been a massive increase from predecessors.⁵¹ USAID Administrator Samantha Power has also emphasized the importance of involving women-led organizations in the design and implementation of humanitarian programming, and how climate change resilience and adaptation is integral to long-term resilience planning.⁵²

However, more meaningful engagement with feminist civil society on climate policy and programming is necessary, as is the administration's coordination with these groups via future COPs and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Feminist advocates also pointed out several gaps and areas for much-needed progress in the administration's approach to climate justice. For instance, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) writes that the IRA "defied any notion of consultation and consent," despite the generations-long struggle of "climate, racial, and gender justice organizers." Feminist advocates have pointed out that the IRA does not: recognize the global dimensions of U.S. domestic climate policy, centralize frontline communities facing the climate crisis, or impress in multilateral climate

spaces, as it reduces U.S. emissions just to the levels agreed to in the Paris Climate Agreement.⁵³

While the administration announced several climate change initiatives at COP 27, these commitments still do not bring the U.S. close to its promised \$100 billion in annual contributions to international climate funding. In this area, the U.S. lags behind France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and others.⁵⁴ This gap between climate promises and actual finance has increased distrust and cynicism in multilateral spaces. Feminist civil society have raised concerns that these new initiatives may elevate private sector partnerships and risk diminishing the amount of funding available for federal, public, grants-based finance to adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage.⁵⁵ **At COP 27, the U.S. was also one of the last holdouts blocking agreement on a new loss and damage finance facility — which was a key demand from vulnerable countries and feminist civil society.**⁵⁶

Moving forward, the Biden-Harris administration must more meaningfully engage feminist civil society and impacted communities in all climate policy and programming considerations; prioritize gender equality in all climate financing; and target climate change issues harming women, girls, and marginalized communities. Furthermore, the President should exercise executive powers on climate and foreign policy where possible (for example, by ending fossil fuel infrastructure investment at home and abroad, and instituting changes to importing and exporting oil and gas).⁵⁷ The administration should more intentionally foster substantive connections between domestic climate policy and foreign policy, particularly in the areas of human rights, gender equality, multilateralism, trade, defense, and more.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

One of the Coalition's key asks is a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, both internally among leadership and staff and externally as co-created with feminists outside of government.⁵⁸

Over the past two years, the Biden-Harris administration has significantly expanded its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts — a positive step toward more representative and inclusive policy making.

In June 2021, President Biden issued an executive order mandating new diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) measures across the government.⁵⁹ Among other actions, the executive order requires agencies to assess and make strategies to improve DEIA, address pay equity, and provide recourse for sexual harassment and discrimination.⁶⁰ In November 2021, the administration issued a government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance DEIA in the Federal Workforce, establishing a DEIA initiative at the White House Office of Personnel Management and mandating DEIA strategies in federal agencies.⁶¹ Furthermore, on his first day in office, President Biden issued an executive order on racial justice, mandating government agencies to conduct equity assessments to uncover potential systemic barriers to access, and develop Equity Action Plans.⁶² Biden also issued a national security memorandum recognizing the need for a more diverse and inclusive foreign policy workforce and partnerships.⁶³ Many observers agree that the administration has improved progress in this area; to start, the administration welcomed the first Native American member of the cabinet and the first transgender person to be nominated and confirmed by the Senate.⁶⁴

For the implementation of U.S. foreign policy, the State Department launched an Equity Action Plan to “embed intersectional equity principles into diversifying public diplomacy and communications strategies and expand

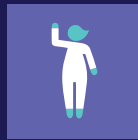
recruitment for programming and exchange opportunities to focus on underserved communities.”⁶⁵ The State Department also appointed a Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice, a newly created position amplifying the administration's commitment to tackling racism and discrimination, and engaging with local civil society and representatives of historically marginalized communities.⁶⁶ The administration also named a Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Persons,⁶⁷ as well as a Special Envoy for Global Youth Issues.⁶⁸

Taken together, the Biden-Harris administration has launched a significant effort toward diversity and inclusion in foreign policy, although the real measure will be in its implementation and accountability. **The Coalition urges the administration to embrace co-creation by meaningfully and transparently engaging with civil society at all levels of policy development, implementation, and monitoring — including representatives from countries, communities, and sectors most impacted by U.S. foreign policy.** We encourage the administration to build upon and scale up consultation efforts utilized in developing recent policy documents, such as the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality, the Strategy on Global Women's Economic Security, and the Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally. The Coalition commends the administration for establishing the International Security Advisory Board,⁶⁹ featuring feminist advocates and civil society leaders, as a promising co-creation model, and recommends an expansion of similar efforts across U.S. foreign policy making agencies. Increasing and formalizing such mechanisms is an important agenda for the rest of the Biden-Harris administration's term.

EVALUATING THE MIDTERM: PROGRESS ON THE FOUR PILLARS



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POLICY ARTICULATION

A feminist foreign policy — as implemented through defense, diplomacy, foreign assistance, humanitarian assistance, immigration, and trade, among other areas — will advance gender equality and broader goals around diversity, intersectionality, and representation. Articulating these goals and the process to achieve them is critical. The Coalition has recommended that the Biden-Harris administration develop and launch an overarching U.S. Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy to promote this vision and ensure effective integration within Executive Branch agencies. We have laid out a number of specific recommendations for various thematic elements of such a Strategy, as described in our scoring criteria.

By our tabulation, the Biden-Harris administration has accomplished 36.5 of 63 specific recommendations in this area, two years into the term. This is an improvement from the 31 of 60 documented in our last annual scorecard, which covered 2021 progress only. In this scorecard, we measured progress against 63 recommendations (rather than just 60 in our 2021 scorecard, in which we determined that a

few recommendations would not be possible in just one year and hence would not be evaluated). This year, we excluded one recommendation on trade agreements because no trade agreements were made in 2022. **In just two years, fulfilling over half of our recommendations indicates progress has been maintained — amid multiple international crises, domestic policy changes, and the turbulence of midterm elections — with significant room for possibility and improvement.**

As described in our last annual report, the Biden-Harris administration has communicated through executive orders, statements, and speeches that it is the policy of the United States to “establish and pursue a comprehensive approach to ensure that the Federal Government is working to advance equal rights and opportunities, regardless of gender or gender identity, in advancing domestic and foreign policy.”⁷⁰ Most significantly, the administration launched a National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality in late 2021, which initiates a process for each federal agency to identify priority goals and outcomes for the next one to three years, in coordination with the White House Gender Policy



POLICY ARTICULATION SCORE:

36.5 OF 63 RECOMMENDATIONS,
COMPARED TO 31 OF 60 IN 2021

Council. At least one of the agency goals should be achievable within “current authorities and resources;” i.e., without new laws or additional funding.⁷¹

For each goal, agencies have been asked to identify:

- “the gender gaps they aim to close;
- outcome measures;
- budgetary, staff, and other institutional actions needed to achieve targeted objectives.”⁷²

These goals and implementation plans were finalized in the summer of 2022, as intended, but will not be publicly released. The Gender Policy Council will be publicly releasing its annual progress report, which — initially expected in the fall of 2022 — is now months delayed.⁷³

At this midterm point, the Coalition finds several areas of new and continued progress in policy articulation: for instance, on diplomacy, the administration has supported and engaged multilateral institutions, elevated gender equality in bilateral and multilateral meetings, and restored assessments of global reproductive rights and information on maternal mortality in the annual Human Rights Country Reports, most recently released in April 2022. At the U.S.-Africa Leaders’ Summit in December 2022, Vice President Kamala Harris also announced several new commitments, backed by funding, to promote women’s economic participation in Africa. The White House proclaimed, “promoting gender equity and equality is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy in Africa and around

the world.”⁷⁴ On foreign assistance, USAID Administrator Samantha Power has voiced a renewed commitment to localization, amplifying the role of local constituencies in informing development programming.⁷⁵ Administrator Power’s localization approach aims to shift power dynamics, and introduces a “new focus on listening to the voices of marginalized populations, including women, people with disabilities, youth, the LGBTQI+ community, Indigenous populations, displaced persons, and ethnic and religious minorities.”⁷⁶ While promising, the true test of this approach’s inclusiveness and effectiveness will be in its implementation and monitoring.

In 2022, the administration also released two new strategies prioritizing gender equality: the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, which “elevates the human rights of women and girls globally as a U.S. national security, diplomatic, and foreign assistance priority,”⁷⁷ and the U.S. Strategy on Global Women’s Economic Security, which “lays out a vision in which women and girls around the world, in all their diversity, are able to fully, meaningfully, and equally contribute to, and benefit from economic growth and global prosperity.”⁷⁸

The latter focuses on four main priorities relevant to advancing women's economic security: promoting economic competitiveness through well paying, quality jobs, advancing care infrastructure and valuing domestic work, promoting entrepreneurship and digital and financial inclusion, including through trade and investment, and dismantling systemic barriers to women's participation."

Both strategies were launched with high-level events featuring Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, USAID Administrator Samantha Power, and Director of the White House Gender Policy Council Jen Klein — indicating that these new gender equality initiatives are a high priority for the administration.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the development process for both strategies featured widespread civil society consultation; for the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, the administration consulted more than 450 individuals from over 200 organizations around the world, inside and outside of government,⁸⁰ and for the U.S. Strategy on Global Women's Economic Security, the administration consulted over 200 civil society organizations and external stakeholders from more than 30 countries⁸¹ — a practice the Coalition hopes the administration will deepen and sustain.

The administration also made reforms in its rationale and approach for issuing sanctions. The Coalition has been calling on the Biden-Harris administration to, when issuing sanctions, protect the health and dignity of civilian populations. Throughout the fall of 2022, the U.S. government sanctioned Iran's "morality police" and several officials for continuing their crackdown on protestors and limiting internet access following the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman detained by the morality police.⁸² These sanctions targeting individual do not have the same pernicious impact on civilian populations as blanket economic sanctions, and are a direct response to the denial of women's rights. As Secretary of State Anthony Blinken expressed, "We reiterate our condemnation of Iran's brutal acts of violence against peaceful protestors,

ongoing denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and pervasive oppression and state-sponsored violence against women."⁸³ While this represents some progress, the U.S. has a long way to go in reforming its sanctions regime — including in Iran — toward which U.S. blanket sanctions have had detrimental socioeconomic and environmental impacts.⁸⁴

In the area of defense, the Department of Defense (DoD) has made strides in addressing gender equality through its operations. As we reported in our first annual scorecard, President Biden lifted the ban on military service for transgender people. Also, an independent review commission on sexual assault in the military was formed and issued a report outlining concrete actions for improving the way the military handles sexual assault and creates justice mechanisms for survivors of gender-based violence. The Department also reported increased training on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. In the wake of the Supreme Court Dobbs decision, the Department also "issued a memo to the Force, DoD civilians, and military families on ensuring access to essential women's health care services. The memo reiterates that the Department will continue to provide seamless access to reproductive healthcare for military and civilian patients, as permitted by federal law. Military providers will continue to fulfill their duty to care for service members, military dependents and civilian personnel who require pregnancy termination in the cases of rape, incest, or to protect the life of the mother."⁸⁵

On development and humanitarian assistance, USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, circulated for external review in the fall of 2022, includes several provisions to ensure that gender equality issues and outcomes are incorporated into the Agency's work in the design stage and throughout the acquisition or assistance process. For instance, statements of work and program descriptions must reflect findings from a gender analysis; activity design teams are required to report on their gender integration efforts; and implementing partners are encouraged to submit

a Gender Plan of Action, as well as integrate gender into their monitoring plans.

With regards to data, USAID tracks partners' performance on gender equality-related outcomes by requiring the collection of sex-disaggregated data. **Additionally, USAID is undergoing a rulemaking process to mandate the use of Development Information Solution (DIS), the Agency's cohesive portfolio management system, by all contractors.** When this process is complete, DIS will enable USAID to increase reporting of sex-disaggregated data. **Understanding that sex-disaggregation does not capture all gender identities, USAID will explore and adopt disaggregates that better track who is being reached and benefits from programming.** USAID also annually collects data on programs and results as related to racial and ethnic equity, LGBTQI+ communities, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups.⁸⁶

Furthermore, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has continued its efforts to address gender and racial inequities in trade issues. In our last annual scorecard, we reported that USTR joined a World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial declaration on the importance of women's economic empowerment⁸⁷ and another on non-discrimination between men and women in service suppliers, a first in WTO negotiations.⁸⁸ In 2022, USTR commissioned a report from the International Trade Commission (ITC) on the distributional effects of trade — an effort to address the absence of data disaggregated by gender, race, socioeconomic, and disability status in trade policymaking. The report is a significant first for any ITC effort in this area, for the clear distributional effects it found, and for numerous areas it identified where more and better research is needed.⁸⁹ The report marks the first time the ITC — or any U.S. government body — has studied these questions and provided data on structurally excluded groups to policymakers.

The Biden-Harris administration's launch of an Indo-Pacific Economic Forum showed

some movement away from the Trans-Pacific Partnership model and toward a more holistic approach that takes into account labor rights, environment, and gender — explicitly mentioning gender and Indigenous persons, as well as relevant International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions, in its first ministerial statement.⁹⁰ Additionally, negotiations launched with both Kenya and Taiwan included explicit focus on the inclusion of women and marginalized communities in trade, though no negotiating principles for either are yet publicly available. Finally, **after the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was renegotiated to become the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), labor issues were elevated to an enforceable chapter in the agreement that explicitly protects migrant workers and women.** This places labor violations at the same level as other trade-related disputes and subjects governments to sanctions for those violations.⁹¹

On immigration, the administration reversed the Migrant Protection Protocols, which forced asylum seekers to remain in Mexico. This measure required an extensive legal battle that ended in the Supreme Court.⁹² In March 2021, two women migrant workers filed the first complaint against the U.S. government under the USMCA, arguing that the U.S. government is facilitating employers' discriminatory and illegal hiring practices of migrant workers by failing to enforce anti-discrimination laws. In response, the Department of Labor held a listening session with migrant workers. However, the U.S. government has yet to publicly acknowledge the petition or take remedial action to prevent and address widespread sex-based discrimination against migrant women.⁹³

Per our recommendations, there remain several areas in which the Biden-Harris administration lacks progress on policy articulation. For instance, on defense, while the National Security Strategy does pledge to invest in women and girls and acknowledges marginalized communities, it makes little effort to systematically address gender equality as a core element of security.⁹⁴ **Although the National Strategy on Gender**

Equity and Equality is pushing agencies to adopt gender analysis in their operations and planning, there is still no gender analysis mandate in defense or diplomatic program design or implementation. The Coalition has also been calling on the U.S. to further articulate goals and “redlines” for what is acceptable in multilateral negotiations, as well as minimum standards and templates for gender language and inclusiveness. This should include declarations and decisions on human rights, climate, conflict, and other multilateral agreements. The Coalition has also been calling on the State Department, Department of Defense, and other relevant agencies to retool internal policies to ensure provision of childcare and spousal support that does not assume a female “trailing” spouse, as well as a total redesign of promotion and retention policies to be predicated on the successful implementation of gender equitable work.

Additionally, the Coalition has been urging government agencies to use procurement and contracting to mandate gender analysis, transparent reporting on gender equality metrics, and vetting for effects on women and other historically marginalized groups. While USAID is taking some steps in this regard to mandate all contractors adhere to its Development

Information Solution system, and the State Department’s Equity Action Plan identifies procurement, contracts, and grants as a key priority,⁹⁵ the Biden-Harris administration can go much further in ensuring all contractors promote the government’s commitment to gender equality.

A feminist foreign policy must prioritize transparency, equity, inclusion, and co-creation with the communities it is meant to benefit. Mechanisms to incorporate and integrate these inputs must be developed in agency implementation plans. However, since these plans will not be publicly released, it will be difficult to assess their strength in this regard. **The Coalition therefore calls for the public release of all agency implementation plans alongside the Gender Policy Council’s own annual report.** While the administration has undoubtedly progressed in the past two years, several of the Coalition’s cross-cutting and thematic recommendations on policy articulation — as laid out in the scoring criteria — remain unaddressed. In the remaining two years of the Biden-Harris administration’s first term, the Coalition urges an acceleration of these efforts, and government-wide support for feminist foreign policy-related principles.

SPECIAL FEATURE ON CARE

Women and girls shoulder the bulk of care responsibilities within households and in society, which limits their educational opportunities, ability to engage in paid work, and advancement in jobs and civic life. The COVID-19 pandemic helped to bring the “care crisis” to the fore of public discussion and media coverage. Households around the world struggled with the challenges of caring for loved ones while external care support shut down: childcare, schools, in-home care services, elder care, and others.⁹⁶ The pandemic increased care and domestic responsibilities, which disproportionately fell upon women.

According to the Center for Global Development, “Women spent three times more time than men providing additional unpaid childcare [in 2020] — and in turn lost an estimated \$800 billion in income. The gender gap in childcare provision has been even wider in low- and middle-income countries.”⁹⁷

In the U.S., a variety of policy measures were instituted to assist. Most notably, an expanded Child Tax Credit — though now expired — helped reduce the financial burden for families during the pandemic and, in fact, had a strong positive effect of drawing large numbers of children out of poverty.⁹⁸ The Biden-Harris administration also helped launch a new Childcare Incentive Fund at a White House event in April 2022 with Dr. Jill Biden.⁹⁹ USAID will contribute \$50 million to the Fund, hosted at the World Bank. The Childcare Incentive Fund is meant to catalyze funding to support childcare in low- and middle-income countries, providing returns and supporting families, businesses, and economies.¹⁰⁰ “Advancing care infrastructure and valuing domestic work” is also a key pillar of the new U.S. Strategy on Global Women’s Economic Security.¹⁰¹

USAID also contributes to childcare provision through CATALYZE EduFinance, a five-year program to mobilize private capital to address funding gaps for education. USAID funding leverages private capital to increase access to quality education and to improve and sustain learning outcomes of disadvantaged children and youth in multiple countries.¹⁰² Furthermore, the U.S. has formally joined the Global Alliance for Care, a global, multi-stakeholder initiative to transform the care economy for the economic empowerment of women and girls — and an outgrowth of the Generation Equality Forum.¹⁰³

For the Biden-Harris administration, the agenda going forward on international care issues could include encouraging other aid donors to contribute to the Childcare Incentive Fund — as the U.S. championed during the 2022 G7 — and to broaden the care economy approach beyond childcare. In addition, a promising area for focus is to improve immigration pathways for care workers, who are disproportionately women migrants.

LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURES

As we pointed out in our first annual assessment, “changing systems requires the right structures and personnel” — a key element of adopting and advancing a feminist foreign policy.¹⁰⁴

By our tabulation, the administration has implemented 10 of 14 recommendations in this section. This is roughly on par with our first annual assessment, in which the administration met 7.5 of 13 recommendations. In 2021, the Coalition evaluated progress against 13 possible recommendations, as we felt it was not realistic to achieve all 14 in one year; at this midterm point, we have evaluated all 14. Most progress in this area was concentrated in the administration’s first year, but few additional and significant steps have been taken in 2022.

Importantly, the White House Gender Policy Council has, in line with our recommendations, elevated gender equality and women’s rights as a key government priority. **Jen Klein, Director of the Gender Policy Council, has been promoted to the level of Assistant to the President — now satisfying the Coalition’s recommendation that this position report directly to the President, signifying an important level of seniority.** The administration has nominated the most diverse cabinet in history, and has followed through with a series of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives as laid out in the earlier section. Importantly, U.S. leadership, with regard to gender equality, has been represented by naming new envoys and leaders to promote these goals — including a Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons and a Special Envoy for Global Youth Issues. The U.S. has sent high-level delegations to key global convenings; in 2021, Vice President Kamala Harris represented the U.S. at the Generation Equality Forum and the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women.

The administration has also moved to fill positions of importance for a feminist foreign policy, including appointing a Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights, and

nominating Geeta Rao Gupta as Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues.¹⁰⁵ Several feminist foreign policy champions have been named to meaningful roles, including as Director of the White House Gender Policy Council, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, the Assistant Secretary for Global Affairs at Health and Human Services, and the Chief of Staff to the U.S. Trade Representative, among others.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, the **State Department has appointed a Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice**, as well as a new Ambassador-level Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer who reports to the Secretary of State and directs efforts within each bureau.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, USAID Administrator Samantha Power issued a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy on her first day in office.

The USAID Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, an important position for elevating gender equality in U.S. development policy, is no longer “triple-hatted,” as we had reported in our first annual scorecard. Initially, the position was simultaneously carrying out several roles and responsibilities, but now is able to focus more completely on its mandate. **The Senior Coordinator was also reinstated in the USAID Administrator’s office as a direct report, an important improvement affirming the seniority of the position.**

A key concept for feminist foreign policy is co-creation, and the substantive continuing involvement of diverse stakeholders, including feminist civil society, impacted communities, and non-traditional participants in foreign policy processes. In 2022, the Secretary of State made an important stride toward a model of co-creation, appointing a number of feminist advocates, academics, and civil society representatives to an International Security Advisory Board (ISAB) to advise him on various issues. Members of the ISAB, which is governed by Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)

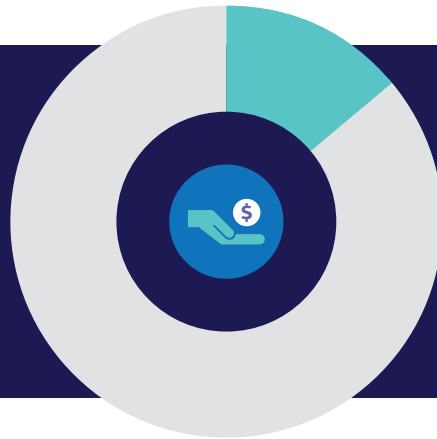


guidelines, were issued security clearances to ensure their ability to engage substantively and with precision on matters of concern.¹⁰⁸ This is a compelling model that could be explored by the White House and other implementing agencies.

While acknowledging this progress, the Coalition also notes significant room for improvement. Despite the prominent establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council, its staffing and resources remain critically thin. Per the President's orders, the Gender Policy Council was meant to have two co-directors, but has been operating with one for most of its existence. The Coalition has also been calling on the Biden-Harris administration to establish a civil society

advisory council for the White House Gender Policy Council with a clear co-creation mandate and mechanisms for accountability, two-way communication, and ongoing feedback loops.

For the remainder of this term, the Coalition urges the Biden-Harris administration to celebrate progress by making more; we call for an acceleration of efforts in feminist leadership — across key foreign policy levers, including defense and national security — enhanced co-creation models, elevating an intersectional approach to gender equality throughout all existing structures, and direct and sustainable engagement with those communities most impacted by foreign policy decision-making.



FUNDING SCORE:
3 OF 12 RECOMMENDATIONS,
COMPARED TO 1.5 OF 11 IN 2021

FUNDING

The Biden-Harris administration considerably increased investment in gender equality in its second year in office. To date, the administration has met 3 of 12 of our recommendations, which is a significant improvement from our first annual scorecard, in which 1.5 of 11 recommendations were achieved. In our first annual scorecard, the Coalition marked against 11 possible recommendations, as we felt it was not realistic to achieve all 12 in one year.

On International Women’s Day, March 8, 2022, Biden-Harris administration officials announced that the Fiscal Year 2023 budget will include \$2.6 billion for foreign assistance programs that promote gender equality around the world.¹⁰⁹ This is a historically high level of funding, and would represent significant new resources. It also bears noting that the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality commits to developing a means of gender budgeting across the whole of government. It further notes, “OMB [the Office of Management and Budget] and the Gender Policy Council will work together to ensure that agencies’ budgets reflect the policies, activities, and investments outlined in this strategy.”¹¹⁰

Furthermore, USAID Administrator Samantha Power has prioritized a localization agenda and pledged that at least a quarter of all USAID funds will go directly to local partners within the course of the next four years.¹¹¹ In 2022, USAID

announced a \$15 million initiative with the Global Fund for Women to strengthen local, national, and regional actors capable of partnering with USAID on a range of development networks, with a focus on networks of feminist and women-led organizations to build capacity to respond to emerging development priorities.¹¹² This involved a number of changes to standard operating procedures for USAID, and hopefully will provide a successful case study that can be scaled to more meaningful levels of investment.

Despite these efforts, the U.S. has a long way to go in ensuring adequate levels and means of funding for gender equality. The Coalition has called for no less than 20% of U.S. foreign assistance funding to be dedicated to promoting gender equality as a primary goal across various sectors. The \$2.6 billion amount, while still unprecedented, would only represent about 9% of the bilateral foreign assistance request. While it is notable that the U.S. is among the largest gender equality donors by volume, relative to total official development assistance (ODA), it is considered a laggard among OECD aid donors.

The U.S. ranks near the bottom among countries for dedicating such a small share of its foreign assistance to targeted gender equality programs.¹¹³

Furthermore, with agency implementation plans — those mandated by the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality — not released to the public, it is not possible to assess the

administration's progress on gender budgeting. While gender budgeting would presumably entail larger investments in gender equality across all foreign and domestic spending, no progress has been reported. Also, USAID's localization agenda has come with no specific commitment to increased investment in women's rights organizations and feminist movements, nor core support and multi-year funding for these groups.¹¹⁴

Therefore, the Coalition reiterates its call for increased funding for gender equality; particularly, direct support for local women's rights organizations, intersectional gender analysis in all programming, simplified funding mechanisms with streamlined processes, and building staff capacity and expertise, training, and accountability mechanisms.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Based on the Coalition's recommendations, the Biden-Harris administration's performance has decreased with regard to accountability. However, our expectations have grown. In our first annual scorecard, we only measured against three recommendations — which we considered all fulfilled. At this point, we evaluated against all six recommendations, of which the administration achieved 4.

As we reported in our first annual scorecard, Executive Order 14020 establishing the White House Gender Policy Council outlines a process to create a government-wide strategy to advance gender equity and equality that responds to a number of the Coalition's recommendations: these include establishing specific, time-bound objectives, the creation of the strategy itself, an annual report on the implementation

of the strategy, the designation of agency representatives to the Gender Policy Council, and semi-annual agency reporting on strategy implementation.¹¹⁵

A key element of feminist foreign policy is transparency in reporting and implementation. **Agency-specific action plans, which were expected to be finalized in the summer of 2022, will not be publicly released. The Gender Policy Council's own annual report, which was expected to be publicly released in the fall of 2022, is delayed.** The Coalition calls on the Biden-Harris administration to release agency action plans and the annual report, presenting necessary cost estimates, budgets, staffing, associated policies, and other needs — all relevant for ensuring effective accountability.

CONCLUSION

The Biden-Harris administration has demonstrated commitment and made substantial progress toward advancing gender equality at home and abroad. However, in the context of an increasingly crowded field of global players adopting explicitly feminist foreign policies, and in consideration of a domestic setting in which women's rights are increasingly under attack, if this administration wants to reclaim the mantle of U.S. global leadership on these issues, then greater ambition and more progress are urgently needed.

As the administration embarks on the final two years of this term, the Coalition recommends an explicit and intentional elevation of these issues that makes full use of the bully pulpit and all tools at its disposal:

- Announce that the U.S. will join the growing and diverse global cohort of allies advancing feminist foreign policies; short of this, demonstrate support for the effort by taking interim steps such as joining the Feminist Foreign Policy Plus group seeking to advance feminist multilateral cooperation at the United Nations.
- Appoint and increase gender expertise in all relevant foreign policy agencies and institutions, including the Department of Defense, National Security Council, Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Trade Representative, U.S. embassies and missions, and other.
- To support greater transparency and accountability, publicly release agency-specific plans, including costing analysis linked to human and financial resources.
- Confer more authority and resources to the White House Gender Policy Council to elevate these issues within the portfolios of foreign policy leadership, including the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the USAID Administrator, and the Director of National Intelligence.
- Name a civil society advisory council to work with the Gender Policy Council in the development and implementation of its policy and programmatic efforts, modeled after the State Department's International Security Advisory Board. As one of its first efforts, the council should publish a report on the merits and potential risks of U.S. adoption of a feminist foreign policy.
- Increase funding for gender equality focused foreign assistance, and explore innovative ways to localize and channel support to women's rights and feminist organizations and movements, similar to the model of Canada's Equality Fund.¹¹⁶ Ensure all foreign policy funding integrates gender equality. Although the Biden-Harris administration has proposed historically high budgets, the U.S. is still not a leader internationally and has allocated less than half of what the Coalition recommends, and is needed to be a global leader.
- Mandate gender analysis and gender equality goals in federal contracting and procurement policies, thereby conditioning the use of contractors on their ability to demonstrate positive outcomes for women and historically marginalized communities.
- Continue carrying forward the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and do more to ensure that gender equality is at the forefront of the administration's approach to conflict and crisis, which are tragic setbacks for human security, particularly in Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, and Myanmar.

NOTES ON SCORECARD AND METHODS

This midterm review evaluates the Biden-Harris administration's progress against a compilation of recommendations the Coalition has made in "A Feminist Foreign Policy for the United States: A Memo to the Next Administration" and the white paper, "Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States." We do not provide a "letter grade" or percentages as we feel these may confuse and obscure the substantial progress the administration has made, as well as the areas where more effort is needed. In our first annual scorecard, we determined scores based on achievements compared to recommendations made. In some cases, we judged that it would be unrealistic to expect progress on certain recommendations in one year, so did not count those as part of the total calculation. In this midterm review, we include all but one recommendation as part of the calculation. One recommendation was excluded because it referenced trade agreements, which were not issued in 2022; therefore, we chose not to score against this recommendation.



POLICY ARTICULATION: 36.5 of 63 recommendations, compared to 31 of 60 in 2021



LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURES: 10 of 14 recommendations, compared to 7.5 of 13 in 2021



FUNDING: 3 of 12 recommendations, compared to 1.5 of 11 in 2021



ACCOUNTABILITY: 4 of 6 recommendations, compared to 3 of 3 in 2021

TOTAL: 53.5 OF 95 RECOMMENDATIONS, COMPARED TO 43.5 OF 87 IN 2021



POLICY ARTICULATION

DESCRIPTION	MIDTERM SCORE	POSSIBLE SCORE
CROSS-CUTTING		
Executive Order on U.S. Feminist Foreign Policy	1.0	1.0
Include immigration policy as a relevant lever of foreign policy	1.0	1.0
Advance U.S. ratification of the Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other human rights conventions	1.0	1.0
Outline mainstreaming throughout current structures	1.0	1.0
Emphasis on core feminist principles of gender equality; diversity, intersectionality, equity, and representation; peace; diplomacy; bodily autonomy; environmental integrity; and human rights	1.0	1.0
Reverse harmful Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping	1.0	1.0
Develop U.S. Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy	1.0	1.0
Each agency articulates a series of commitments to implement a unified vision for Feminist Foreign Policy	1.0	1.0
Consult and co-create with civil society, including diverse representation of women leaders, feminist organizations and movements outside of government, as well as Indigenous Peoples and representative institutions, including and especially those from low- and middle-income countries, on the development and implementation of the Strategy	1.0	1.0
Mandate gender analysis to be standard practice in program implementation throughout the government, tailored to each agency	0.5	1.0
Declare the intention to execute a U.S. feminist foreign policy (called the U.S. Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy)	0.0	1.0
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	0.5	1.0

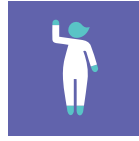
DESCRIPTION	MIDTERM SCORE	POSSIBLE SCORE
Conduct an analysis of environmental impacts and emissions resulting from U.S. foreign policy activities; include that analysis in the U.S. national climate action plans, in line with the Paris Agreement; and report the impact thereof across other Multilateral Environmental Agreements	0.0	1.0
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	0.0	1.0
DEFENSE		
Lift the transgender service member ban	1.0	1.0
Craft a National Security Strategy (NSS) that take into account women's and other people's experiences of systemic discrimination, including due to gender	1.0	1.0
Develop and implement 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	1.0	1.0
Design and deliver 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	1.0	1.0
Provide increased training on the women, peace and security agenda and its integration into military colleges and training	1.0	1.0
Fully implement 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	0.5	1.0
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.	0.5	1.0
Ensure equal opportunity to meet performance standards for female and LGBTQIA+ servicemembers	0.0	1.0
Retool 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	0.0	1.0

DESCRIPTION	MIDTERM SCORE	POSSIBLE SCORE
Ensure comprehensive coverage of and access to sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception and abortion, for people serving in the military	1.0	1.0
Condition 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	0.0	1.0
DIPLOMACY		
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	1.0	1.0
Use diplomatic pressure to insist women and gender-diverse people are part of peace and reconciliation processes	1.0	1.0
Mandate training on gender, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), anti-racism and implicit bias in both early-career and ongoing professional development	1.0	1.0
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	1.0	1.0
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 sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence	1.0	1.0
Engage and support multilateral institutions, including the Human Rights Council, treaty-bodies and regional human rights mechanisms	1.0	1.0
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	0.5	1.0
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	0.0	1.0
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 expost reports	0.0	1.0

DESCRIPTION	MIDTERM SCORE	POSSIBLE SCORE
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	0.0	1.0
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	0.5	1.0
The diplomatic corps should develop and maintain consistent redlines that can be deployed in negotiations surrounding climate and other multilateral agreements	0.0	1.0
Define women's rights and gender equality-related terminology, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and clearly articulate redlines and what is acceptable in multilateral negotiations	0.5	1.0
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	0.0	1.0
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	0.0	1.0
FOREIGN ASSISTANCE		
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	1.0	1.0
Repeal the expanded Mexico City Policy	1.0	1.0
Align project targets to ensure achievement of the gender-related Sustainable Development Goals	0.5	1.0
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE		
Implement best-practices and tools to center women, girls and people of all gender identities in humanitarian responses	1.0	1.0
Ensure requirements and standards for gender analysis and gender-sensitive programming are upheld, even in emergency contexts	1.0	1.0
Demand universal application of safeguarding minimum standards among all humanitarian actors	0.5	1.0

DESCRIPTION	MIDTERM SCORE	POSSIBLE SCORE
Condition 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 work	0.5	1.0
IMMIGRATION		
End family separation and commit to expeditiously reuniting families	1.0	1.0
Rescind the Migration Protection Protocols, which harm families and subject women and transgender people to violence	1.0	1.0
Create formal mechanisms to collect sex-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	0.5	1.0
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	0.5	1.0
Expand child-friendly practices and procedures at all points of the immigration process. End the detention of children, and adopt alternative methods of accountability for families and others who do not pose a risk to national security	0.5	1.0
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	0.0	1.0
Ensure asylum seekers are granted humanitarian parole whenever possible, especially when they are LGBTQIA+ or have acute medical needs	0.5	1.0
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	0.0	1.0
Adopt gender-sensitive approaches to all release and custody decisions with a particular focus on transgender people	0.0	1.0
Ensure that the U.S. asylum system recognizes Indigenous identity and provides appropriate cultural and linguistic services	0.0	1.0

DESCRIPTION	MIDTERM SCORE	POSSIBLE SCORE
TRADE		
Re-engage in the Paris Agreement, which articulates some of these principles in the preamble	1.0	1.0
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.	1.0	1.0
Develop new mechanisms to link gender equality to environmental and labor concerns in trade agreements	0.5	1.0
Incorporate women's human rights and gender equality in bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, specifically in the binding sections	0.0	1.0
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. <i>This recommendation was excluded because no new trade agreements were issued in 2022.</i>	0.0	0.0
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	0.0	1.0
Trade agreements should not enforce measures that privatize government entities or dismantle health, safety and labor protections	0.0	1.0
TOTAL SCORE	36.5	63.0



LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURES

DESCRIPTION	SCORE 2022	POSSIBLE SCORE
CROSS-CUTTING		
Require a senior leadership role responsible for Feminist Foreign Policy coordination, resourcing, and execution	1.0	1.0
Assemble a White House Feminist Policy Council	1.0	1.0
Achieve gender parity in political appointments and diversity and intersectional representation throughout all agencies and ranks of government	1.0	1.0
Full-time, foreign policy personnel at White House Gender Policy Council	1.0	1.0
Send a high-level delegation to United Nations Commission on Status on Women	1.0	1.0
Send a high-level delegation to the June Generation Equality Forum	1.0	1.0
Send a high-level delegation to the Mexico City kickoff of the Generation Equality Forum	0.0	1.0
Each agency would need to appoint its own high-level position focused exclusively on integrating Feminist Foreign Policy within the agency, linked closely with policy planning processes and relevant interagency partners	0.0	1.0
Appoint a Director of the Feminist Policy Council, reporting to the President, to develop and oversee U.S. Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy	1.0	1.0
Launch the White House Feminist Policy Council and civil society advisory council and host the first joint meeting of both	0.5	1.0
Ensure 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	0.5	1.0
DEFENSE		
Create a high-level position, either reporting to the Secretary of Defense or reporting to the National Security Advisor at the National Security Council (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	0.5	1.0

DESCRIPTION	SCORE 2022	POSSIBLE SCORE
DIPLOMACY		
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	1.0	1.0
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE		
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	0.5	1.0
TOTAL SCORE	10.0	14.0



FUNDING

DESCRIPTION	SCORE 2022	POSSIBLE SCORE
CROSS-CUTTING		
Commit to robustly resourcing the U.S. Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy, including through direct support for local women's rights organizations in low- and middle-income countries	0.5	1.0
100 percent of U.S. international programs consider and incorporate intersectional gender analysis in their design, implementation and evaluation (i.e., be "gender mainstreamed")	0.0	1.0
No less than 20 percent of U.S. foreign assistance funding should be dedicated to promoting gender equality as a primary goal across various sectors and appropriations funding mandates	0.0	1.0
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	0.0	1.0
Increase direct support for local women's rights organizations	0.5	1.0
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	0.5	1.0
Factor in operating costs for implementing feminist foreign assistance, including building staff capacity and expertise, training and accountability mechanisms	0.0	1.0
Agency-specific, costed action plans to implement the Strategy, including necessary policy, staffing, training, budget (including additional programmatic funding needed), legislative affairs and communications needs	0.0	1.0
DIPLOMACY		
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	1.0	1.0

DESCRIPTION	SCORE 2022	POSSIBLE SCORE
FOREIGN ASSISTANCE		
Full funding for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights programs	0.5	1.0
IMMIGRATION		
Apply gender lens to the allocation of funds and services in budgetary and appropriations decisions	0.0	1.0
TRADE		
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	0.0	1.0
TOTAL SCORE	3.0	12.0



ACCOUNTABILITY

DESCRIPTION	SCORE 2022	POSSIBLE SCORE
CROSS-CUTTING		
Mandate annual, public reporting on progress regarding the implementation of the U.S. Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy	1.0	1.0
Agency-specific focal points or ombudspople to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy and agency action plans	1.0	1.0
Develop government-wide strategy for advancing a feminist foreign policy that includes a commitment to publicly track progress on implementation and a call for agencies to fund the implementation of such a strategy.	1.0	1.0
Agency-specific, costed action plans to implement the Strategy, including necessary policy, staffing, training, budget (including additional programmatic funding needed), legislative affairs and communications needs	0.5	1.0
Agency-specific gender policies that are derived from the agency action plans and are both internally and externally facing, from personnel decisions to agency programs and interventions	0.5	1.0
Greater transparency around how projects and programs mainstream and prioritize gender equality	0.0	1.0
TOTAL SCORE	4.0	6.0

OVERALL PROGRESS

53.5

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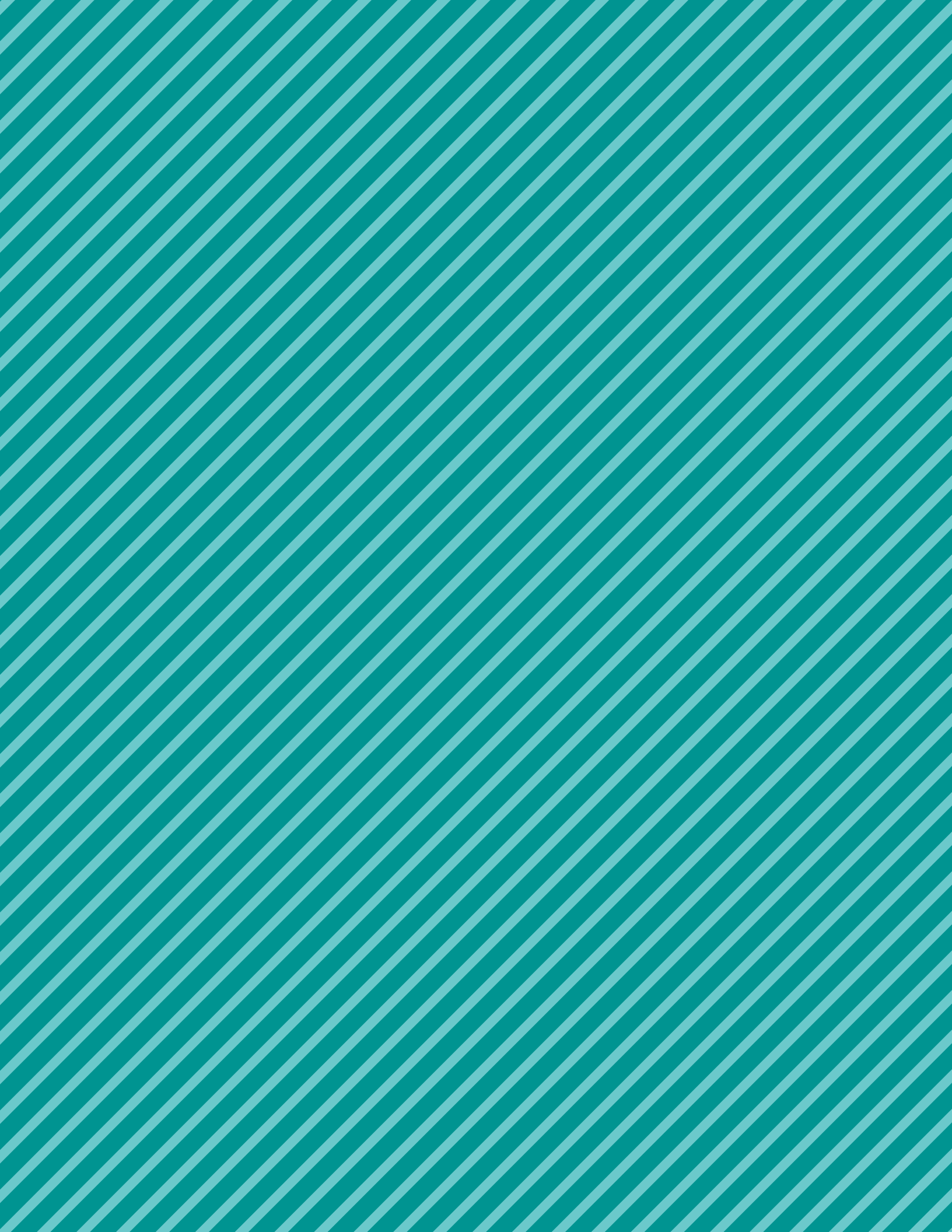
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