

# TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY: A REVIEW FOR BEIJING +25



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UN WOMEN TRAINING CENTRE

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# TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY: A REVIEW FOR BEIJING +25



**UN WOMEN TRAINING CENTRE**

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# INTRODUCTION

Recent research from both practitioners and academics demonstrates the ways in which training can contribute to gender-transformative change at the level of individuals, institutions and societies. The UN Women Training Centre defines training for gender equality as:

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“A transformative process that aims to provide knowledge, techniques and tools to develop skills and changes in attitudes and behaviours. It is a continuous and long-term process that requires political will and commitment of all parties in order to create an inclusive, aware and competent society to promote gender equality.”

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As set out in the *Working Paper Series on Training for Gender Equality*, training for gender equality goes beyond technical understandings which focus on skills acquisition and development. In order to be transformative, training for gender equality should be an explicitly political and contested endeavour, grounded in feminist pedagogical principles and practices and a broader commitment to gender-transformative change. The focus of contemporary debates in the field is how training for gender equality can contribute to such change, and at what levels.

As such, the **purpose of this paper is to trace how training for gender equality has developed from the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) to the current Beijing +25 review in 2020.** In particular, the paper is concerned with the extent to which training for gender equality has been *transformative* rather than merely *transactional*.

**The overall aim of this paper is to help strengthen understanding of training as a strategy to achieve transformative change for gender equality, rather than an instrumental or transactional activity.** This involves reflecting on what has worked well and what challenges remain.

## BOX 1

### Key Findings and Recommendations Beijing +20 Review (UN Women Training Centre, 2015)

#### Findings:

1. Training has been an important tool for increasing gender equality, and has flourished substantively, beyond the original expectations set out in the Platform for Action.
2. The provision of training for gender equality has often involved collaboration between different actors, expanding beyond a focus on the public sector to encompass the private sector, civil society and numerous other key-players.
3. While training for gender equality has developed, evolved and expanded consistently since Beijing, there appears to have been a decline in focus on training and a reversal in its scope in recent years.

#### Findings:

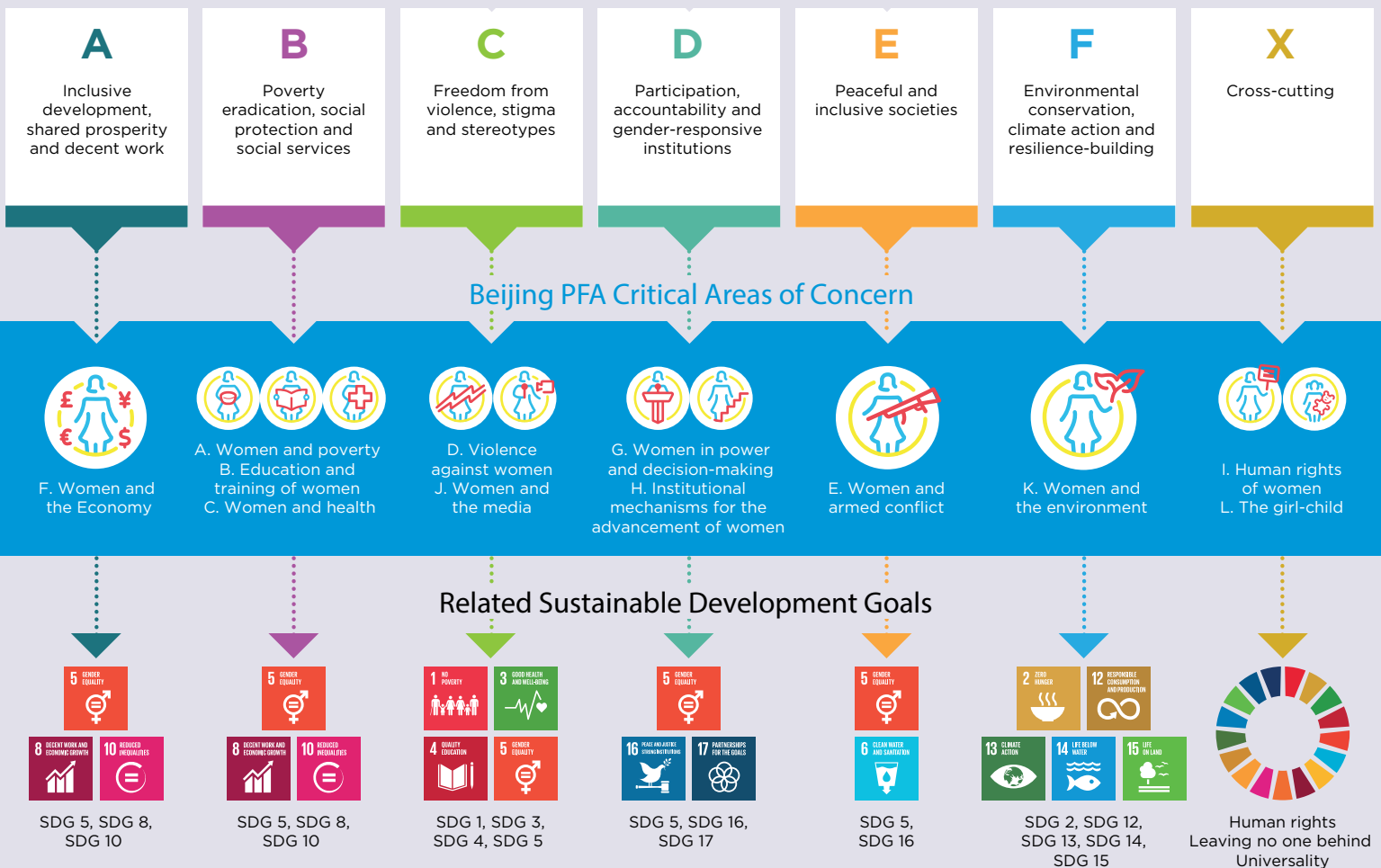
1. Raise awareness of the important role played by training for gender equality in increasing equality between women and men since the Beijing Conference.
2. Continue to develop adequate systems for the monitoring and evaluation of training for gender equality in order to measure outcomes and impact more systematically.
3. Explore the possibilities for expanding training for gender equality in critical areas of concern which have received less attention to date.
4. Promote the value and role of training for gender equality as a tool for transformation in gendered power relations.
5. Encourage collaboration between a range of actors to expand and enhance the provision of training for gender equality while supporting the UN to be a world leader in this field.
6. Work to reverse the trend of a declining focus on training.

In the context of the Beijing+25 review, the paper explores how training for gender equality has evolved from the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 to the present day. Through an analysis of a range of relevant documents including regional reports and the Secretary-General's report (see Annex 1), the review maps out key developments and issues in training for gender equality. It draws on an earlier paper produced by UN Women Training Centre for the Beijing +20 review (see Box 1 for key findings and recommendations). The paper is aimed at gender trainers and specialists but may also be useful for decision-makers and development practitioners working on gender equality.

The report follows the thematic areas of the Beijing +25 review, as shown in Figure 1 below. Each section sets out how training features in the Beijing review processes, with a particular focus on the current +25 review. The paper finishes with key recommendations, to ensure that the analysis is useful for a wide range of actors and stakeholders. It is also accompanied by two infographics: one presenting this report's main findings and messages; and a graphic timeline to represent the content of the matrix on critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and its subsequent reviews.

FIGURE 1:

### Reporting framework for the 25-year review by the Secretary-General



## Training for gender equality in the Beijing Platform for Action

A range of types of training are envisaged in the PFA across its 12 critical areas of concern. In some critical areas, the focus is predominantly on skills training for women – namely poverty, the economy and the environment – without an explicit discussion of the role of training in gender mainstreaming within these spheres. Other areas – particularly education and the girl child – are concerned with training on non-discrimination. In the remaining critical areas, further attention is given to ‘gender-sensitive training’, more closely in line with our focus here on training for gender equality. The need for gender-sensitive training for personnel is highlighted in the areas of health, violence and human rights. In terms of institutional mechanisms, proposed measures include staff training in designing and analysing data from a gender perspective, alongside training and advisory assistance to governments with a view to integrating a gender perspective into their policies and programmes. See Annex 1 for a detailed review of training in the PFA and how this links to the reporting framework for the 25-year review. This is presented using the same groupings as the Beijing +25 reporting structure, in order to promote coherence and comparability with current debates.

The PFA points out that the training service of the UN Office of Human Resources Management should design and conduct regular gender-sensitivity training or include such training in all its activities. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) – whose functions are now part of UN Women – is highlighted as the institution with a mandate to promote research and training on women’s situation and development. International financial institutions are encouraged to increase staff training in gender analysis and the international community is urged to commit sufficient resources to training and information activities for the advancement of women.

**However, as outlined throughout this paper, there is little discussion in the PFA of the rationale and expected impact of these training activities. Nor is there a clear definition of how the impact of training on gender equality will be monitored and evaluated. This omission means that there is no systematic global evaluation of training for gender equality, hence the need for analytical papers to conduct such research.**

## Training for gender equality: Beijing+5 to Beijing+20

Training featured frequently in the Secretary-General’s report for the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action.<sup>1</sup> Key achievements in implementation during this period were that a number of countries had introduced awareness raising and gender awareness training in an effort to change institutional culture in agencies and departments. In particular, efforts to sensitize the police and the judiciary to gender equality concerns, such as violence against women, were implemented. Training on domestic violence was conducted for health professionals, law enforcement personnel and other officials, including embassy and consular staff involved in immigration issues. In the

section on conclusions and further actions, there was a call to expand gender training.

Training was also discussed in some of the critical areas of concern, as outlined in Figure 2. In addition to the Secretary-General’s report, document S-23/3 – *further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* – outlined additional points on the role of training in gender mainstreaming for a range of actors. National governments were urged to develop a gender-sensitive curriculum from kindergarten to elementary schools, vocational training and universities to address gender stereotyping as one of the root causes of segregation in working life. Further actions to

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these topics, please see [Training for Gender Equality: Twenty Years On](#).



be taken at the national level by governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors include: providing gender-sensitive training to all actors, including police, prosecutors and the judiciary, in dealing with victims of violence, particularly women and girls, including sexual violence; taking further measures to redesign health information, services and training for health workers in order to make them gender-sensitive; and strengthening gender-awareness campaigns and gender equality training among women and men, girls and boys to eliminate the persistence of harmful stereotypes.

At the international level, proposed actions for the United Nations system and international and regional organizations included: ensuring that all UN personnel and officials at Headquarters and in the field, especially in field operations, receive training to mainstream a gender perspective in their work, including gender impact analysis, as well as ensuring appropriate follow-up to such training; providing gender-sensitive training to all actors in peacekeeping missions in dealing with victims of violence, particularly women and girls, including sexual violence; and encouraging and implementing curriculum changes in training for public officials to make them fully gender-sensitive. **In summary, in the five years since the Beijing conference there was a strong focus on transformational gender training. The focus was very much on gender-sensitive training and gender mainstreaming, in line with the transformative and holistic approach of the PFA.**

Five years later, the Secretary-General's report on the ten-year review of the Beijing PFA (Beijing +10) underscored progress made in resource allocations for training, as well as a wide variety of training activities for government institutions, civil society, women's organizations and individual women. Its section on institutional arrangements and mechanisms for the advancement of women notes that governments were urged to promote gender training for both women and men in government ministries. Several states instigated training on gender-sensitive budgeting and responses from countries in all regions included information on capacity building workshops

and training programmes. As well as the critical areas of concern, training was also discussed in relation to two emerging issues in the +10 report which were not explicitly addressed in the PFA – trafficking in women and girls and HIV/AIDS. The lack of gender sensitivity among professionals working on trafficking issues was identified as a key challenge in this area.

Training also featured in two specific action points of ECOSOC Resolution 49/4: *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all national policies and programmes.*<sup>2</sup> The first concerned developing and using frameworks, guidelines and other practical tools and indicators to accelerate gender mainstreaming, including gender-based research, analytical tools and methodologies, training, case studies, statistics and information, in planning and evaluating all policies and programmes. The second was to support the provision of training on gender mainstreaming and promote awareness, information campaigns and capacity building, including gender training, to governmental bodies at all levels, the public sector and the judiciary, so as to ensure understanding of their roles and responsibilities, as well as to facilitate implementation. **In summary, by 2005 training was being used widely as a tool for gender-transformative change through gender mainstreaming. Specific budgets were allocated and institutional mechanisms were strengthened. However, as noted below, 2005 represented the peak of this transformative approach to gender training.**

Training also featured strongly in the reports and analysis of the fifteen-year review, Beijing +15. The Secretary-General's report concluded that many national machineries expanded their capacity development and training functions for all members of government; that the availability of gender mainstreaming tools – including guidelines, checklists, manuals, and guidance for conducting gender impact assessments – increased; and that specialized training, workshops and seminars were provided for staff in different ministries and government agencies, including for senior managers. The +15 report outlined a number of remaining issues, with respect to which training is mentioned twice: in relation to violence

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2 <https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2008/resolution%202008-34.pdf>

against women and the training of journalists and other media professionals. Training also features in the final report of Beijing +15 and is a key action point for HIV/AIDS, as well as girls' and women's human rights. **In summary, fifteen years on from Beijing, training was still a key component of gender equality actions worldwide. Moreover, this was still within a gender mainstreaming framework, with the overarching goal of transforming individuals, institutions and societies.**

Twenty years on from Beijing, training was not discussed in the Secretary-General's report beyond the analysis of the PFA's critical areas of concern, with the most detailed reflection relating to institutional mechanisms. The report noted that while some countries had developed training to strengthen staff skills in gender analysis, the +20 report – as in previous years – underlined remaining challenges, in particular staff capacity in national gender equality machineries due to a lack of training and investment. It emphasized strongly that much more needed to be done in this area, highlighting specifically the need for greater knowledge and capacity in gender responsive budgeting, especially in the context of shrinking budgets. The report noted the creation of UN Women in 2010 and the UN SWAP process from 2012, which states that UN bodies must provide *“on-going mandatory training for all levels of staff at HQ, regional and country offices.”* UN Women Training Centre's open access online course “I Know Gender” was launched in 2014 and is available to all UN personnel and the general public. **In summary, twenty years on from Beijing, concerns were being raised about the institutional mechanisms in place to provide gender-transformative training. The context had shifted from transformative approaches within the context of gender mainstreaming to more transactional and instrumental approaches to training within the critical areas of concern. Moreover, it should be noted that training was mentioned fewer than half as many times as in the five-year review.**

## BOX 2

### Training recommendations from the Beijing+25 regional review reports

**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA):** Invest in STEM education and training for women and girls to provide foundational skills necessary for utilizing digital technologies, contributing to digital innovations, as well as navigating contemporary labour market requirements.

**United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP):** 41 per cent of the countries noted a lack of capacity among individuals and entities responsible for implementing gender equality policies, plans and programmes. Finance and budgetary limitations are also cited as roadblocks to ensuring sustained investments in gender equality. For effective gender mainstreaming, training and technical support are seen as critical.

**United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA):** Enact legislation to protect women and girls by taking preventive measures against all forms of violence; provide specialized training for workers in this field, and ensure that all women and girls who suffer from violence have access to protection and long-term care to ensure their recovery and integration into society.

**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE):** No clear recommendation.

**United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):** No clear recommendation.

## Twenty-five years later: Training in Beijing +25

Training is an even less strong feature of the twenty five-year Beijing review process (Beijing +25), as reflected in the Secretary-General's report. As set out in Annex 3, the reporting process for this review period differs from previous exercises, grouped into seven clusters instead of the 12 critical areas of concern. The following analysis is organized along these clusters to ensure coherence with the overall review process. In the recommended actions, training features in the discussion of poverty eradication, social protection and social services, with a specific recommendation to ensure that technical and vocational education and training programmes transform gender stereotypes by supporting women's participation in non-traditional fields and addressing barriers faced by them in the labour market.

**In contrast to earlier review periods, there is little discussion of the transformative role of gender training. Rather, the approach is more transactional and instrumental – i.e. training as a tool for achieving other goals, rather than as a key aspect of**

**gender-transformative change. Nevertheless, there is acknowledgment of the importance of gender-responsive training across the majority of the critical areas of concern and thematic issues.** The detailed analysis below draws on the Secretary-General's report, as well as all regional reports prepared for the twenty five-year review. For the sake of coherence, the analysis is presented in the same format as the other documents from this review period for the sake of coherence, as set out in Figure 2. As set out in Box 2, training features in the overarching recommendations for some regions.

### 1. Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

In the twenty five-year review there is a strong focus on attracting women to work in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) occupations. **African** governments have focused on providing business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women. Persistent occupational segregation in **Europe** has been addressed primarily by initiatives to eradicate educational segregation, particularly the greater inclusion of women and girls in STEM. Numerous countries provided skills training to women among other efforts to foster their employment. The regional report for **Latin American and the Caribbean** prepared by ECLAC notes that the absence or weakness of vocational training mechanisms that take account of the unequal distribution of unpaid work, among other manifestations of inequality, is one of the specific difficulties women face when it comes to increasing their participation in employment. In response, a number of gender-sensitive vocational training

initiatives have been formulated across the region. Most **Arab states** have taken measures to increase girls' access to technical and vocational education, and training and skills development programmes, which benefit girls to varying degrees across Arab countries. In the last five years, most Arab countries have witnessed efforts to enhance skills and expand training in new and emerging fields, especially in STEM.

A number of countries reported facilitating access to training and employment opportunities for women with disabilities, using targeted and universal measures, in response to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is in line with the "leave no one behind" approach of Agenda 2030.

**In summary, a transactional or instrumental approach to training can be identified for this thematic area. Strategies to increase the presence of women in technology are often focused on mentoring or**

Training support personnel to provide advice, information and an immediate response to complaints of violence against women

Training and protocols to support health care in the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls

Training for support service providers, medical professionals and law enforcement officers to tackle institutional discrimination for people from LGBTI communities

Formal and technical vocational education and training in the media and information and communications technology, including in the areas of management and leadership

Training to build a gender dimension into land initiatives and encourage and help women to implement sustainable land practices

Training for the police and security forces in order to prevent violence against women in elections

"Judicial and police training to introduce or strengthen measures to increase women's access to justice"

"Training on gender equality and gender-based violence for military and diplomatic staff, and those deployed on overseas missions"

"Gender-sensitive training for health care providers, including for those responding to the health needs of victims of gender-based violence, and those responsible for ensuring quality maternal and neo-natal care"

"Training for media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls"

"Gender equality and human rights training for teachers and educators"



## HOW IS TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY DESCRIBED IN THE BEIJING+25 REVIEW PROCESS?

"Training on violence against women for the judiciary and law enforcement officers"

"Unconscious bias training"

"Training activities aimed at fostering a working environment free of harassment and discrimination"

"Prevention training for teachers and educators"

"Capacity building and gender training for law enforcement personnel"

"Training women in remote and rural areas on waste management, composting and recycling"

"Training on violence against women for government bodies and service providers"

"Training on disaster risk management and climate change with a gender perspective for government departments and community leaders"

"Digital empowerment programmes and training"

"Gender-sensitive vocational training"

"Gender-responsiveness training for health service providers"

**unconscious bias training, putting the onus on individuals (i.e. women) to change, rather than shifting workplace cultures that exclude women. This can be seen as a missed opportunity to deploy**

**training for gender equality to transform STEM education and workplaces. This needs to be developed more substantively as a matter of urgency, given the increasing profile of this topic.**

## 2. Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

Between 2015 and 2019, 60 per cent of states reported measures to promote safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments. These included the provision of teaching materials and prevention training for teachers and educators. In addition, two thirds of states reported measures to improve gender equality and human rights training among teachers and educators. Key actions included eliminating stereotypical representations of gender roles in school textbooks, programmes and curricula and delivering education focused on human rights, gender equality and comprehensive sexuality education. In addition, some countries focused more on diversity and inclusion. This trend towards a diversity and inclusion approach as opposed to only gender equality can be noted as part of a broader worldwide trend.

As above, many countries conducted initiatives to remedy the underrepresentation of girls and women in STEM learning. In **Europe**, 72 per cent of countries reported measures in that area, compared with East and South-East Asia (33 per cent) and Central and South Asia (40 per cent). Specific measures include digital empowerment programmes and training in partnership with industrial companies and the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, initiatives to combat stereotypes and increase women's interest in and access to STEM-related training and education.

Measures to improve girls' access to technical and vocational training are widely reported, including some examples of efforts had been made to encourage women to enter non-traditional sectors through such training. However, in many cases, such programmes continue to perpetuate gender stereotypes, by channelling female students into fields such as food and nutrition, cosmetology and sewing. In many countries, limited literacy and basic skills among adult women, particularly those in rural areas, mean that

they cannot take full advantage of adult education and lifelong learning opportunities. Moreover, the need for adult education is also often overlooked in humanitarian settings and the opportunity to build up skills for resilience and support women's economic empowerment is thus missed.

In **Asia**, 22 countries took measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, including technical and vocational education and training and skills development. Moreover, 17 countries increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In **Africa**, the PFA's strategic objective to improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology is gaining prominence. **Latin American** countries also focused on combatting gender stereotypes and discrimination against girls and women in the science and technology sectors. A new trend can be identified in Latin American and the Caribbean, where several countries have developed training activities aimed at fostering a working environment free of harassment and discrimination. This is in line with the 2019 ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (No. 190).

In terms of women and health, as in previous review processes, nearly half of all countries (49 per cent) reported that they had provided gender-responsiveness training for health service providers, with a specific focus on training and protocols to support health care in the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls. A number of European countries initiated gender-sensitive training for health care providers, including for those responding to the health needs of survivors of gender-based violence, and those responsible for ensuring quality maternal and neo-natal care.

In summary, there is again a substantive focus on gender-sensitive training to encourage women into STEM education and training, in line with technological changes at the global level. As argued above, this is problematic from a transformative perspective, as the focus is on a transactional and instrumental approach to gender training. Moreover, there is little discussion of the relationship between training and

formal education, or the impact of technology on the potential for transformational gender training, for example through the expansion of online training for gender equality. Nevertheless, some gender-transformative training can be identified, such as the work of some Latin American and Caribbean countries on transforming working environments.

### 3. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

States have taken a number of initiatives to implement and enforce laws to improve women's access to justice, including training on violence against women for the judiciary and law enforcement officers. Overall, 87 per cent of states reported that they have introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence, including through training on violence against women for government bodies and service providers. In line with the examples from Latin America above, some countries have begun to frame violence against women, including domestic violence, as a labour rights issue. Training has also been developed as part of tackling institutional discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people who have experienced violence. In terms of the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and gender bias in the media, the Secretary-General's report notes that this area has not been prioritized to the same extent as other aspects of the Platform for Action. Some 49 per cent of states have provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls. Efforts to engage the media to address stereotypical representations and report responsibly on violence against women have been focused on training for journalists. However, as the report notes, more needs to be done to standardize media practices and establishing

regulatory mechanisms to ensure consistency and accountability.

Several **European** countries have addressed gender stereotypes in the media by providing media trainings, legislative reform, fostering voluntary codes of conduct, and developing guidelines and regulations by national media authorities. In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, almost all countries in the region have established services for direct assistance to women survivors of violence, including services associated with security systems and hotlines for emergency calls and immediate counselling. These services have trained personnel to provide advice, information and an immediate response to complaints of violence against women. In a number of **Arab** countries, progress is being made in introducing or strengthening measures to increase women's access to justice through judicial and police training.

**In summary, training features strongly in activities aimed at freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes. A focus on gender stereotypes in the media and judicial systems are helpful when part of longer-term gender-transformative strategies. However, more detailed research would be required in order to assess to what extent such trainings have been transformational.**

### 4. Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Two-thirds of countries reported that they have implemented capacity building and skills development to support women's political participation at the local

and national levels in the past five years. Some 45 per cent reported initiatives to enhance opportunities for mentorship, leadership training and political



campaigning, which are often government-led or supported by civil society organizations. A total of 41 per cent of states reported that they have prioritized the participation of minority and young women through awareness raising and mentorship programmes. However, the Secretary-General's report highlights that additional capacity building and awareness raising are required in this thematic area. A number of countries have included training for the police and security forces in order to prevent violence against women in elections.

In **Asia**, 22 countries have implemented capacity building and skills development initiatives; and 20 countries have provided opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion and political campaigning. While quotas have helped to increase women's parliamentary representation in the region, the same study shows that quotas need to be complemented with sustained mentoring, training and skills development for women parliamentarians. To increase the participation of women in the media, 11 Asian and Pacific countries strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training in the media and information and communications technology, including in the areas of management and leadership.

## 5. Peaceful and inclusive societies

Some 59 per cent of countries reported that they have promoted or supported women's participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements. That figure increases to 75 per cent of the countries affected by conflict and crisis. Initiatives have included training and capacity building, the development of guidance tools and the provision of networking opportunities. Training has featured significantly in post-conflict and post-crisis recovery policies for gender equality and inclusive societies, including capacity building and gender training for law enforcement personnel are thus essential.

In **Europe**, many countries have provided training on gender equality and gender-based violence to military and diplomatic staff, and to those deploying

It is important to note that the revised format for presenting progress on implementing the PFA means that not all critical areas of concern need to be reported. As such, there is very little focus on institutional mechanisms for gender equality (Area H) in the +25 review process. As noted in the UNECE report, although most **European** countries have gender equality policies in place, not all of them were effectively costed and budgeted. Gender mainstreaming across all policy sectors is largely lacking in the region, particularly in the economic, financial and environmental spheres; and in some parts, no gender mainstreaming has taken place. In some countries, gender equality initiatives have been limited to short-term projects reliant on donor support, without state budgetary contribution.

**In summary, the critical area of concern most closely linked with transformative training for gender equality – institutional mechanisms – has been largely neglected and/or marginalized in this review period. This is concerning, considering the well-established requirement for strong institutions and procedures for implementing gender-transformative change. In addition, approaches to training in women's leadership and political participation continued to be predominantly targeted at women, rather than at transforming gender structures and behaviours.**

on overseas missions. In conflict-affected countries and in the EU, consistent support has been offered to build the capacity and support the inclusion of women mediators in active negotiations. A number of **Latin American** countries reported the use of training in measures to combat trafficking in persons.

**In summary, training has been substantively linked to gender equality strategies in post-conflict and post-crisis societies. Gender equality training has also been provided for military and diplomatic staff. This broadly reflects a transformative approach, due to the links to broader change processes.**

## 6. Environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building

The participation of women in climate-related decision-making processes and intergovernmental climate negotiations at the global level has increased in recent years but remains far from parity. Between 2013 and 2019, their level of participation as delegates to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change rose from 29 per cent to 38 per cent, partly as a result of the implementation of the Framework's gender action plan through awareness raising, training and capacity building activities (FCCC/CP/2019/9). Some states are supporting diversified climate-resilient livelihoods through community-based natural resource management. This includes training to build a gender dimension into land initiatives and encourage and help women to implement sustainable land practices. States are also promoting equal employment in the green economy as a means of building resilience, including training women in remote and rural areas

on waste management, composting and recycling. In addition, training has been provided on disaster risk management and climate change with a gender perspective for government departments and community leaders.

**In summary, this is an emerging area for training for gender equality. To date, the majority of such training appears to have adopted a transactional and instrumental approach which aims to harness women's contribution to environmental action. However, there is some evidence of an emerging gender equality approach to climate change training. Given the importance of this thematic area, it is vital that gender-transformative training is developed in a systematic manner for tackling environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building.**

## 7. Cross-cutting themes

Training is not discussed in relation to the human rights of women or the girl child in the Secretary-General's report for Beijing +25. The only regional report which mentions these issues is UNECA. Across all African subregions, most governments have taken specific actions in favour of the fundamental rights of women and girls, especially in terms of providing them with quality education, training and lifelong learning.

The promotion of STEM education and training for girls is a growing trend and has been incentivized in many African countries.

**In summary, it is not possible to identify a gender-transformative approach to training in relation to human rights or the girl child. This is concerning, especially given ongoing violations of women's and girl's human rights worldwide.**

## Recommendations

The recommendations are developed in two sections, in line with the Secretary-General's Report of the

25-year review – by thematic area and by cross-cutting priorities for action.

### Recommendations by thematic area

#### 1. Inclusive development, decent work and well-being:

1A. Ensure that skills training and vocational training challenge gender stereotypes and

integrate a gender perspective in order to overcome inequalities in the labour market.



- 1B. Develop transformative gender training that challenges the stereotypes and structural gender bias inherent in STEM education and workplaces.
- 1C. Integrate intersectional approaches more substantively into training for gender equality.
- 2. Poverty eradication, social protection and social services:**
- 2A. Integrate a gender perspective into training for public service workers in social protection and social services.
- 2B. Develop the potential for technological innovations to contribute to transformative change for gender equality – for example through online training which follows feminist pedagogical principles and practices.
- 2C. Ensure that a “leave no one behind approach” does not marginalize specific gender equality measures in education and training.
- 3. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes:**
- 3A. Develop and implement gender-transformative training in justice systems and the media in order to challenge entrenched norms of male dominance and foster norms of respect, non-discrimination and equality.
- 3B. Build on emerging practices for implementing the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, ensuring that such training is developed for decision-makers and the private sector, and is not merely targeted at women workers or labour union members.
- 4. Participation, gender-responsive institutions and accountability:**
- 4A. Expand current training provision beyond leadership training for women to include gender-transformative approaches to participation and accountability.
- 4B. Require all countries to report on institutional mechanisms for gender equality, thus maintaining pressure to ensure that adequate measures and resources are in place to fund and implement the required gender training to support gender mainstreaming processes.
- 4C. Ensure that gender training as part of gender mainstreaming processes is political, reflexive and transformative, not merely focused on skills development and knowledge acquisition.
- 4D. Establish a system for documenting and evaluating training for gender equality and measuring its impact across countries, following the principles of gender-transformative evaluation.
- 4E. Ensure that gender equality training is targeted at all levels of society – including those with the most power and influence – in order to demand accountability and secure political will for gender transformative change.
- 5. Peaceful and inclusive societies:**
- 5A. Continue to train women as mediators, as well as working to use training to address the root causes of conflict, violence and instability, including global inequality, and structural drivers of conflict.
- 5B. Link training to gender equality strategies in post-conflict and post-crisis societies.
- 6. Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation:**
- 6A. Avoid an instrumental approach which focuses solely on harnessing women’s contribution to environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building.
- 6B. In line with the Gender Action Plan of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ensure that climate change training is gender-transformative.
- 7. Cross-cutting themes:**
- 7A. Link human rights and gender-transformative training more systematically.
- 7B. Develop a programme of gender-transformative training for girls which goes beyond an instrumental focus on their participation in STEM careers.

## Recommendations by 25-year review cross-cutting priorities for action

### 1. Remove discriminatory laws and prioritize gender-responsive institutional frameworks.

- Ensure that national gender equality mechanisms and national human rights institutions are adequately funded and receive the political support and recognition they need to fulfil their mandates, in order to provide gender training as a necessary component of gender-transformative change.
- Break silos and build gender-responsive and integrated approaches to implementation based on human rights standards and principles. Develop a comprehensive approach to gender training to ensure that gender equality and human rights are integrated across all sectors.
- Reach the most marginalized groups of women and girls and ensure no one is left behind. Ensure that gender training addresses intersectionality.

### 2. Match commitments to gender equality with adequate financing.

- Work with a range of partners to secure adequate financing for gender equality training, including the private sector.

### 3. Accelerate women's participation in decision-making and create enabling environments for women's rights organizations.

- Provide resources and funding to allow training for women's rights organizations, in order to support their role in advocacy and transformative change.

### 4. Transform social norms to create cultures of non-violence, respect and equality.

- Utilize the transformative potential of gender training to address discriminatory social norms and gender and cultural stereotypes

### 5. Harness the potential of technology to advance gender equality.

- Continue to develop innovative methodologies for online learning, in order to reach the widest audience as possible in an effective manner.

### 6. Close data and evidence gaps to monitor progress effectively.

- Systematically collect and analyse data on gender training in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach and its role in gender-transformative change.

**In conclusion, training should be acknowledged as a key component of gender-transformative change. Training can be a transformative process in its own right, when embedded within broader change programmes. A decline in gender-transformative approaches to training can be identified since 2005, in favour of more transactional and instrumental approaches. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency in order to reclaim the transformative potential of training to contribute to gender equality across all of the Beijing PFA's 12 critical areas of concern, as well as a broader gender mainstreaming project.**

# ANNEX 1: ALIGNMENT OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION'S CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AS SET OUT IN THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE 25-YEAR REVIEW OF THE PFA

Reporting framework for the 25-year review by the Secretary-General

A. Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

PFA Critical Areas of Concern

F. Women and the Economy

Related Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 10

Training in the PFA

F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

As with women and poverty, this area focuses primarily on skills and vocational training for women in order to improve their position in economic structures. However, little attention is paid to training for policy-makers and officials on how to address gender inequalities in economies and labour markets, an issue discussed in more detail in this paper.

Reporting framework for the 25-year review by the Secretary-General

B. Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

PFA Critical Areas of Concern

A. Women and poverty

B. Education and training of women

C. Women and health

Related Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 10

Training in the PFA

A. WOMEN AND POVERTY

The focus here is on skills and vocational training for women, geared towards improving livelihoods and lifting women out of poverty. There is little discussion of the structural gendered issues related to poverty and the kinds of training that may be appropriate for addressing these. This kind of analysis was developed more clearly in conjunction with the Millennium Development Goals.

#### B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

Again, there is ample focus on skills training for women in this critical area. However, some attention is paid to training more broadly in strategic objective B.4, which calls for the development of non-discriminatory education and training. The associated actions to be taken in this regard are: to develop training programmes and materials.

In spite of decades-long activism for women's rights, particularly the long struggle for civil and political rights and for the reform of the religious family code, learning on gender only seems to have come centre-stage around the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, China, in 1995. Many women's rights activists recall attending their first gender training or seminar in the early 1990s as part of the preparations leading up to the Beijing Conference for teachers and educators that raise awareness about the status, role and contribution of women and men in the family and society; to develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness of their own role in the educational process, with a view to providing them with effective strategies for gender-sensitive teaching; to introduce and promote training in peaceful conflict resolution; and to develop leadership training and opportunities for all women, so as to encourage them to take up leadership roles both as students and adults in civil society.

#### C. WOMEN AND HEALTH

Training in this area focuses primarily on gender training for health professionals. Recommendations include: redesigning health information, services and training for health workers so that they are gender-sensitive and reflect the user's perspectives with regard to interpersonal and communications skills, as well as the user's right to privacy and confidentiality; and ensuring that medical school curricula and other health care training include gender-sensitive, comprehensive and mandatory courses on women's health.

Reporting framework for the 25-year review by the Secretary-General

#### C. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

PFA Critical Areas of Concern

#### D. Violence against women

#### J. Women and the media

Related Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 1, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5

Training in the PFA

#### D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In this critical area there is an acknowledgment that women may be vulnerable to violence perpetrated by persons in positions of authority in both conflict and non-conflict situations. As such, the PFA proposes training all officials in humanitarian and human rights law. It also advocates for the punishment of perpetrators of violent acts against women, which would help to ensure that violence does not take place at the hands of public officials in whom women should be able to place trust, including the police, prison officials and security forces.

The corresponding recommendation is to create, improve or develop, as appropriate, and fund training programmes for judicial, legal, medical, social, educational, law enforcement and immigration personnel. This is envisioned as a means of avoiding the abuse of power which leads to violence against women, while sensitizing such personnel on the nature of gender-based acts and threats of violence so that fair treatment of female victims can be assured. As such, the coverage of training in this critical area is quite broad, and it is clear that training has a key role to play in combating violence against women.

#### J. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

The training component of women and the media involves gender-sensitive training for media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotyped, balanced and diverse images of women in the media.

Reporting framework for the 25-year review by the Secretary-General

#### D. Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

PFA Critical Areas of Concern

#### G. Women in power and decision-making

#### H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

Related Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 5, SDG 16, SDG 17

Training in the PFA

#### G. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

Here the focus is on training women in leadership skills, as opposed to addressing the constraints to women's leadership and how these might be addressed through training. There is some attention to gender-sensitive training in terms of promoting non-discriminatory working relationships and respect for diversity in work and management styles.

#### H. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Training is a fundamental component of this critical area. In the section's preamble, the PFA notes that national machineries for the advancement of women have been established in almost every UN Member State. However, it also acknowledges the marginalized nature of such mechanisms and clearly states the lack of adequate training. As such, strategic objective H<sub>1</sub> – create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies – includes two specific objectives on training: provide staff training in designing and analysing data from a gender perspective; and provide training and advisory assistance to government agencies in order to integrate a gender perspective in their policies and programmes.

Reporting framework for the 25-year review by the Secretary-General

#### E. Peaceful and inclusive societies

PFA Critical Areas of Concern

#### E. Women and armed conflict

#### Related Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 5, SDG 16

#### Training in the PFA

#### E. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

Training here focuses on strategic objective E5 – provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women. The corresponding action is to develop awareness of women’s human rights and provide, as appropriate, human rights education and training to military and police personnel operating in areas of armed conflict and areas with refugee populations.

#### Reporting framework for the 25-year review by the Secretary-General

#### F. Environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building

#### PFA Critical Areas of Concern

#### K. Women and the environment

#### Related Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 2, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14, SDG 15

#### Training in the PFA

#### K. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Training is noted as a means of helping women living in rural areas and those working in the agricultural sector to increase their participation in sustainable development. Objectives in this critical area include the development of training programmes for girls and women in the fields of science, environmental management and technical, administrative and clerical work; as well as rural and urban training, alongside research and resource centres to disseminate environmentally sound technologies to women.

#### Reporting framework for the 25-year review by the Secretary-General

#### Cross-cutting

#### PFA Critical Areas of Concern

#### I. Human rights of women

#### L. The girl-child

#### Related Sustainable Development Goals

Human rights

Leaving no one behind

Universality

### I. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Training also features strongly in terms of the human rights of women, under strategic objective I2 – ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice. This area includes three action points: provide training in the human rights of women for all UN personnel and officials to promote their understanding of the human rights of women; provide gender-sensitive human rights education and training to public officials; and include information about international and regional instruments and standards in their public information and human rights education activities, as well as in adult education and training programmes.

### L. THE GIRL CHILD

Training is addressed in two areas in relation to the girl child. Strategic objective L4 – eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training – includes the development of training programmes and materials for teachers and educators, raising awareness about their own role in the educational process, with a view to providing them with effective strategies for gender-sensitive teaching. Training is also an action point for eradicating violence against the girl child (L7), in which gender sensitization training should be provided for those involved in healing, rehabilitation and other assistance programmes for girls who are victims of violence, while promoting programmes of information, support and training for such girls.

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**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION  
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND  
THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A  
GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND  
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED  
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON  
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.