

DEFINING FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: The 2023 Edition



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COLLABORATIVE
FEMINIST
FOREIGN
POLICY

I - INTRODUCTION

When we began writing this series in 2019, only a handful of countries had announced explicitly feminist foreign or development policies, and there was no common definition or framework elucidating the concept, which had yet to be consistently interrogated or evaluated. The global understanding of feminist foreign policy was extremely limited, largely left up to those few governments who had stepped forward to define it. At the time, all but one of those governments were situated in Europe or the Global North.

Our work to distill a global definition and framework was motivated by a desire to establish some common standards or approaches—customizable to context, of course—ahead of what we rightly anticipated would be a growing field, and, in the words of our advisor Beth Woroniuk, to ensure such efforts were developed in conversation with feminist activists who would be on the receiving end of such policies. We undertook that effort, researching the various approaches those initial countries were adopting and consulting with hundreds of feminist organizations from every United Nations region to understand what they thought the promise and potential pitfalls of feminist foreign policy might be.

The resulting definition and framework are anchored in and shaped by the thought leadership of feminist activists, academics and a growing roster of government officials who are as likely to hail from Latin America as they are from Europe, with a smaller but growing movement in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

The field of 2023 is much bigger, and the pace of change quickening: it took six years for the first five governments to announce feminist foreign policies; in the last two, eleven have followed suit. Feminist foreign policy is on the rise, the banner of a rapidly diversifying and expanding cohort of countries who are seeking—we hope—to adopt the highest level of ambition in advancing gender justice and the global goals of equality, peace and planetary integrity around the world.

Our initial scholarship identified **people, peace and planet** as three co-equal goals of feminist foreign policies. The words that most often emerged over the course of years of consultations, interviews and research were “intersectionality”—the recognition that people’s lives, and their experiences with privilege and oppression, are impacted by their overlapping identities, such as their gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, age, migratory status or other—and “accountability”—the principle that in order to be useful, such policies needed to deliver real change in the lived experience of the people they are intended to impact. In short, they need to be more than words on paper or speeches at the United Nations.

The definition that our collaborative efforts have distilled is therefore ambitious and expansive; it offers a long-term vision for the change feminist foreign policies seek to achieve in the world, one that will take time but offers, we hope, a useful and unifying ideal that will inspire increased ambition and action.

We define “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. Feminist foreign policy is coherent in its approach across all of its levers of influence, anchored by the exercise of those values at home and co-created with feminist activists, groups and movements, at home and abroad.

(Thompson et. al, 2020)

Understanding that the chasm between our immediate reality and this long-term vision is considerable, we have, together with our government and civil society partners, also worked to develop a more operationally-oriented framework for designing such policies (Thompson, 2021). The framework seeks to provide a number of shorter- and medium-term steps that can serve as an entry point for designing transformative approaches. We utilize this

framework as the basis for our analysis throughout this paper, assessing countries' progress against what we identify as five illustrative measures of success for feminist foreign policy: (1) rights, (2) resources, (3) representation, (4) research and reporting, and (5) reach.

This continually evolving body of collaborative work is our effort at laying a strong, inclusive and clear foundation for what we hope will be a seismic shift in the traditional approach to foreign policy, which has emphasized economic and military dominance of the state over the global goods of human and environmental flourishing. Our goal is not quantity—that all countries adopt a feminist foreign policy, which we realize is unlikely—but quality: that in adopting a feminist foreign policy, those governments that are brave enough to try will do so from a position of humility, introspection, innovation and learning, understanding that the change that is sought is considerable, the pace will be gradual, progress uneven and hard-fought, yet the potential gains are the best hope we have to achieve our global goals and forestall the urgent threats of conflict and climate chaos that threaten our very existence.

The journey is only beginning.



Founder and CEO, Feminist Foreign Policy Collaborative

The FFP Map in 2023

★ FFPs announced in or before 2021 ✨ FFPs announced since 2021



II - METHODOLOGY & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In an effort to honor the accountability principle that so clearly emerged as central to FFP, we have published a biannual series documenting updates in the field, starting with our first *Defining Feminist Foreign Policy* paper from 2019 in which we first established our global definition of FFP and chronicled the efforts of the first few countries that had announced such policies. A 2021 Update followed, as the tally grew to 7 governments, and in this year's 2023 Edition, some 16 governments are reviewed, the largest cohort to date.

We have organized the paper with an in-depth assessment of activity among the newest cohort of countries (those that announced and/or published FFPs in the two years since our last paper was published), followed by key updates from existing FFP countries (those whose announcements predated 2021 and were covered in our subsequent paper[s]). We present both a summary of the current status of efforts by each government, as well as a subsequent analysis of those efforts organized around the five illustrative measures of success outlined in our *Feminist Foreign Policy: A Framework* document: (1) rights, (2) resources, (3) representation, (4) research and reporting, and (5) reach.

Our process starts with desk research based on our team's own knowledge of the issue and what articles and resources we can find through our partners and our own desk review. We then share a draft with civil society experts hailing from the country or region who are able to provide comments based on their own expertise and closer proximity to the policy at hand. Having incorporated any civil society comments, we then send a revised draft to the government for review and comment. In this way, we attempt to ensure that we are telling the most comprehensive possible story of this growing field, incorporating in equal measure the perspectives of feminist leaders in government and civil society as they work together to innovate, experiment and move the field forward.

This paper is, like all of our work, a collective effort.

We are grateful to the many civil society and government partners in the [Global Partner Network](#) for Feminist Foreign Policy, which we coordinate as our [Generation Equality Forum](#) commitment, for their contributions—be it through research and publications, the sharing of information and promising practices, review of drafts and reflection on common themes, achievements, challenges and key gaps.

In particular, we wish to thank Mabel Bianco of Fundacion para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, Kristina Lunz and Liam Li of the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, Memory Kachambwa of FEMNET, Leah Moss and Esther Lever of Mama Cash, Foteini Papagiotti of the International Center for Research on Women, Nicolas Rainaud of Equipop, Zahra' Langhi of Libyan Women's Platform for Peace, Anika Snel and Marene Elgershuizen of WO=MEN, the Dutch Gender Platform, Saskia Ivens and Barbara van Paassen, independent researchers, and Beth Woroniuk of the Equality Fund, who reviewed drafts and provided comments, as well as the governments of Argentina, Canada, Colombia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Scotland, Slovenia and Spain for responding to requests for comment and sharing information and resources to inform this paper.

And we are especially grateful to the funders who make this work possible. This paper—and the much larger body of work that enables it—is supported by grants from the Global Fund for Women, Open Society Foundations, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

We hope that this resource will provide valuable insights to the progress and key challenges in what we continue to believe is our best hope for achieving a more inclusive, just and sustainable future. We look forward to your comments and continuing the conversation.

III - A GLOBAL SUMMARY OF TRENDS

As 2023 winds to a close, we can say with confidence that feminist foreign policy is officially a trend.

More governments now label their foreign policy feminist than ever before, a global cohort that is rapidly expanding and diversifying. This period saw the proliferation of FFP in more regions than ever, with the Americas emerging as the region to watch: Argentina, Chile and Colombia joined Canada and Mexico, with Brazil having appointed an official to explore the concept. In Europe, Germany, the Netherlands and Slovenia joined France, Luxembourg and Spain, with Belgium exploring a feminist foreign policy commitment. Liberia joined Libya as the second country to announce in Africa and first in sub-Saharan Africa, and Mongolia became the first country in the Asia region.

There was also interest in promulgating FFP at the sub-national level, with Scotland announcing a feminist foreign policy governing the devolved powers under its authority as part of the United Kingdom, and exploration by the Government of Catalonia in Spain.

The proliferation of firsts is exciting in its own right, with more champions emerging who might carry the mantle for people, peace and planet as we confront the polycrisis. But the growth trajectory is even more compelling for the potential this growing cohort now represents for multilateral collaboration within the bloc. Importantly for progress at the United Nations and in other international organizations, the number of countries who have announced FFPs is now balanced between the global North and South. Chile and Germany together co-lead a new UN caucus on feminist foreign policy, and Argentina just hosted the first regional convening in the Americas on the same, with participation from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Spain, the Netherlands, UN Women and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

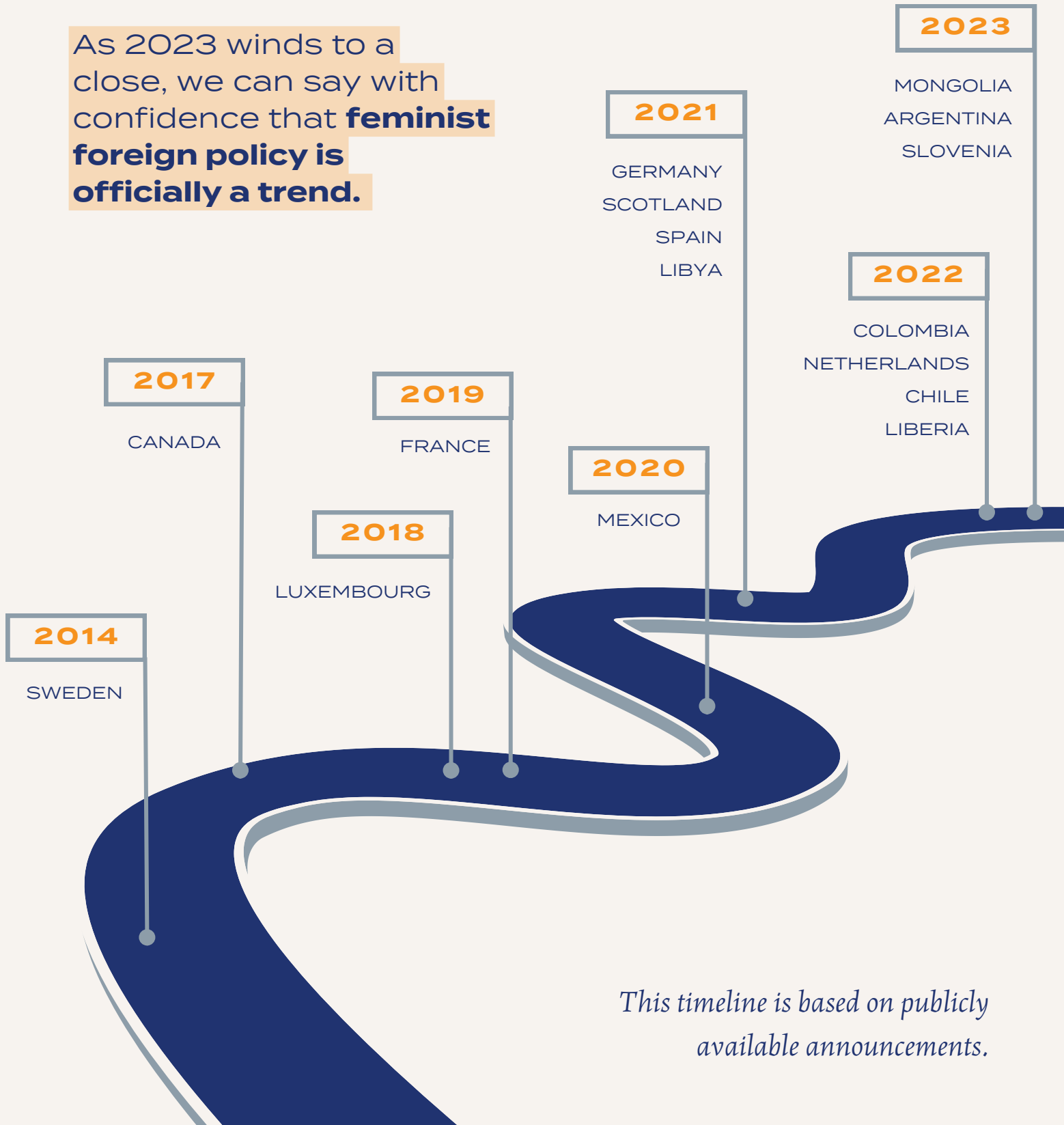
The diversification of government actors advancing feminist approaches to foreign policy is mirrored across feminist movements: in July 2023, the African Feminist Collective on Feminist Informed Policies released a Statement of Intent on Feminist Informed Policies Abroad and at Home, calling for an interrogation of global power dynamics, funding for local research and knowledge production, and taking more seriously issues of militarization, climate change and migration that are increasingly more urgent and globally intertwined. Additionally, they call for a utilization of existing tools and frameworks, such as the African Feminist Charter and the Maputo Protocol to advance implementation of feminist principles. There are similar calls to action by feminists in Latin America, advancing frameworks like the Buenos Aires Commitment and the Escazú Agreement as part of the emerging canon anchoring and informing truly global FFP discourse (Haastrup et. al, 2023).

In the words of our partner, Memory Kachambwa (Researchers Without Borders, 2023, 32:25), “feminist foreign policy is not foreign to the African continent... our herstory has been invisibilized; it has not been archived. We have been involved in foreign policy as African feminists, so how do we start building and leveraging on our story... so that we remove the notion that feminist foreign policy is not African... We’ve really struggled in the sexual and reproductive rights and justice movement with the pushback that it’s not African—we really should be owning that FFP is something that as the African continent and African feminists we should be interrogating, documenting, writing about it and documenting so that we are creating our narrative.”

Of course, it is going to take more than 16 governments and a vibrant but still small movement of civil society actors to counter the rights reversals and rollbacks that are taking the world by storm, but these are seeds of collective action that will hopefully grow and begin to bear fruit in the years to come.

Feminist Foreign Policy: A Timeline

As 2023 winds to a close, we can say with confidence that **feminist foreign policy is officially a trend.**



This timeline is based on publicly available announcements.

It is only just getting organized, but under the leadership of Chile and Germany the so-called “Feminist Foreign Policy Plus” group has carefully designed a plan of action that will help its members champion gender equality and human rights in key UN dialogues and debates, hopefully a growing counterbalance to the so-called “pro-family” group whose policy agenda seeks to radically restrict or even criminalize everything from abortion to homosexuality. Together the countries have hosted high-level meetings among foreign ministers, workshopped progressive language for political declarations and begun to organize around values rather than the regional blocs that typically constrain ambition with regard to gender equality, climate change and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Given that this growing consensus does not occur in a vacuum, but rather in a highly politicized and regressive environment, these governments will have to do the careful work of building trust and buy-in if they are to be successful, both among themselves as well as in partnership with feminist movements who can inform, amplify and strengthen their success. These are early days, but promising ones.

In addition to the rapid growth in the quantity of feminist foreign policies, the period also saw a number of quality improvements and noteworthy policy innovations. Per the success factors set out in our Framework, most governments scored well on articulating an ambitious, intersectional and coherent approach in their feminist foreign policies. In terms of trends, intersectionality is now solidly a fixture of feminist foreign policy, with all new policies asserting a broader conceptualization of gender equality and human rights issues than a narrow focus on cis women and girls, although there were different constellations on LGBTQIA+ (not all countries explicitly include Intersex, although all were trans-inclusive at least in name) and some language differences with regard to emphasis on gender equality broadly versus equality between men and women, particularly in francophone countries.

Most affirmed the importance of prioritizing the rights of racial, ethnic and religious minorities, and

refugee or migrant populations, and to a certain extent disabled persons, although this was an area where there was pushback and could in most cases stand to be strengthened. In the case of Germany, language in the German Feminist Development Policy was best-in-class, outlining an explicitly antiracist and decolonizing approach: “The BMZ’s feminist development policy aspires to pursue a post-colonial and anti-racist approach. This (learning) process, which involves critical reflection on issues of power, starts with the recognition that colonial continuities and racist thinking are still present in German development cooperation today” (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 11).

Argentina has distinguished itself in the cohort for a focus on trans feminism, in both its foreign and domestic policy. It is the first government to have a gender-inclusive abortion law, and boasts a Special Representative for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity—a post occupied by a transgender woman Alba Rueda, the highest ranking trans official in Argentine history—in addition to an Ambassador for FFP. A number of FFP countries, including Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Germany and Mexico, have focused on redefining care as a human right, working together for example to establish the International Day of Care and Support, which will be celebrated for the first time October 29th, 2023 (UN Women, 2023).

During the period, Colombia became the first country to introduce an explicitly pacifist approach to FFP, while the Netherlands, long a leader in support for feminist movements, ramped up efforts to counter backlash and Germany introduced a focus on digital. Slovenia surpassed gender parity in its diplomatic corps, while Canada achieved it in its ambassadorial and senior diplomatic staffing levels.

On resourcing, Canada devoted the highest share of its assistance to gender equality (as either a “principal or significant” objective according to the OECD-DAC gender marker system for monitoring aid flows) in the FFP cohort, at 90%, followed by the Netherlands at 82%, and was also the highest funder for ending

violence against women. The Netherlands was the greatest proportional investor in programs principally designed to achieve gender equality and also for directly supporting women's rights organizations. Slovenia and Germany set the most ambitious goals in terms of increases in funding for gender equality, with targets to increase from roughly 4% and 6% to 85% of ODA investments in programs advancing gender equality as a principal or significant goal respectively. Given that Germany is the largest donor by volume to gender equality in the DAC, this represents real potential for a transformative impact on gender equality globally, if achieved.

There was a clearer emphasis on collaboration—and sometimes even co-creation—with civil society, as Colombia, Scotland, the Netherlands and Germany hosted global consultations with feminist activists and academics to inform the shaping of their policies and France, Spain and Colombia established or continued official advisory boards to ensure ongoing independent analysis, critique and evaluation of their FFPs.

In terms of taking on the thorny issues of the day that require brave and ambitious leadership, all new policies addressed the essential action needed to counter climate chaos, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and peace and security, while many took on the issue of migration. However, this emerged as an area fraught with tension, as most FFPs do not authorize activities in this policy area, yet it is a highly relevant and visible space in which feminist principles often fall down in practice. While the limitation of authorities may present legitimate bureaucratic barriers for implementation, from a coherence perspective there is tremendous need for transformative leadership here. Particularly in Europe, where even FFP countries have been providing financial incentives for North African governments to crack down on and deter African migrants from reaching their shores, cascading consequences have wrought tragic results, rampant human rights abuses and acts of overt racism and Islamophobia. This is an area of opportunity for developing—together with feminist advocates and academics—a blueprint for what a more feminist immigration policy for Europe might look like. This could start with a listening tour of impacted communities, including feminist activists who are documenting rights abuses and generating ideas for improvements (Chebbi, 2023b).

These undercurrents have emerged front and center in elections on the continent, with worrying results. In December 2022, the “mother” of feminist foreign policy, Sweden, stepped back, sending shockwaves globally (Bianco et. al, 2023) as a right-wing coalition government was elected on an anti-immigration platform (Ringstrom & Johnson, 2022) and quickly renounced its nearly decade-long embrace of the policy. This is

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likely only the first ripple in what could become a wave of backlash, as right-leaning parties have gathered strength in a number of FFP countries where elections are both impending and outcomes uncertain: in July of 2023 the Dutch government imploded, scheduling elections for late November. Also in July, a snap election was called in Spain, and while the right-wing party that had been picking up steam underperformed, results are still unclear. Starting in October in Argentina, where a right-wing candidate has threatened to eliminate ministries of gender and labor, elections will be held in 4 of the FFP countries in the next year: Argentina in October, Liberia in October, the Netherlands in November and Mexico in June of 2024.

Upcoming elections in FFP countries



Other issues of contention included, on resourcing, increases in defense spending in Europe following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, often alongside corresponding decreases in foreign assistance and other social spending. While, as a general rule, the cohort of donor countries increased allocations for gender equality and/or women’s rights organizations, at least in the most recent year for which we have data available (2020-2021), they are in a number of cases doing so among a likely smaller pie due to either outright cuts or a provision of the OECD-DAC that allows reallocation of foreign assistance funds for domestic support of refugees and asylum seekers to still be counted as foreign assistance (Taylor, 2023). Canada, France and Luxembourg were the exceptions to this rule.

The proliferation of feminist foreign policies challenges traditional theories of international relations—and the ways in which they are taught—introducing new priorities in global affairs, multilateralism and security. For years, feminist international relations scholars were pushing back against theories of realism, liberalism and constructivism, pointing out their limitations in understanding power and hierarchy. Feminist foreign policy builds upon these scholars’ analyses; it understands security in broader terms of human well-being, centralizes women’s rights and gender equality in all thematic elements of foreign policy and seeks to understand how globalization and the international political economy impact structurally excluded populations. In the period under review, FFP governments have expanded and revised their approach to key international relations issues like gender and trade, reform of international financial institutions and the multilateral system, and countering colonial legacies in development policy. FFP advocates are pushing them to go further, urging progressive approaches to eliminate debt, calling for climate reparations and demanding the recognition of civil society, feminist movements and human rights defenders as key leaders and decision-makers. For 16 governments around the world to declare themselves “feminist” was perhaps once thought unimaginable; now, it challenges our ways of understanding global relations, opens up new possibilities for imagination and proves that evolution toward progressive change is possible (Ruiz, 2005; Brown, 2021; Pallapthu, 2020).

In sum, this was the most promising period yet in terms of qualitative and quantitative improvements for FFP. But progress isn’t assured: this period also saw real setbacks for the field. The following in-depth analyses of each government’s efforts are presented to provide a depth of detail as to the status of current efforts in each geography, as well as our analysis—per our *Framework* principles and illustrative measures of success—intended to provide feedback on strengths and areas for continued improvement. We offer these insights in a spirit of learning and reflection and celebrate the efforts that so many feminists in government and civil society have proffered to hone a new approach to foreign policy geared toward justice, equality and sustainability, and a more feminist future for all.

IV. FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE 2022-2023 PERIOD



THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

Current Status

In January 2023, the Government of Argentina published a decree announcing its commitment to a feminist foreign policy. The decree reiterates a range of Argentina's commitments to women's rights and gender equality, such as CEDAW, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and other constitutional protections and multilateral statements. In the decree, Argentina commits to a FFP that coordinates both external action and internal policies.

The decree encourages gender mainstreaming in local, state, national and international policies, including diplomatic efforts, and appoints Professor María Cristina Perceval, former Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations and Undersecretary of Human Rights, to a new position, Special Representative for Feminist Foreign Policy. The Special Representative position, based in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, is given the "rank and hierarchy of Secretary," meaning Perceval will be recognized as an ambassador.

Argentina's decree includes an annex detailing the functions of the new position. It notes that the Special Representative will assist the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship in representing the country's position on FFP in international forums and bilateral diplomacy—also communicating the actions, programs and policies the Government of Argentina is undertaking to advance

the rights of women and girls. The Special Representative will coordinate actions with not only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, but also with the National Public Administration and the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity. Furthermore, the Special Representative will be expected to mainstream a feminist approach throughout Argentina's external action, establish spaces for joint work on this approach, advance gender parity and promote advocacy and strategic alliances on gender equality and the rights of women and girls (Decreto 881, 2022).

In August 2023, Argentina shared with us a brochure on its FFP, details on the main axes and foundations of the policy, as well as its 2023 Action Plan, which assigns specific guidelines for its main axes.

The brochure reaffirms the creation of the Special Representation for Feminist Foreign Policy (REPEF) to carry out implementation. It grounds Argentina's decision to adopt a FFP in two points: first, the willingness to develop a coherent institutional framework in which "national policies aimed at recognizing, protecting, and guaranteeing gender equality are reflected in the initiatives, actions, and definitions of its foreign policy," (REPEF, personal communication, 2023) and second, reaffirming the government's international commitments to "human rights of all women, adolescents, and girls, and gender equality" (REPEF, personal communication, 2023).

The document provides a thorough description of Argentina’s institutional vision for its FFP, characterizing it as “an emancipatory project aimed at transforming the existing power hierarchies and privileges that are reproduced in the international arena” (REPEF, personal communication, 2023) as well as a “strategy to feminize international politics, based on the revalorization of the ethic of care” (REPEF, personal communication, 2023) and “a democratizing, universalist and multidimensional challenge that places substantive gender equality—from an intersectional, intergenerational and intercultural perspective—at the center of all political agendas” (REPEF, personal communication, 2023). Furthermore, Argentina identifies its FFP as “an ethical, political and institutional commitment” (REPEF, personal communication, 2023) that aims to mainstream gender throughout bilateral, subregional, regional and global settings, and as a “democratizing impulse” (REPEF, personal communication, 2023) that encourages new practices and forms of cooperation between countries.

Argentina also lays out two broader objectives: (1) to establish lines of action for advancing gender equality as a key element of foreign policy and (2) to “progressively and systematically” incorporate a gender approach throughout international relations, actions, instruments, mechanisms and foreign policy phases in a manner that is “cross-cutting, intersectional, intercultural and intersectoral.” To achieve these objectives, Argentina also calls for the development of institutional policies to strengthen coherence between “commitments assumed internationally by the Argentine State and the national legal order,” fostering consistency between national-level and external action.

The document reveals that an annual roadmap for the implementation of the feminist foreign policy was created by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity and the National Cabinet for the Mainstreaming of Gender Policies. This roadmap spans only one year due to the upcoming national elections in Argentina.

The brochure establishes six priority axes: 1) **the care society**, 2) **economic autonomy**, 3) **sustainable development**, 4) **scientific knowledge and technological innovation**, 5) **a world without violence and impunity** and 6) **democracy**. To address these axes, Argentina developed a “matrix management strategy” forming thematic clusters and coalitions to carry forward implementation. These are housed in the Chancellor’s Cabinet of Ministers and are developed in consultation with civil society and feminist movements. The brochure notes that Argentina has also established bilateral relations with other FFP countries, is strengthening coordination with intergovernmental organizations and is placing particular emphasis on feminist cooperation with the Global South. While no additional information is provided at this time, the brochure notes that the matrix management model features a budget per project and accountability plans with a line of reporting to the Chancellor.

In the 2023 roadmap or Agenda, Argentina reiterates its institutional vision, affirming that the rights of LGBTQI+ people and reproductive rights are also part of the progressive agenda adopted by the feminist foreign policy. It then elaborates upon core strategies and actions for each of its six priority axes.

For axis 1, or “The Care Society is Equality,” the Buenos Aires Commitment and the Global Care Alliance are defined as the institutional mechanisms that will serve as a basis for implementation. To support the Buenos Aires Commitment, Argentina identifies core actions reinforcing other global

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commitments, pledges to advance care as a human right, commits to preparing a report on the topic and potentially submitting a project to the United Nations Economic and Social Council on care issues. To support the Global Alliance for Care, Argentina proposes meeting with regional parliaments to encourage adoption of regulatory frameworks on care, and co-creating more guidelines to address the policy.

For axis 2, or “Economic Autonomy is Equality,” Argentina relies on the UN Global Compact’s Women’s Empowerment Principles to strengthen deliberation, exchange and networks on gender inequality and the world of work, and promotes “reform of the international financial architecture with a gender and human rights approach”—particularly regarding sovereign and domestic debt and their impact on women and girls. For Argentina, this is especially relevant due to the ongoing debt crisis that began in the 1970s and has fluctuated in severity ever since (Debt Justice, n.d.). Argentina is one of many Global South countries whose economies are crushed by financial policies that disproportionately impact lower and middle-income countries, forcing them to dedicate a significant portion of their GDP to debt repayments, which impedes more beneficial investments, like gender equality programs.

For axis 3, or “Sustainable Development is Equality,” Argentina pledges to strengthen and encourage ratification of the Escazú Agreement, and particularly focuses on the protection of women environmental defenders in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also commits to promoting the New Urban Agenda through a gender lens, as well as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. In this vein, Argentina calls for gender parity in climate change deliberations and generating new alliances.

For axis 4, or “Scientific knowledge and technological innovation is equality,” Argentina focuses on “science diplomacy,” or boosting women’s and girls’ participation in science and technology through a symposium held in collaboration with feminist theorists, FFP countries and the UN system. It also pledges to participate in discussions surrounding ethics and artificial intelligence, with active participation in guidelines developed by UNESCO.

Axis 5, or “A world without violence and impunity is equality” calls for disarmament and an arms trade treaty, encouraging the involvement of women’s and feminist organizations in this agenda. Furthermore, Argentina calls for gender mainstreaming in “processes of truth, memory, justice, and reparation for serious international crimes and crimes against humanity” (REPEF, personal communication, 2023). It commits to hosting a high-level meeting focused on genocide prevention with the participation of Colombia, East Timor, Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina and USG Special Advisor for the Prevention of Genocide of the United Nations, Alice Wairimu. Argentina also calls for the eradication of hate speech, increased efforts to prevent sexual- and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and strengthening the collaboration between the Ibero-American Women Mediators’ Network and the Mercosur Women Mediators’ Network.

Finally, axis 6, or “Democracy is equality,” commits to gender parity, as well as broadening the scope of feminist diplomacy in all areas of foreign policy. It also pledges to strengthen international humanitarian and human rights law, supporting the UN Secretary-General’s Our Common Agenda and participating in the UN Summit of the Future 2024. Lastly, Argentina commits to women’s participation in inclusive multilateralism through networks of ambassadors, the FFP+ Group at the United Nations, general recommendations to CEDAW decision-making systems and the selection process of the next UN Secretary-General.

It is unclear when Argentina’s feminist foreign policy will be publicly launched, but according to a comment by Argentine officials after reviewing this draft, “the 2023 Action Plan was presented in February 2023 to the national high authorities—the President of Argentina, Alberto Fernández, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Santiago Cafiero, the Argentine Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity, Ayelen Mazzina, and the National Cabinet for the Transversalization of Gender Policies. It was also presented to the Gender Equity Commission of the Civil Society Consultative Council of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs during March” (personal communication, 2023).

Argentina is already engaging multilaterally and with civil society in this arena. In August 2023 it hosted a regional meeting of FFP governments, multilateral agencies and civil society advocates in Buenos Aires, featuring representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Spain and the Netherlands, and is set to participate in upcoming debates on FFP at the United Nations General Assembly in September. However, like so many FFP governments, the country's elections are looming, slated for October 2023, where a far-right candidate threatens to overturn progress in this area, including eliminating the gender ministry entirely.

Analysis

I - Rights

Argentina's FFP is explicit in its focus on advancing "the rights of women, adolescents and girls in their diversity" (REPEF, personal communication, 2023). As outlined above, it commits to a range of rights issues, such as eliminating sexual- and gender-based violence, reparations for international crimes, the protection of women environmental defenders, promoting care as a human right and advancing a gender and human rights perspective through the international financial architecture. Argentina's focus on trans feminism in both its domestic and foreign policy is unique in the cohort.

Its FFP relies upon regional and international frameworks and commitments, such as the Escazú Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Our Common Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, to advance its objectives.

Argentina's focus on care as a human right is noteworthy, and aligns with its current country-wide push for legislation that values unpaid care workers. For example, in 2021, Argentina passed a law that determined that each child raised by a woman counts as up to three years towards the thirty years necessary for retirement—two years later, this policy allowed 350,000 women in Argentina to retire (ANSES, 2023). In the international arena, Argentina is clear in its commitment to the Global Care Alliance as a means of advancing policy and achieving the recognition of care.

This is an intersectional and ambitious agenda. The focus on promoting care as a human right is of particular interest, as is Argentina's emphasis on intergenerational feminism, an element that seems unique in the cohort. The effort to bring together governments from around the world on genocide prevention is also noteworthy.

II - Resources

Argentina's brochure states that all projects in the matrix management model have budgets. However, it is not detailed what these budgets entail, specifically which projects they fund or the length of support they will provide. Given the economic crisis that Argentina is currently facing, this may be a difficult area in which to achieve ambition, but in line with civil society advocacy in this area we recommend that Argentina strive for a gender analysis in all foreign affairs spending, and a 20% target for spending on programs and policies that focus on achieving gender equality as a principal objective. Another approach the government might consider is that of Mexico's Anexo 13, which sets aside 50% of discretionary spending for marginalized groups including gender, racial, ability or other streams of discrimination.

III - Representation

In its axis 6 on “Democracy is Equality,” Argentina pledges to achieve gender parity in diplomacy, and plans to support networks of ambassadors involved in gender equality, human rights and feminist foreign policy. It commits to the “equal representation of women in the areas of development, law, and international policy” (REPEF, personal communication, 2023). In this pursuit, more provisions are needed to ensure other identities, such as LGBTQIA+ people, Afro descendant and indigenous women, women with disabilities, youth and rural women, are appropriately represented in all areas of foreign policy. The same considerations can be applied to commitments made to increasing participation and representation in other areas: science and technology, arms control negotiations and climate negotiations. Additionally, provisions can be added to existing bodies within the Argentinian government, like the Cabinet for the Mainstreaming of Gender Policies and any other working groups that arise to execute feminist foreign policy, to ensure those are appropriately representative.

However, Argentina is unique in its incorporation of a trans feminist perspective in their foreign and domestic policy work. Argentina’s Special Representative for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Alba Rueda, is the first transgender woman to ever reach a high position of government in the country. Relatedly, Argentina is the second country in the Americas to offer a non-binary option in identity cards, has the first gender-inclusive abortion law in the world, and a quota law for transgender people in government that determines that at least one person in the national administration must be transgender (Guzmán, 2022).

Having already announced and selected María Cristina Perceval as Special Representative for FFP prior to having published its FFP is a promising sign and demonstrates an investment in her leadership. Perceval has already participated in regional and international-level discussions on FFP, including representing Argentina at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, and has initiated meetings with civil society organizations on issues such as gender, disarmament and arms control (Embamex Alemania,

2023; Mendoza Today, 2023; International Center for Research on Women, 2023; CEPAL, 2023).

Argentina’s Special Representative for FFP is tasked with fostering strategic alliances to promote the country’s ambitious policy. The brochure also notes that Argentina will form thematic clusters to advance its FFP objectives that will be “interinstitutional, intersectoral, intersectional and multistakeholder.” While this is a promising commitment and one that alludes to civil society engagement, Argentina could be more explicit in its process for ongoing collaboration with civil society and feminist movements. While civil society played an active role in the development and drafting of Argentina’s FFP, it remains unclear the frequency and extent to which they will be involved in ongoing implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

IV - Research and Reporting

The commitment to research in Argentina’s feminist foreign policy is laudable, having identified knowledge production and sharing as a policy point for each of its six axes. This is boosted by the provision on ensuring female participation in the scientific field.

Given that Argentina’s FFP takes an intersectional approach in its scope, the preference afforded to gender should be similarly spelled out for other structurally excluded communities who have similarly been disenfranchised. Argentina should consider an explicit pledge to decolonize knowledge creation, acknowledging that, like many Latin American countries, Argentina’s institutions are influenced by long-standing racism and discrimination, and their FFP needs to acknowledge and account for this history.

The brochure provides an encouraging overview of Argentina’s core priorities for FFP, but it lacks specific timelines and benchmarks for achieving its objectives in many areas. This is particularly challenging for more ambitious goals with aims of structural change, like reforming the international financial architecture. There is no clear target or plan for data collection; while Argentina notes that its

matrix management model will include “accountability and line of reporting to the Chancellor,” (REPEF, personal communication, 2023) there is no further detail on what this looks like and who is responsible. We look forward to learning more about developing plans in this area as Argentina hones and makes its plans public.

V - Reach

Argentina explicitly includes exchange with other FFP governments as foundational for many of its policy points. It recognizes that plural debate is essential for a truly equitable and transformative feminist foreign policy.

The FFP also makes strategic use of existing international structures and agreements to push forth its agenda. In addition to the August 2023 convening of FFP governments in the region, Argentina will host the Primer Encuentro Suprarregional de Mujeres, a regional meeting for female members of Latin American governments and multilateral organizations, as well as Conference of the Parties (COP 2) to the Escazú Agreement, at which it will address the topic. The government is also using its convening power beyond Latin America and the Caribbean; the diverse constellation of countries it is assembling to advance commitments to end genocide is a promising example. Argentina can further advance gender equality in these engagements by committing to support gender provisions in all outcome documents and including women’s rights and gender equality in the main agenda when the meeting is not explicitly focused on women’s issues. During COP 2, for example, only optional side events had gender-related matters as main topics of discussion.

Relatedly, the explicit pledge to support women environmental defenders is also valuable and unique, and especially relevant in Latin America. Argentina should also more clearly acknowledge that the women environmental defenders are largely indigenous, and therefore, policies in support of environmental advocates need to be tailored to the needs of indigenous women and their communities. In fact, many policies presented in the document could benefit from a more intersectional analysis of the issue and related interventions, such as the STEM-related commitments, underscoring that some women more than others are excluded from science and academia.



THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE

Current Status

In February 2022, the government of Chile officially announced it would adopt a feminist foreign policy. Its FFP had been in plans prior to current President Gabriel Boric’s election. In November 2021, about three weeks before election day, he released his government plan, which explicitly identified FFP as part of his foreign policy strategy (Plan de gobierno: Apruebo Dignidad, 2021). The document states that the goal of the feminist foreign policy is to mainstream and institutionalize a gendered, intersectional and human rights perspective in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also commits to affirmative action to close historic gaps and achieve parity and plurality within the Ministry.

While Chile released a comprehensive document detailing its FFP in June 2023, the process leading up to this moment was marked by changes in relevant leadership. In March 2023, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonia Urrejola was replaced by Alberto van Klaveren Stork, a career diplomat, (Reuters, 2023) following Boric's decision to reshuffle his Cabinet in the face of political resistance to his progressive tax agenda (Vergara, 2023). Urrejola, whose background was in human rights, was an early champion of Chile's FFP, often reiterating its commitment to a feminist agenda in international settings and amplifying Chilean women's leadership in decision-making. Van Klaveren Stork, while not a woman, maintained Chile's commitment to the policy and supported its launch (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023). The policy document opens with a statement by van Klaveren Stork, in which he mentions Chile's commitment to gender equality in diplomatic settings over the past 70 years as a precedent for taking "a more daring step forward" in adopting a FFP (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p.7).

Chile's feminist foreign policy document, officially released on June 12, 2023, spends much of its early chapters highlighting Chile's previous commitments to gender equality, mostly international, describing them as fundamental to Chile's history. It describes Chile's adoption of a FFP as a political decision, backed by conviction at the "highest political level" and requiring a "consistent, comprehensive, and permanent mandate, based on a human rights approach that seeks to strengthen cross-sector tools" (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 14).

The FFP identifies six foundational premises: that gender inequality is a barrier to the full realization of fundamental rights and the country's sustainable development and well-being; that gender equality is a legal obligation rooted in international treaties and multilateral instruments; that gender equality will be a strategic axis for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; that Chile is to influence multilateral and bilateral bodies to protect women and girls in all their diversity; that the FFP will align with domestic policies; and, finally, that gender equality is both a democratic value and a principle enhancing Chile's image and recognition (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023).

Further, Chile describes its FFP as *participatory*, making room for all actors in design and implementation, *inclusive*, ensuring its benefits reach all; *cross-cutting*, promoting coordinated action across the Ministry and at both national and international levels; and *intersectional*, recognizing the overlapping identities and structural factors that shape inequality. Like the German *Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Guidelines*, Chile's FFP is also described as a "living document," open to construction.

The document also outlines eight priority themes: 1) human rights and strengthening democracy with a focus on gender equality, 2) eradicating and eliminating gender-based violence, 3) empowerment and greater representation of women, 4) women, peace and security agenda, 5) trade and gender, 6) climate change and gender, 7) digital, science, technology and innovation agenda and 8) a comprehensive care system. For each of the eight themes, the document briefly describes areas in which Chile will advance the goals of its feminist foreign policy (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023).

Chile's FFP document goes into further detail about its plans for implementation, both in external and internal affairs. The document outlines strategies for multilateral, bilateral and consular agendas, as well as engagement with specific regions, such as neighboring countries, Latin America, North America, Central America and the Caribbean, and Europe. The document also proposes activities for the numerous agencies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and presents a four point plan for institutional strengthening. This includes: (1) institutionalizing gender issues, particularly through the creation of a new Gender Affairs Division to coordinate progress on gender equality issues throughout the Ministry; (2) gender budgeting, or allocating resources to support new structures, programs and initiatives supporting gender equality; (3) greater participation, representation and visibility of women and LGBTQIA+ people in decision-making, design and implementation of policies; and (4) review and reinforcement of training and education programs, so that curricula on gender equality and biases are incorporated early on (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023).

Chile makes clear that the formulation and implementation of its FFP is ongoing. It tasks the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs with managing the process, the first step of which includes developing a FFP Action Plan. Chile does not specify when this Action Plan will be released, but indicates that it will be designed to complement the Ministry’s objectives and existing commitments to gender equality, as well as relevant laws and regulations. It also notes that Chile’s FFP “requires creating institutional coordination bodies with the participation of both political and administrative areas,” and that a network of focal points across the Ministry and in embassies, missions and consulates will help advance this agenda. Given the document’s focus on trade and economic issues, the FFP also highlights the role of the Undersecretary of International Economic Relations (SUBREI). Chile commits to creating a structure to mainstream gender and inclusion throughout the SUBREI, including setting up a Gender Roundtable with representatives from different directorates.

Analysis

I - Rights

Chile’s feminist foreign policy identifies human rights and strengthening democracy as one of its priority areas, as well as other issues relevant to human rights agendas. For example, on the eradication and elimination of gender-based violence, Chile commits to implementing mechanisms within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prevent workplace and sexual harassment, as well as improved reporting mechanisms in missions abroad. It makes specific references to rights frameworks and instruments, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Belém do Pará Convention and the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Chile also details its strategy of advancing human rights in external affairs. For example, it proposes gender mainstreaming through its multilateral efforts—particularly at the United Nations, grounded in its work with the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on human rights. As a member of the Human Rights Council for the next two years, Chile commits to “pay special attention to the human rights agenda of women, adolescents and girls, as well as to issues related to the defense and promotion of the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community” (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 41). Additionally, Chile calls for a gender focus to be incorporated in the Escazú Agreement, a regional treaty which “defends the human rights of environmental defenders” (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 42). Chile’s FFP acknowledges the rights and representation of LGBTQIA+ people throughout the document; however, while it names “women and girls in all their diversity,” it falls short of explicitly addressing identities such as race, ethnicity and disability. The document is also very limited in detailing its approach to promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as countering the anti-rights and anti-gender movement—issues that are particularly pertinent worldwide.

II - Resources

Chile’s FFP acknowledges gender budgeting as an important element of institutionalizing the policy. The document notes that “resources are essential to provide continuity and content not only for the new structure created to address gender issues, but also to finance specific programs or initiatives within a given period” (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 51). With the support of UN Women Chile, an initial workshop

on gender budgeting was held in 2023 to begin incorporating this issue into the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There is no further information on whether a specific budget will be released to accompany the FFP, nor a timeline for further gender budgeting plans.

A notable commitment described in Chile's FFP is the creation of a Gender Affairs Division, which will be responsible for: "systematizing information on gender initiatives and activities in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; coordinating the progress of the Ministry's Gender Equality Plan and Gender Commitments; and coordinating across political and administrative divisions in order to articulate joint progress on these issues" (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 50). Chile also pledges to establish a network of focal points throughout the Ministry as well as in missions, embassies and consulates for further promotion of this agenda. The FFP also documents how different agencies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will advance gender equality, including the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, the Chilean Agency for International Development Cooperation, the National Department of State Borders and Boundaries, the Chilean Exports Promotion Bureau, the Undersecretary of International Economic Relations and the Chilean Antarctic Institute. While Chile's FFP provides an allocation of tasks and responsibilities, it excludes additional detail on how it will sustain the resourcing of this agenda, provide adequate staffing throughout the Ministry and timelines for implementation. As Chile now develops its accompanying Action Plan, we anticipate further details on budgets, staffing and timelines.

Chile also makes clear that its goal is not just facilitating entry into the Ministry, but also retention; in other words, fostering conditions to ensure that women and LGBTQIA+ people stay and thrive in their diplomatic roles.

III - Representation

Chile's FFP recognizes the empowerment and greater representation of women as one of its key principles, noting that "women's participation is understood as an integrating and transforming concept that should exert an impact on foreign policy" (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 51). Chile has made headway in representation in recent years, achieving a record number of women in the foreign service in 2022—14 of 37 ambassadors appointed by the Boric administration are women, 38 percent of the total (Olivares, 2022). Women now represent 27.9 percent of the total foreign service, compared to 11.5 percent in 2019 (Ferrer, 2019). In its feminist foreign policy, Chile commits to advancing parity in international spaces at "all organizational ranks" (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 41). In the Ministry itself, Chile pledges to include more women and LGBTQIA+ people in the "design and execution of public policies," and commits to establishing an Expert Advisory Committee to develop a strategy to advance gender parity by 2030 (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 52). Importantly, Chile also makes clear that its goal is not just facilitating entry into the Ministry, but also retention; in other words, fostering conditions to ensure that women and LGBTQIA+ people stay and thrive in their diplomatic roles. At present, the FFP does not provide further detail on how the Ministry will execute plans for retention, but we anticipate the Expert Advisory Committee and Action Plan will incorporate this into their review.

To eliminate gender bias, Chile also pledges to increase a gender perspective in its Diplomatic Academy, both in its curriculum and entrance examination. The academy's director and deputy director as of 2022 are both women, who have been intentional in their efforts to highlight more female authors, academics and researchers. As mentioned earlier, there is room for Chile to work on representation of other groups aside from women, such as racial and ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities, especially since intersectionality is designated as a foundational concept for the policy.

Chile also makes clear its commitment to enhance women’s representation in areas of women, peace and security—another one of its FFP’s pillars, and one that Chile has been engaging with since the development of its National Action Plan in 2009 and its update in 2015. Chile indicates that the adoption of its FFP is contributing to a more “comprehensive understanding of peace, not only as the absence of conflict, but as a building block for the creation of more inclusive and peaceful societies” (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 34).

In the months leading up to the release of the feminist foreign policy, Chile was frequently engaged with civil society and the international community. For example, Former Minister Urrejola attended the inauguration of Unidas Week 2022, a collaborative event between Latin American and Caribbean countries and Germany to discuss the impact of gender in foreign policy issues, where she reiterated Chile’s commitment to a FFP (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). In October, then-Feminist Foreign Policy Coordinator Verónica Rocha participated in a conversation with academics from the Agencia Chilena de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo on the formulation of Chile’s feminist foreign policy (Agencia Chilena de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, 2022). Urrejola was also one of the female foreign ministers who attended a virtual convening to discuss the human rights crackdown in Iran (Scherer, 2022). In December, then-Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Ximena Torrijo also participated in a Seminar of Feminist Foreign Policy with Mexico and Spain (Gobierno de México, 2022).

The role of Feminist Foreign Policy Coordinator was created in the second semester of 2022 after Chile announced it would be adopting a feminist foreign policy with the purpose of coordinating civil society dialogue and implementation. Rocha was the first to occupy the post, which was seemingly eliminated after the change in leadership, when she was promoted to Cabinet Chief under van Klaveren Stork, a position she also no longer holds. Chile’s FFP document does not specifically mention the FFP Coordinator role, but acknowledges the responsibilities of other positions,

such as a “foreign policy coordinator that is constitutionally mandated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 15) to continue ongoing dialogue with other ministries and public agencies, the Gender Affairs Division to lead gender activity across the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs to lead development of the Action Plan, the Undersecretary of International Economic Relations to coordinate trade and gender issues; and other agencies to advance gender equality within their purview. Chile’s FFP does not detail its plans to continue engaging with civil society throughout implementation, nor which entity will be responsible for carrying out this key feature of the former FFP Coordinator’s role.

In April, after the change in leadership, Minister van Klaveren Stork and Undersecretary of International Economic Relations Claudia Sanhueza met with the Canadian Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development Mary Ng and discussed gender provisions in trade agreements, a component both countries’ feminist foreign policies focus on (Global Affairs Canada, 2023). In May, Undersecretary of Foreign Relations Gloria de la Fuente attended an engagement with Latin American feminist civil society at the University of Chile (Instituto de Relaciones Internacionales de la Universidad de Chile, 2023).

IV - Research and Reporting

In its FFP, Chile makes important commitments relevant to research and reporting. For example, it calls for greater integration of women in science, technology and innovation—one potential way to encourage greater knowledge production. Its efforts to mainstream gender throughout its Diplomatic Academy also reflect attempts to amplify feminist scholarship and learning.

Chile’s FFP still lacks a plan for ensuring accountability of its commitments. It notes that the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs will “lead the creation of a mechanism to monitor and implement an action plan,” which will be designed in alignment

with the Ministry’s strategic objectives, as well as management tools and regulations (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 55). We anticipate the Action Plan will further detail Chile’s plans for monitoring and evaluation, but have little information at this point in time, including when the Action Plan will be released. As Chile continues to refine its FFP, it should develop timelines, benchmarks and indicators for each of its goals, provide more information on the flow of resources, and adopt feminist evaluation techniques in its review. Furthermore, it can consider annual external reporting on its FFP, issued by an independent body of experts and released to the public.

V - Reach

As discussed, Chile’s FFP covers a range of priority topics, from human rights to care to climate change. Chile’s FFP is particularly unique in its focus on trade and international economics, which it details several times throughout the document. Chile dubs itself a “pioneer and world leader when it comes to incorporating gender clauses and chapters in the negotiation of trade agreements” (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 49). Chile effectively describes how it intends to leverage existing trade agreements and international treaties to push for the greater participation of women in this field, and calls for a structure to mainstream gender and inclusion within the Undersecretary of Economic Relations (SUBREI), the main entity responsible for trade matters.

Chile's feminist foreign policy aims to be consistent, comprehensive, permanent, and a living document.

Internally, coordination between multiple agencies is encouraged throughout the feminist foreign policy, which bodes well for Chile’s implementation. One instance of this is the pledge from SUBREI to set up a Gender Roundtable including members of different directorates and ProChile, the body responsible for exports promotion. Another example is the Gender Affairs Division, which will be responsible for “coordinating across political and administrative divisions in order to articulate joint progress” (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 50). However, it is unclear how Chile’s FFP will extend to other branches of its government; while the FFP is focused on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its various agencies, it does not indicate plans to work with many other relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of National Defense, nor does it specify a role for President Boric.

Broadly speaking, Chile sets a solid foundation for its feminist foreign policy. Its ambition to make its feminist foreign policy “consistent, comprehensive and permanent” (Política Exterior Feminista, 2023, p. 14) is admirable, and its acknowledgement of the policy as a “living document” leaves open a door for constant improvement. As it now develops its Action Plan, we hope for further specification in the following areas: a detailed budget, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, plans to consistently and substantively work with civil society and feminist movements, and a deeper application of principles of intersectionality.

Current Status

In September 2022, Colombia announced that it would adopt a feminist foreign policy. This was reiterated later in the National Development Plan 2022-2026, in which Colombia pledged to be an international leader on gender equality issues. The document states that Colombia will pursue parity in its representation abroad and apply feminist principles to the international combat against illegal drug trade, as well as promote gender equality across a range of sectors (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, 2023).

Under the leadership of former Deputy Minister of Multilateral Affairs Laura Gil, the government hosted its first national dialogue on the formation of its FFP, inviting civil society representatives from Colombia and around the world, which it promised would be the first of many such dialogues. During the event, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs outlined the core principles of Colombia's upcoming policy; it will be (1) pacifist, aligned with the "Total Peace", or "Paz Total" agenda articulated in its National Development Plan 2022-2026, which calls for an end to violence inside and outside of Colombia's borders (2) participative, ensuring an active role for women in all democratic processes and (3) intersectional, recognizing the overlapping identities of race, class and sexual orientation.

On the sidelines of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2023, Colombia hosted an official side event wherein Deputy Minister Gil and Ambassador Arlene Tickner, Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations, further elaborated the government's approach to its FFP. They identified eight strategic areas of focus: (1) women, peace and security; (2) gender and climate change, (3) gender and commerce, (4) gender and migration, (5) gender and diplomacy, (6) gender and culture, (7) gender and cooperation, and (8) women and science. They expressed support for a gender-transformative approach to FFP that protects the human rights of vulnerable populations, including ethnic minorities and LGBTIQ+ peoples (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 2023). Colombia shared a general document prior to the event articulating the three principles and eight strategic areas, and indicating that implementation will be carried out at the national, regional and international levels. Minister Gil spoke at several other CSW events on FFP as well, asserting Colombia's leadership and commitment to working with civil society.

However, soon after CSW, Laura Gil resigned from her position as Deputy Minister, and was succeeded by Elizabeth Taylor Jay. Minister Gil's departure was rumored to be the result of tensions between her and Foreign Minister Alvaro Leyva. Given her early activism on human rights issues—including withdrawing from the Geneva Consensus, a global anti-abortion statement, affirming support for the LGBTI community and confirming that Colombia would ratify key inter-American conventions against racism and discrimination—civil society expressed support for Minister Gil to remain in her position amid rumors of tensions. Over 150 national and international civil society organizations wrote to the President and Foreign Minister asking for the government to ensure Gil remains in her position (Franco, 2023). The National Summit of Women and Peace, an alliance of eight women's platforms and over 1,000 organizations and movements, also wrote to the President insisting that Gil stay in the role (El Espectador, 2023). In a comment responding to a draft analysis, Colombian officials indicated that the personnel shift would not impact the country's level of commitment to its FFP, including on these issues: "regarding the Geneva Consensus, a global anti-abortion statement, the support for the LGBTI community and (...) inter-American conventions

against racism and discrimination, [these] are achievements of the MOFA and President's Petro government" (government official, personal communication, 2023).

According to Colombian officials, the general document previewing Colombia's FFP will be updated to reflect Minister Taylor Jay's inputs. In June, Colombia also appointed a new gender advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Relations, Diana María Parra Romero, to lead implementation of the FFP. Parra has previous experience working on gender equality issues, both in federal government and UN positions, as well as an academic background in the subject. In an interview, Parra commits to carrying forward Gil's vision of FFP, and to implementing the vision throughout all aspects of Colombian foreign policy and the inner workings of the ministry itself. Further, Parra notes she will work closely with the offices of the Foreign Minister and the Deputy Minister, and she intends to revive and sustain relationships with civil society. Parra also mentions that she plans to build a roadmap with clear instructions for implementing Colombia's FFP (Franco, 2023).

In July 2023, Minister Durán and Deputy Minister Taylor Jay held a press briefing re-announcing and reiterating their commitment to a feminist foreign policy. In this event, they pledged to commit financial and human resources to the design of the policy, including promoting a number of women to high-level positions so that the working group responsible for creating the policy has more women than men (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023a).

Also in July 2023, Colombia shared an updated presentation on its evolving FFP, which elaborates on the general document and introduces additional areas of focus. Like the general document, the presentation reiterates the pacifist, participative and intersectional framework, this time adding a fourth element, "transformative," presented as the culmination of the three other elements. Colombia also identifies the "3 Rs" of rights, representation and resources as core pillars of its FFP, though does not provide further details into how they will frame the overall policy approach.

Colombia's presentation also includes a definition of its FFP, which reads as follows: "Mechanism containing a set of principles and tools guiding State foreign policy to recognize, reduce and transform social norms and practices that reproduce gender gaps and inequalities" (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023b). Its main objective is to "promote and ensure gender equality in the bilateral and multilateral policy," for which it presents three goals: to recognize the gender approach as a fundamental tool for international cooperation, to redirect efforts in missions, consulates, embassies and cooperation to promote the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ peoples and to strengthen external relations with women's organizations and the LGBTIQ+ community.

It also introduces more information on the scope of the policy. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombia pledges to gender mainstreaming and gender parity in decision-making roles, as well as institutional policies on gender equality. In embassies, missions and consulates, Colombia commits to making the FFP a priority (outlined in the next paragraph), and introducing staggered parity and criteria and guidelines for gender mainstreaming. The presentation notes that diaspora communities will benefit from Colombia's FFP, as they can expect more "timely services" (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023b) for their needs, though further detail on the specifications of this are not provided. For civil society, women "in all their diversities," (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023b) and the LGBTIQ+ community, Colombia pledges more active participation and inputs in country positions, strengthened relationships and a commitment to prioritize these communities in receiving cooperation resources.

Compared to the general document, the presentation proposes twelve key areas for Colombia's FFP, divided into four groups. The first group is social justice, which includes the focus areas of 1) participation and representation, 2) trade and work (with a focus on paid and unpaid care) and 3) human mobility, or migration. The second group is total peace, which includes 4) UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security,

5) gender-based violence and 6) drugs and society. The third group is environmental justice, which includes 7) environmental protection, conservation and restoration, 8) climate change and 9) biodiversity. Finally, the fourth group is education, science, and culture, which includes 10) education for life, 11) women in sports and 12) culture. This slightly differs from the eight key areas Colombia previously identified, leaving out gender and commerce, gender and diplomacy, gender and culture, gender and cooperation, and women and science. In a comment responding to this draft analysis, foreign ministry officials stated that:

The ‘Gender and commerce’ approach will be included in the social justice area, particularly in the sub-area ‘trade and work’. On the same basis, ‘Gender and culture’, as well as ‘Women and science’ are included in the fourth core area ‘education, science and culture’.

Regarding women and diplomacy, it would be addressed as a mainstreamed approach, in line with the dual approach that we intend to implement. Finally, gender and cooperation would be also included as we are working hand in hand with APC (presidential agency for cooperation) in the ENCI (national strategy for international cooperation), in which we are drafting a chapter of Feminist Cooperation Strategy. (Government official, personal communication, 2023)

On institutionalizing the policy, Colombia mentions four core strategies: 1) a dual approach, internal (within the Ministry) and external (at multilateral and bilateral levels), 2) criteria and guidelines for affirmative action and equality mechanisms in institutional action plans, 3) information systems with indicators for monitoring and 4) participation mechanisms for “social organizations, LGBTIQ+ people and women in their diversities” (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023b). To facilitate institutionalization, Colombia will establish an internal working group and develop an investment plan.

The strategy described is to be articulated in what Colombia describes as a “feminist foreign policy cycle” (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023b): the feminist foreign policy feeds into bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, which influence policies and programs aimed at women and the LGBTIQ+ community, which, in turn, are a part of the National Strategy for the International Cooperation that the FFP integrates.

Analysis

I - Rights

Colombia’s FFP is unique in its explicit support for pacifism within and outside of its borders. Colombia intends to align its FFP with its “Total Peace” agenda, which seeks to end all forms of armed conflict that have impacted the country’s history and trajectory. In the pursuit of this ambitious peace agenda, it is crucial that Colombia prioritize the protection of human rights of vulnerable groups. According to the International Crisis Group, the Total Peace agenda should also address the different forms of violence armed groups use to take advantage of vulnerable communities, such as “child recruitment, sexual violence and movement restrictions” (International Crisis Group, 2023).

While Colombia is still developing its feminist foreign policy, preliminary information received from the government—including the aforementioned guiding document and presentation—reference human rights as a key pillar of the strategy. The details of what this pillar includes, however, are still to be determined.

Colombia's FFP does reference strengthening external relations with women's organizations—in all their diversity—and members of the LGBTIQ+ community, as well as taking steps to advance gender equality in institutional policies of the Ministry.

II - Resources

While Colombia's preliminary background note on its FFP made no mention of budgetary allocations or plans for resourcing, its presentation shared in July indicates that as part of institutionalizing the agenda, Colombia will develop an investment project and establish an internal working group. Per communication received from the Government of Colombia, the investment project—currently pending approval—that will help finance the FFP amounts to about 3,000 Colombian pesos for three years, about USD 750,000. Further, Colombia's presentation notes that civil society organizations, women in all their diversities and the LGBTIQ+ community will benefit from a “prioritization of cooperation resources” (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023b)—a still elusive commitment, but one that implies some increase in funds or access to resources for these groups. As Colombia expounds on its policy and releases the roadmap that Parra has committed to, we expect further details on its plans to resource this agenda.

III - Representation

As Colombia develops its feminist foreign policy, it is evident that it is taking steps to ensure leadership and staffing of this agenda, as well as a process to work alongside civil society and feminist movements in the country. Colombia's appointment of Diana María Parra Romero to carry forward implementation of FFP, and her close proximity to the Foreign Minister and Deputy Minister, is welcome news. Furthermore, the presentation Colombia shared in July indicates that an internal working group will be established to institutionalize the agenda, and that new participation mechanisms will promote inclusion of “social organizations, LGBTIQ+ people and women in their diversities” (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023b). While Colombia has much to delineate on these points, its

preliminary documentation indicates that external stakeholders will be active participants in informing the government's positions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently holding forums in partnership with civil society to formulate a National Action Plan on WPS, a key element of the country's FFP, as well as for its feminist foreign policy, which offers one precedent for civil society engagement that Colombia can strengthen and institutionalize.

On women's representation in leadership, Colombia has quite a way to go in closing gender gaps. Per figures provided by the government, 35 percent of embassy staff are women, compared to 65 percent men. Among managerial positions in the Foreign Ministry, 30 percent are held by women and 70 percent are held by men. Among those pursuing diplomatic careers, 40 percent are women and 60 percent are men. The government notes that these figures require further disaggregation by identities, such as gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age and disability. In its presentation, Colombia identifies representation as a key pillar of its FFP; through its identified internal and external actions, time will tell how effective the Colombian government is taking steps to gender parity, feminist leadership and more equitable workplaces.

IV - Research and Reporting

So far, Colombia has shared little to no plans for accountability of its feminist foreign policy. In its presentation shared in July, the government indicates that one mechanism for institutionalizing the FFP will be developing “information systems,” which are described as “indicators, measurement and monitoring mechanisms.” However, it provides no further information on the details of this plan. As Colombia continues to develop its FFP and compiles guidelines for implementation, it should outline specific, actionable policy points for each of its goals, with associated measurable and time-bound targets. In addition, Colombia should consider regular, public reporting intervals on its FFP and consider external systems of evaluation.

V - Reach

Based on Colombia's general document and its presentation, it is evident that the government is eager to address a range of foreign policy issues through a feminist perspective. Together, the two resources cover issues of peace and security, climate change, migration, trade, commerce, culture and diplomacy—reflecting a wide scope of topics. As the thematic areas highlighted in the two resources are distinct, it is unclear which issues Colombia's eventual FFP guidelines will address. Further, it is also not clear to what extent the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will work with other government agencies to advance implementation.

Though one of the pillars of Colombia's feminist foreign policy is intersectionality, its guidance note only references “race, sexual orientation, and class” (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023b). The concept note for Colombia's CSW event, however, also references ethnic minorities and the LGBTIQ+ population, a heartening but still insufficient expansion of its conceptualization of intersectionality (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 2023). Its presentation shared in July reiterates a commitment to the LBGTQI+ community, and acknowledges women “in all their diversity” (Cancillería de Colombia, 2023b) a welcome term alluding to women's overlapping identities and diverse lived realities. When Colombia releases additional guidelines, it would be prudent to expand its definition of intersectionality to more explicitly address other identities, such as disability, nationality, religious identity, class and more. It can consider the example of Germany's feminist development policy, which lays out a clear definition of intersectionality:

Intersectionality describes how different characteristics that give rise to discrimination against individuals are combined and become mutually reinforcing. This means that forms of discrimination on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social or national origin, disabilities, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or belonging to or being associated with a particular religion, for example, cannot be viewed as separate from each other or as merely cumulative; instead,

new modes of discrimination emerge at the intersections between them. (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2023)

Colombia's FFP covers issues of peace and security, climate change, migration, trade, commerce, culture and diplomacy—reflecting a wide scope of topics.

While there is more the world wants to hear from Colombia on the substance of its developing policy, it bears noting that domestic political dynamics raise concerns for the policy's prospects. When Colombia's National Development Plan 2022-2026 was released, it committed to a “pacifist, participative and intersectional Feminist Foreign Policy” (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, 2023, p. 2017). Vice Minister Laura Gil then took this announcement forward to several multilateral forums, starting with the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (Gil, 2022). However, following months of domestic discussion around the National Development Plan and in the wake of Gil's departure, Colombia's Congress subsequently released a document that commits only to a “foreign policy with a gender perspective.” The decision not to include the term “feminist” in the latest document is a seemingly significant omission that raises questions about the viability of FFP within Colombia's domestic political space. However, Minister Taylor's press briefing reiterating Colombia's support for FFP ameliorates concerns about the government's commitment to this agenda, as does its presentation shared in July—which lays out core elements of its policy and plans to institutionalize the evolving strategy.

We now await the eventual release of Colombia's guidelines further detailing its FFP, look forward to Parra's and Deputy Minister Taylor's leadership in supporting this agenda and closely watch their potential influence in the region and around the world.

Current Status

The Government of Germany first announced its commitment to a feminist foreign policy in November 2021, in its Coalition Agreement 2021-2025. The document outlines the priorities of the new government's leading political parties: the Social Democrats, Greens and Liberals. The phrase "feminist foreign policy" was the only term written in English; it was also italicized, a noteworthy editorial choice that will be further unpacked in the following analysis. The process for development, consultation and implementation of Germany's feminist foreign policy has been carried forward by its Federal Foreign Office, with its official Guidelines, *Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy*, published in March 2023.

Germany is a donor country; its development assistance policy is set and administered by a separate ministry, the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which also in March 2023 released a feminist development policy. The publication of these two strategies—as well as the public leadership of the two ministers, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development Svenja Schulze—has elevated Germany's global engagement on feminist foreign and development policy and has set high expectations for implementation. The following sections provide an overview of Germany's two policies and analyze their content.

Feminist Foreign Policy

Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy: Federal Foreign Office Guidelines, Germany's 89-page publication outlining its approach, is organized per the "three Rs" model first set forth by Sweden: advancing women's and girls' rights, backed by *resources* and supporting increased *representation* of women and marginalized groups. Minister Baerbock and a number of other officials had for many months previewed the policy as including the 3Rs as well as a "D," for diversity, underscoring the importance of an intersectional approach to Germany's FFP, though the final document does not include a separate diversity goal on the same level with the 3 Rs (although there is ample reference to lower-case "d" diversity throughout the policy). We will unpack these pieces more in the analysis section.

The document asserts the intention of cultivating a "feminist reflex," whereby a feminist perspective influences all foreign policy ideas, activities and forums at national, regional and international levels, and fosters an internal cultural shift as well. The Guidelines explicitly note that they are designed as a "living document," therefore open to "ideas and revisions, criticism and corrections"—and are developed in parallel to BMZ's feminist development policy (*Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy*, 2023).

The document looks both outward and inward, ascribing guidelines for external foreign policy activities and internal policies of the Federal Foreign Office.

Regarding external foreign policy activities, the document identifies six guidelines, covering issues of (1) peace and security, (2) humanitarian assistance and crisis management, (3) human rights policy, (4) climate diplomacy and external energy policy, (5) foreign trade and investment policy and (6) cultural and societal diplomacy. Regarding internal policies of the Federal Foreign Office, the guidelines address (7) gender equality, diversity and inclusion in the foreign service, (8) equal opportunities and combating discrimination,

(9) diversity within ranks and (10) dialogue and network building with civil society, citizens and international partners. To support the implementation of these ten guidelines, the document presents four feminist foreign policy instruments: mainstreaming, multipliers, gender budgeting and monitoring.

In each of the six guidelines relevant to external foreign policy activities, the document highlights key objectives, as well as select projects and approaches the government is currently undertaking to support their advancement and implementation. Some projects and approaches are described in more detail than others, and it is not always specified how resources will be allocated toward their success. While the document features much more detail, some significant commitments include: penalizing conflict-related sexual violence through targeted sanctions; ensuring that 100 percent of humanitarian assistance is gender-sensitive, and gender-targeted “wherever appropriate” (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 16); expanding project work on sexual and reproductive health and rights; advocating for the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals in bilateral and multilateral settings; developing a federal strategy on climate diplomacy that centers women and diversity; integrating gender into European Union trade policy; commissioning an independent scientific study to identify “exclusionary mechanisms and structures” (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 54) embedded in German cultural diplomacy; funding scholarships to research German colonial history; and creating safe spaces for vulnerable groups to meet and network, particularly in authoritarian societies where diverse perspectives are not welcome (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023).

The internal guidelines for the Federal Foreign Office also articulate several commitments. These include: actively promoting diversity in the foreign ministry and the German public service; supporting gender parity at all levels of the Federal Foreign Office; advancing equal opportunities in recruitment, promotion and retention; urging zero tolerance for sexual harassment; and encouraging dialogue with civil society (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023).

In the section on instruments, or mechanisms for implementation, the document notes that FFP will be afforded “top-level attention” through the appointment of an Ambassador for Feminist Foreign Policy. Over the summer, Ambassador Helga Barth assumed this position while retaining her role as Director for Human Rights, International Development, Health and Social Affairs and Coordinator for Sustainable Development at the Federal Foreign Office, before rotating out of the position by August. A new Ambassador was subsequently named: Gesa Bräutigam, who formerly served as German Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). When referring to the appointment of a FFP Ambassador, the Guidelines use the pronoun “she,” implying the position is to be filled by a woman. The Ambassador oversees the Feminist Foreign Policy Section of the Federal Foreign Office, which had already been created at the time of the Guidelines’ launch. Furthermore, the document notes that “set contacts” for FFP will be identified at all Directorates-General of the Federal Foreign Office and missions abroad; it does not stipulate the positions and responsibilities of these contacts, nor a process for identification. The document also notes that a high-ranking steering committee will oversee implementation of the Guidelines and solicit feedback from civil society (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023).

Additionally, the document explains that FFP principles will be incorporated in all foreign policy strategies, including the first ever National Security Strategy, the China Strategy and the climate diplomacy strategy. The Federal Foreign Office will encourage uptake of the Guidelines by issuing a “Best Feminist Practice” prize for staff, integrating FFP in all compulsory training courses and ensuring the Foreign Minister meets with women’s networks or marginalized communities in all trips. Germany also commits to supporting existing women’s and diplomatic networks at the regional level and in multilateral dialogues to have a “multiplying” effect on support for FFP (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 76).

The Federal Foreign Office also commits to establishing “systematic gender budgeting throughout our institution on the basis of an inclusive concept of gender.” For the first time, all project funding in the Federal Foreign Office’s 2023 budget will be assessed against the [OECD’s gender marker criteria](#). By 2025, the Federal Foreign Office pledges that 85 percent of its project funding will be “gender-sensitive,” or that it will address gender in some way, and 8 percent will be “gender-transformative,” or that gender equality will be its principal goal. (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 79).

Finally, on monitoring and accountability, the guidelines only ascribe a monitoring and evaluation plan for the realm of peace and security, which will follow the third National Action Plan for the WPS Agenda and rely on exchanges with civil society organizations, namely the 1325 Coalition. For all other issues, a monitoring plan is not identified. Finally, the Federal Foreign Office commits to establishing a forum for critical exchange, supported by the Minister of State and the Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance, to foster connections to civil society and continue conversations on the further development of Germany’s FFP (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 80).

Feminist Development Policy

On the same day, March 1st, 2023, the Federal Foreign Office released its Guidelines, the BMZ also published its *Feminist Development Policy: For Just and Strong Societies Worldwide*.¹ The policy was developed

following consultations with over 400 stakeholders, including dialogues with over 50 German civil society organizations, a broad online survey issued to both Global North (54 percent of respondents) and South (46 percent of respondents) organizations and a high-level conference with focus group discussions. The BMZ also released a document synthesizing key themes that emerged from the consultations, including civil society contributions, requests and recommendations, which are featured throughout the Feminist Development Policy (Synthesis of Contributions by Civil Society, 2022).

The BMZ’s *Feminist Development Policy* is divided into five sections: (1) an introduction describing the policy as gender-transformative and intersectional,² (2) contextual background, including challenges and opportunities, (3) parameters for implementation and cooperation, (4) strategic policy orientations and (5) evaluation, or measuring success. At the outset, the document states that there is no single concept of feminism, that feminism is not a Western invention, nor exclusively white and Eurocentric, and that, through their diversity, all forms of feminism find commonality in their “opposition to discrimination and oppression and their commitment to gender-equitable power relations” (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 5).

Like *Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy*, the development policy is grounded in the “3 Rs” framework of rights, resources and representation. It further identifies three levels at which the BMZ will operationalize this strategy: the implementation level through relevant procedures, instruments and funding, international

¹ BMZ launched its feminist development policy (in German) on March 1, 2023—alongside the Federal Foreign Office’s launch of its feminist foreign policy. The English version of the feminist development policy was released later in May.

² The BMZ provides the following definition of “intersectionality:” “Intersectionality describes how different characteristics that give rise to discrimination against individuals are combined and become mutually reinforcing. This means that forms of discrimination on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social or national origin, disabilities, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or belonging to or being associated with a particular religion, for example, cannot be viewed as separate from each other or as merely cumulative; instead, new modes of discrimination emerge at the intersections between them” (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 16). Furthermore, it describes gender-transformative policies as addressing the root causes of gender equality as well as its symptoms.

cooperation and at the institutional level within BMZ and implementing organizations, including GIZ and KfW.³ The document notes that Germany’s feminist foreign and development policies will be coherent in their approach, and that the BMZ will advocate for feminist approaches domestically and in international settings.

Furthermore, the document describes the BMZ’s intentions to pursue a post-colonial and anti-racist approach to its feminist development policy. It states, “This (learning) process, which involves critical reflection on issues of power, starts with the recognition that colonial continuities and racist thinking are still present in German development cooperation today. The aim is to eliminate these continuities and ways of thinking from development cooperation and to establish an equal partnership between the Global North and the Global South” (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 11). The BMZ notes that it will adapt all programs and objectives to country context, recognizing that patriarchal norms and social practice vary. The feminist development policy aims to be gender-transformative, which the BMZ describes as focused on the causes of gender inequality, not just its symptoms (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 17).

The BMZ will aim to pursue a post-colonial and anti-racist approach and adapt all programs and objectives to country context, recognizing that patriarchal norms and social practice vary.

With regard to “rights,” the BMZ focuses on the elimination of discriminatory laws, such as those that restrict access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, economic opportunity, a safe and inclusive digital space, land rights and services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. On resources, the BMZ supports the improved “access to and control over resources for women, girls and marginalized groups and individuals,” through provisions like social protection and decent work, as well as increased resourcing for women’s rights organizations and advocates.

On representation, the BMZ calls for full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making bodies across politics, society, peace processes and the judiciary, and also “supports an enabling environment for women in relation to globally and socially just and environmentally sustainable economic and tax systems” (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 23-27).

While the document details the BMZ’s approach to resources more extensively, some key commitments include the following: by 2025, 93 percent of all newly committed project funding will promote gender equality. Eight percent of these funds will support gender equality as a principal objective, and 85 percent will support gender equality as a significant objective per the OECD gender marker criteria. Furthermore, the BMZ commits to implementing the federal LGBTI Inclusion Strategy in its foreign policy and development cooperation activities; supporting local civil society participation in all stages of the project cycle; advancing gender equality by fostering alliances in “multilateral forums, development banks, funds and working groups;” and promoting more gender-equitable policies and trainings within the ministry itself (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 31).

On plans for monitoring and evaluation, the BMZ commits to releasing a Gender Action Plan later this year which will detail further targets and actions, as well as a system for impact assessment. Following its release,

³ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW).

the BMZ commits to collecting relevant data and undergoing a portfolio analysis to determine a baseline from which to improve its programs and policies. The BMZ says it will host regular meetings with implementing organizations, and in 2025 will conduct a process of reflection to evaluate process, shortfalls and success. To assess the success of internal objectives, the BMZ will rely both on the upcoming Gender Action Plan and the new Gender Equality Plan (2023-2026). Throughout this period, BMZ also commits to making use of new and existing feminist evaluation and analysis tools, including at the EU and among multilateral organizations (Feminist Development Policy, 2023).

Analysis

I - Rights

Both the *Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy* guidelines and the *Feminist Development Policy* explicitly acknowledge the systemic nature of gender inequality, and assert women’s and human rights as a priority area for attention across various domains. Germany makes specific commitments to address rights issues in the areas of peace and security, human rights and humanitarian assistance. For example, Germany pledges to increase the number of women in peacebuilding and negotiating roles, in order to address women’s human rights in peace processes in places like Iraq and South Sudan. It proposes measures against conflict-related sexual violence both in country-specific contexts, like support for women’s shelters in Afghanistan, but also pushing for stronger structures to combat this issue at bodies like the UN and the EU. It pledges to protect the reproductive rights of women, girls, and marginalized groups, and the rights of LGBTQI+ people, through expanding work in international and country-based advocacy projects. It also makes a commitment to “help reduce the risk of gender-based disadvantages in the use of AI-driven algorithms” (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 52) through Germany’s role as chair of the Freedom Online Coalition’s Task Force on AI and Human Rights, and to combat female genital mutilation and lack of menstrual hygiene for refugee women.

As Germany seeks to build its “feminist reflex,” it will be important not only to develop and implement targeted programs that advance women’s and LGBTQ+ rights, but also to review and scrutinize broader development assistance partnerships to ensure that they are advancing—rather than undermining—the stated goals of its feminist foreign and development policies. For example, a 2023 report by Provost revealed that Germany was one of many countries that, in recent years, has contributed with aid funding to the anti-LGBTQI+ backlash that led to the criminalization of homosexuality in Uganda. Though some proposed measures, like funding feminist research in former German colonies, are a good first step to “an approach that reflects post-colonial realities,” (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 56) there is still a lot of work to be done.

II - Resources

Perhaps the most ambitious goals articulated in both the feminist foreign and development policies are around the “resourcing” pillar: the Federal Foreign Office pledges 85 percent of its project funding to be significant, and 8 percent to be principal, by 2025; the BMZ articulates the same goal and timeline for its new

⁴ The research by Provost (2023) revealed that, aside from Germany, development aid from three other FFP countries was also funneled into anti-LGBTQI+ backlash in Uganda: Canada, Sweden (before abandoning FFP) and the Netherlands.

project funding as well. The Federal Foreign Office also commits to applying gender budgeting to all of its project funding by the end of the legislative period, and then expanding it to cover the ministry's whole budget (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023). This is an incredibly ambitious, specific and laudable target, and a real stretch goal for Germany, which to date despite being the largest donor by volume in the FFP cohort, has traditionally ranked among the lower levels of spending on marker 1 and 2, respectively. This is on track with civil society calls for increased funding: feminist advocates have been calling for all foreign policy funding, including official development assistance, to address gender equality, and for at least 20 percent of those funds to be specifically targeted to programs that advance gender equality as a principal goal (or GE2 on the OECD-DAC gender marker) (Thompson, 2020). However, per latest figures released by OECD, Germany still has a long way to go.

The 2019-2020 figures (Development Finance for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, 2022) showed that both Germany's share of ODA spent on projects with gender equality as a principal or significant objective were on the average or lower end of the scale—42% and 2%, respectively, but as the highest volume donor among FFP countries was a top donor for both combating violence against women (\$41 million) and supporting women's rights organizations and institutions (\$43 million). Based on this analysis, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW, 2022) recommended that Germany strengthen their program design to increase funding levels for gender equality as a significant or principal goal at levels more in line with the larger cohort of FFP countries.

However, this year's report (OECD 2023) shows that rather than increasing funds for gender in the 2020-2021 period, Germany experienced a 1% decrease in overall GE1 or significant funding, compared to the previous year's data. While it's important to note that these figures, despite being the most recent available, actually predate Germany's commitment to adopt feminist foreign and development policies under its new government, they do show a trend line headed the wrong direction; coupled with news in August 2023

that Germany intends to cut its overall development assistance by 5% (Gawel, 2023), there is reason for concern. Furthermore, in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, cuts by the Ministry of Finance added over €50 billion to the defense budget while shrinking funds available for ODA by 12%. This means that, though the percentage committed to funding for gender equality as a principal or significant objective (GE1) might have increased, the total amount that percentage is pulled from has decreased, and with the war, increased costs with refugees and humanitarian assistance are expected to consume a large part of the ODA budget, leaving less room for gender-focused programming (Kinkartz, 2022).

Nonetheless, the German government has this year made public commitments in its Feminist Development Policy and Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy to increase to 85% of funding marked significant, and 8% to be marked principal, by 2025. This is an ambitious and laudable stretch goal for Germany, and one that clearly indicates it is listening to civil society feedback and responding to community recommendations for a more ambitious level of investment as an indicator of feminist development policy. As the largest FFP donor, reaching these targets would present a tremendous increase in funds available for gender equality (although at 8% the target for principal funding is still roughly half the levels that other top donor countries like Spain and Canada have committed). Furthermore, the pledge to invest in a gender-transformative manner "whenever appropriate" (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 16) leaves considerable wiggle room.

The resourcing targets for both the foreign and development ministries are ambitious and, if implemented, will cement Germany's reputation as a government that has truly sought transformation in its approach, taking up goals in response to civil society recommendations and community visions. This is feminist foreign policy in practice.

However, it bears noting that there is one area in which Germany has been encouraged to act but has

not yet committed to do so: funding for women's rights organizations. Due to legal limitations, BMZ is not currently able to directly fund civil society organizations outside of Germany—it can only do so through intermediaries like the implementing agency GIZ, through support of multilateral institutions like UN Women or through Germany-based NGOs with international partners. This has been a major point of emphasis among women's human rights defenders, feminist organizations and movements (Bernarding, 2023), which are grossly under-resourced. However, despite its responsiveness to advocacy to increase levels of funding for gender equality issues, the BMZ fails to pledge to increase funds for civil society organizations and feminist movements in its feminist development policy. Instead, it simply states that the “BMZ is assessing direct participation formats and mechanisms for the funding of local civil society, grassroots organizations and (human rights) activists,” but makes no further specifications (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 33).

III - Representation

At a rhetorical level, it is clear that feminist foreign and development policy are priorities for the government of Germany. Support for this agenda comes from the highest levels, with both Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Economic Cooperation and Development Minister Svenja Schulze consistently advocating for feminist approaches to foreign and development policy in capital and on the international stage.

On the multilateral front, Germany has exercised its leadership to advance a feminist approach from the United Nations to the G7 and among international financial institutions like the World Bank. At the United Nations, Germany co-chairs with Chile the Feminist Foreign Policy Plus (FFP+) Group, an informal group of member-states interested in advancing FFP in UN processes and negotiations (UN Web TV, 2023). During Germany's G7 presidency in 2022, FFP was a feature of a number of official speeches and ultimately included as a priority in the Leaders' Communiqué. This is a significant achievement for Germany, which was the first G7

presidency to negotiate such language in the final document despite previous efforts led by fellow FFP governments Canada and France in 2018 and 2019, respectively (W7 Communiqué, 2022).

On the international assistance front, during an event on feminist development policy at the World Bank Annual Meetings in October 2022, Minister Schulze not only highlighted Germany's efforts to advance gender equality in its development programming, she also called on more donors to follow suit and urged the World Bank itself to take a “quantum leap forward” in its own approach (Ahmed, 2022; World Bank, 2022).

This agenda has clearly been established as a priority in Berlin as well, where the Federal Foreign Office in September 2022 hosted the world's first foreign ministers' meeting on feminist foreign policy. In addition to using its convening power to elevate attention to FFP at the ministerial level for the first time, Germany also answered calls from civil society to utilize an inclusive and consultative approach in crafting its own policy by using the event to solicit recommendations and feedback from fellow FFP governments and civil society representatives from around the world. This was part of a series of consultations with German and international civil society as described above.

The significance of the German-hosted ministerial meeting on FFP should not be overlooked: it set an important precedent that seems likely to be continued, with the Kingdom of the Netherlands having committed to hosting a follow-up conference in 2023 and Mexico in 2024. Germany's leadership in this regard encourages other governments to give more urgent, ministerial-level attention to FFP—which had traditionally been deputized to the ambassador or staff level, denying it the same degree of importance as other foreign policy and security issues.

Also in September 2022, BMZ hosted a public high-level conference on feminist development policy with Minister Schulze prior to the feminist development policy's release. The ministry similarly invited

German and global civil society to partake in panel discussions and consultations, many of which focused on issues often overlooked, such as women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa (Entwicklungsministerium, 2022).

Both conferences were consultative in nature; they invested in and invited expertise to substantively influence their drafting process and to help build buy-in among ministry staff. The in-person nature of the events was resource-intensive and will not necessarily be achievable for all governments, but we believe it has set a precedent for the priority governments should give to feminist foreign and development policies, as well as the processes that feed into them.

Nonetheless, advocates have pointed out that the processes of formulating both Germany's feminist foreign and development policies could have been stronger, and more intentionally inclusive. For instance, CFFP writes that while BMZ undertook several consultative measures—including those mentioned in the previous section—their process “was lacking in two ways: firstly, there was insufficient focus on participants from the Global South, with excessive participation of German civil society organizations...Secondly, in-person consultations were only held in Germany in English or German, and participating civil society was not compensated for their time, effectively excluding many grassroots actors who operate in survival mode without funding” (Boodhoo & Denkovski, 2023, p. 11). Zilla highlights the fact that no Global South representatives participated in the consultations ran by the Federal Foreign Office (2023) and that there was weak inter-ministerial coordination in their execution (2022), which might have been responsible for some of the dissonance in form and content between the final versions of the two documents.

To complement BMZ's process and gather inputs for the feminist development policy, CFFP organized four consultations, offering interpretation in five languages, effectively reaching over 100 feminists from more than 25 countries. One of the main findings emerging from these consultations was that Germany's feminist development policy should

“fund, support, and work with local feminist experts, as equal partners in co-designing, co-leading and adapting government-funded development programmes to ensure do-no harm in all projects” (Boodhoo & Denkovski, p. 18).

Finally, Germany is clearly prioritizing increased representation of women and minoritized groups internally. The policy commits to internal measures to enhance the participation of women in the Federal Foreign Office, where significant gaps also remain—for example, a mere 27% of foreign missions were headed by women at the time the FFP guidelines were published (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023). The measures described include intersectional components, like ensuring missions are accessible to employees with disabilities and LGBTQI+ families. Additionally, the document includes processes to be implemented that will combat workplace discrimination and ensure that all employees have equal opportunities to thrive and advance. Some commitments are strong and specific, like enabling more embassies to be “run by married couples on a job-sharing basis” (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 61), while others, like “Establishing appreciation for diversity as a management responsibility” (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 69), could stand to be further elaborated as to the how, by when, where and by whom.

IV - Research and Reporting

On monitoring and evaluation, Germany's FFP would benefit from a more comprehensive plan dedicated to measuring the success and implementation of its Guidelines. At present, it relies on the WPS National Action Plan to assess its peace and security goals, but ascribes no evaluation criteria to all other elements of the strategy.

It is difficult to assess the quality of evaluation mechanisms for the feminist development policy until BMZ releases its Gender Action Plan later this year. However, the pledge to “hold regular meetings with its implementing organizations (primarily GIZ and KfW) in order to discuss implementation progress, possible challenges and any unidentified

potential is valuable—though the document provides no further details on the frequency, substance and staffing of such meetings.

In the spirit of transparency, feminist advocates have called upon governments to publicly report on progress at regular intervals; adopt specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (or “SMART”) indicators; and utilize external and third-party systems of research and evaluation to validate and interrogate results (Thompson, 2020). Germany’s policies have yet to incorporate this level of rigor, but a refined system of evaluation will be necessary to drive accountability and determine best practices.

V - Reach

Since their release, Germany’s feminist foreign and development policies have garnered both compliments and critique for their substance, coherence and specificity around timelines, budgets and implementation. Both policies are among the most extensive that have been published thus far by any government, covering a wide range of topics, offering concrete guidelines and tangible next steps to move the agendas forward, most notably the specific ODA targets to be reached by 2025. However, the FFP lacks time-bound, measurable goals for the other two Rs—rights and representation—and loses strength by having omitted the “D” for diversity, which would have more explicitly asserted an intersectional approach including and beyond a focus on women.

On coherence, Germany’s FFP only authorizes activities of the Federal Foreign Office. While it addresses a need to partner with other ministries and fosters linkages with relevant federal policies,⁵ it does not assign a feminist approach to the “whole-of-government.” Brechenmacher points out that the FFP makes no mention of the Chancellery’s role, which “raises questions about whether the agenda will be

implemented at the highest level” (Brechenmacher, 2023). It bears noting, however, that the 2022 G7 process, which resulted in an outcome document that references “feminist development, foreign and trade policies,” was led by Chancellery’s office—indicating some level of interest in carrying forward this agenda. The feminist development policy is also specific to the BMZ, but calls for “whole-of-government dialogue” to promote the “coherence of feminist, human rights-based approaches...” (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 33).

A key tension here regards how the German FFP relates to German security policy. Before we present this debate, it is important to situate the German FFP in its larger political context. While the new coalition government leans more progressive than the previous one, as evinced by its commitment to a feminist foreign policy—among other progressive approaches—within its coalition agreement, the concept was not without its critics at the outset, even before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine dramatically shifted the landscape for German foreign and security policy. Recall, for instance, that feminist foreign policy was the only phrase in the coalition agreement written in English, and that salacious headlines in German media pilloried the concept and its proponents (Bogdański, 2022; Vanheuckelom, 2023).

Fast forward to February 27, 2022, and this dynamic only intensifies: with the Russian invasion, Chancellor Scholz addresses Parliament and announces that the invasion has presented a *Zeitenwende* (Hackenbroich et. al, 2022), or sea change, in German security policy. In the wake of Russian aggression against its neighbor, Germany will reverse decades of low investment in its military, meet for the first time NATO defense spending targets, divest itself of its dependence on Russian gas and adopt a stronger posture not only for its national defense, but also for its neighbors and allies on the

⁵ The FFP states work will be coordinated with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (or BMZ), the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, the Federal Ministry of Defence and “the other federal ministries, particularly where their remits are affected” (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 14).

European continent specifically and within the NATO alliance more broadly. On March 18th, 2022, the government announces that it will—for the first time in its history—draft a national security strategy, articulating its approach under these new conditions (Berry, 2023; Integrated Security for Germany, 2023).

The Chancellery holds the pen for the national security strategy; the foreign ministry does for the feminist foreign policy. Assertions are made that both documents—among others that are also in the works, like a China strategy—will be designed in tandem and present a coherent approach. But this is difficult to do both in principle and in practice, and much ink is spilled about the tensions between the two within the German foreign policy establishment and in larger civil society debates. When the FFP is published in March of 2023, it explicitly asserts that it does not take a pacifist approach, stoking criticism among advocates skeptical of increased military spending (Brachenmacher, 2023). When the National Security Strategy is at last released after multiple delays, more than a year later, it does cross-reference the feminist foreign policy multiple times (including, for the first time, in German language) but, in the analysis of Stamm (2023), “does not go far enough in explaining what a comprehensive FFP entails.”

Saskia Brechenmacher (2023), fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, notes that while not all feminist advocates support complete pacifism, Germany’s simultaneous pivot toward deterrence politics and higher military spending to counter Russian aggression in Ukraine directly contradicts most conceptions of FFP and the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. Brechenmacher writes that Germany’s FFP guidelines “offer little guidance on how short-term responses to Russian aggression should be balanced against a longer-term strategy to address the root causes of global insecurity and peacefully manage global geopolitical competition, and how a feminist approach might reshape what this broader vision entails or how it is to be realized” (Brechenmacher, 2023). Zilla (2023) and Dinkel et. al (2023) similarly argue that the sea change described by Scholz goes against the current of central feminist principles in international politics, and the feminist

foreign policy lacks specific guidance to address this dissonance. Zilla claims that “the lack of reflection on what a feminist shaping of German and European support for Ukraine — in and beyond arms deliveries — could look like is surprising” (2023, p. 7) due to the self-identified pragmatic character of the German feminist foreign policy.

Many women’s rights organizations and feminist movements have been advancing peace as a key element of FFP, grounded in principles of the longer-standing WPS Agenda. For example, in its Feminist Foreign Policy Manifesto for Germany which was published before the last parliamentary elections in September 2021, Berlin-based Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP) calls out Germany for the “prioritization of a militarized state-centric conception of security over feminist understandings of security,” (Bernarding et. al, 2021, p. 17) which center the experiences of the individual, and focus on the expansion of rights, access to resources and justice. Germany’s FFP does, however, reiterate its support for implementing and strengthening the WPS agenda—particularly its goals of increasing women’s participation in peace processes, combating sexual- and gender-based violence and promoting gender-sensitive approaches to arms control and arms export control (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 20-27). Further, Germany’s FFP endorses goals of disarmament, human security and protecting vulnerable populations, but falls short of explicitly directing resources towards them. Nor does it explicitly develop a peace strategy that focuses on structural inequalities and militarized power relations, as CFFP’s manifesto recommends (Bernarding et. al, 2021).

Zooming out more broadly as we observe other trends in the global FFP discourse, we note that Germany’s dismissal of pacifism in its feminist foreign policy is in direct contrast with another country that is releasing a FFP this year, Colombia, which has committed to a “total peace” agenda within and outside of its borders as a core element of its FFP. Suffice it to say that the tensions around how defense and security policy do or do not comport with feminist foreign policies has been and continues

to be one of the central and unresolved tensions within the growing field.

Refugee and migration policy is another arguably relevant area that gets very little attention in both Germany's feminist foreign and development policies. This issue is particularly pertinent in Europe, where many migrants seek asylum and face discrimination on the basis of their race, ethnicity and nationality. Germany itself saw a 6.3% increase in 2021 of immigrants and first-generation Germans, constituting 24.3% of its total population (DW, 2023). The National Security Strategy contends that "regulated immigration enriches Germany; indeed our country is reliant on it, not least because of demographic trends" (Integrated Security for Germany, 2023, p. 27) despite the ever-present link made between migration and conflict and disaster.

On their websites, both the German Federal Foreign Office and the BMZ identify migration and refugee issues as key areas of concern, grounded in commitments to international humanitarian policies—such as the Global Compact on Refugees, the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration (Federal Foreign Office, 2022; Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, n.d.-a; Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, n.d.-b).

CFFP's manifesto notes that "the current German government [i.e. the previous one] continues to promote discourse that characterizes migration as a security issue," (Bernading et. al, 2021, p. 5) further stigmatizing migrants and refugees in the country. Instead, CFFP calls upon Germany to provide gender-sensitive support for migrants through every stage of their journey, and to champion this cause at international levels (Bernading et. al, 2021). Germany's feminist development policy similarly neglects to mention this population—despite its stated intentions to counter racism and colonial legacy. Likewise, Germany's FFP Guidelines mention refugees only in the context of their vulnerability to sexual violence and exploitation, exacerbated in periods of climate-related disasters, and two projects supporting solar panels in refugee camps and menstrual hygiene for women and girl refugees. Further, the Guidelines mention

immigrants only in the context of increasing their employment in the Federal Foreign Office (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023).

Climate change is an area of focus in the policy, and Germany pledges to gender mainstream all climate processes. This is an important commitment that will be particularly useful in forums considering climate finance as well as in the many multilateral processes mentioned in the policy, like COP 27 and the EU Khartoum Process on migration, where Germany, as chair, says it will emphasize the gender and climate dimensions of the migration crisis. The feminist foreign policy also addresses gaps in finance, labor and trade by pushing for further international compliance to the ILO Convention No. 190 on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work and supporting network and dialogue-building in "selected countries" (Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy, 2023, p. 51).

Finally, prior to the release of the Guidelines, German government representatives had publicly mentioned that in addition to the "3 Rs," German FFP would feature an additional "D" for diversity (GermanyDiplo, 2022). While the Guidelines endorse an intersectional approach to foreign policy activities, the lack of attention to refugee and migrant issues in particular is one indication that further attention to diversity is necessary.

In a related vein, the German FFP's definition of intersectionality does not mention race or nationality. The feminist development policy fares better in this regard, including a broader definition of intersectionality that addresses "gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social or national origin, disabilities, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or belonging to or being associated with a particular religion" (Feminist Development Policy, 2023, p. 16). It more explicitly acknowledges the impacts of racism and colonialism, particularly toward Indigenous peoples, and their intersections with gender inequities. Notably, the BMZ also acknowledges different variants of feminism, such as Black feminism and socialist feminism, and explicitly commits to a non-binary view of gender—which is not articulated as clearly in the feminist foreign policy (Feminist Development Policy, 2023).

THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

Current Status

While the Kingdom of the Netherlands has long been a leading development donor on gender equality and women's rights, and has, by some accounts, been implementing a feminist foreign policy for many years in practice, if not in name, on May 13, 2022, Minister of Foreign Affairs Wopke Hoekstra and Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Liesje Schreinemacher officially announced that the Netherlands would make explicit its adoption of a feminist foreign policy.

This followed a recommendation to do so in an independent expert study by Saskia Ivens and Barbara van Paassen that was commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, following a request by the Senate to examine the possibilities for making Dutch foreign policy feminist.

Published in August 2021, the study found that the Netherlands had already been taking some necessary steps in the direction of a feminist foreign policy: the Foreign Ministry was already applying gender mainstreaming and possessed a gender-sensitive approach to diplomacy and programming. It was also adhering to explicit gender-focused targets centered on representation, economic empowerment, prevention and elimination of violence against women (VAW) and strengthening of women's roles in conflict prevention and resolution (Ivens & van Paassen, 2021). The Netherlands is also one of the top donors of gender-focused aid in the world, ranked third with 67 percent of funds being marked gender-focused between 2014 and 2020 (Papagiotti et. al, 2022).

All of these factors led Ivens and van Paassen to conclude that a feminist foreign policy would be the “logical next step” (2021, p. 37) for the Netherlands. Key priorities of this approach were telegraphed in a progress update to Parliament that was sent on November 8, 2022 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. This borrowed the famous “3 Rs” framework from Sweden (now also utilized by Germany) of “Rights, Resources and Representation,” and also included a fourth (also developed by Sweden, albeit subsequent to its original 3 Rs framework), “Reality Check.” The letter also presents seven priority areas of the Dutch FFP as: 1) setting the international agenda, 2) gender mainstreaming the policy cycle, 3) gender budgeting, 4) investigating and considering root causes, 5) including civil society, 6) evaluating the impact of the policy on women and LGBTIQ+ people and 7) looking critically inwards at its own organization (Hoekstra & Schreinemacher, 2022).

The full policy scope and objectives are currently being fleshed out in a handbook for MFA civil servants and diplomats in consultation with civil society. While its publication has been considerably delayed, it is highly anticipated and, in the words of one public servant, is “aiming for quality over speed” (Personal communication, 2023). This approach may prove ill-advised, as on July 9th Prime Minister Rutte tendered his resignation to the King, announcing that his coalition had failed to come to consensus over immigration disputes. Elections will be held later in the year, on November 22nd, 2023.

⁶ The 2021 study by Ivens and van Paassen was commissioned in response to a request from the Democrats 66' parliamentary party to inform them on other countries' experiences with feminist foreign policy and what value was added in those case studies in order to examine possibilities and opportunities for a feminist foreign policy in the Netherlands.

Nonetheless, the Netherlands is not waiting to embrace its mantle as a FFP leader. In May 2023 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a news item celebrating progress in the first year of its feminist foreign policy, noting various bilateral and multilateral efforts to promote gender equality, investigate and hold accountable sexual violence as a war crime, and include gender expertise in its COP27 delegation (Government of the Netherlands, 2023). Together with FFP+ like-minded countries the Netherlands has been leading the development of a high level event during the UN General Assembly in September 2023, with the aim to promote FFP and enhance political will and cooperation in this field. Then, on November 1-2, 2023, the Netherlands will organize the Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy conference in The Hague, following the German handover to the Dutch at the conclusion of the Berlin conference last year.

It is unclear if or when the Handbook will be officially released—perhaps at the November Hague conference. The MFA also needs to approve proposed plans to monitor FFP progress via annual plans and reports of all departments and missions, a commitment that would start in 2024.

Analysis

I - Rights

Though the development of a feminist foreign policy would likely expand the ground covered in this area, the Netherlands' existing gender-focused foreign policy work centers around four thematic goals for women's rights: political empowerment and participation of women, economic and climate justice for women, preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls and strengthening the role of women in conflict—all crucial areas for feminist leadership in light of the current, shared global challenges of the day.

Importantly, the Dutch have traditionally exercised an inclusive approach to gender equality, championing the rights of LGBTQ+ people as well as women and girls: Ivens and van Paassen (2021) note the Netherlands' advocacy in the EU space against the backsliding of the rights of LGBTQ+ people and access to sexual and reproductive health, for example, pushing for strategic language in official documents. In their letter of intent to the Parliament, Ministers Hoekstra and Schreinemacher stated that equality for LGBTI people would be a priority in the feminist foreign policy (Hoekstra & Schreinemacher, 2022).

Finally, the Dutch are establishing leadership in the area of countering anti-rights activity, having developed a Countering Pushback strategy that includes a strategic bilateral outreach agenda focusing on a handful of 'moving middle' countries and conservative countries. As one official wrote us in a 2023 email communication: "The objective is twofold: 1) enlarging the group of silent/middle ground countries that do not speak up (sufficiently) and; 2) improve tactics on neutralizing the most hard line opposition countries. Within the strategy we focus on long-term relationships building, both in-country by our Embassies as well as at Permanent Representation level (in NY/GEV/BXL etc.) through, for example, the following instruments: organizing joint side events (at for example CSW on keeping Girls in School) and co-hosting events, informal breakfasts at for example EU Council working group level, HRC, Ambassador level lunches, informal dinners, outreach/visits by our Ambassadors and Special Envoys on Human Rights, Gender Equality and Women's Rights, and Freedom of Religion and Beliefs, proactive responsive lines on common issues and tools such as the Nexus initiative and Group of Friends that can be used for cross regional collaboration and outreach" (NL MFA, personal communication, 2023).

II- Resources

In addition to the political challenges the collapse of the government presents to a future FFP, proposed budget cuts leave a question mark on how the Netherlands will handle its gender funding. The Netherlands has had a mixed performance in this regard: the last two years of data supplied by the OECD show that the Netherlands saw a 7 percent increase in gender-transformative aid, from 24 percent in 2019-2020 to 31 percent (the highest of all DAC countries) in 2020-2021, as well as a 4 percent decrease, from 55 percent to 51 percent, in gender-sensitive aid (Development Finance for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, 2022; Official Development Assistance for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in 2020-21, 2023). These data also reveal that the Netherlands is, by a large margin, the biggest donor to women's organizations and institutions: USD 199 million were committed in the 2020-2021 period, a difference of over USD 100 million in comparison to the second largest donor (Official Development Assistance for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in 2020-21, 2023). In its analysis of the 2019-2020 figures, the International Center for Research on Women called for the Dutch to insert at least one gender equality objective in all screened projects to reach 100 percent of screened aid as gender-responsive, and to continue its best-in-class support for women's rights organizations, which has evolved in response to feminist and women's rights organizations' feedback to provide more flexible, long-term funding directly to partners in the Global South. Organizations like the Count Me In! Consortium (2022) are also pushing for the Netherlands to increase its ambition to 10 percent of gender-targeted aid for women's rights and feminist organizations (this would roughly double current levels).

New and noteworthy in the resourcing arena are recent investments by the Dutch in countering anti-rights organizing and backlash, both through its ODA and in Europe. In EU countries, the Human Rights Fund, Shelter City Project and the Netherlands support NGOs that are faced with backlash and help them find their way to EU funding (e.g. the EU

programme 'Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values' 2021-2027). Globally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 Fund of over 500 million euros between 2021 — 2025 supports women's rights organizations and feminist movements. The Dutch were also leaders of the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, through which the Netherlands has been a strong supporter and promoter of the [Alliance for Feminist Movements](#).

However, there is some room for concern in this traditional area of strength. The Spring budget announced by the Dutch government in May of 2023 established EUR 3.4 billion in cuts to the ODA budget, meaning that the increased percentage of gender-transformative contributions will be pulled from a greatly decreased pool of funds. These cuts come at an especially critical time as the Netherlands' budgetary needs for humanitarian assistance and welcoming refugees and asylum seekers increase (Partos, 2023). It is unclear if the current, caretaker government will be able to make budget decisions, but as one temporary solution that was put in place just before resigning, the previous government agreed on a *kasschuif*, or bringing forward money from the 2027 and 2028 ODA budget as a buffer to cover the immediate budget deficits for 2023, possibly 2023-2026. Dutch advocates note that this is not a structural solution for the "problem" of covering the excess spending on domestic asylum reception costs from the BHOS budget and is therefore a short-term, rather than long-term, solution that risks decreasing the overall budget in the long run if this is not compensated for later on.

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III - Representation

The 2021 (Ivens & van Paassen) overview of Netherlands' foreign policy work on gender found it already possesses concrete initiatives focused on representation and gender mainstreaming, particularly in the field of development cooperation. In 2021, the Dutch Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a new Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan, which Ivens and van Paassen characterized as a “notable example of inter-ministerial collaboration on women’s rights” (2021, p. 22). In addition, gender considerations are made in many instances, such as pondering the risk of violence against women in arms trade negotiations; however, in many other situations, gender is not currently listed as a concern. Overall, Ivens and van Paassen concluded that, though attention to gender mainstreaming exists and is effective in some areas, this focus is punctual, more frequent in some bodies and portfolios within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs than others, and for a feminist foreign policy, this perspective must be significantly broadened.

Internally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs already plans to achieve gender parity in managerial positions by 2025, which is reiterated by Ministers Hoekstra and Schreinemacher (2022) in their letter of intent, and there are already initiatives in place to achieve this target. According to the report, in some departments, parity is already a reality, while others are lagging behind. There are also plans to implement quotas for women in senior positions. Figures and goals are limited to numerical tracking and quantitative analysis, and do not include qualitative measures on issues such as meaningful participation or other background information. Most importantly, however, “there is little or no evidence of efforts to address power structures and their underlying causes” (Ivens & van Paassen, 2021, p. 27). According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, research is currently being undertaken to understand the obstacles women face when moving to senior and managerial positions, but no information is provided on the scope of this effort, nor how findings will be utilized.

Importantly, the Ministry is not limiting its efforts to

foster an inclusive and equitable workplace to gender. Following the international attention to the Black Lives Matter movement after the murder of George Floyd in 2020, the Senior Management Board of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs commissioned an internal review of racism within the Ministry. Published at the end of 2022, the review found patterns of racism throughout the Ministry, including the use of racial slurs, belittling and patronizing treatment of national staff employed in embassies and missions overseas, and discrimination against bicultural employees. The findings of the report were accepted by the Senior Management Board, including an apology by the Secretary-General and the public transmission to Parliament of the findings and the Ministry’s plan to respond (Government of the Netherlands 2022). In order to ensure an intersectional approach to its feminist foreign policy, it will be important for the forthcoming Handbook to establish specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time-bound, inclusive and equitable goals to address discrimination and foster equity and inclusion across all streams of marginalization: gender identity and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, religion, immigration status and ability, to name a few.

Another important area for representation—in which the Dutch government has traditionally shined—is in the inclusion of civil society in the policymaking, implementation and evaluation process. Although not without its critiques, the process for developing the Dutch FFP Handbook has similarly relied on a number of civil society consultations throughout. During these discussions, which commenced in roughly October 2022 and are ongoing as of this writing, participants were asked (1) what they thought the Ministry already does in the field of enhancing gender equality and gender mainstreaming; (2) what it needs to do more and differently; and (3) what the Ministry’s ambitions should be and how to realize this change.

While the modalities for the consultations have not been made public, anecdotal reports and inputs from the MFA suggest that two processes were held: first, ahead of the November 8th letter and to provide a basis for the Handbook, the Ministry hosted internal

consultations with its staff, embassies and several policymakers at other departments (including the OCW) involved in an internal working group. External consultations with civil society were also held at this point. Second, the MFA reported organizing a “feedback loop” of consultations to again gather inputs on the Handbook through internal and external efforts. Dutch NGOs have been actively engaged in providing feedback on various versions of the Handbook through the WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform’s FFP working group, and several civil society organizations and individuals beyond the network that have been asked to provide feedback outside of the Netherlands, including but not limited to Dutch-funded consortia (Count Me In! and Leading from the South). However, Dutch feminist organizations like WO=MEN and Mama Cash have critiqued consultation processes for being limited, inaccessible particularly to Global South partners, lacking transparency and having an overreliance on the opinions of experts whose experiences do not reflect those of whom the policy targets (WO=MEN, 2022; WO=MEN, 2023). However, other South-based advocates and implementing partners such as members of the Global Partner Network for Feminist Foreign Policy—which the Netherlands has joined and sits on the Steering Committee for—report having opportunities for input.

As the Dutch move ahead with the publication of the handbook and guidance for the monitoring, evaluation and learning of its implementation, it will be important to similarly and meaningfully involve civil society in this process. The MFA has already initiated the consultation process for its new civil society funding framework. Per Ministry staff, they organized one day of online consultations in December 2022 with civil society organizations, specifically focused on those in the Global South, and tried to accommodate multiple time zones by offering numerous slots. The framework was expected to be formally launched in Summer 2024; however, the MFA informs us that it is now delayed due to the government’s decision to use its ODA budget on the reception of asylum-seekers, as well as the elections now being held earlier than planned. This delay is regrettable, as the civil society funding framework is

an important area for feminist engagement and co-creation.

IV - Research and Reporting

This is a traditional area of strength for the Dutch, as evinced by the evidence-based manner in which the Ministry has come to embrace FFP through first the commissioning of an independent expert study, as well as the public transmission of its call for—and findings of—the study on racism within the Ministry. Additional analysis done by the Ministry itself and external actors include a 2019 report on their progress on SDG 5, the 2021 IOB Evaluation Gender Mainstreaming in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a third party report by IOD-PARC, and the Final Evaluation of Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women (FLOW 2) 2016—2020 (2022). The 2021 review by Ivens and van Paasen did find room for improvement, however, with some instruments for implementation and evaluation in use, albeit with room for expansion of scope and substance (e.g. qualitative as well as quantitative measures for tracking efforts to bolster representation, more intersectional measures, etc.).

Moving forward, the MFA is expected to make a decision on whether FFP progress will be monitored via annual plans and reports of all its departments and missions starting in 2024. As it has throughout the policy development process, the government would do well to ensure ongoing and meaningful opportunities for civil society feedback in the monitoring, evaluation and learning process, perhaps by establishing an independent oversight body tasked with evaluating its response akin to the French High Council for Gender Equality.

V - Reach

While it remains to be seen in the Handbook’s publication precisely what authorities will be covered in the Dutch FFP, a good indication of scope comes from the November 8, 2022 letter to Parliament by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, which characterizes efforts under diplomatic, development

and policy and budget mainstreaming. The 4th R, “Reality Check,” promises to articulate the areas in which impact is desired and a means for determining that implementation is on-track.

Past lessons in Dutch gender mainstreaming as documented by Ivens and van Paassen (2021) provide a cautionary tale that should be noted as the Dutch plan to implement its FFP: the review found that mainstreaming had been applied inconsistently across sectors, with some areas receiving more attention than others. “For example, on trade and investment, the thinking is very limited still,” said one expert. Ivens and van Paassen called for the forthcoming FFP to be more thorough, urgent, with measures for accountability and funding. Significant structures for support and capacity building also existed, but functions and mandates needed to be clarified (Ivens & Van Paassen, 2021).

An area that was not mentioned in the letter, but certainly is a relevant and visible one in which feminist ideals often fall down in practice, is that of migration. A recent deal with Tunisia by outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte on behalf of the European Union to attempt to stem African migration streams through the North African nation to European shores was panned by progressive European (Stöckl, 2023) and African (Chebbi, 2023a) advocates alike is a case in point. As we have recommended elsewhere in the paper to other European FFP countries such as Spain and Luxembourg, which have made specific commitments to advance the rights of migrants in the EU and more broadly, a continent-wide approach is needed here to look at what a more feminist migration policy might look like, based on a listening tour with impacted communities.

Moving forward, the Dutch have the opportunity to extend best-in-class leadership in the resourcing arena to other areas of engagement, with ample room to increase ambition and impact on under-explored areas like trade and investment or immigration policy (Stöckl, 2023); promising opportunities to scale attention and effort to combat climate change; and deepening promising action in countering the anti-rights agenda. One area that merits exploration, given the amount of resources that flow into the anti-rights movement from European sources, is to develop a continent-wide approach to tracking and countering those flows. Similarly, the Dutch seem like a logical partner to amplify and support calls by Southern feminists to reform debt terms and practices in international financial institutions, as Germany has begun to do.

However, the scope of impact will of course be determined by what the future government looks like. All eyes are on the Hague, at once a model partner and a powerful ally in this space.



MONGOLIA

Current Status

At the public launch of Germany’s FFP Guidelines in March 2023, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock disclosed that at the Munich Security Conference, Mongolia’s government presented itself as the first Asian country to adopt a feminist foreign policy (Baerbock, 2023). Since then, Mongolia has joined the FFP+ Group at the United Nations and been more active on gender equality issues in the international arena (Stamm, 2023). In June 2023, Mongolia hosted a Female Foreign Ministers Meeting, co-organized by France and Germany, which resulted in the Ulaanbaatar Declaration—a statement of commitments on women’s

rights, international human rights and law which will be further analyzed in the next section (Batbaatar, 2023a). And it will co-host the upcoming Foreign Ministers Meeting on Feminist Foreign Policy at the 78th session of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

Although Mongolia has not yet issued an official statement announcing that it intends to promulgate a feminist foreign policy, its visible and increasingly frequent activities in this area have warranted an abbreviated analysis in this report.

Analysis

In 2022, independent researchers released a report titled “Mongolia’s Feminist Diplomacy: The Need for a Strategy,” acknowledging the steady, growing role of women in Mongolia’s foreign service and calling upon the government to produce a cohesive, measurable and achievable feminist diplomacy strategy. As they expressed, such an action plan would “connect Mongolia’s international pledges with the domestic audience and help mainstream policies for gender equality.” Furthermore, it would “increase women’s roles and participation at all levels of the policymaking processes” and refine Mongolia’s approach to its bilateral and multilateral relations (Mendee et. al, 2022a, p. 10).

In terms of representation, the current administration has broken the record for the most female ambassadors in the history of the country—6 out of 31 ambassadors, or approximately 20 percent, were women as of January of 2022 (Lkhaajav, 2022). However, similar progress has not been reflected in the National Security Council, which is charged with advising the president and “coordinating state policies and activities” with national security (National Security Law of Mongolia, 2001). Since its establishment in 2001, all members of the Council have been men. Existing bodies like this one, as well as any groups tasked with developing and implementing the upcoming feminist foreign policy, would benefit from provisions to ensure they are representative of Mongolia’s population and incorporate diverse perspectives.

In line with its commitment to Resolution 1325, Mongolia has made advances in the past 20 years in their deployment of women peacekeepers to the United Nations, going from only 1 woman peacekeeper in 2006 to 60 in 2021, with a peak of 104 in 2014 (Mendee et. al, 2022b). In 2022, it pledged to increase the number of women peacekeeping officers to 15 percent by 2027 (UN Peacekeeping, 2022). It also hosted the 2022 Women, Peace & Security conference, which was attended by international organizations and female peacekeepers from 30 countries and focused on women’s role in peacekeeping (Mendee et. al, 2022b). However, despite these advances in representation, policies to support female peacekeepers and dismantle exclusionary structures in the Mongolian military are still lacking. In fact, an analysis by Mendee et. al (2022b) found that the increase in female personnel in peacekeeping forces is more likely due to the UN request that such changes be made and the competitiveness of individual female officers rather than to effective inclusion policy from the Mongolian military. Additionally, women remain more likely to be in more feminized roles, such as field hospitals or in administrative tasks, and numeric growth has stalled in recent years.

In terms of what we might distill with regard to potential priorities for a Mongolian FFP, the Ulaanbaatar Declaration reiterates countries’ commitments to several international human rights frameworks and guiding documents, like CEDAW, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Secretary-General’s “Our Common Agenda.”

The Declaration highlights the gendered impact of current conflicts and calls for all countries to adopt UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (Mongolia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). It calls for countries to address conflict-related human rights violations against women and girls, such as “access to justice for victim-survivors of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, including women and girls, who are particularly targeted, including through the prompt investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence” (Mongolia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). It also specifically addresses the

violations of women’s rights in Afghanistan and advocates for meaningful representation in areas like peacekeeping, as well as encouraging governments to strengthen partnerships with women’s civil society and women human rights defenders. The Declaration further recognizes the impacts of conflict, crisis and climate change on food insecurity, forced displacement and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the Ulaanbaatar Declaration makes no direct reference to feminist foreign policy.

Notably, the Ulaanbaatar Declaration also commits to “strengthen partnership with women’s civil society organizations, women human rights defenders and women peace builders, to facilitate their inclusion in decision-making processes, including by inviting women from the relevant conflict affected contexts to participate in dialogue” (Mongolia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). This important early commitment can and should help drive an inclusive process for Mongolia’s development of its FFP.

Mongolia’s entrance into the world of feminist foreign policy is exciting and full of potential—for Mongolia itself, for the region, and for global affairs. Its Ulaanbaatar Declaration addresses a range of issues, from peace and security to food insecurity and climate change, and expresses Mongolia’s commitment to long standing international human rights frameworks. As we await further details on Mongolia’s FFP, the Declaration offers promising potential for its leadership.

If Mongolia does indeed adopt a feminist foreign policy, it will become the first Asian country to do so. Landlocked between Russia and China, Mongolia’s approach to feminist foreign policy will also offer an interesting case study in a complex and multipolar landscape (Stamm, 2023). Mongolia’s leadership in the Female Foreign Ministers meeting alongside two FFP countries—France and Germany—and at the upcoming General Assembly meetings alongside Chile, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain, is a strong indication of future efforts to come in this regard.

Mongolia has the opportunity to become an innovator and regional leader, and to continue to challenge the idea that feminist foreign policy is a Western project. We look forward to seeing what’s next for the country and region in coming weeks and months.

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REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Current Status

In 2022, Liberia became the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to announce a feminist foreign policy.

Support for this agenda is evident at the highest levels of leadership, where President George Manneh Weah has been referring to himself as “feminist-in-chief” since at least 2018 and has been, according to his foreign

minister H.E. Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, “exerting frantic efforts” (Government of the Republic of Liberia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021) to ensure broader female participation and empowerment in national leadership since 2021, when the ministry also declared that Liberia’s foreign policy would incorporate gender mainstreaming throughout its efforts.

It was not until June of 2022, when Minister Kemayah met with former Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde (who was still in her post at the time, representing the foreign ministry of the government that declared the world’s first feminist foreign policy in 2014), that Liberia publicly expressed interest in developing a feminist foreign policy (Front Page Africa, 2022).

Subsequently, Liberia has been in the process of learning more about FFP and beginning to shape its approach. In September of 2022 Liberia co-sponsored a high level event organized by the Feminist Foreign Policy Plus (FFP+) Group on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, represented by Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection Williametta Saydee-Tarr. Minister Saydee-Tarr stated that Liberia was in-process of developing its FFP, but would first begin to implement a feminist approach to policy at home (Thompson, 2022).

Since then, Liberia has continued to engage in meetings of the FFP+ Group in New York, and was receiving technical assistance from the Swedish government until the new government announced that it would abandon its nearly decade-old FFP. In July 2023, Minister Saydee-Tarr attended the Women Deliver conference in Kigali, Rwanda, where she served as a panelist on in a plenary discussion on feminist policymaking (Feminist Foreign Policy Collaborative, 2023) and stated that Liberia’s feminist foreign policy would be “rooted in [Liberia’s] commitment to creating a more just and equitable space for women in Liberia” (Saydee-Tarr, 2023, 43:53). She outlined core areas of emphasis including women, peace and security and women’s economic rights.

Because there is not yet official policy language to review, we have provided an abbreviated analysis of Liberia’s efforts to date in this report, and look forward to providing a full analysis in the next edition of this series, if and when such language is published.

Analysis

There is tremendous anticipation for Liberia’s forthcoming FFP, in line with the country’s historical contributions to the women, peace and security agenda, its efforts to implement gender budgeting (UNDP,

2022) and increasing support for women’s political participation. Liberia also has potential to be a regional leader, and is, per remarks from Minister Saydee-Tarr, already in discussions with potential partner countries like Sierra Leone (Saydee-Tarr, 2023). Amidst increasing calls by African feminists for the continent to emerge as a thought leader and model for feminist foreign policy, there is increased excitement for what a Liberian FFP might represent in a context that is still dominated by both governments and civil society advocates from the Global North. According to the African Feminist Collective on Feminist Informed Policies, “African feminisms propose a decolonial way of thinking about domestic and foreign policy, situated within a broader vision of a new feminist foreign policy that is anti-imperialist and centres marginalised communities’ social and economic well-being and prioritises human security and dignity” (African Arguments 2023).

From the Nobel Peace Prize-winning efforts of women activists to bridge religious divides and warring factions and successfully and decisively insert themselves in the country’s peace process following years of civil war, to the subsequent period of lasting peace that has been defined by democratic transitions of power and the embrace of international human and women’s rights frameworks (Liberia has promulgated three National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security over the past 13 years, including the current one, covering the 2019-2023 period), there is ample ground to plow as Liberia promulgates its feminist approach to foreign policy. The Weah administration has appointed numerous women to high-level

positions on a national scale, from police chiefs to a chief justice, and per Minister Saydee-Tarr, does not presently have a gender gap in wages for the president’s cabinet (Saydee-Tarr, 2023).

However, in May of 2023, the Liberian National Election Commission (NEC) and a number of political parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) committing to a 30 percent gender quota to party lists ahead of the October 2023 elections—a measure which had previously been proposed in a bill and vetoed by President Weah. The MoU is a voluntary agreement by political parties to adhere to this quota and present a minimum of 30 percent woman candidates, and is less enforceable than the bill would have been, had it passed. As of July of 2023, the quota was not implemented, with only 15.9 percent of candidates presented to the NEC being women. Women’s groups in Liberia signed a petition for the quota to be enforced and submitted it to the NEC, which has not replied as of July (Koinyeneh, 2023). Liberia’s current rates of female representation in both houses of parliament (11 percent in the House of Representatives and 6 percent in the Senate) sit below the regional average (IPU Parline, 2023), and obstacles to institutionalize gender equality measures at home may mean an unsuitable political field for an eventual feminist foreign policy to flourish in the future.

There is clearly much work to be done, but also much potential to be harnessed, as Liberia develops its FFP. However, elections are planned for October of 2023, and if current president Weah is not re-elected, it is possible the plans for a Liberian FFP will be abandoned altogether.

Liberia has promulgated three National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security over the past 13 years, including the current one, covering the 2019-2023 period, meaning there is ample ground to plow as Liberia promulgates its feminist approach to foreign policy.

Current Status

In January 2023, Slovenian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tanja Fajon announced at the 26th Consultation of Slovenian Diplomacy that Slovenia would adopt a feminist foreign policy (Government of Slovenia, 2023j). In a comment on a draft of this analysis, Ministry officials stated that preparations for this began in late 2022, when Fajon began efforts to develop a National Feminist Foreign Policy Strategy, to be “fully integrated in the new Slovene Foreign Policy, human rights, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance are foreseen as cross-cutting issues of the Slovene FFP Strategy, whilst thematically the strategy will focus on women, peace and security; economic empowerment of women and girls; and strengthening of effective multilateralism to promote gender equality” (personal communication). This commitment was reiterated several times, including by the President of Slovenia, Nataša Pirc Musar, who participated in the United States Summit for Democracy debate on “The Status of Women is the Status of Democracy” on March 28th, where she said Slovenia’s FFP strategy would aim to “ensure the full, equal, and meaningful involvement of women in decision-making processes related to peace, security, and climate change” (Musar, 2023).

Slovenia has also discussed feminist foreign policy in many of its multilateral engagements since January. During the 2023 UN Water Conference, Minister Fajon highlighted the role of women and girls in achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and detailed the thematic focus of Slovenia’s FFP strategy: “women’s leadership and political participation, economic empowerment, ending violence against women, and peace and security” (Fajon, 2023a, 7:40). These goals were emphasized later at a business forum in Vietnam, where Fajon noted the influence of feminist foreign policy in advancing the role of women in the economy (Government of Slovenia, 2023f). According to a comment by Ministry officials on a draft of this analysis, “President Pirc Musar and Minister Fajon discussed on several occasions the importance of women’s rights and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda with Irene Fellin, NATO’s Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security. On the margins of the NATO Summit in Vilnius minister Fajon attended the “Leadership Matters” meeting of female leaders, stating: “We need more women in positions of responsibility. We, who have the privilege to co-decide today, have to enable this for other women as well.” The advocate of Slovenian feminist foreign added: “Slovenia has made a tangible contribution to the incorporation of realising the WPS agenda in NATO’s strategic concept and it actively participates in the informal NATO Group of Friends of 1325” (Fajon, 2023b). In her lecture at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Minister Fajon highlighted the importance of women’s empowerment, including in diplomacy.

At this year’s Raisina Dialogue international conference in New Delhi, Minister Fajon stressed the need for commitment “to women’s and girls’ empowerment, to gender equality, and to innovation, science, progress and youth” (Fajon, 2023c). On the sidelines of this event, Minister Fajon also visited a center for the education and empowerment of women and girls operating in the framework of the Plan India non-governmental organization. At the EU-CELAC Summit Minister Fajon presented the priorities of Slovenia’s membership of the UNSC in the 2024-2025 term with special emphasis on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (Government of Slovenia, 2023h). At the 53rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC), Slovenia took an active stand against discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation and gender identity. Slovenia advocated for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls and called for the fight against all forms of violence against women and girls. (Government of Slovenia, 2023i).

In May 2023, Slovenia signed the Declaration on Cooperation between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Western Balkans Cyber Capacity Centre, and cited its feminist foreign policy as a means to “promote the equal, full, and meaningful representation of both genders in the design and implementation of international cybersecurity strategies” (Government of Slovenia, 2023g).

As for bilateral engagements, Slovenia highlighted the importance of FFP with likeminded and other partner countries, including with Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Canada at various levels. Slovenia had previously expressed interest in FFP during a meeting with Argentina in October 2022, during which both governments mentioned adopting a feminist approach to foreign policy (Government of Slovenia, 2022). In May 2023, State Secretary Samuel Žbogar and Deputy Foreign Minister of Argentina Pablo Anselmo Tettamanti met and discussed feminist foreign policy as a common interest (Government of Slovenia, 2023e). Additionally, Minister Fajon met with Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation José Manuel Albares Bueno during the 26th Consultation on Slovenian Diplomacy and discussed the commonalities between both the foreign policies of both countries, namely the aim of approaching it through a feminist lens (Government of Slovenia, 2023a). Slovenia was elected in June 2023 as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2024-2025 term (Maček, 2023, United Nations, 2023). During its successful campaign, Slovenian officials indicated that the Women, Peace and Security Agenda would be a key priority during its term in the Council (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Slovenia, 2023).

According to Ministry officials, “The FFP Strategy is a priority of the mandate of Minister Fajon” (personal communication, 2023). On International Women’s Day in 2023, Minister Fajon stated that Slovenia’s FFP strategy would be conceptualized and drafted with the input of civil society, and that roundtables would be held with stakeholders in the months leading up to June 24th, 2023, when the strategy was first expected to be announced. As of September 2023, the FFP strategy has not been published and no more details about it have been publicized. However, in commenting on a draft of this analysis, Foreign Ministry officials stated that “... we already held consultations with representatives of the civil society organisations and the academia as part of the preparation process of the FFP Strategy. The publication date of the strategy has been slightly postponed and further consultations with CSOs are still foreseen.” They also stated that, “With the commitment and aspiration of the first Slovenia’s FFP Strategy embracing all complexity of the matter and all aspects relevant to Slovenian Government, stakeholders and the public, additional rounds of consultations and revision of the draft FFP strategy, are foreseen to take place in the next months.” (Percic, personal communication, 2023).

Analysis

I - Rights

Slovenia’s President indicated that its FFP strategy will address issues of “women’s leadership and political participation, economic empowerment, ending violence against women, and peace and security.” In the absence of any published policy language, it is difficult to assess the extent to which Slovenia’s FFP will embrace a human rights approach, but it would be prudent to also address rights-related issues including climate change, sexual and reproductive health and rights, migration, and science and technology. Per our *Feminist Foreign Policy: A Framework* document, Slovenia should also embrace an intersectional approach to its FFP—a point that has yet to be articulated by Slovenian leadership. In commenting on a draft of this analysis, Ministry officials indicated that these issues would be addressed in the forthcoming Strategy.

II - Resources

Slovenia reports its aid contributions against the OECD-DAC gender marker. In the two most recently available reporting years, Slovenia's contributions for both principal and significant efforts to advance gender equality were cut considerably: from 25 percent to 6 percent marked significant and from 12 percent to 6 percent marked principal (Development finance for gender equality and women's empowerment, 2022; Official development assistance for gender equality and women's empowerment in 2020-21, 2023).

Slovenia's gender-sensitive contributions are small, especially when compared to other countries in the feminist foreign policy cohort. It should be noted, however, that although these are the most recent data available, they predate the country's commitment to a FFP by almost two years. As part of its Strategy, there's strong indication that the Slovenian FFP will undertake to address this: In a comment responding to this analysis, Ministry officials stated that:

The Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia mainstreams gender equality throughout the country's development work and makes it a cross-cutting issue, meaning that it has to be incorporated into all the stages of development project activities. However, compared to 2020, the number of projects focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment dropped in 2021. In other words, gender equality focused aid dropped from 35% in 2020 to only 5 % in 2021.

In light of these statistics and the Covid-19 pandemic and concomitant lockdowns, which have wreaked havoc on women's rights and safety of women the world over, Slovenia worked on improving its guidelines for a more targeted and efficient inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment into development project activities. It recently released Guidelines for the inclusion of gender equality in the international development cooperation and humanitarian aid (Guidelines), which commits MFEA that by 2030

at least 85% of development projects and programs will include activities for gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal or a significant goal according to the OECD DAC methodology. The Guidelines follow closely EU's Gender Action Gap III (GAP III) recommendation to apply three approaches for a more targeted uprooting of fundamental causes of gender and other inequalities in development cooperation projects, namely gender transformative approach, intersectional approach, and the commonly used human rights based approach.

With the aim to increase the share of ODA targeting GEWE, Minister Fajon approved and signed the Guidelines for the inclusion of gender equality in the international development cooperation and humanitarian aid (Guidelines) in May 2023. (Percic, personal communication, 2023).

We congratulate Slovenia on taking on the challenge of declining funding for gender equality as part of its forthcoming FFP Strategy, and particularly for articulating a specific, measurable and ambitious funding goal as part of this process. We further encourage Slovenia to make corresponding increases to funding to end gender-based violence and support feminist and women's rights organizations, alongside its peers in the OECD-DAC.

By 2030, at least 85% of Slovenia's development projects and programs will include activities for gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal or a significant goal according to the OECD DAC methodology.

III - Representation

In terms of representation, Slovenia is a top performer. Following parliamentary and presidential elections in 2022, Slovenia has the highest number of female MPs in its history (40%), the first female

President, a female President of Parliament and a female Minister of Foreign Affairs. More than half of Slovenian diplomats are women, one third of Ambassadors are women and 60 percent of top managerial roles in the foreign service are held by women. The Ministry also employs a Coordinator for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men with the goal of promoting gender equality, advancing⁷ equal opportunities and shaping family-friendly policies to make the workplace more inclusive of women, according to Slovenian Ambassador to India, Mateja Vodeb Ghosh (WISCOMP One World, 2023).

Despite this progress, gaps still exist. A 2020 study conducted in cooperation with the Iceland Ministry for Foreign Affairs reveals that, although numbers had increased greatly between 2000 and 2020, with an increase from 16 percent to 40 percent of top managerial positions occupied by women, and from 51 percent to 58 percent diplomats being women, the 2020 study revealed that women still form a minority of applicants, particularly for Ambassador-level posts. Women in the foreign service also report experiencing discrimination and sexual harassment at work (Cankar et. al, 2020). Slovenia's upcoming feminist foreign policy strategy would benefit from using the findings of these assessments to develop internal measures to overcome these gaps. In responding to a draft of this analysis, Ministry officials indicated that this will indeed be the case, and pointed to "already ongoing sensitization training and capacity development for the ministry's staff members" (Percic, personal communication, 2023).

Furthermore, the discussion on representation seen so far from Slovenia has been quite binary and limited to women. However, in responding to a draft of this analysis, the Ministry's policy lead on FFP, XXX, indicated that "the forthcoming national FFP Strategy advocates a fully intersectional approach that encompasses women in all their diversity, including based on their sexual orientation and identity"

(Percic, personal communication, 2023).

With regard to civil society representation in Slovenian foreign policy, however, there is more room for improvement. This was an early promise Slovenia made but has yet to carry through. As the country progresses in developing its feminist foreign policy, input from civil society, women's rights organizations and feminist movements in Slovenia and from around the world is an essential element. We recommend the GAPS-UK guide to meaningful civil society engagement as a resource as Slovenia considers its efforts in this area, as well as the examples set by other FFP governments including Colombia, France and Spain in developing standing advisory bodies comprised of feminist activists, academics and impacted communities.

IV - Research and Reporting

Details on how Slovenia intends to track data relevant to its feminist foreign policy are to date unavailable. However, the articulation of specific, measurable and ambitious goals at least in the resourcing arena are a positive indicator that Slovenia does tend to articulate benchmarks and, presumably, monitor and report on its progress in achieving them. Per our Framework, we encourage the Government of Slovenia to develop—together with partners in civil society and academia, particularly historically marginalized communities and those likely to be on the receiving end of its FFP—a results framework that utilizes specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time-bound, inclusive and equitable (SMARTIE) goals. As part of this process, Slovenia could benefit from learnings within the FFP cohort, including particularly from Canada and its gender-based analysis plus framework and independent audits of its feminist international assistance policy, and from France, which has tasked an independent advisory body with evaluation of its feminist foreign policy.

⁷ According to Ministry officials reviewing a draft of this analysis, "Every Ministry of the Government of Slovenia is mandated by the Equal Opportunities Act (2002) to appoint one of its officials to perform the function of a Coordinator for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men" (Percic, personal communication, 2023).

V - Reach

As discussed, Slovenia has already been active in its diplomatic efforts to hone and implement a feminist foreign policy. It has engaged in a great deal of bilateral and multilateral collaboration and discussion on feminist foreign policy, regionally within Europe, globally alongside other new additions to the feminist foreign policy cohort like Argentina, and in broader conversations with international organizations including the EU, the OECD and the UN system.

It is clear that development cooperation will feature heavily in the Slovenian FFP Strategy, as Slovenian officials have been actively promoting gender equality issues particularly in engagements with partner countries. In April 2023 Minister Fajon discussed security and peace with Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of Tanzania, with a particular focus on the empowerment and equality of women and girls, sustainable development and water security (Government of Slovenia, 2023d). State Secretary Samuel Žbogar and the Deputy Foreign Minister held consultations in Namibia, where they visited International Women's Peace Centre-Namibia in Windhoek (Government of Slovenia, 2023c).

This is a strong signal of the level of emphasis gender equality issues will receive in Slovenia's diplomatic and development efforts. As recommended in our Framework, Slovenia should mirror this level of emphasis across the various streams of foreign policy, from diplomacy, development and humanitarian assistance—where it is already undertaking an ambitious change agenda—to trade, migration, defense and security policy, where we have seen less evidence of these issues in focus.



GOVERNMENT OF SCOTLAND

Current Status

In September 2021, the Scottish Government published its 2021-22 Programme for Government and with it, announced its commitment to develop a “feminist approach to foreign policy.” With the intention of bringing coherence to its international and domestic policies, the Programme for Government 2021-22 detailed several immediate actions. Among them were the creation of a new global affairs framework grounded in feminist principles and the continuation of Scotland's Residential Fellowship Programme to support the participation of women in conflict zones in peacebuilding and climate change mitigation. The Programme also increased Scotland's International Development Fund COVID-19 recovery and response aid to the Global South from £10 million to £15 million and allocated an additional £500,000 to fund local organizations dedicated to the advancement of gender equality in partner countries (The Scottish Government, 2021).

The Scottish Government released its new Global Affairs Framework less than a year later. As indicated in the Programme for Government 2021-22, the third of its seven-step approach was dedicated to gender equality. It laid out its commitment to conduct a comprehensive review of Scottish international policies and programs to “ensure that they reflect a feminist approach to foreign policy,” highlighting their intention to source expertise and knowledge from the Global South (The Scottish Government, 2022c).

As of July 2023, the Scottish Government was still engaged in the development phase of its feminist approach to foreign policy. Since the announcement, three papers have been published documenting the development process. The first two papers were based on the findings of an initial series of seven interviews conducted between May and June 2022 with academics, researchers, NGO workers and an activist with knowledge of feminist foreign policy. A summary of the interviews published in November 2022 revealed many of the same key principles shared in wider feminist foreign policy discourse, namely the importance of safeguarding marginalized groups, peace and planet; intersectionality; policy coherence; collaborative, participative, representative and transformative engagement; self-reflectivity on part of the government; resourcing and monitoring and evaluation (The Scottish Government, 2022b).

Following this phase, the government published a background note which sought to define its rationale, high-level aims and next steps for the development of its feminist foreign policy (The Scottish Government, 2022a). Based on participant responses, they arrived at three key areas of focus for their forthcoming feminist foreign policy: (1) climate justice; (2) economic justice; and (3) peace. The background note provided further detail of the mechanisms by which women and girls in Scotland and in the Global South would participate in the development of its feminist foreign policy, notably through its new Global South Programme Panel for International Development and a forthcoming series of workshops aimed at supporting the development of a policy statement and an action plan.

In June 2023, the Scottish Government published an independent evidence report which summarized the findings of the second phase of consultations. The central government contracted Scotland's International Development Alliance and the Scottish Council for Global Affairs to conduct a series of consultative workshops between November 2022 and January 2023. From these consultations, five key elements of a Scottish feminist foreign policy emerged. Respondents emphasized that a feminist approach to Scottish foreign policy must have (1) a transformative vision; (2) an intersectional lens; (3) an

anticolonial and antiracist approach; (4) a participative approach at home and abroad; and (5) a clear commitment to clarity, transparency and accountability (Duncanson et. al, 2023). Findings are organized by thematic area consisting of a summary of the Scottish Government's current actions on the issue, a summary of the relevant workshop and recommendations for policy and action.

The authors further clarified the working definition of "feminist foreign policy" and made the first reference to the limitations posed by Scotland's status as a constituent country to the United Kingdom on the development and implementation of its feminist foreign policy. Regarding its definition, they emphasized the importance of transformative approaches to policy, expressing conviction that a "FFP should contribute to the *systemic transformation of the root causes* of inequalities and insecurities—competitive and militaristic international relations, an economic system organised around extracting profit from natural resources and labour, and patriarchal gender relations" (Duncanson et. al, 2023, p. 7). The challenges and impact on implementing a feminist foreign policy posed by Scotland's status as a devolved government will be explored in the following Analysis section.

Researchers organized the data collection for the 2023 independent report in four thematic online workshops and a final in-person workshop aimed at bridging the voices of feminists from the South and taxpayers from Scotland. The four thematic workshops focused on (1) international development, (2) peace and security, (3) climate and environment justice and (4) trade justice with diverse actors from the Global South, prioritizing participants from countries which partner with the Scottish Government in a small assistance programme—those being Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda and Pakistan. The report is organized according to these four themes, providing an overview of what the Scottish Government is already doing as well as its ambitions, a summary of the participants' discussion on the topic and targeted recommendations. The fifth workshop engaged Scotland-based participants and was aimed at co-developing actionable and transformative policies based on inputs from the first four online workshops. They conclude the report with three recommended

actions to ensure the effective, timely and participative implementation of the policy recommendations by the Scottish Government. These include (1) the creation of a mechanism for ongoing dialogue with actors from civil society, academia and beyond; (2) the creation of a targeted consultation mechanism to engage women's groups and feminist networks from the Global South; and (3) the promotion and support for structures which facilitate exchange on foreign policy amongst civil society at home and abroad.

The emergence of Scotland on the feminist foreign policy scene presents an interesting case study of how a sub-national government may contribute to the feminist foreign policy discourse.

The Scotland Act (1998) reserves responsibility for foreign affairs to the United Kingdom Parliament, including the regulation of international trade, international development assistance, immigration and defense. The Scottish Government has justified their feminist exploration into these reserved areas through several rationales. It frames its international pursuits as a means to advance its domestic priorities and live up to its potential as a “good global citizen.” Additionally, it cites The Scotland Act of 1998 which empowers Scottish Ministers to pursue interests in foreign affairs, only so far as their engagement (1) assists Ministers of the Crown with international affairs, including international development assistance; (2) does not purport to speak or make commitments on behalf of the UK; nor (3) facilitates the entry of the Scottish Government into binding Treaties (The Scottish Government, 2022b). However, it bears noting that the current Scottish Government (Scottish National Party who have a cooperation agreement with the Scottish Green Party) is pro-independence. Opposition parties have rebuked the efforts to develop a Scottish FFP as an intrusion into reserved areas (McLaughlin, 2022). While the Foreign Office has declined to comment on these claims, feminist advocates now fear that the “feminist foreign policy” label may serve as a potential flashpoint in the Scottish independence debate.

This paper does not take a position on the matter of independence, and is only concerned with analysis of the substance of and process through which the existing Scottish Government has explored and begun to develop a feminist approach to the foreign policy powers it possesses.

Analysis

As of mid-2023, the Scottish feminist foreign policy is still in development. As a result, its analysis vis-à-vis our *Feminist Foreign Policy: A Framework* document will be based on the consultative phase of its development and the recommendations made therein, as well as Scotland's ongoing international activities and commitments.

I - Rights

The Scottish Government has made strides to incorporate international human right standards, including those specific to gender equality, into its domestic law. The government plans to adopt a human rights Bill to ensure access to a clean and healthy environment and to enshrine the protections set forth in four UN treaties,⁸ including and of particular relevance, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

⁸ The proposed Human Rights Bill also seeks to domesticate the provisions set forth in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Discrimination against Women. First announced by former Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People Shirley-Anne Somerville in March 2021, the Human Rights Bill (Scottish Human Rights Office, 2023), as of June 2023, has entered into public consultation and will conclude with its introduction to Parliament in October 2023. Within the same vein of the Scottish Government's efforts to bring its policies in alignment with international human rights accountability standards, Scotland has adopted a National Performance Framework to mainstream targets set forth in the UN SDGs into its internal and external policies.

Whether and to what extent these recommendations will be reflected in the forthcoming policy remains to be seen, but the consultative phase of Scotland's feminist foreign policy has given much reason to be hopeful for an intersectional, gender transformative and cross-cutting strategy.

II - Resources

The terms of the Scotland Act of 1998 limits the extent to and avenues by which Scotland may pursue a feminist approach to its international engagement. As a constituent country, under the 1998 Act, Scotland is prohibited membership to international bodies such as the UN or WTO (though it participates in committees through the UK government) and is barred from negotiating trade agreements or entering into binding treaties. Scottish Ministers are, however, empowered to assist Ministers of the Crown with international relations, including international assistance, per the terms of the 1998 Act. In 2005, the UK government agreed, in respect of the Scotland Act, to the Scottish Government establishing an international development footprint (Benn). The majority of Scotland's opportunities to engage in feminist funding is through its (albeit modest) international development portfolio, specifically through its engagement with its four international development partner countries: Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Pakistan.

Accompanying its 2021 announcement of its feminist foreign policy, Scotland also committed to increasing its International Development Fund by 50%, or from

£10 million to £15 million, between 2021 and 2026 (The Scottish Government, 2021a). This included £2 million awarded to 10 projects aimed at promoting the human rights of women and girls in Scotland's international development partners (The Scottish Government, 2022a, Comic Relief, 2021). According to the Scottish Government, its official development assistance is reported against the OECD gender marker via the UK Government. Since Scotland is not an independent government, its numbers are not individually published by the OECD, making it difficult to compare its level of principal and significant gender funding to other countries in this analysis. However, commentary received by the Scottish Government assures us that "going forward all new spend will be properly screened against the marker and scoring reported to the DAC as part of UKG ODA returns." To encourage transparency and better understand the scope of Scotland's potential impact, we hope these numbers can also be shared publicly.

Other programs that are worth noting as relevant to or aligned with its feminist approach include adopting an explicitly "human-rights approach to development," the document communicates the Government's embrace of intersectionality, anti-racism and leadership from the Global South in its programming (The Scottish Government, 2021c) and the establishment of a new Equalities Funding Stream, including paying £500,000 towards a Women and Girls Fund dedicated to funding local organizations dedicated to advancing gender equality in its partner countries. Although not specifically focused on gender, new funding was also announced sustaining a £1 million per year Humanitarian Emergency Fund, including £240,000 for support crisis response in Afghanistan (The Scottish Government, 2021a) tripling its Climate Justice Fund to £36 million by 2025 in order to tackle existing inequalities further worsened by climate change.

Although many features critical to assessing the performance of Scotland's feminist resourcing against our *Framework* have not been detailed, such as how money is dispersed, if funded initiatives directly support gender equality and how its upcoming FFP will be staffed and resourced, the priorities and stated principles in its international development assistance

to date have been promising.

Whether and to what extent these recommendations will be reflected in the forthcoming policy remains to be seen, but the consultative phase of Scotland's feminist foreign policy has given much reason to be hopeful for an intersectional, gender transformative and cross-cutting strategy.

III - Representation

The Scottish Government has taken intentional and explicit steps to ensure the inclusion and meaningful participation of stakeholders across sectors and from the Global South in the ongoing development of its feminist foreign policy. The documents published to date synthesize the findings of the development process of Scotland's feminist foreign policy, revealing promising elements of a co-creative model which is accountable, transparent, responsive and participative. While not citing it explicitly, elements of the GAPS UK consultation process (2019) have been integrated into both phases of interviews. In alignment with good practice set out in the GAPS UK consultation framework, researchers from Scotland's International Development Alliance and the Scottish Council for Global Affairs organized consultations in an online format to increase accessibility, engaged stakeholders with the aim of developing long-term relationships, put in place a 50 percent quota of participants from the Global South, regularly and promptly shared reports with participants and provided participants compensation in the form of money, childcare and travel assistance (Duncanson et al, 2023).

Following its internal review of its International Development Programme, and in alignment with its new International Development Principles (The Scottish Government, 2021c), the Scottish Government established a Global South Programme Panel to provide guidance by a range of "experts by experience" principally working or residing in the South. One such panel (The Scottish Government, 2023) invited members of civil society and international organizations from Rwanda to discuss shifting power, decolonization and localization in Scotland's engagement through its international

development assistance. This is representative of not only the intention to engage in ongoing dialogue with people in partner countries and the rest of the world, but also an explicit effort to challenge how policymakers typically recognize "expertise," acknowledging the unique knowledge that comes from lived realities and experience with movement-building. Per comments received by the Scottish Government, it also supports "inclusion and diversity and equalising power relationships in its International Development work." Whether these efforts will be accompanied by concrete actions which substantively decentralize power to partners in the Global South remains to be seen.

Scotland has also demonstrated its commitment to increasing women's participation in social, economic and political representation in the spheres of peacebuilding and climate change through targeted traineeships. With the announcement of its feminist foreign policy, Scotland detailed that it would expand its Residential Fellowship Programme, a training program aimed at enhancing women's capacity to participate in peacebuilding processes, to also include a climate dimension. The "Climate Fellows" would be trained in mitigating the effects of climate change (The Scottish Government, 2021a). Scotland has also funded the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) in enhancing its efforts

to bring women delegates to UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) convenings every year, such as the COPs, directly supporting the participation of feminist advocates, including grassroots and indigenous leaders, at the multilateral level (WEDO, 2021). Similarly, the Scottish Government has contributed to the Women,

Scotland has shown effort to challenge how policymakers typically recognize "expertise," acknowledging the unique knowledge that comes from lived realities and experience with movement-building

Peace and Security agenda through its Women in Conflict 1325 Fellowship (Beyond Borders Scotland, n.d.), which has been held three times annually since 2016, creating a space for women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution to share their experiences and learn about different aspects of peacebuilding beyond high-level, formal peace processes.

IV - Research and Reporting

Accompanying the announcement of its feminist foreign policy in 2021, the Scottish Government described two initiatives aimed at ensuring its investment and policy decisions were rooted in rigorous evidence. The first of which was the establishment of a Scottish Council for Global Affairs (the Council), a non-partisan, multistakeholder think tank tasked with the coordination of Scottish research activities on international relations and global politics. The second was the commitment to establish a Scottish Peace Institute, a research initiative aimed at enhancing the government's understanding of conflict resolution, peace and human rights through research and evidence. As of June 2023, the Council has been established and active, publishing articles and hosting events and workshops on diverse topics, including on feminist foreign policy (The Scottish Council for Global Affairs, 2022a). Meanwhile the establishment of the Peace Institute has been delayed until later in the parliamentary term due to economic constraints (They Work For You, 2023).

In September 2022, the Scottish Government published an independent scoping study (Duncanson et al., 2022) which identified opportunities for policymakers to develop a gender responsive approach to Scotland's international development, climate change and peace and security policies and programs. The scoping exercise provided five opportunities for the Scottish Government to include a feminist approach to its international climate response: (1) center economic justice in climate justice; (2) use its Climate Justice Fund and International Development Strategy to support just, inclusive and sustainable feminist economies; (3) empower women peacebuilders and environmental defenders to advocate for economic transformation; (4) advance gender equality through all Climate Justice Fund and International Development programming; and (5) leverage partnerships at home and abroad and continue to learn.

Even at its development phase, researchers tasked with the second phase of stakeholder consultations have taken advantage of “SMART” indicators in the drafting of their policy recommendations. In conjunction with online consultations with global stakeholders, the authors of the 2023 independent report on feminist foreign policy also engaged 25 participants in Edinburgh for an in-person, collaborative, policy-writing workshop (Duncanson et al., 2023). In their methodology, they describe having tasked participants with developing SMART policies based on findings from the four preceding online workshops on international development, peace and security, climate justice and trade justice. Although, they amended the SMART framework, taking the original “specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound” indicators and evolving them to “specific, measurable, actionable, relevant and transformative” (Duncanson et al., 2023, p. 10). The most notable of these revisions was the final which prompted workshop participants to move beyond inclusion and to instead, imagine policy which tackled the systemic nature of gender injustice.

9 In our Framework, we point to the “SMART” indicators as a key accountability measure in research and reporting. “SMART” policies are policies which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound and which allow policymakers to more clearly define and more effectively measure progress on their objectives.

V - Reach

In both its Programme for Government 2021-22 and its Global Affairs Framework, the Scottish Government reaffirmed its commitment to ensure the coherence of its domestic policy with its international affairs as well as its policy across sectors. That same year, Scotland's Vision for Trade was published which acknowledged the differential impacts on women, girls and marginalized communities, including the impact of unpaid work, iterated the government's commitment to enhance opportunities for women to access the benefits of trade and set forth to identify practical actions to strengthen and/or create links between trade, domestic policy and feminist approaches to Scotland's international work (The Scottish Government, 2021b).

When it comes to defense and security, the Scottish Government has reiterated its support for denuclearization, emphasizing its opposition to its housing of the UK's nuclear deterrent, in its Programme for Government 2021-22 and again in its Global Affairs Framework. However, this comes at the same time as Scotland enters "a new era of confidence and investment in the defence sector" (Scottish Affairs Committee, 2022, p. 10). As of 2020/21, the UK Government's Military of Defence (MOD) allocated close to £2 billion to Scotland's defense industry and commerce (Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland and Ministry of Defence, 2022). Acknowledging that Scotland, as a devolved government, has limited powers to directly determine the MOD's annual defense procurement, it does have power to articulate its priorities and can use the bully pulpit to continue to assert increased ambition in funding for people, peace and planet, as it continues to do.

Finally, The Scottish Government has demonstrated leadership in advancing gender equality in climate discussions. In co-sponsorship with UN Women, the Scottish Government issued the Glasgow Women's Leadership Statement on Gender Equality and Climate Change at COP26. The Statement calls for acknowledgement of and increased and sustained support for women's and girls' leadership in the global climate response.

V. FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: UPDATES ON EXISTING EFFORTS



CANADA

Current Status

In the 2021 edition of this report, we wrote that Canada had yet to publish its white paper on feminist foreign policy, initially anticipated in 2020, to complement its Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), which was released in 2017. As of mid-2023, this still holds true. An internal version of the policy paper was drafted in 2021, but with no public accompaniment.

While Canadian government representatives often describe their foreign policy as feminist, they have yet to officially, publicly and comprehensively define what this means. In a 2021-2022 report to Parliament, Global Affairs Canada wrote that “Canada’s work abroad was guided by its feminist foreign policy, which seeks to build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world.” The report repeatedly references Canada’s FFP and FIAP as guiding frameworks for the government’s external action, particularly in areas of development, peace and security, trade and multilateral engagement. However, the report provides no further articulation of the FFP’s content, goals, timelines and objectives.

Analysis

I - Rights

Canadian government officials have continued to publicly promote women’s human rights as a core component of feminist foreign and development policy, alongside other FFP governments and throughout various civil society events and convenings. At a FFP event held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September 2022, for example, Minister Mélanie Joly stood with other foreign ministers, secretaries and ambassadors to highlight issues including: the rise in anti-gender forces and backlash globally; the situation of women in Iran; women’s representation in peacekeeping; and support for organizations defending women’s reproductive rights (UN Web TV, 2023). In October 2022, Minister Joly also convened a group of female foreign ministers from around the world to address the status of women’s rights in Iran; they released a joint statement expressing support for women human rights defenders, condemning the crackdown against protestors and calling for an investigation into use of force by authorities (Government of Canada, 2022).

II - Resources

In this category, Canada has continued to be a global leader, including among FFP countries—although most recent data available suggest a slight decrease in support in funding for gender equality as a principal objective in its official development assistance, a potentially worrying sign for the field, as we will explore.

There are two reporting years covered in this analysis. In both, Canada scores among the highest for its overall support of gender equality in ODA

and its funding for women’s rights organizations. Over the 2019-2020 period, Canada’s contributions to gender equality as a principal or significant goal, or GE1 on the OECD-DAC gender marker, were 88 percent of ODA. It saw a growth of 2 percent a year later, and at 90 percent in 2020-2021, Canada was behind only Iceland in this category, making it the highest grossing donor for gender equality of all FFP countries (Development Finance for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, 2022; Official Development Assistance for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in 2020-21, 2023). In terms of funding for gender equality as a principal objective (GE2), however, there was a worrying dip in the same period: from 22 percent in 2019-2020 to 16 percent in 2020-2021. In a comment in response to this draft, officials at Global Affairs Canada indicated that this was mostly due to large amounts of funding going to pandemic response. The latest data show that Canada is also the largest volume donor to combating violence against women and girls, having committed USD 63 million, and the second largest donor to women’s organizations and institutions, with USD 67 million in funding.

In recent years, Canada’s contributions to gender equality as a principal objective have been negatively impacted by worldwide crises, first by the COVID-19 pandemic (Papagiotti et. al, 2022), and later by the war in Ukraine (Blouin, 2023). ICRW suggested that Canada work on returning to its pre-pandemic levels of gender-sensitive aid, which saw a record high of 92 percent (Papagiotti et. al, 2022). The growth seen between the two latest OECD reports shows that Canada is on its way to achieving that goal. However, the dip in aid for gender equality as a principal objective shows a lag in taking up the recommendation on increasing targeted aid.

Furthermore, the Equality Fund—which was kickstarted by an initial investment of \$300 million from the Government of Canada as a flagship investment under its FIAP that now expects to mobilize \$1 billion for feminist movements globally—calls upon Canada ‘to double down on its support for a strong FIAP.’ (Tomlin, 2023). In addition to its investment in the Equality Fund, FIAP has motivated Global Affairs Canada to take greater action and exercise feminist leadership on the global stage. For instance, Canada helped co-develop the Alliance for Feminist Movements, a multistakeholder engagement group that emerged out of the Generation Equality Forum and aims to increase support for feminist movements worldwide. The Government of Canada co-chairs the Alliance alongside RESURJ and also sits on the Steering Group for the Alliance with Malawi, providing ongoing input and guidance to its overall strategy.

In April 2023, Canada’s Former Minister of International Development Harjit Sajjan announced an investment of \$195 million over 5 years and \$43.4 million annually for the Women’s Voice and Leadership

Canadian officials have spoken on the rise in anti-gender forces and backlash globally; the situation of women in Iran; women’s representation in peacekeeping; and support for organizations defending women’s reproductive rights

Program, one of Canada’s flagship international assistance programs supporting local women’s rights organizations with direct, flexible funding—which, per a formative evaluation led by GAC’s Evaluation Division, has also been deemed successful in its approach¹⁰ (Global Affairs Canada, 2023; Women’s Voice and Leadership Program Formative Evaluation, 2022). Canadian civil society organizations have been calling on their government to increase and strengthen investments in gender equality, and international aid more generally. This year, 77 Canadian international aid organizations wrote to Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland referencing the FIAP and asking for international aid to commit \$10 billion by 2025, a predictable and feasible increase from 2022’s \$8.15 billion envelope (Keep The Promise, 2023). The Equality Fund makes five key recommendations to ensure FIAP reaches its full potential: that Canada makes a renewed commitment to FIAP’s ambitious vision; fulfills its transformative agenda by investing in systemic change and working directly with local women’s rights organizations; sharpening its intersectional lens; instituting capacity-building efforts for Global Affairs Canada staff; and improving structures for reporting and accountability (Tomlin, 2023).

In terms of impact, there is some indication that Canada’s leadership and approach has been a field catalyst: Canada’s FIAP has had positive ripple effects both on Canadian leadership, and in encouraging other governments—such as Germany—to follow suit. As analysis by ICRW points out, Canada’s “actual spending from 2018 to 2021 increased by \$2.32 billion to support the FIAP, among other initiatives.” (Papagiotti et. al, 2022, p. 8).

III - Representation

On representation, Canada has continued to make progress, albeit with some opportunities for improvement. According to Oxfam Canada’s 2023 Feminist Scorecard, women continue to hold important leadership positions in cabinet, though “more could be done to improve women’s intersectional representation in cabinet and help ensure that government policies and decision making responds to the needs of Canadians in all their diversity.” In 2022, Canada also reported that it falls among “the countries with the greatest proportion of women occupying key leadership roles in diplomacy, having achieved gender parity in ambassadorial and senior management positions” (Government of Canada, 2022). Notably, Canada’s first-ever Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security, Jacqueline O’Neill—appointed in 2019—maintains a whole-of-government mandate leading Canada’s execution of its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, and models frequent engagement with civil society and feminist movements. Ambassador O’Neill often meets with women human rights defenders in her country visits, and has led WPS delegations to other countries with Canadian civil society leaders including most recently to Colombia, another FFP country.

As discussed in the 2021 edition of this report, Canada had committed to working with civil society in launching its policy paper; Global Affairs Canada had even launched a robust consultative process with feminist activists, Indigenous partners, experts and academics. As part of a FFP Working Group, civil society organizations had organized engagement sessions to compile recommendations for Canada’s FFP. We reported in 2021: “hopefully, these inputs will be seen to have shaped the design, implementation, and

¹⁰ “The evaluation was conducted in-house by the Evaluation Division (PRA). The core evaluation team was supported by a feminist evaluation advisor and four teams of local evaluators in Guatemala, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Ukraine...Three bodies played an advisory role to the evaluation and ensured the participation and engagement of evaluation stakeholders, both internal and external to the department. Two of these were existing WVL governance bodies: WVL’s DG Advisory Committee and WVL’s Coordination Group. The third body, the Evaluation Reference Group, was created specifically for the purpose of the evaluation; it included representation from departmental staff, implementing partners and WRO” (Global Affairs Canada, personal communication, 2023). Click [here](#) for more information.

tracking of Canada's FFP" (Thompson et. al). It is important for Canada to maintain these processes, working towards efforts of co-creation with civil society. In commemoration of the FIAP's fifth year anniversary in 2022, the Equality Fund released a series of blogs reflecting on successes and challenges of implementation. The first of the series notes that "Canada can open doors for participation by feminists in policy discussions—not just on women's rights but on the key issues of our day: climate, trade, pandemic preparedness and more" (Woroniuk, 2022).

IV - Research and Reporting

Canada has exercised long-standing leadership in this area with its development and refinement of the Gender-Based Analysis Plus, or "GBA Plus" analytical approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning for its programs and initiatives. As commitments to its Feminist International Assistance Policy strengthened that analytical tool, Canada has exercised thought leadership among the FFP cohort, encouraging the development and use of measures beyond the gender binary and ensuring programs were robustly and consistently examined, interrogated and adapted for impact. This was a desperately needed and overdue expansion of what had been an overwhelmingly binary-based approach to gender in FFP.

This year, Canada continues to demonstrate its commitment in this area, even at considerable political cost. In March 2023, the Auditor General of Canada released a report on Global Affairs Canada's (GAC) implementation of the FIAP, assessing the extent that its projects integrated gender equality in accordance with policy goals, as well as key outcomes reported by recipient organizations and the department overall. This effort is very much in line with our recommendations for full and public transparency, monitoring and accountability, and the report found several useful learnings from which GAC specifically—and the FFP field in general—will undoubtedly benefit.

The Auditor General found that significant weaknesses in Global Affairs Canada's information management systems and practices hindered its ability

to appropriately track progress in projects funded by the \$3.5 billion in bilateral development assistance deployed each year between 2017 and 2022. According to the report, GAC had incomplete or missing project files; failed to measure outcomes on 24 of 26 project indicators; and did not reflect long-term outcomes in its reports to Parliament. Furthermore, GAC fell short of two of three spending commitments laid out in FIAP: while it spent over 85 percent of its bilateral development aid on projects that integrate gender equality—exceeding the FIAP's goal of 80 percent—it did not meet the other two goals of spending 15 percent of aid on projects that specifically target gender equality, and 50 percent toward sub-Saharan African countries. Furthermore, while the FIAP prioritizes intersectionality as one of its main principles, the report notes that Global Affairs Canada's "gender equality assessment process for projects did not consistently include analysis of intersecting identity factors, apart from age" (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2023, p. 8).

The Auditor General makes three recommendations: that Global Affairs Canada immediately invest in improving its information management systems, adjusts its performance indicators to measure both outputs and outcomes; and considers more intersecting identity factors beyond gender and age (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2023, p. 16-17).

Unfortunately, the spirit of openness, learning and transparency in which the Auditor General's report was undertaken has not been rewarded. Although praxis proves the counterpoint, research and reporting is not supposed to only document one's triumphs, but also to shed light on one's failures. Learning comes most often not from having succeeded, but from having missed the mark. The Auditor General's report provides a rich tapestry of both the strengths of Canadian feminist foreign and development policy—having exceeded goals in some areas—but also a sobering blueprint for where improvements are needed. And this is precisely the point. The AG's report has been welcomed by partners including the Equality Fund and Cooperation Canada.

Public accountability reporting is an area that is both

immensely important for stakeholders—from taxpayers to aid recipients—but also incredibly politically risky for a democratically elected government, as to undertake an impact review and find room for improvement risks becoming an invitation for critique. And, as we have seen with the anti-gender movement and organized backlash on gender equality and women’s rights issues, becomes a lightning rod for politicization and attack.

Indeed, in Canada’s case, press coverage of the Auditor General’s report has skewed negative, overlooking positive findings and interpreting data coding and reporting inconsistencies as evidence of program failure, rather than as challenges of data collection or impact attribution (Robertson, 2023; Iftikhar, 2023). From our perspective, and the perspective of many of Canada’s partners, Canada is to be lauded for carefully developing a new and innovative measurement framework that attempts to go beyond the binary and capture outcomes, in addition to outputs, and for walking the talk of accountability, publishing a public testimony of its triumphs and tribulations. The proof will be in the response, as to whether GAC implements the recommended changes and ensures that the next reporting period finds program managers better able to understand and use its nuanced monitoring and evaluation system, tracking measures of success across more areas than simply gender, as its program goals intend.

However, there is also a chance that Canada’s forthrightness on data and transparency will come at such political cost that no such future learnings are possible. Only time will tell.

IV - Reach

Overall, while Canada continues to score well in the preceding “R” categories of our framework, their now 3-year delay to publicly release their long-awaited FFP paper risks undermining their leadership at home and on the international stage. “Failure to Launch,” as one expert recently joked, may become the unfortunate headline for a nation who otherwise has field-defining contributions to offer.

Civil society advocates have expressed that in periods of climate change, COVID-19, conflict and disaster, it is high time for the Canadian government to reiterate its commitments to a feminist agenda. As Beth Woroniuk of the Equality Fund opines, “A feminist foreign policy is not a luxury that Canada turns to when times are good. It is precisely in this moment of crisis that a clear statement of guiding principles is needed. We have evidence of the relevance and potential impact. We have the calls from activists. Now is the time for a clear roadmap with concrete steps and resources for implementation” (Woroniuk, 2022).



THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG

Current Status

In 2018, Luxembourg became the third country to announce a feminist foreign policy, behind Sweden and Canada. The providence and content of Luxembourg’s policy is covered in more detail in the 2021 edition of this paper, in which we noted the government’s 2021 Generation Equality Forum pledge to establish an Action Plan on Feminist Foreign Policy over a timeline of the next 5 years. As of the writing of this report, the Government of Luxembourg has not published this Action Plan, although in May 2023, Luxembourg published a two-pager reiterating its commitment to FFP.

I - Rights

In 2021, the Government of Luxembourg published a brochure summarizing its candidacy for the Human Rights Council 2022-2024 term (Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 2021), in which it pointed to gender equality and its feminist foreign policy as one of four priorities: (1) Support for the rule of law, civil space and human rights defenders and the fight against impunity; (2) Sustainable development and climate action based on human rights; (3) Gender equality and the fight against all forms of discrimination; and (4) The protection and promotion of the rights of the child. The government also underlines the necessity to promote and protect the rights of LGBTI persons within efforts to advance gender equality.

On the occasion of the 2022 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Luxembourg's Ministry for Equality between Men and Women together with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and its Directorate for Cooperation, within the frame of Luxembourg's feminist foreign policy, made note of its bilateral engagement in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal aimed at supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights and combating GBV, FGM and child marriage (Ministère de L'Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, 2022). Luxembourg has also expanded its support to women's human rights defenders in Afghanistan, Central America and Africa through partnerships with the International Service for Human Rights and Front Line Defenders.

II - Resources

Although it is a small country, Luxembourg is a generous one, and has for more than twenty years been one of the few countries to meet or exceed the UN funding target of 0.7% of GNI being dedicated to its ODA. Preliminary data from the OECD (2023) showed that Luxembourg had committed \$530 million of ODA in 2022, representing a 4.4 percent increase in real terms in volume from 2021. Given the wave of funding cuts sweeping Europe, Luxembourg's continued commitment to development assistance makes it an important model.

However, inconsistent screening of its ODA portfolio against the DAC gender markers makes it difficult to understand to what extent those resources are advancing gender equality and women's rights. According to a 2021 review by Papagiotti et. al (p. 14) of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), of the FFP donor countries, "Luxembourg has by far the highest share of commitments that were not screened or were found to not contribute to gender equality after screening (...) 92 percent of aid commitments in 2020 were not screened."

The ICRW recommended Luxembourg more carefully track and screen its funds moving forward. Most recent available OECD data suggest Luxembourg's gender-sensitive ODA increased six times from the 2019-2020 period, at 5%, to 29% in 2020-2021, with a tenfold increase in gender-transformative contributions, from approximately 1% to 10% (Papagiotti et. al, 2022; Development Finance for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, 2022; Official Development Assistance for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in 2020-21, 2023). Assuming that the same methodology for screening was consistently applied, this is an impressive indication that, following the announcement of its feminist foreign policy in 2018, Luxembourg immediately invested in increasing its resourcing commitments in line with the ambitions of its stated policy. However, there is some cause to question these data, given the inconsistencies flagged in previous reports.

Regarding resourcing to feminist civil society organizations and movement-building, OECD's 2022 preliminary data (OECD, 2023) on Luxembourg's ODA does not provide a gender analysis of its 28.9 percent funding allocation to civil society organizations. However, responding to a draft of this analysis, a foreign ministry official (personal communication, 2023) pointed to the general terms and conditions governing Luxembourg's ODA (Luxembourg Aid & Development, 2023a), stating that it is a matter of policy under these regulations that:

projects from the outset must systematically and jointly embed gender and climate considerations into funding activities, with a particular reference to the Luxembourg's Cooperation's Gender Strategy and its Environment and Climate Change Strategy. Project activities must provide equitable access to the resources, services and infrastructures set up within the framework of the project, with a focus on women's empowerment. The analysis of needs and vulnerabilities and the definition of indicators must be sensitive and take into account gender, human rights and environmental and climate issues. In case a project does not apply a cross-cutting theme, the civil society organization is requested to provide a reasoning as to why this is the case. Further, the organizations are required to report on the progress of these topics when submitting their annual reports.

While it is unclear what percentage of this funding was committed to women's rights and feminist organizations, Luxembourg was one of UN Women's top 20 donors of 2021, and 100 percent of Luxembourg's total ODA aligned with the Recommendation on Untying ODA of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. Among its aims, the Recommendation on Untying ODA intends to "strengthen the ownership and responsibility of partner countries in the development process; demonstrate responsiveness to the requests from partner countries and others to increase the use of untied aid in order to promote aid effectiveness" (OECD, 2023, p. 3).

The Government of Luxembourg could strengthen its

efforts in this area by improving data collection and tracking, consistently screening all aid, and aiming to achieve civil society's recommended targets of 20% of ODA for gender equality as a principal objective, with 100% of all aid advancing equality as a principal or significant objective.

In a comment responding to this analysis, an official in Luxembourg's foreign ministry (personal communication, 2023) stated that:

Luxembourg's commitment to gender equality and the protection of women's rights is a longstanding priority in its development cooperation. Gender equality is taken into consideration as a cross-cutting priority in most interventions. Nevertheless, to truly deliver on this commitment, the Directorate of Development Cooperation acknowledges the need to further strengthen its internal capacity on these topics. Luxembourg's Development Cooperation made an intentional effort by launching its revised Gender Cooperation Strategy in 2021. It provides a framework to strengthen gender mainstreaming and an increased number of gender focused projects across the Development Cooperation's portfolio. In the revised Strategy a clearer focus on specific gender relevant themes is introduced to steer portfolio growth according to its priorities and build relevant expertise. To further embed gender considerations into funding activities, tailored gender tools have been developed that are yet to be socialized among staff and implemented consistently. The current development of a gender action plan is an excellent starting point to systematically translate its strategic ambitions for contributing to gender into practice.

While updated official data on Luxembourg's overall international funding of gender equality measures has not yet been published, the government has engaged international organizations in gender finance initiatives. In the presence of Her Royal Highness Grand Duchess Maria Theresa of Luxembourg, in 2022, the Luxembourg Stock Exchange signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UN Women to "strengthen their cooperation and promote joint initiatives to advance financing for gender

equality” (Luxembourg Stock Exchange, 2022). The MoU seeks to increase the visibility and understanding of gender-focused bonds and sustainable debt instruments in order to better mobilize public and private sector financing towards ventures which advance gender equality.

Given its interest in innovative approaches to debt and finance in the service of gender equality, Luxembourg should consider the calls of feminists from the Global South in documents such as the African Manifesto on Debt and Feminist Foreign Policy to adopt transformative approaches to debt management policies, such as adopting debt forgiveness measures as a form of colonial reparations to the Global South. Responding to a draft of this analysis, an official from the foreign ministry stated that:

Luxembourg has engaged in a review process, the financial Inclusion Navigator, with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) to generate insights into how it operates to advance financial inclusion. Within this process one of the specific learning objectives requested by Luxembourg was the strengthening of the vision on women’s financial inclusion. (Personal communication, 2023)

III - Representation

As of June 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg indicated that about 40% of its diplomatic corps were women (Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 2023). In terms of women’s representation in national government, according to a 2022 report published by the European Commission, Luxembourg had only reached a 35.3 percent share of women in senior and prime ministerial positions, narrowly surpassing the EU average of 32.3 percent but still falling short of parity (European Commission, 2023).

In terms of staffing the FFP portfolio, this is not entirely clear. Efforts are led by Ambassador Anne Goedert, the Ambassador-at-Large for Human Rights. It bears noting that the Human Rights Ambassador— one of four “goodwill and thematic ambassadors”— does not yet have an explicit FFP or gender equality

titular mandate, unlike most FFP countries (although Germany’s new FFP Ambassador is similarly dual-hatted with the FFP role, it does include FFP in the title). However, in some documents the role does include a reference to gender equality (see Luxembourg’s 2021 commitment tied to the GEF, in which the post is referred to as the Ambassador for Human Rights and Gender Equality). In a comment responding to a draft of this analysis, a foreign ministry official commented:

This pertains to a technical error made in 2021. There was no revision in the title, which has always been Ambassador-at-Large for Human Rights. Luxembourg would like to underline that since the GEF in 2021 reflections have been ongoing on the revision of the title and that in spring 2023, it was confirmed that the implementation of FFP will remain in the attributions of an Ambassadorial post. (Personal communication, 2023)

Irrespective of the title, it is unclear how the role (for that or any of Luxembourg’s four and thematic ambassadors, for that matter) is resourced and staffed (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 2023). Luxembourg’s Ministry of Equality Between Women and Men, under the direction of Minister Taina Bofferding, has promoted Luxembourg’s feminist foreign policy at high-level events (Ministère de l’Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, 2023).

In a comment responding to this analysis, the foreign ministry commented:

Luxembourg believes that gender equality and a feminist foreign policy can only be promoted while these topics are also addressed at a national level. The Ministry of Equality Between Women and Men (in short: MEGA) is in the lead for the promotion of equality in all aspects of life and society in Luxembourg. It has developed a National Action Plan on Gender Equality (“Plan d’action national pour une égalité entre les femmes et les hommes”) and actively works against gender-based discrimination. Thereby, the international promotion at high-level events of Luxembourg’s FFP is an essential contribution of the MEGA to

the efforts taken by the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, while it continues the work at a national level. The MEGA remains an important partner for the Luxembourg MFEA and close consultations will continue in the process of drafting the FFP Action Plan. For more specificities on the portfolio, we refer to the Ministry's website: <https://mega.gouvernement.lu/en/le-ministere.html> and its various specific micro websites on different aspects of gender equality such as www.violence.lu, www.sexisme.lu, www.megacommunes.lu, www.megadelegates.lu, www.actionspositives.lu, www.rockmega.lu. (Personal communication, 2023)

In terms of civil society's representation in the policymaking process, according to ministry officials, "In the context of drafting the Action Plan on FFP, Luxembourg has been in contact with civil society as of late June/July 2023 for that purpose and announced the beginning of consultations for late 2023" (personal communication, 2023). Given that Luxembourg's Action Plan on Feminist Foreign Policy has yet to be released, this is a moment of opportunity for inclusion of feminist civil society in the process of policymaking, implementation and evaluation as recommended by our Framework—to which Ministry officials have assured us they are committed. We encourage Luxembourg to explore models for co-creation with feminist activists, such as the French High Council for Gender Equality or Spanish High Level Advisory Council for Feminist Foreign Policy, both of which are independent bodies of experts tasked with advising the government on the implementation of its FFP.

IV - Research and Reporting

According to Ministry officials, the timeline for developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and publishing its forthcoming action plan is 5 years—the timeframe of its 2021 Generation Equality Forum commitment. Presumably the Action Plan on Feminist Foreign Policy will include additional specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time-bound, inclusive and equitable objectives and indicators by which to measure progress. Per Ministry officials, this

will be developed in consultation with civil society, starting in late 2023.

V - Reach

The Government of Luxembourg has inconsistently embraced the "feminist" label in its foreign policy. It has amplified its feminist foreign policy and drawn on feminist foreign policy framing with audiences already engaged in gender equality efforts, such as Ambassador Goedert's participation at the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy's 2022 FFP Summit (Anne Goedert, 2022) or Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean Asselborn's remarks at the 2022 international Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference in Berlin (Le gouvernement luxembourgeois, 2022), as well as through its 2022 Humanitarian Action Strategy (Luxembourg Aid & Development, 2022). While we hold that it is more important that a policy is feminist in content rather than in name, in the case of Luxembourg's General Development Cooperation Strategy: The Road to 2030 (Luxembourg Aid & Development, 2023b), the government falls short on centering feminist foreign policy objectives, treating gender through the frame of "socio-economic integration of women and girls" rather than with the intersectional, transformative and rights-based language prescribed by feminist foreign policy.

In our 2021 Update, we recommended that the Government of Luxembourg formulate its then-forthcoming Development Cooperation Strategy with an equal emphasis on gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability. Released in March 2023, the Development Cooperation Strategy explicitly described that its main objectives were to eradicate extreme poverty and promote economic, social and environmental sustainability (Luxembourg Aid & Development, 2023b). Within these objectives, it details four topic areas: (1) improving access to quality basic social services; (2) strengthening the socio-economic integration of women and young people; (3) promoting sustainable and inclusive growth; and (4) promoting inclusive governance. The Development Cooperation Strategy framed its work advancing women's rights as means to eradicate poverty rather than as an end in and of itself, limiting its activities to strengthening women's employability and access to vocational training. It also

did not underline the intersections of gender and environmental sustainability and other human rights as per our 2021 recommendations. In response to a draft of this analysis, a ministry official stated:

By developing and implementing its gender cooperation strategy and its strategy for environment and climate in parallel, Luxembourg's Development Cooperation wanted to ensure cross-referencing of the transversal character of both themes and to systematically integrate both topics into political dialogues, new cooperation programs and projects. By recognizing and putting in place processes to address the gender and climate nexus in development cooperation efforts, the Directorate of Development Cooperation is ahead of many peers in mainstreaming both lenses concurrently. (Personal communication, 2023)

In August 2022, the Government of Luxembourg released its Humanitarian Action Strategy (Government of Luxembourg, 2022). In contrast to its Development Cooperation Strategy, the Humanitarian Action Strategy explicitly cites its feminist foreign policy and the need to adopt an intersectional lens in policymaking, underlining the disproportionate impact of conflict and insecurity on women, girls, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations. The strategy seeks to “[promote] gender-transformative change in humanitarian action, thereby supporting capacity and resilience building that goes beyond temporary needs” (Luxembourg Aid & Development, 2022, p. 12). This objective is reflected in the strategy's six cross-cutting priorities which lists gender as the first followed by (2) disability-inclusive humanitarian action; (3) mental health and psychosocial support; (4) localization of aid; (5) innovation and digitalization; and (6) greening of humanitarian action. We welcome the strategy's framing of humanitarian policy as a means to accelerate gender equality and its adoption of a cross-cutting, gender-centered approach. We note that the Humanitarian Strategy could have been even further rooted in feminist foreign policy principles and praxis if it had underlined the importance of policy co-creation with women and girls, the particular need to decentralize

power to grassroots feminist organizations via flexible, multi-year funding and had made the explicit link to the reverberating impacts of colonialism on today's conflict and instability.

As for Luxembourg's commitments to integrate feminist approaches to its engagement internationally, the government has noted migration policy as a priority. In his remarks on a high-level panel at the 2022 Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference in 2022, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Jean Asselborn asserted the need to adopt a gender perspective in EU migration policy. Here Luxembourg possesses unique potential to contribute to this agenda, as Ambassador Goedert holds a dual function as Coordinator for international migration issues (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 2023). However, given recent reports documenting concerns in Luxembourg's immigration and judicial systems, including high rates of pre-trial detention, poor if improving conditions for unaccompanied minors (OMCT, 2023), a short statute of limitation for rape and the omission of femicide from its criminal code, it will be important from a coherence perspective for Luxembourg to first meaningfully address these concerns at home, before making efforts to lead urgently-needed progress on the continent more broadly.

Luxembourg highlights the feminist foreign policy's need to adopt an intersectional lens in policymaking, underlining the disproportionate impact of conflict and insecurity on women, girls, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations



THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN

Current Status

Spain was the sixth country to adopt a FFP, having released its Guide to Feminist Foreign Policy in March 2021. Analyzed in greater detail in the previous edition of this report, the Guide to Feminist Foreign Policy outlines five principles that Spain commits to integrating across all elements of its foreign policy: a transformative approach ensuring coherence across all external action; leadership's commitment to developing and advancing FFP; coordination mechanisms that enhance ownership of FFP by different stakeholders; inclusive participation and fostering alliances; and intersectionality and diversity (Thompson et. al, 2021; Spain's Feminist Foreign Policy, 2021). On accountability, Spain's Guide to Feminist Foreign Policy mandates annual, public reporting on implementation progress and the creation of a High-Level Advisory Group to help shape future priorities.

Spain is now in the process of developing an Action Plan 2023-2024 for its FFP with the endorsement of the High-Level Advisory Group. The purpose of the Action Plan is to provide implementation guidance for Spain's existing FFP principles within the wider framework of Spain's Foreign Action Strategy 2021-2024 (or Estrategia de Acción Exterior). The Action Plan presents four axes by which to operationalize Spain's FFP principles: (1) advancement of a feminist foreign agenda as a political objective in bilateral, regional and multilateral spaces, (2) equality in the foreign service through promotion of gender parity, prevention and eradication of sexual and gender-based harassment and the strengthening of institutional mechanisms for collaboration, (3) coordination and harmonization of actors, including a diversity of stakeholders and (4) accountability, including the presentation of an annual monitoring report to Parliament outlining the contributions of Spain's FFP.

Each of the Action Plan's axes is attached to a set of indicators, which identify coordinating entities, implementing entities and other involved actors all within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. On the first objective, a feminist foreign policy agenda, the Action Plan highlights indicators relevant to Spain's promotion of gender equality in multilateral settings, such as the United Nations and the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalitions; the European Union; bilateral and regional engagement opportunities and forums; and through international cooperation and humanitarian action. On the last point, it commits up to 15 percent of Spain's official development assistance to projects that support gender equality as a principal objective—a goal which Spain has exceeded over the past several years (Estrategia de Acción Exterior, 2021; Papagiotti, 2022). On the second objective, promoting equality in the foreign service, the indicators outline several measures to promote women's entry and retention in diplomatic careers, support for more safe and equitable workplaces and awareness raising efforts around FFP. On the third objective, coordination and harmonization of actors, the indicators include the creation of a High Level Advisory Group for the execution of the FFP, the designation of gender focal points in all Spanish embassies, and greater knowledge production and awareness raising around FFP. On the fourth objective, accountability, the Action Plan commits to quantitative and qualitative monitoring of the FFP through a matrix of indicators, reports submitted to multilateral entities like the UN, EU and OECD-DAC, independent evaluations of plans, programs and strategies and strengthened data collection processes—all to feed into the development of an Annual Monitoring Report that will be presented to Parliament (Estrategia de Acción Exterior, 2021).

Spain's Action Plan further outlines governance and resourcing commitments to carry out implementation of the FFP. It notes that the FFP will be supported by technical, financial and human resources—reiterating

the 15% of ODA target for projects with gender equality as a principal objective, strengthening gender and diversity approaches in existing financial instruments, as well as an increase in financial support for women's organizations and feminist movements, though an amount is not specified. The Action Plan identifies the High Level Advisory Group as responsible for coordination of actors involved in the FFP, and notes that it will host at least three annual meetings. Further, the Action Plan identifies Spain's Ambassador-at-Large for FFP as the institutional figure responsible for maintaining a global vision of the policy, and the Equality Unit, attached to the Technical Cabinet of the Under-secretariat, as the body responsible for integrating a gender approach to internal policies of Spain's foreign service. The Action Plan also recommends the formation of a FFP Support Group staffed and resourced to accompany management, implementation and monitoring by the High-Level Advisory Group and the Ambassador-at-Large for FFP. While the Action Plan only covers the period 2023-2024, the document notes that key FFP actions have been integrated in other policies and frameworks to encourage sustainability beyond the current legislature, such as the Plan of Human Rights II (2023-2027) and the Spanish Strategy for Humanitarian Diplomacy (2023-2026), the Third Strategic Plan for the Effective Equality of Women and Men (2022-2025) or the State Strategy to Combat Sexist Violence (2022-2025), among others.

Like the *Guide* before it, the substance of the *Action Plan* is strong, and hopefully will be officially approved by the Foreign Minister soon.

However, there is some cause for concern as to the political sustainability of this effort. As is the case across Europe, the power of the far right is growing, and while it underperformed against expectations in the recent elections, there was not sufficient support for the ruling coalition to continue. On August 17, Francina Armengol, the socialist candidate, was elected President of the Parliament, with support from Catalan's separatist groups. This "may be seen as a barometer for the relative strength of the left and right blocs amid negotiations to form a government," (Reuters, 2023), according to some reports, and is of further interest given the government of Catalonia's increasing exploration of feminist foreign policy. While some have suggested that this may portend another Sánchez government, and presumably the continuation of Spain's FFP. However, as of this writing, the future for the Spanish government—and its feminist foreign policy along with it—is unclear.

Analysis

I - Rights

Throughout its Action Plan, Spain commits to advancing the human rights agenda in numerous forums: the multilateral level, the European Union, bilateral and regional relations and in international action for international cooperation and humanitarian action. It aligns its feminist foreign policy with the National Human Rights Plan II and recognizes that human rights have faced a setback due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Spain acknowledges the urgency of regressing human rights, and calls for "new commitments that allow sustaining feminist efforts and transformative agendas to continue attacking the structural causes of gender inequalities" (Ministry official, personal communication, 2023). Spain addresses a range of human rights issues in its Action Plan. For example, it highlights its co-leadership of the Generation Equality Forum's Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights and its role as a catalytic partner for the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact. Spain also calls for the "construction of political positions and resolutions" in various UN human rights agendas, including climate change, digitization,

health, education and human, education and human security. Spain joins Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Germany and Mexico in the cohort of FFP countries working to establish a human right to care, and in collaboration with partner countries, UN Women, OHCHR and ILO has led the UN resolution to commemorate the International Day of Care and Support, which will be celebrated for the first time October 29th, 2023 (United Nations, n.d.).

Additionally, Spain commits to supporting initiatives and internationally-agreed language that advances sexual and reproductive health and rights—including for LGBTIQ+ persons—as well as the prevention and elimination of sexual- and gender-based violence. This is an important area in urgent need of champions, and Spain’s approach is inclusive. However, given that feminist foreign policy is meant to embrace the highest level of ambition, we encourage Spain not to limit itself to internationally-agreed language in this area, pushing for new and better language in collaboration with feminist activists and women’s human rights defenders.

Notably, Spain’s *Action Plan* also pledges to support the rights of Afghan women and girls, facilitating their participation in international fora, supporting declarations, collaborating with the EU’s Forum of Afghan Women Leaders and Supporting the “Hear Us” platform that amplifies voices from Afghanistan and the diaspora. At the EU level, Spain also commits to supporting the application of its guidelines on human rights defenders and protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls. In its bilateral relations, it will offer technical support to embassies so that they can promote the rights of women and girls in their host countries. Spain also promises to advance human rights within its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation—promoting more equitable personal, family and work policies, and committing to prevent sexual- and gender-based harassment.

Spain’s FFP is quite comprehensive in its approach to human rights, and as discussed, tasks specific agencies to carry forward its objectives in areas where action is urgently needed. The commitment to

protect the human rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls within the European Union is particularly noteworthy, as this is an area in which the protection of such rights is urgently needed. There is tremendous need for transformative leadership here, and Spain should work with its European counterparts in the FFP cohort (France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Germany) in developing—together with feminist advocates and academics—a blueprint for what a more feminist immigration policy for Europe might look like, starting with a listening tour with impacted communities. As part of this effort, Spain must also consider and respond to activist critiques of its efforts to outsource migration controls to partner countries like Morocco (Elshamy & Wilson, 2023).

Spain makes an urgent commitment to protect the human rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls within the European Union.

II - Resources

On budgeting and resourcing its FFP, Spain’s *Action Plan* presents several concrete commitments, although it lacks detail in some areas. For instance, it commits 15 percent of its official development assistance to programs that support gender equality as a principal objective. It also notes that the Humanitarian Action Office reserves the 25 percent of the yearly call budget for NGOs to projects with gender interventions. The *Action Plan* makes human resourcing commitments through the appointments of the High Level Advisory Group and the Ambassador-at-Large for FFP, and recommends the creation of a Feminist Foreign Policy Support Unit with its own staffing and financing. Furthermore, the *Action Plan* commits to “greater financial support for women’s organizations and feminist movements” —

but does not specify any amounts or conditions, although in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly in 2022 President Sánchez indicated that Spain would be “contributing EUR 100 million over the next three years to organizations working on gender equality, especially in reproductive and sexual rights, including UN Women” (Sánchez, 2022).¹¹ Feminist advocates have been calling on governments to increase direct, multi-year, flexible and sustainable funds to women’s organizations and feminist movements (Mama Cash, 2022). Compared to this recommendation, Spain’s commitment stands to be improved.

On official development assistance, using findings from the OECD-DAC, Spain has one of the highest percentage contributions with gender equality marked as a principal goal, or GE2 marker: 16 percent in the 2020-2021 period. However, it is important to note that despite ranking third in this category, this represents a decrease of 3 percent in comparison to the previous year—despite the fact that it coincided with the announcement of the Spanish FFP. Contributions to gender equality as a significant goal, or GE1, also fell from 27 percent to 25 percent in the same period (Development Finance for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, 2022; Official Development Assistance for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in 2020-21, 2023), putting Spain below the DAC average.

In a report from last year using the latest data available (2019-2020), the International Center for Research on Women recommended that Spain work on reversing this decrease by adding gender objectives to all projects to sustain or increase the high share of gender-transformative projects. Neither category has been sustained or increased, and the establishment of a 15 percent target for gender-transformative aid in their FFP—a target they had already surpassed—shows a surprising lack of ambition for a donor whose percentages are otherwise among the best in

the DAC in this area. In 2018, the figure was roughly double that, but has fallen ever since (Papagioti et. al, 2022, p. 18).

In February 2022, the Spanish parliament passed the Cooperation Law for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity (Agudo, 2023) establishing that, by 2030, the percentage of Spain’s GNI dedicated to ODA will be 0.7 percent, which is more than twice the 2022 value of 0.3 percent (OECD Stats, 2022). If implemented, this would entail a laudable and immense increase in the funds targeted to gender equality as a principal goal. However, given Spain’s history of leadership when it comes to gender-transformative funding, 15 percent is aiming low. Spain should seek to return to 2018 levels and reclaim their banner as best-in-class for gender transformative aid; if they are indeed able to grow the overall pie for development assistance in line with the 2023 law, against a backdrop of aid cuts among even the FFP cohort, Spain will become an undisputed leader in this space.

II - Representation

A significant part of Spain’s *Action Plan* is focused on promoting equality in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. It identifies gender parity as a key goal, particularly in higher and management bodies. Currently, women make up 30% of the diplomatic service, but women ambassadors account for only 25%, while in the central services of the Ministry women in senior positions reach 38%. While Spain may have attained the 25% goal it set out to be achieved by the end of the current administration initially set in its FFP (Ceballos, 2022), there is still a long way to go to reach parity.

Spain aligns its gender parity goals with two other frameworks: its III Strategic Plan for the Effective Equality of Women and Men 2022-2025 (PEIEMH) and the III Gender Equality Plan for the Spanish

¹¹ In September 2022, President Sánchez announced at the General Debate of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly that Spain will contribute EUR 100 million over the next three years to organizations working on gender equality, especially in reproductive and sexual rights, including UN Women (Sánchez, 2022).

Administration and Dependent Bodies. It sets up coordination mechanisms, including with gender focal points, to advance its objectives toward institutional gender equality. Furthermore, Spain commits to encouraging more women to enter diplomacy, including modules on FFP in diplomatic training courses and evaluating compliance to equality-promoting rules and regulations. Spain's identified actions are quite specific in this regard, and again task certain agencies with carrying out this work. As discussed earlier, Spain's human resourcing commitments to its FFP—particularly the appointment of an Ambassador and a High-Level Advisory Group—further amplify the importance of this agenda as a national priority.

Spain's leadership has been actively championing feminist foreign policy in its external engagements, as its *Action Plan* sets out. In October 2022, President Sánchez joined the Chancellor of Germany, Olaf Scholz, in signing a Joint Plan for Action for Closer Bilateral and EU Cooperation, which committed among other things to advance cross-cutting feminist foreign and development cooperation policies. The same year, Foreign Minister Albares signed two similar memoranda of understanding with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Mexico and Chile. In November of 2022, Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Pilar Cancela Rodríguez, attended the 15th Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, where she spoke at an event on feminist development (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación, 2022).

So far this year engagement has continued apace, beginning in January with a meeting between Foreign Minister Albares and Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Tanja Fajon to discuss feminist foreign policy, following the latter's announcement that it would join the FFP club (Government of Slovenia, 2023a). In May, the EU-LAC International Foundation and the Governments of Germany, Spain, Argentina and Mexico held a meeting in Berlin with more than 120 representatives of civil society, academic experts, cooperation agencies and international organizations to strengthen cooperation between the two regions on

socio-economic gender inequalities, gender-sensitive climate actions and women's political leadership, including sustainable peace and security. Later this month, together with a number of other FFP countries, Spain will co-sponsor the 2023 foreign ministers meeting on FFP, to be held in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings. Spain is also currently in its EU presidency, and has indicated that FFP will be a part of the issues it will take up in this capacity.

With regard to civil society representation in the Spanish feminist foreign policymaking and implementation process, the High Level Advisory Group is a laudable mechanism for ongoing feedback and co-creation. Having included Advisory Group approval as part of its Action Plan clearance process is an important indicator of the meaningful level of engagement the Advisory Group holds. Little data on the Advisory Group's membership is publicly available, but the Foreign Ministry provided a complete list and Terms of Reference when we requested it for this report. Laudably, the group includes feminist activists, academics and practitioners from both Spanish civil society as well as countries which are recipients of Spanish assistance. Together with France and Colombia, Spain serves as a model in this regard of providing concrete mechanisms for ongoing comment and engagement by civil society in the development and promulgation of its FFP.

Surprisingly, the Action Plan makes few other commitments to substantively and frequently partner with civil society and feminist movements in the development and implementation of its FFP. The document references civil society engagement merely twice: once in reference to enhancing greater harmonization and coherence among the stakeholders involved in the High Level Advisory Group, and once when encouraging dialogue with civil society on the implementation of the Africa Plan. While Spain's Action Plan is strong in its precision in identifying indicators, coordinating and implementing entities and timelines, it could stand to benefit from the application of similarly detailed plans for co-creation with civil society and feminist movements.

IV - Research and Reporting

Spain's Action Plan 2023-2024 presents a tangible approach to advancing and implementing its Guide to Feminist Foreign Policy. Importantly, the Action Plan attaches specific, time-bound and measurable indicators to each of its four axes. By identifying coordinating entities, implementing entities and other involved actors within the Ministry to carry forward each indicator, the Action Plan demonstrates Spain's clear effort to strengthen implementation and harmonization of its FFP principles. The Action Plan is also unique in that it presents a theory of change for its FFP, demonstrating how its four axes will impact external foreign policy engagement and interior changes in the Foreign Service, and how these efforts will improve the lives of women and girls worldwide—all while acknowledging strengths, key assumptions and potential risks. Spain's FFP is both thoughtful and strategic in this regard; it is evident that the Ministry has evaluated an ecosystem of factors impacting ongoing and future implementation.

Furthermore, Spain's Action Plan is particularly strong in its commitment to accountability—a fundamental area in which peer governments are often found lacking. The Action Plan presents a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Framework which identifies measurable process and outcome indicators relevant to Spain's feminist foreign agenda and efforts toward promoting equality in the Foreign Service. It commits to an Annual Monitoring Report that will be submitted to Parliament, and encourages numerous actors to input data for its compilation. It also tasks the High Level Advisory Group with annual follow up meetings, and expects that its recommendations be incorporated into strengthening Spain's FFP. Per a Terms of Reference (ToR) provided to us by the Government of Spain, the High Level Advisory Group includes 29 participants from a range of ministries, the business sector, the United Nations, academia and civil society. It notes that the group will meet in-person at the Ministry on a quarterly basis (March, June and December), maintain regular contact via email and, if necessary, can call for extraordinary meetings. The

ToR identifies five key functions: (1) identifying priorities and courses of action, (2) making recommendations for the implementation of the Action Plan, (3) exchanging knowledge and information on new FFP initiatives, (4) identifying advocacy opportunities for the FFP and (5) collaborating on FFP accountability and its advances. Also, throughout the Action Plan, Spain identifies 90 indicators distributed across 47 lines and 38 objectives—reflecting a meaningful commitment to implementation and accountability for this agenda.

V - Reach

The indicators in Spain's Action Plan address a range of foreign policy issues including women, peace and security; gender-based violence; climate change; sexual and reproductive health and rights, support for women's human rights defenders; migration and asylum; accessible quality care and care services; women's economic empowerment; and support for Afghan women and girls. Most of these indicators are tied to specific strategies, policies and commitments that Spain is involved in at national, regional, Council of Europe, European Union and international levels. This reflects Spain's intentional effort to foster a both comprehensive and actionable FFP, leveraging strategic opportunities and political openings.

The Action Plan does not provide an in-depth analysis of these foreign policy issues, building upon the thematic priorities outlined in Spain's Guide to Feminist Foreign Policy. Given the comprehensive scope of relevant areas it names, there is real potential for Spain to apply its feminist approach across a number of relevant policy areas in a truly whole-of-government approach. In this analysis, we will point to three of particular interest: security policy, refugee and migration policy, and climate policy.

The Action Plan identifies the Ministry of Defence as a relevant actor for several objectives related to women, peace and security and the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence, an opening to explore what a more feminist approach to security policy would look like. It bears mentioning here that while Spain is increasing its level of official

development assistance, it has also increased its investment in military expenditure. In response to a 2 percent GDP requirement set by NATO, Spain increased its military spending from 1.4 percent of its GDP to military expenditure in 2021, to 2.17 percent in 2023. The Ministry of Defense's budget increased by 26 percent in 2023. Unlike Germany and Colombia, Spain does not take an explicit position as to whether its feminist foreign policy is pacifist. One might assume that it falls into a similar camp as Germany, which is also intentionally ramping up military spending to meet NATO targets. However, it would benefit from further defining its approach as to how it sees the intersection of these policy areas—in tension, or in compliment—and how it might ensure a more feminist approach within its security policy.

As explored in detail in the preceding “Rights” section, Spain's articulation of its commitment to champion the rights of refugee and migrant women within the European Union is particularly noteworthy. Perhaps more than any other policy area besides defense, refugee and migration policy is the area in which feminist activists and women's human rights defenders have been the most critical of FFP, particularly given the treatment of Black and brown migrants and Muslim migrants both within national borders (OHCHR, 2022) and in transit countries (Spirlet, 2023).

In commenting on a draft of this analysis, Spanish officials stated that, “The MFA's Migration Office considers that this is a very serious statement and requests facts, details and examples in relation to ‘bad treatment of black and brown Muslim **women** within national borders’” (personal communication, 2023). The emphasis (theirs) on the word “women” in the above reinforces what seems to be a limited view of intersectionality in the Spanish FFP to women specifically. Indeed, although intersectionality is listed as the fifth principle of the Spanish FFP, the definition provided underscores this:

Intersectionality and diversity: Mainstreaming the gender approach in foreign policy necessarily means working with an intersectionality perspective. The situation of women and girls

cannot improve without recognising the existence of intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination. In addition to gender discrimination, women may also suffer discrimination due to their ethnic or racial origin, sexual orientation and gender identity (LBTI women), economic status, religious beliefs, disability or place of origin. (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación, 2021, p. 8)

While, by this definition, the Government of Spain may not be violating the explicit terms of its FFP, we encourage a more inclusive and expansive application of an intersectionality lens, as per our Framework and as evoked in the Spanish FFP's first principle of transformation:

Transformative approach: Spain will foster a global view of its feminist foreign policy, eliminating silo-based work and ensuring coherence across all areas of external action. The goal is to bring about a structural change in working methods and institutional culture, so that gender perspective is systematically mainstreamed in every action of the Foreign Service. (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación, 2021, p. 7)

By this measure, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Migration Office could consider the excessive use of force and other issues that have been documented by the International Office on Migration, UN Refugee Agency, and UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in addition to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, even if targeted against men and boys, as antithetical to the spirit and principles governing its FFP, and worthy of interrogation.

Another area for further exploration could be that while the Spanish FFP does name race and ethnicity as relevant areas of action under its Intersectionality principle, the Action Plan does not name race as one of the intersectional issues under its purview. Moving forward, Spain could bolster its approach by including an explicit focus on race and ethnicity, not

only in its efforts to champion migrant and refugee women’s human rights, but more broadly as well.

We reiterate that we see an opportunity and an urgent need for transformative leadership among the FFP cohort here, and encourage Spain to invite its European counterparts (France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Germany) to join them in a listening tour that would inform the development—together with feminist advocates and academics—of a blueprint for what a more feminist immigration policy for Europe might look like. As part of this effort, the group should consider and respond to activist critiques of its efforts to outsource migration controls to FFP partner countries like Morocco (Elshamy & Wilson, 2023) and Tunisia.

Finally, on climate change: Spain was one of the first countries to explicitly name climate policy as a relevant area for its FFP, and has included a focus on the issue in both its Guide and Action Plan. However, the issue of domestic policy coherence in this area raises an issue: a lawsuit was filed in 2020 by a number of civil society organizations against the Spanish government for failing to deliver on its Paris Agreement commitments. The lawsuit was dismissed by the Spanish Supreme Court in July of 2023 (Lombardi, 2023). While Spain mentions advancing human rights in climate change negotiations and acknowledges its commitment to the Paris Agreement in its Action Plan, there is significantly less attention to this issue than others. Given the reaction by environmental groups and the urgency of countering climate change, Spain’s FFP could benefit from greater attention to climate issues within its feminist foreign policy, supporting as Mexico has the preferred negotiating language of indigenous and women’s rights defenders at COP, partnering with activists for gender and climate commitments, as both Mexico and Germany have, and examining the issue of gender in its climate finance.

THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

Current Status

In our 2021 analysis of France’s feminist foreign policy, we noted: “All eyes are eagerly looking ahead to the unveiling of its handbook [outlining its feminist foreign policy] in 2022” (Thompson et. al, 2021). As of mid-2023, no such handbook has been released. However, France’s Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs has since uploaded a brief explainer on its FFP to its website, identifying the priority areas of “reduction of inequality, sustainable development, peace and security, defense and promotion of fundamental rights, and climate and economic issues” (Ministère de L’Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, n.d.). It notes that the key elements of France’s FFP are laid out in its International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018-2022), which was analyzed in the last edition of this report. The Strategy mandates biennial, public evaluation of progress against its goals, and has tasked its High Council for Gender Equality—an independent body of gender experts under the authority of the Prime Minister—to evaluate its implementation. The second report of the High Council was released in July of 2023, and included a number of recommendations that we explore in the analysis section of this report.

The document on the Ministry’s website also highlights different mechanisms by which France is taking action on its FFP: at the bilateral level through the Solidarity Fund for Innovative Projects and the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations; at the multilateral level, including at the United Nations, G7 and

Generation Equality Forum; and through its international aid, which targets 75 percent of France's ODA to projects that support gender equality and 20 percent that are uniquely dedicated to gender equality. The explainer also addresses key issues and associated French investments in them: France has committed 400 million euros to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights; half of the 333 million euros France has allocated to the Global Partnership for Education will address girls' education and equality education; and between 2019 and 2022, France has contributed 8.2 million euros to the Global Fund for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Further, the document references internal efforts at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, highlighting equal opportunity, equal pay, improved work-life balance and zero-tolerance for violence, discrimination, gender-based aggression and sexual harassment (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, n.d).

France is currently revising its International Strategy for Gender Equality, the latest edition of which is set to be released around March 2024. The strategy is expected to further delineate France's priorities and provide a definition of its feminist foreign policy. In a comment responding to this draft, a foreign ministry official indicated that this would include:

Particularly mainstreaming gender equality in all foreign policies, especially global issues (climate, digital, trade), funding and ODA, sustaining feminist activists and organizations, feminist approaches to crises and humanitarian contexts, transparency and accountability and actions within the administration. France is currently running a process of multi-stakeholders' consultation through the organization of several working groups, to inform the upcoming Strategy. (Personal communication, 2023)

Analysis

I - Rights

France has exercised its feminist diplomacy perhaps the most visibly in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). On International Women's Day in March 2023, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna released France's new International Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The strategy, covering the period 2023-2027, addresses issues like access to safe abortion, contraception and family planning, sexual- and gender-based violence, comprehensive sexuality education, LGBT+ rights and SRHR in conflict and crisis settings (France Diplomacy, 2023). Furthermore, Colonna announced that France would issue sanctions against individuals and entities from Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria and South Sudan for their human rights violations, particularly against women's rights; renew and improve the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations France which was launched in 2020; strengthen its financial aid towards conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence in Ukraine and the dialogue with francophone feminists organizations; promote women's rights at the upcoming COP28 in Dubai; and launch new initiatives on the protection of women in online spaces.

These have also been encouraging developments on SRHR, one of the key areas that activists and academics have consistently pointed to as among the most important to prioritize in a FFP. This comes within a context of similarly increasing ambition with regard to France's official development assistance, which we explore further in the "Resources" section.

II - Resources

To date, there have been two relevant developments which indicate promising progress towards a fully-resourced French feminist diplomacy strategy. First, the official responsible for France's leadership of the Generation Equality Forum was given ambassadorial rank and does fulfill the FFP portfolio in practice, though not in name. Secondly, shortly after the Generation Equality Forum, the French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne announced the creation of an ambassador for LGBT+ rights and the commitment of 3 million euros to support the creation and financing of new support centers for LGBT+ persons throughout France. In late 2022, Jean-Marc Berthon was nominated to become the first Ambassador for LGBT+ rights, coordinating and amplifying France's European and Foreign Ministry's strategy to promote rights of LGBT+ persons. Although it is too early to track the role's impact or the fluctuation in its funding, it nevertheless serves the dual function of hopeful precedent of France's motivation and capacity to concretize its commitments to gender rights through its staffing and resourcing decisions, but also, as an aspirational model for its FFP portfolio. But until then, the absence of a designated portfolio or policy framework, as well as cuts in the resourcing for the office of the Ambassador for Generation Equality Forum,¹² places France out-of-step with its peers who have moved toward ever more explicit articulation of both policy goals and resourcing for those responsible for implementing them.

On financial resources, as mentioned in the last edition of this report, France's International Strategy for Gender Equality set out to increase bilateral and programmable ODA that contributes to gender equality to 50 percent in 2022, up from 30 percent in 2018. In 2021, parliament also passed a new international development law that set targets of 75 percent of ODA spending on gender as a significant

and principal objective, and 20 percent of ODA on gender as a principal objective by 2025. This is a laudable stretch goal, particularly for the gender transformative category, and currently France is not on track to reach this goal by 2025—although it is improving. According to the latest OECD report on gender funding, France is now still only the 14th highest funder for gender equality, although it has climbed considerably from 19th the preceding year. As the fifth largest donor by volume for gender equality, should France meet its funding targets this would represent a considerable increase to the available funds for gender equality globally.

With regard to how that funding is spent, France replenished its Support Fund for Feminist Organizations. The actual amount disbursed through the Fund (134 million euro) has surpassed the initial amount announced (120 million euro). Support to SRHR has also been reflected in its ODA, with the implementation of its commitments taken at the Generation Equality Forum in 2021, including a 90 million euro contribution to UNFPA for purchasing and distributing contraceptives and related health products and a 50 million euro contribution to the Muskoka Fund. France will also contribute an additional 2 million euros to the Global Survivors Fund supporting women survivors of sexual violence in Ukraine (France Diplomacy, 2023). This is an important area for continued investment, and France would do well to increase its commitments in this area as part of its strategy to reach its 20% target (currently those levels lag at about 4% in 2020-2021).

III - Representation

The weak institutionalization of France's international feminist commitments can be seen reflected in its senior or diplomatic staffing decisions. Only a third of France's Ambassadors are women, and it has yet to formally designate a senior official responsible for its FFP or a gender equality

¹² Since France transitioned out of its role leading the Generation Equality Forum, there has also been a noticeable reduction of resourcing this agenda. Although the Ambassador position has remained, there were more policy staff and a larger budget for that office's engagement in and contributions to various multilateral efforts, a profile that is noticeably scaled down in similar meetings on the global stage in ensuing years.

ambassador (Chebab, 2022).

One area where France shines, however, is in its collaboration with civil society and independent experts in the implementation and assessment of its FFP. The government has tasked the feminist diplomacy committee of its High Council for Gender Equality with evaluating the French International Strategy for Gender Equality, and FFP by extension. The Council recently released its report, which we cover in more detail in the “Research and Reporting” section. The extent to which the government takes on board recommendations from the Council’s recent report will be an important test of its ability to embrace co-creation, or the incorporation of that feedback in policy praxis, beyond the solicitation of external ideas and insights. In order to ensure this feedback is truly global, the government should consider appointing representatives from countries who are recipients of French aid, as it is currently comprised only of French citizens (who possess considerable expertise on relevant topics, but are nonetheless not impacted individuals).

IV - Research and Reporting

In July of 2023, the French High Council for the Equality for Gender Equality (HCE), an independent, appointed, consultative entity, released its review of France’s International Strategy for Gender Equality, between 2018 and 2022. In its evaluation, the High Council underlined three main areas of improvement to be addressed: defining, funding, and backing the feminist foreign policy. In comparison to other countries, the authors note that the French feminist diplomacy lacks strong conceptual foundations and a specific definition, and covers a limited range of topics. In addition, the backing, both politically and within the Ministry, has been timid. For example, there is low adherence to optional gender sensitivity training modules, which means the culture change the policy seeks has been slow, especially amid a context of backlash against which the policy does not stand substantively. This, combined with the fact that the policy is not sufficiently resourced and funded, means that there has been progress, but much work remains to be done. The Council makes a number of

recommendations, mostly centered on concretizing a budget, an actionable definition and generating more institutional backing for the policy (Pierre-Brossolette et. al, 2023).

While there is clearly much work to be done, we are heartened by the government’s recent statements that it intends to issue its long-awaited, official articulation of its feminist foreign policy, and find the French government’s relationship with its Gender Equality High Council to be a particularly inspiring model for mechanisms institutionalizing collaboration and—ideally—co—creation with civil society counterparts.

While critical feedback can be hard to hear, when offered in the spirit of improving impact it can be among the best ways to test and enhance outcomes. We look forward to seeing how the government addresses these recommendations as it proceeds with the exciting work of drafting its forthcoming Feminist Foreign Policy Strategy.

One area where France shines is in its collaboration with civil society and independent experts in the implementation and assessment of its feminist foreign policy.

V - Reach

In the last edition of this report, we noted that France’s feminist foreign policy—while often championed by government officials on the global stage—had yet to be published in any publicly available document or articulation of policy. Since then, the brief explainer on its website reflects some progress to define the government’s approach, yet falls short of any recognition of objectives, timelines, plans for implementation or monitoring, staffing or intersectionality. Overall, France’s approach to its

FFP would significantly benefit from the eventual publication of an official policy document, as current guidance is mostly piecemeal, lacking in specificity and ambition. In a comment responding to this draft, representatives from the foreign ministry indicated that French officials plan to include such a definition of FFP in the next International Strategy for Gender Equality.

Activists and academics have also identified areas in which France could significantly improve its approach to FFP. For instance, a 2022 report by the Transnational Institute found that France is simultaneously one of the top carbon emitting countries in the world and one of the top military spenders in the world (Akkerman et. al, 2023). According to the report, France accounts for “about a third of the European Union’s estimated 24.8 million tonnes” of military carbon footprint (Akkerman et. al, 2023, p. 9). This contradicts France’s own commitment to “mainstream gender in climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and funding mechanisms” in its International Strategy for Gender Equality (Directorate-General for Global Affairs, Culture, Education and International Development, 2018) and the salience peace and planet hold among FFP advocates—although in commenting on this draft a French official disputed this critique stating that “I don’t see any contradiction because there is no anti-militarism trend in French policy.”

Immigration is also an issue in which France receives similar scrutiny from activists: in April 2023, French civil society published an open letter calling upon the French government to accept more female Afghan refugees, claiming that its actions failed to embrace values of feminist diplomacy. Like throughout much of Western Europe, militarized approaches to human migration, such as abusive policing, surveillance, detention and forced evictions, are regularly and increasingly employed by French security forces. After French Minister Gérald Darmanin brazenly dismissed a Human Rights Watch report documenting degrading treatment of migrants in northern France, including 60 children, other officials admitted the incoherence of the country’s problematic migration policy with its feminist aspirations in its foreign policy. This admission has failed to materialize substantively in terms of cooperation with other FFP countries in multilateral fora to advance human-centered migration policies.



THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES

Current Status

In the last edition of this report, we analyzed Mexico’s existing FFP, to be implemented between 2020-2024. It identifies five main principles: (1) integrating a gender perspective and feminist agenda throughout all aspects of Mexico’s foreign policy; (2) achieving gender parity within the Foreign Ministry, and instituting organizational reforms in support of gender equality in the workplace; (3) combating all forms of gender-based violence, including within the Foreign Ministry; (4) ensuring that feminist leadership and women’s contributions— especially women from Indigenous, Afrodescendant and other historically excluded groups—to the development of Mexico’s foreign policy are visible; and (5) following an intersectional

¹³ We encourage the Government of France to take steps to cultivate and support diverse membership to the Gender Equality High Council to better reflect the diversity of the populations impacted by its policies at home and abroad.

feminist approach in all foreign policy actions (Mexican Observatory, 2020; Government of Mexico, 2020; Delgado, 2020; Thompson et. al, 2021).

To date, Mexico has not released any evaluations tracking its progress against these principles, nor commissioned an independent assessment. However, according to the Mexican Foreign Ministry, which is under the new leadership of Foreign Minister Alicia Bárcena, a new strategy on feminist foreign policy will be launched, in which results of its initial period of implementation will be published, along with an updated and enhanced series of objectives and indicators to track progress in the future.

There have also been a number of recent changes to Mexico's foreign policy leadership: Foreign Minister Bárcena has succeeded Marcelo Ebrard. Bárcena previously served as the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); the UN Secretary-General lauded her leadership as “progressive and visionary,” noting that she was “one of the first at the UN to position equality in its multiple manifestations, including gender equality, as the cornerstone of sustainable development...” (United Nations, 2022). In her new position, Bárcena has begun engaging with Mexico's FFP. In June 2023, the Foreign Affairs Secretariat (referred to as “SRE” or Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores) convened a meeting with heads of embassies and international organizations, during which Minister Bárcena committed to “conducting a responsible, more human and feminist foreign policy, in order to advance the bilateral, regional and multilateral agendas” (Gobierno de México, 2023).

Among foreign policy priorities, Minister Bárcena identified “banning nuclear weapons, combating the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, eradicating the illegal sale of cultural objects and recovering the cultural heritage of native peoples” (Gobierno de Mexico, 2023). In regards to regional and global engagement, she also highlighted issues of

leadership will implement and advance Mexico's feminist foreign policy, particularly its five main principles. Responding to a draft of this analysis, a SRE representative indicated that the Foreign Minister would be making new announcements on this subject at the upcoming meetings of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

There has also been a reshuffling at the functional level that has oversight of Mexico's FFP within SRE. Former Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Martha Delgado, has stepped down. Delgado often championed FFP on the multilateral stage, including at civil-society-led events. Her successor, Ambassador Joel Hernandez, has been appointed but has not made any public statements on this portfolio that we were able to ascertain. Delgado's second-in-command, Director-General of Human Rights and Democracy Cristopher Ballinas Valdés¹⁴—perhaps an even more visible figure in the representation of Mexico's FFP in the past—has also resigned.

While civil society has been actively critiquing the Mexican FFP to date, the Mexican government has not released any public progress reporting against its internal and reasonably well-defined goals. Because of this, our analysis relies heavily on civil society sources. In responding to a draft of this analysis, the Mexican Foreign Ministry did provide a number of comments, which we have clearly indicated throughout.

Mexico will prioritize banning nuclear weapons, combating the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, eradicating the illegal sale of cultural objects and recovering the cultural heritage of native peoples.

¹⁴ Director-General of Human Rights and Democracy Cristopher Ballinas Valdés served as an advisor to the Feminist Foreign Policy Collaborative from its inception until his departure from the Ministry in August of 2023.

Analysis

I - Rights

Most of Mexico's FFP efforts have been led by SRE's Undersecretariat for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, which has been considerably engaged in multilateral dialogue about FFP in international fora, most notably the Generation Equality Forum, the G20, the Conference of the Parties (COP) and other civil society and diplomatic events and opportunities (García et. al, 2023).

Representatives of Mexico's Undersecretariat for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights have been particularly active on FFP in forums of the United Nations, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. Mexico has cosponsored all CSW and UNGA forums on FFP, and, according to climate change activists, have been alone among even the other FFP governments in championing women's human rights defenders' preferred language in debates at COP27.

While Mexican officials have demonstrated their global leadership in the aforementioned areas, other contexts have not come without debate. In December 2022, Mexico came under scrutiny for its decision to abstain from a vote on whether the Iranian government should remain on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). In the midst of Iran's crackdown on peaceful protestors defending women's rights, the UN's Economic and Social Council decided to vote on whether Iran's actions deemed it fit to fulfill its term on the Commission, which is tasked with reviewing progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment. Mexico was the only FFP government that abstained from the vote. This received widespread attention, with an open letter calling for Iran's removal from the CSW attracting over 114,000 signatures, including members of the Iranian diaspora, human rights activists and prominent leaders such as Nobel Prize laureates and former heads of state.

In its explanation of vote, Mexico contended that if a State is considered not to be fulfilling its commitment as a member of the CSW, the Commission is precisely the ideal forum to deal with this, and reiterated its condemnation of the various acts of repression and violence against women and broader human rights abuses. (In a comment on this draft, a SRE representative pointed to this explanation of the vote, as well as Mexico's repudiation of same in various human rights bodies, saying that "...the expulsion of any member means closing the dialogue and does not contribute to improving the situation of women in that country. The position of Mexico remained aligned with the position of our country in the competent multilateral forums" [personal communication, 2023]).

Undersecretary Delgado and Director-General Ballinas penned an op-ed explaining Mexico's abstention in much the same vein, writing that Mexico has repeatedly condemned the situation in Iran and reiterated its support for human rights, but that removing Iran from the Commission would alienate the country and risk not bringing the concerns of Iranian women and girls to the international stage. Delgado and Ballinas Valdés concluded that Mexico's abstention therefore "attends more than ever to the principles of [its] feminist foreign policy, worrying not about political correctness, but genuinely about the best interests of girls and women" (Delgado Peralta and Ballinas Valdés, 2022).

While Mexico's concern that expulsion can hinder dialogue with a government is legitimate, Iran's repressive actions far exceed a level of acceptability. It is evident that the Iranian state does not stand by Iranian women and girls; in such a dire situation, allowing Iran to remain on a Commission dedicated to gender equality is

particularly egregious. While it also follows that a number of other members of the Commission have questionable records on the issue of women's human rights and gender equality—including, on the issue of femicide, Mexico itself—that is a broader scope of analysis than the focus of this paper permits.

II - Resources

Mexico has provided little detail on how it will specifically resource its FFP agenda. However, information is available about budget provisions under Anexo 13, or Annex 13, which reserves funds for the purpose of advancing “equality between women and men.” Under Anexo 13, 50 percent of the government's discretionary funds must be invested in international action toward the support of women and girls.¹⁵ While this is an ambitious and welcome goal, this has proven difficult in practice—with government agencies often encountering difficulty in meeting this level. In a comment in response to a draft of this analysis, SRE representatives stated the following:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) indicates that it promptly reports, on a quarterly basis, the budgetary aspects of the programs established in Annex 13. Disbursements for equality between women and men from the Federal Expenditures Budget, as well as the results achieved in terms of gender equality, measured through specific indicators and goals.

In this sense, the Foreign Ministry reports, among others, indicators such as:

- Percentage of cases of Mexican women, girls, boys and older adults abroad, in a situation of abuse, treated under the “Gender Equality” subprogram.
- Percentage of cases of Mexican people in situations of abuse and/or vulnerability, assisted for their repatriation to Mexico in the “Gender Equality” subprogram.

- Percentage of public officials benefited from awareness-raising and training actions for the incorporation of the gender equality perspective in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- Promotion of actions in compliance with Mexico's international obligations regarding gender equality. (Personal communication, 2023)

In this regard, the actions carried out by MoFA are described; a precise explanation is given in case there is a variation between the programmed goals and those achieved; and the improvement actions identified according to the results are indicated.

III - Representation

One area in which Mexico's FFP stands to improve is in its relationship with civil society and feminist movements. *Internacional Feminista* laments the Mexican government's lack of engagement with these stakeholders throughout the policy's development and implementation—besides regional consultations organized alongside the UN Development Program (UNDP) following the FFP's announcement (García et. Al, 2023, p. 5). Civil society advocates have also noted that SRE fell short of substantively consulting the range of government offices working on gender equality issues, and leveraging the relationships with civil society they may have. This includes, for example, the Feminist Advisory Group of Mexico's National Institute of Women (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, or INMUJERES). In other areas, Mexico has taken steps towards civil society inclusion; for example, Mexico's delegations to the COP have included civil society and young women representatives.

Additionally, *Internacional Feminista* reported little progress in women's representation in the foreign service and achieving gender parity at SRE. The report finds that, “It is not possible to know the overall percentage of women in SRE itself since the Secretariat says it does not have rank and gender-disaggregated data on its personnel. Moreover, the

¹⁵ This information is public, it can be consulted [here](#). As these comments were received after our publication deadline, we were not able to conduct further research but have reprinted the comments and resources here for further reference.

percentage of women by rank in the Foreign Service has remained static since 2018 with no notable change since the implementation of the FFP in 2020” (García et. al, 2023, p. 19). In a comment responding to this analysis, an SRE official (personal communication, 2023) stated that Actions will be implemented to give women greater visibility and voice, including the generation of diagnoses and information on their situation.” While no timeline was given for these actions, it is assumed that this will be part of the forthcoming updated FFP strategy that the Ministry’s new leadership has promised.

IV - Research and Reporting

In the 2021 edition of this report, we celebrated Mexico’s inclusion of measurable and time-bound actions across each of its five objectives. For instance, SRE undertook a baseline analysis of the number of women in Ambassador posts and various foreign ministry staff levels, and set specific benchmarks for growing those numbers by 2024. It also committed to the development and implementation of staff trainings and a Manual of Foreign Policy Principles (Gobierno de Mexico, 2020; Thompson 2020). By identifying concrete actions, Mexico had set itself up for future monitoring, evaluation and learning of its FFP—which it had laudably tasked to a specific actor: its Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights (Gobierno de Mexico, 2020). However, as of mid-2023, the government has not undertaken any public accountability of its progress toward those objectives, leaving it unclear whether its goals have been achieved. *Internacional Feminista* also reported significant challenges in finding and accessing information about the policy for their report; they expressed, “there are no accountability or transparency mechanisms that allow independent researchers or civil society to gauge the scope and impact of Mexico’s FFP” (García et. al, p. 5).

In a comment responding to a draft of this analysis, an SRE representative stated that, “Work is being done to generate a renewed and strengthened version of [the] Feminist Foreign Policy Indicators, concrete actions and measurable results are being defined to guarantee feminist transparency and accountability. To ensure a genuine process, a follow-up mechanism

will be implemented with the participation of civil society organizations and academia” (personal communication, 2023).

V - Reach

As described above, Mexico’s FFP has mostly been championed by SRE, particularly its Undersecretariat for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights. While SRE has brought much international attention to Mexico’s FFP and exercised clear leadership in the international human rights and diplomatic arenas, the scope of the policy and the range of government stakeholders supporting the agenda beyond SRE was not clear. A clear area for improvement was its lack of collaboration with INMUJERES, the Mexican gender ministry, which has long fostered relationships with Mexican feminist civil society and is addressing gender equality issues across the country, in addition to playing a global role as Mexico’s lead organizer of the 2020-2021 Generation Equality Forum, marking the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The *Internacional Feminista* report put it thusly: it is “unclear whether the FFP engages other branches of government, such as the executive and legislative powers” and that “SRE appears to be the only stakeholder involved in mainstreaming gender perspectives across Mexico’s foreign policy, which means implementation is severely restricted” (García et. al, 2023, p. 13).

However, initial reports from both the foreign ministry and INMUJERES indicate that, under the new SRE leadership, this situation is dramatically improving. INMUJERES leadership and technical advisors have been actively engaged in discussions with regard to the forthcoming FFP update, which will, per a SRE spokesperson, “generate a renewed and strengthened version of its Feminist Foreign Policy that will include more and better coordination actions, both within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as with federal public administration agencies... and various stakeholders, such as civil society organizations and academia” (personal communication, 2023).

Additionally, as discussed in the last edition of this report, Mexico has struggled to implement the

feminist approach its foreign policy espouses at home, a split screen in which Mexico is, under the feminist approach its foreign policy espouses at home, a split screen in which Mexico is, under the authorities of its FFP, a leading voice on women's human rights and combating violence and discrimination globally, and simultaneously host to a President and domestic authorities who have yet to effectively respond to issues of femicide, violence against protestors, and other urgent health, social and economic concerns (Gómez, 2023). *Internacional Feminista* points out this lack of coherence between Mexico's multilateral engagement and its domestic policymaking, claiming it reduces the legitimacy of its FFP (García et. al, 2023, p. 14). They also report the lack of an intersectional approach, despite being identified as one of the five main principles; *Internacional Feminista* notes that the FFP "only mentions women and girls as if they were a fixed group or category" and falls short of assessing impacts on "Afro-descendent populations, Indigenous, first nations or tribal people, people with disabilities, and migrants, among others" (García et. al, 2023, p. 30).

While it bears mention that the foreign ministry does not, by definition, have any authority over the statements or actions of its domestic-facing counterparts, the issue of domestic and foreign policy coherence is paramount for the continued sustainability and credibility of FFP as a discourse. The foreign ministry seems to recognize as much, walking a fine and politically risky line between its external-facing efforts and statements on the status of women internally. In a comment responding to this analysis, an SRE official stated (personal communication, 2023):

Mexico recognizes the enormous challenges that still exist for the achievement of substantive equality and the eradication of gender violence against women, for this reason the Mexican Foreign Ministry promoted the creation of the Feminist Foreign Policy of Mexico, in order to attract the highest international standards on human rights of women and girls to our country. For this reason, for example, Mexico recently ratified two international instruments to directly

benefit women: Convention 189 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) on domestic workers and Convention 190 of the ILO on violence and harassment in the workplace. Likewise, within the framework of the actions to strengthen the Feminist Foreign Policy, on August 22, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Institute for Women held an Intersecretarial Meeting of the Commission for Monitoring the Observations of the Committee for the Elimination of The Discrimination Against Women. The Commission is a coordination and cooperation mechanism between national institutions, which seeks to contribute to the follow-up of the observations issued by the CEDAW Committee. More than 26 national institutions participated in this meeting and decided to approve the Commission's restructuring proposal to strengthen national actions on gender equality.

Mexico demonstrated early leadership by being the first government in the Global South to announce a FFP—challenging conceptions of who "owns" FFP, and encouraging other governments in Latin America and worldwide to follow suit. For instance, Mexico participated in a seminar alongside Chile and Spain discussing best practices in their FFP, encouraging fellow governments to join multilateral efforts on human rights, gender and climate change (Gobierno de México, 2022). While Mexican government officials continue to champion FFP in global fora, civil society analysis points to a pressing need to improve its articulation of goals, timelines and budgets, intersectional approach, collaboration with civil society and overall monitoring and evaluation. With Mexican elections looming in 2024, it is high time for the government to step up its commitments to FFP, and ensure this agenda does not lose traction in the near term.

In response to this analysis, an SRE representative characterized the above as "areas of opportunity," and committed that (personal communication, 2023):

The Mexican Foreign Ministry, in coordination with the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES), is working to strengthen Mexico's Feminist Foreign Policy:

- The content of the PEF will be given greater clarity.
- More and better coordination actions will be generated, both within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as with public administration agencies and with various interested parties, which will enhance its implementation.
- Indicators, concrete actions and measurable results are being defined to guarantee transparency and feminist accountability.
- Likewise, to guarantee accountability, a follow-up mechanism will be implemented with the participation of civil society organizations, academia and other relevant actors.

No timeline for the updated FFP strategy was given, but we look forward to learning more about the process and its results.



THE STATE OF LIBYA

Current Status

In the last edition of this paper, we reported that Libya announced its commitment to a feminist foreign policy in July 2021—becoming the first African nation to do so. During an event held on the sidelines of the Generation Equality Forum (GEF), Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Najla Mangoush grounded the announcement in Libya’s commitment to the women, peace and security agenda. She focused on Libya’s ongoing economic and security challenges, as well as the need to address root causes of conflict. Minister Mangoush did not provide any details on timeline or process for developing the FFP, but explained that it would seek to understand the perspectives of marginalized parties in foreign policy design and decision-making, and uphold principles of human security, dignity and digital security (Thompson et. al, 2021; International Center for Research on Women, 2021). In our last paper, we anticipated the Libyan policy’s eventual release and implications for the broader Middle East and North Africa region. However, since the July 2021 event at the GEF, Libya has neither commented on nor published any content on its FFP.

Since Libya’s announcement of its FFP, political tensions have been prevalent across the country, and within the government itself. Minister Mangoush belongs to the Government of National Unity (GNU), a transitional government based in Tripoli that emerged from the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, a series of meetings held to accelerate the Libyan peace process and lead to democratic elections. Since the GNU’s formation in early 2021, it has faced a vote of no confidence and no elections have been held (Al Jazeera, 2021). In 2022, a rival government, the Government of National Stability, was also installed in the east—intensifying a power struggle and leaving the country with no unified government (Al Jazeera, 2022).

Further, military leaders of the Libyan National Army have expressed support for a new proposal by legislators to set up an interim government—another potential challenge to the GNU (Reuters, 2023). Such internal power struggles and political turmoil raise important questions for the state of Libya’s FFP. While Minister Mangoush announced a FFP as part of the GNU’s efforts to advance women, peace and security

and enhance stabilization throughout the country and region, it is evident that efforts may have succumbed to overwhelming political standoffs.

Because the State of Libya has not continued to message on its commitment to a feminist foreign policy following the Generation Equality Forum announcement in 2021, it is unclear that the State continues to promulgate an FFP. However, because of its previous announcement, we have included an abbreviated analysis of its efforts in this period in this report.

Analysis

Libyan women's rights activists have pointed out several areas in which the government has fallen short. In a statement to the Libya Herald, Libyan Women's Platform for Peace expressed that they were "deeply concerned about the arbitrary detention, forced confessions, and online defamation campaigns of activists, journalists, and human rights defenders which constitutes a clear violation of civil rights" (Zaptia, 2023). In 2022, the Libyan government came under criticism for its country-wide Marriage Fund, which offers Libyans financial compensation to get married. Activists called out the government for prioritizing marriage over investment in other basic needs and social services, and for giving legitimacy to harmful practices like child marriage. Libya's Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibeh even offered "bonuses" for marriages with "older women," fueling further controversy (Fetouri, 2022). Also, in 2021, Libya hosted the first Stabilization Conference to discuss solutions to security and economic issues in the country. Despite the ongoing work of women's rights activists and the participation of Foreign Minister Najla Mangoush, the Conference's resulting nine-point agenda made no reference to the role of women (Zaptia, 2021).

Furthermore, in 2021, the GNU's Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UN Women to prepare a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, grounded in UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Libya's Minister of Women's Affairs supported the initiative: "By drawing a road map to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda, Libya has shown its commitments to translate this much-needed resolution into concrete actions that will allow Libyan women to rightfully be part Libya's quest for prosperity" (UN Women Arab States, 2021). However, just prior to the Stabilization Conference, the Prime Minister decided to launch an investigation into the Ministry of Women's Affairs for taking this initiative with UN Women. Women's rights activists called out the GNU for this action; Karama, a regional NGO, was quoted: "This announcement is a direct attack, an attempt to criminalize one of the key duties of the Libyan government—to protect women and girls" (Karama, 2021).

In an article published by the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, Nouran Ragrag, researcher on women's political participation in Libya, also reported a public rise in resistance to women's rights-based frameworks and initiatives. Protestors rejected the MoU signed between Libya and UN Women, particularly its adherence to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Media organizations and social media accounts across Libya "spread narratives that FFP, CEDAW and WPS are at odds with Sharia'a law," and the Commission of Civil Society, a state institution which registers and approves of civic activities, issued a communiqué against the mainstreaming of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on WPS (Ragrag, 2022).

Reports have also emerged about GNU imposing restrictions upon civil society organizations. According to Human Rights Watch, the Office of the Prime Minister announced in March that domestic and foreign

NGOs are required to “correct their legal status” per a draconian, decades-old law of the Muammar Gaddafi-era, all within the context of “increasing restrictions on civic group activities, including harassment and at times detention and prosecution of local staff members and obstacles for non-Libyans working in humanitarian, human rights, and other nongovernmental organizations to obtain entry visas” (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Furthermore, over 130 organizations and activists issued a statement condemning new measures limiting women’s freedom of movement in Libya. Per new GNU-issued guidance, every Libyan woman traveling alone is now required to complete “an official declaration providing: her reasons for travel, an explanation of why she is traveling alone and details of her travel history,” which signatories call out as discriminatory, unconstitutional and violation of basic rights and freedoms (Libyan Women’s Platform for Peace, 2023). These regressive actions by the GNU are far from emblematic of their commitment to a FFP and do not bode well for future progress. And on the multilateral front, Libya remains a member of the Group of Friends of the Family, which has championed a restrictive agenda at the UN contrary to many feminist principles. As prospects for FFP in Libya are not promising, the country’s case does raise several learnings: namely, in periods of political turmoil, how can feminist values be protected?

According to Ragrag, Minister Mangoush has also encountered difficulty in her position. She reports that the Minister “has faced exclusionary tactics from the presidential council, such as being suspended and ‘banned’ from traveling for ‘administrative violations.’” (Ragrag, 2022). As the only public advocate for FFP

within the Libyan government, limitations on the Minister’s agency do not pan out well for the advancement of this agenda—nor the state of women’s political leadership in top levels of government.

As prospects for FFP in Libya are not promising, the country’s case does raise several learnings: namely, in periods of political turmoil, how can feminist values be protected?

As evident, ongoing political turmoil, resistance to women’s rights and a crackdown on human rights defenders stand in direct contrast to Libya’s commitment to a FFP. It is difficult to assess the scope of Libya’s policy without further details from the government, but it is clear that the cohesiveness of its agenda has been under threat.



THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN

Current Status

In a development that sent shockwaves through the feminist foreign policy community, in September of 2022 the newly-elected Swedish government, led by the far-right Sweden Democrats, announced that it would abandon its nearly decade-old feminist foreign policy. Within one month of taking office Minister of Foreign Affairs Tobias Billström announced “Gender equality is a core value for Sweden and this government, but we will not conduct a feminist foreign policy” (Granlund, 2022).

Analysis

The announcement has had ripple effects throughout the small but swiftly expanding feminist foreign policy community. It was met with disappointment not only among Swedish feminists (Andorff, 2022), but also globally, with advocates expressing appreciation for the power of the Swedish FFP as precedent-setting and, in a number of arenas, having demonstrated impact (Thompson, 2023). The move has heightened the urgency within advocacy circles to strategize on how to best institutionalize feminist foreign policy practices (The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2023), norms and standards to withstand election cycles. The departure has also impacted nascent feminist foreign policies, slowing down momentum on development and implementation of policies where Sweden was providing technical assistance, such as Liberia.

While the Swedish government has sought to reassure critics that removing “feminist” from the official description of its foreign policy will not affect its commitment to gender equality, stepping away from the label sends a clear signal that the level of ambition and focus on women’s rights and gender equality will inevitably decrease from a central organizing priority to one of many global objectives.

In the words of Bianco et. al (2023), “We hope that Sweden’s step away from the feminist foreign policy ‘club’ is temporary. We will miss your insights, ambition and leadership. And we will welcome you back with open arms when—once again—Sweden proudly calls its foreign policy feminist.”

Sweden's withdrawal from the feminist foreign policy space has heightened the urgency within advocacy circles to strategize on how to best institutionalize feminist foreign policy practices, norms and standards to withstand election cycles.

VI - CONCLUSION

Culminating our 2022-2023 review with the Swedish case study is a somber note on which to end, albeit fitting: as she began the official history of the field, so Sweden concludes our current review.

The departure of Sweden from the feminist foreign policy “club” that she founded is, while saddening for proponents of the discourse, certainly instructive. Progress is not assured. Even as we probe new horizons for human rights, backlash grows and is, it seems, increasingly successful in recalibrating the overall temperature for the movement. Perhaps we are entering a cooling period for the discourse after the hottest year on record.

Seeking solace, we’re inspired here to return to the words of our Framework:

Invocation of the word “feminist” can be a profound commitment, and not one that is necessarily possible or appropriate for all actors in all contexts. Governments who may be considering developing feminist foreign policies and advocates who are championing them will be helped to focus on the core ingredients, with the flexibility to find their own way to describe their commitment in a language and manner that is most helpful in their unique context. For those who are ready to use “feminist,” this can be an important signal that a government is ready to pursue a more transformative approach to the advancement of gender equality and inclusion, in a manner that is intersectional and that focuses at its core on transforming power relations, not just lifting up some women. (Thompson, 2020, p. 3)

In light of this perspective, Sweden’s step back can be seen as necessary and appropriate: if a government no longer wishes to plumb the outer limits of ambition, then perhaps the “feminist” label is no longer warranted. To maintain it in name only would only affirm that worst of all allegations, “pinkwashing.”

Meanwhile, the departure of the first generation from center stage makes room for a new and more diverse generation of champions. As Sweden has stepped back from the helm of the UN’s FFP+ caucus, Chile and Germany have together stepped up, experimenting with a co-leadership model that spans hemispheres and expands horizons. Feminist foreign policies are now being promulgated in five of six U.N. regions, each with its own unique approaches, insights and contributions.

As calls for the diversification and decolonization of the discourse have mounted—calls that we celebrate and welcome—we also celebrate the bravery and commitment of those feminists who are every day responding to the calls to improve, to innovate, and to increase ambition. This is a journey that never ends, only evolves ever forward, the process every measure as important as the product.

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