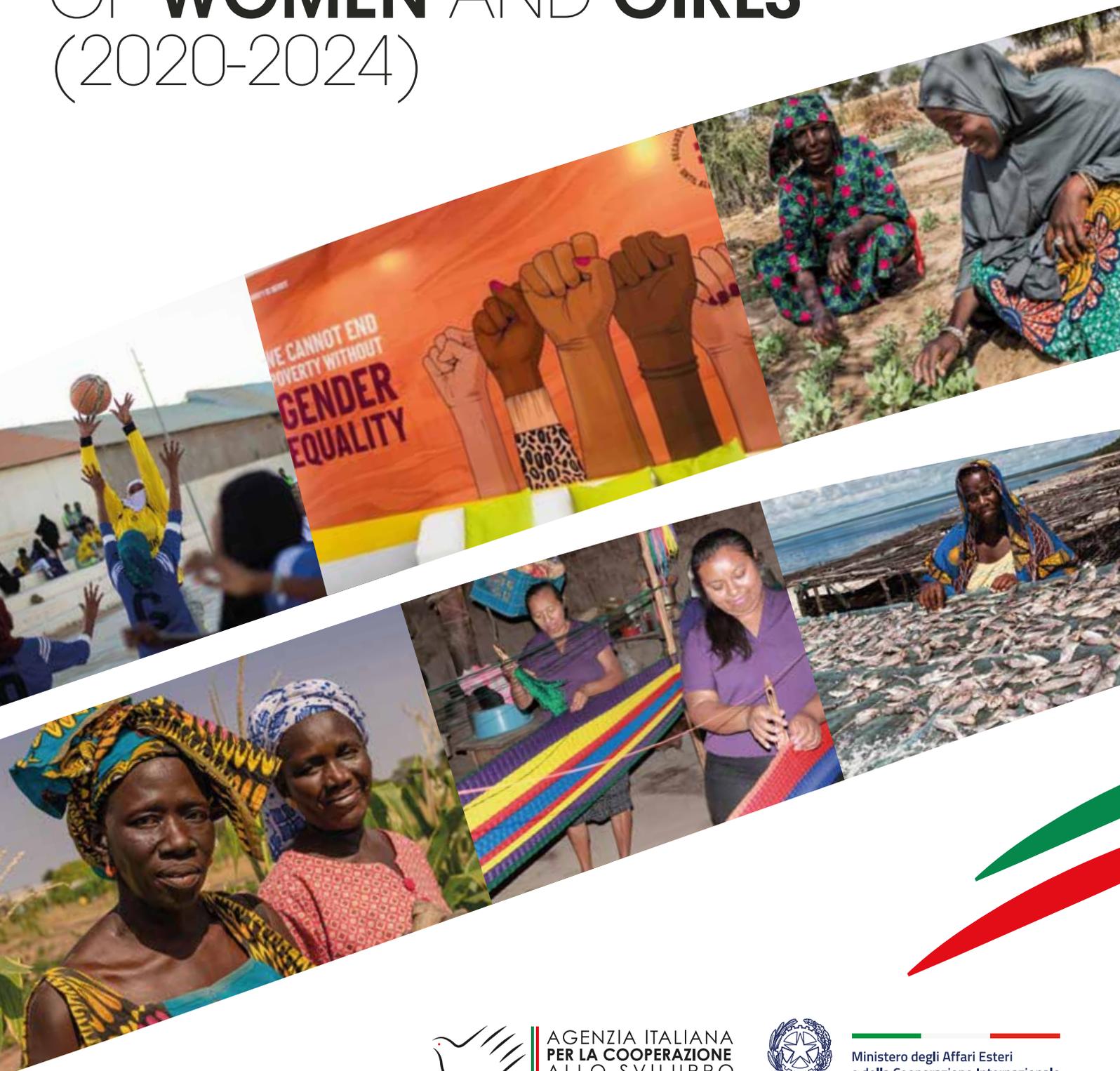


# GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF **WOMEN** AND **GIRLS** (2020-2024)



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# FOREWORD

1 It is internationally recognised that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are an essential pre-requisite to eradicate poverty and build a global society based on sustainable development, social justice and human rights. Gender discrimination persists throughout the world, albeit in different forms and dimensions. It must be perceived not only as an obstacle to the fulfilment of human rights by women and men, girls and boys, but also as a key factor to overcome and eliminate to achieve economic and social progress.

The promotion and protection of, and respect for, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, including the right to development, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, are crucial for women's economic empowerment and should be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes aimed at the eradication of poverty.  
*Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Final Document of the 62<sup>nd</sup> UN Commission on the Status of Women (CWS)*

2 During the COVID-19 pandemic, advances in gender equality hard-won over decades have shown much fragility. In just a few months, economic and social inequalities, gender-based violence, difficulty in accessing basic sexual, reproductive and maternal health services have increased. At the same time, while women are disproportionately at the forefront of family care (children, the sick and elderly) and of health and care services, their economic and participatory spaces are shrinking, wiping out years of progress; especially in developing countries<sup>1</sup>. For this reason, it appears all the more necessary to identify guidelines designed to promote the achievement of effective, participatory and lasting equality and the protection of women and girls who live in conditions of vulnerability and are exposed to the risk of violence.<sup>2</sup>

3 The issue of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) became part of Italy's cooperation policy following the IV UN Conference on Women in Beijing (1995). This led to the second version of the "Guidelines for the enhancement of the role of women and the introduction of a gender perspective in development cooperation policies" in 1998 (the first guidelines on gender date back to 1988). This document allowed to consolidate the initiatives launched, identify new areas of intervention and start the development of a preliminary mainstreaming strategy and mechanism.

4 The "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" Guidelines of 2010<sup>3</sup>, tailored to a renewed context focused on improving the effectiveness of actions (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and ACCRA Action Plan), clarified the conceptual framework for building gender cooperation policy. Furthermore, they identified key areas of intervention, such as the fight against gender-based violence (GBV), economic and social empowerment, rural development and food security and access to health, towards which investments should be directed and technical and financial resources increased.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/feature-covid-19-economic-impacts-on-women>

<sup>2</sup> IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action: "Interim Guidance - GENDER ALERT FOR COVID19 OUT-BREAK". March 2020.

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/interim-guidance-gender-alert-covid-19-outbreak>

<sup>3</sup> MAECI, Linee Guida per l'Uguaglianza di genere e l'Empowerment delle Donne 2010: [https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2010-07-01\\_LineeguidaGenere.pdf](https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2010-07-01_LineeguidaGenere.pdf).

5 Since 2010 it has been possible to: identify geographical areas, target countries and key sectors, where Italy has developed, over the years, expertise recognised at international and European level. Italy has increased sectoral investments through the elaboration and implementation of specific actions in support of GEWE. It has improved the political dialogue with partner countries, thanks to a greater commitment in bilateral programmes towards issues such as gender-based violence, gender mainstreaming, social protection and socio-economic empowerment, acting on policies and plans in support of gender equality.

6 The 2014<sup>4</sup> report of the OECD Peer Review on Italy recognised the importance of GEWE in the policy documents of the Italian Development Cooperation. However despite major achievements, the report strongly recommended the need to improve the gender mainstreaming strategy through the use of a twin-track approach. This included continuing, on the one hand, to support specific actions and ad hoc interventions for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; ensuring, on the other, its cross-cutting nature in policy documents and individual initiatives at central and decentralised level. It also recommended investing technical and financial resources and setting up a monitoring and evaluation system including gender indicators to measure impact. The 2019 Peer Review later acknowledged the progress of Italian Cooperation and underlined its commitment to an increasing share of gender equality programmes. Italy –as stated in the 2019 Peer Review –puts its focus on leaving no one behind and assigns special importance to gender equality across the programme cycle. A network of gender focal points accompany and monitor implementation on the ground, tracking both results and spending. Project and programme evaluations are already obliged to assess gender equality and the impact on human rights.

7 In this context, with Law N. 125/2014 laying down the new "General law on International Cooperation for Development", Italy reiterates, among its main aims, the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, the defence and upholding of human rights, the dignity of the individual and the principles of democracy and the rule of law<sup>6</sup>.

8 The update of the political-strategic guidelines of the Italian Development Cooperation on GEWE arise from the need to tailor the Italian Development Cooperation policy to the changing international and national scenario and to evaluate the results obtained, by enhancing good practices and identifying new challenges. This may strengthen the impact in terms of effectiveness, planning, visibility, and, above all, of support to policy definition processes in the partner countries.

9 The new "Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls (2020-2024)" are addressed to all actors of the Italian system, as provided for by Law 125/2014, Chapter VI, and apply to all projects and programmes financed and/or co-financed by Italy. In compliance with Law 125/2014 (articles 26 and 27), collaboration between all actors should be encouraged, envisaging monitoring and evaluation phases at central and decentralised level.

<sup>4</sup> OECD Development Co-operation Peer Review the Development Assistance Committee, Enabling effective development Italy 2014. [https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Italy\\_peerreview2014.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Italy_peerreview2014.pdf);

<sup>5</sup> OECD-DAC, Peer Review dell'OCSE sulla cooperazione allo sviluppo- ITALIA, 2019.

[https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PeerReviews\\_Italy-red.pdf](https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PeerReviews_Italy-red.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Art. 1 comma 2, legge 11 agosto 2014 n. 125.

# GENDER POLICY IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

- 10** The Beijing+20 Report<sup>7</sup> was a landmark in the assessment of the 1995 Beijing Action Plan's implementation. It showed that over the last few years, despite significant progress in gender equality in some countries and/or geographical areas, the global economic and financial crisis, together with persistent conflicts, volatile food and energy prices, climate change have increased inequalities and worsened people's vulnerabilities, with an almost universal negative impact on women and girls. In addition, important achievements are still threatened by growing radicalism and extremism, which exploit the control over freedoms and fundamental rights of women and girls as a means to defend identity and cultural values.
- 11** More than 300,000 women worldwide continue to die from complications during pregnancy or childbirth. Every year 15 million girls are forced into child marriage, at least 200 million women and girls worldwide undergo Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)<sup>8</sup>. Additionally 61 million do not have access to primary and/or secondary education due to poverty, gender stereotypes or lack of appropriate social services<sup>9</sup>. Women still earn about 40% less than men, 35% of them experience violence and only 22 out of 100 Members of Parliaments are women. The invisible and unpaid social reproductive work of women and girls, which has grown due to austerity and the dismantling of social policies, severely inhibits their empowerment and the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms. This strongly affects their economic autonomy, their freedom of choice and increases their vulnerability.
- 12** The final document of the sixty-second Commission on the Status of Women (CWS) of the UN<sup>10</sup>, in 2018, expressed strong concern at rising poverty, which affects 1.6 billion people, 80% living in rural areas, and at growing gender inequality. It urged the international community to recognise, in interventions for sustainable and inclusive development, the links between the increasing feminisation of poverty, the empowerment of women, girls and children and the fight against poverty, in its multidimensional meaning.

<sup>7</sup> UNWOMEN. Report "The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20". New York, March 2015.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/female-genital-mutilation>

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF. Gender Action Plan 2018-2021

<sup>10</sup> Economic and Social Council, Commission on the Status of Women Sixty-second session 12–23 March 2018.

## 2.1. THE 2030 AGENDA AND THE ADDIS ABABA ACTION PROGRAMME

- 13** In response to the urgent need for an effective and lasting solution to persistent inequalities and growing global poverty, in 2015 the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda. The promotion of gender equality is at the heart of the Agenda, not only to guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms of women and girls, but also to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (- SDGs).

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

#### SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

##### Targets:

- 5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3** Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- 5.4** Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 5.6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- 5.b** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- 5.c** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

**14** The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, which applies to all countries according to the principle of **universality**, defines the obligation to act for the respect of the fundamental rights of people, "leaving no one behind"<sup>11</sup>. It calls for countries and the international cooperation to put the rights of the most marginalised communities at the centre of their action. In this respect, the promotion of women's human rights is an end in itself, recognised by SDG 5 and by specific cross-cutting targets of the other SDGs, on the role of women and gender discrimination.

**15** The crucial innovation of the 2030 Agenda regarding GEWE is, on the one hand, the identification of a transformative stand-alone goal. It is derived from the need to act on the structural determinants of inequality and gender-based violence in its three social, economic and political dimensions. On the other hand, it mainstreams gender-specific goals into all the other goals in order to drive the process of the entire 2030 Agenda framework according to a multidimensional and intersectional approach.

**16** The Agenda also builds on the commitments made in the 1995 Beijing Plan of Action and the "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW). It clearly states that gender equality is fundamental to guarantee the sustainability of development, and that the rights of women and girls will become a reality if they are perceived as an integral part of the common efforts to protect the planet and ensure that every person can live a respectful and decent life.

**17** The 2030 Agenda incorporates the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda**<sup>12</sup>, signed in July 2015 by 193 UN member countries. It identifies more than 100 measures including financial instruments and investments, addressing current economic, social, and environmental challenges. Although it does not discuss the gender-neutrality of macroeconomic policies, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda establishes a new model of sustainable development. This focuses on the empowerment of women and girls as a prerequisite for global, sustainable, and harmonious economic progress.

We, the Heads of State and Government, gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13 to 16 July 2014, affirm our strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating and enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity. We reaffirm and build on the 2002 Monterey Consensus and Doha Declaration. Our goal is to end poverty and hunger and to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions through promoting inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment, and promoting social inclusion. We commit to respecting all human rights, including the right to development. We will ensure gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment. We will promote peaceful and inclusive societies and advance fully towards an equitable global economic system in which no country or person is left behind enabling decent work and productive livelihoods for all while preserving the planet for our children and future generations.

<sup>11</sup> *Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015.*

<sup>12</sup> *Addis Ababa Agenda. Third International Conference on Financing for Development. July 2015. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=2051&menu=35>*

**18** In particular, paragraph 613 of the Agenda affirms that the member States 1) recognise that achieving gender equality, empowering all women and girls, and the full realisation of their human rights are essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development; 2) reiterate the need for gender mainstreaming, including targeted actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies; 3) recommit to adopting and strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation and transformative actions for the promotion of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment at all levels; 4) re-commit to ensuring women's equal rights, access and opportunities for participation and leadership in the economy, and 5) commit to eliminating gender-based violence in all its forms.

**19** The 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provide the framework for all possible actions that can contribute to sustainable development in all its dimensions, including international cooperation.

## 2.2. POLICIES AND COMMITMENTS FOR FRAGILE AND CRISIS CONTEXTS

**20** In the humanitarian context, the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2007)<sup>14</sup> — signed by Italy — recognises the different needs, capacities and contributions of women and men. It stresses the importance of integrating gender considerations into humanitarian aid, also promoting the active participation of women in the design and planning of interventions. Furthermore, in July 2013, The European Commission defined its policy by adopting guidelines on "Gender in Humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance"<sup>15</sup>, which set out a strengthened approach to gender-based violence in humanitarian contexts. To ensure the effective implementation of this policy, the European Commission introduced a "Gender-Age Marker" in 2014.

**21** At the World Humanitarian Summit - WHS (Istanbul, 24/25 May), humanitarian actors, through the **Agenda for Humanity** launched by the UN Secretary General and during the Roundtable no. 5 on women and girls, reaffirmed the positive role of women in peace processes<sup>16</sup>, and the need to act in crisis contexts to promote gender equality, eradicate sexual violence and support the empowerment and the protection of women and girls. On the same occasion, the 'Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action' recognised that in humanitarian crisis contexts, women with disabilities are disproportionately exposed to violence, exploitation, and abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence.

**22** In recent years, several summits have focused on sexual violence in conflict and emergency situations. In April 2013, the G8 Foreign Ministers in London adopted the "Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict"<sup>17</sup>. At the 68<sup>th</sup> UNGA in New York (September/October 2013), 122 States adopted the "Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict"<sup>18</sup>. Later, at the Global Summit in London (10/13 June 2014), a "Statement of Action" - signed by Italy - was shared, reiterating the commitment to ending sexual violence in conflicts.

<sup>14</sup> *European Union, European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, signed by the Council, European Parliament and European Commission on 18 December 2007 and published in the EU Official Journal on 30.01.2008.*

<sup>15</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender\\_thematic\\_policy\\_document\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit, One humanity: shared responsibility, February 2016, page 12.*

<sup>17</sup> "Declaration on preventing sexual violence in conflict": [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/185008/G8\\_PSVI\\_Declaration\\_-\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/185008/G8_PSVI_Declaration_-_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> "A declaration of commitment to end sexual violence in conflict": [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/274724/A\\_DECLARATION\\_OF\\_COMMITMENT\\_TO\\_END\\_SEXUAL\\_VIOLENCE\\_IN\\_CONFLICT.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274724/A_DECLARATION_OF_COMMITMENT_TO_END_SEXUAL_VIOLENCE_IN_CONFLICT.pdf)

**23** In 2013, the UK and Sweden launched the 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies' (henceforth Call to Action - CIA) with the aim of implementing political commitments and mobilising donor countries and humanitarian actors to protect women and girls in all emergencies, including conflicts and natural disasters. Italy joined the Call to Action since its inception, signing the 'Keep Her Safe' communiqué adopted in London in November 2013.

**24** In May 2019, the Conference on "Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Humanitarian Crisis" was held in Oslo, hosted by Norway, UNFPA, UN OCHA and ICRC with the aim of mobilising political and financial commitments to end Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in humanitarian contexts. This conference was organised in the framework of a series of international initiatives to end SGBV, and, in particular, it contributed to achieving the commitments set out in the Call to Action on protection from gender-based violence. The Conference pledged financial contributions from 21 donors<sup>19</sup> - including Italy - amounting to USD 363 million for 2019-2020 (of which USD 226 million for 2019), in addition to generous 'unearmarked' contributions to humanitarian agencies including funding to the *Central Emergency Response Fund and the Country-based Pool Funds*.

**25** Gender inequalities and discrimination often increase vulnerability, limit access to information, resources, and decision-making processes, also in natural or man-made disasters<sup>20</sup>. The Sendai Framework of March 2015<sup>21</sup> recognised that women are disproportionately affected by disasters (article 4), the need to strengthen women's leadership in disaster risk management and to pay more attention to gender equality and to women's rights, as key conditions for the community resilience to natural or man-made disasters (articles 7, 19, 32 and 36). More recently, UN Women included such priorities as topics of the World Reconstruction Conference 4 (WRC4)<sup>22</sup> and of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction<sup>23</sup>.

**26** Moreover, the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement on "Sexual and gender-based violence: Joint action on prevention and response"<sup>24-25</sup>, (whose progress report was recently published<sup>24</sup>) and the 33<sup>rd</sup> Conference "Women and leadership in the humanitarian action of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement" (held in Geneva on 9-12 December 2019) adopted specific resolutions on SGBV in conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies.

<sup>19</sup> Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, UK. More information on donors is available on the Conference website at: <https://az659834.vo.msecnd.net/eventsairwesteuprod/production-possibility-public/d736453498d042a3b77bcfb6845c6ab8>

<sup>20</sup> On the topic of gender equality and SGBV in disaster context, see the 2017 report of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), entitled "Effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters – global case study"

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291\\_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf](https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> For further information: <https://www.gfdr.org/en/events/WRC4/session3d>;

<sup>23</sup> For further information:

<https://www.unisdr.org/conference/2019/globalplatform/programme/special-sessions/view?id=898>; <https://www.unisdr.org/conference/2019/globalplatform/programme/side-events/view?id=930>

<sup>24</sup> Resolution of the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent "Sexual and gender-based violence: Joint action on prevention and response":

[https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2015/04/32IC-AR-on-Sexual-and-gender-based-violence\\_EN.pdf](https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2015/04/32IC-AR-on-Sexual-and-gender-based-violence_EN.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Resolution Progress Report of the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent "Sexual and gender-based violence: Joint action on prevention and response"

[https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2019/10/33IC-SGBV-progress-report\\_EN.pdf](https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2019/10/33IC-SGBV-progress-report_EN.pdf)

## 2.3. UN SYSTEM-WIDE GENDER POLICIES

**27** The United Nations' commitment to GEWE has a long history, marked mainly by the four International Conferences on Women<sup>26</sup>, held in the 1970s and 1990s in Mexico City, Copenhagen, Nairobi, and Beijing, respectively.

**28** The Executive Coordination Council (ECC) adopted in October 2006 the first **UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment** (UN-SWAP), in order to implement international commitments, provide concrete responses to the transnational women's movement and ensure the application of the 1997/2 ECOSOC<sup>27</sup> conclusions. The UN-SWAP also aimed at guaranteeing gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes and at all levels of the United Nations system. The UN-SWAP became operational with the adoption of the Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, including 15 performance indicators, for more consistent interventions and a shared gender mainstreaming approach within the UN system.

**29** In July 2010, the UN General Assembly established the UN Women Agency, the UN entity for gender equality and women's empowerment. The creation of UN Women is part of a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system aimed at combining resources and mandates, in a systemic approach, by bringing together, under a single agency, four bodies that operate separately in the area of GEWE: the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW, created in 1946), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI, created in 1997), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, created in 1976), the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW, created in 1976).

### UN WOMEN 4 PRIORITIES

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action.

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>

**30** Ongoing and constant support from member countries to UN Women is linked to its key missions: to assist intergovernmental bodies in the formulation of policies and standards and to help member States make these standards effective by providing requested technical and financial support to countries and by building partnerships with civil society. In addition, UN Women supports the UN system in reporting on its commitments on gender equality and in regularly monitoring progress across the system.

<sup>26</sup> Mexico City, 19 June - 22 July 1975. Copenhagen, 14 - 30 July 1980. Nairobi, 15 -26 July 1985. Beijing 4 -15 September 1995.

<sup>27</sup> "COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALISED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM. Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" ECOSOC 1997.

31 In fulfilling its mission, UN Women coordinates the **Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE)**, a network of Gender Focal Points and UN agencies. Their key role is to promote gender equality and to follow up on the 1995 Beijing Conference and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Assembly in 2000 (Beijing +5). In line with their respective missions, each Network member agency (ILO, FAO, UNESCO, ICAO, WHO, World Bank Group, IMF, WMO, IMO, WIPO, IFAD, UNIDO, IAEA, WTO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNRWA, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, UN-Habitat, UNAIDS, UN Regional Commissions) has over the year developed policies, programmes and/or action plans for the implementation of GEWE.

32 Two key institutions have been established under the UN system for GEWE: (i) the main institution dealing with GEWE policymaking is ECOSOC's **Commission on the Status of Women (CWS)**<sup>28</sup>, which brings together member States, UN agencies and civil society each year to assess progress, issue recommendations, identify new challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide; ii) the **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, a body composed of 23 experts, tasked with monitoring the implementation of the "Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women". Each State party is obliged to submit periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee, outlining the actions taken to implement the Convention's provisions.

33 Regarding sexual and reproductive health, a key role is played by **UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund)**, the United Nations agency committed to ensuring reproductive rights for all. UNFPA aims to ensure that all people, particularly women and youth, can access high-quality sexual and reproductive health services. This includes voluntary family planning, so that they can make informed and voluntary choices about their sexual and reproductive lives. UNFPA therefore works to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, as well as to eradicate harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage.

34 In relation to Gender Based Violence (GBV), the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR) was established within the Global Protection Cluster of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (**IASC**)<sup>29</sup>. The GBV AoR works collaboratively to improve the effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian efforts, for the prevention, risk mitigation and response to all forms of gender-based violence.

35 IASC also paid special attention to combating and preventing harassment, sexual exploitation, and abuse (Sexual Exploitation and Abuse - SEA) in international aid activities since 13 June 2002, by drawing up the "Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse"<sup>30</sup>, recently updated. IASC's efforts have continued over the years, resulting in 2018 in the development of a strategy on the matter<sup>31</sup> and a collection of good practices<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, in 2017, Italy joined the UN Secretary-General's "Voluntary Compact on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse"<sup>33</sup> and the "Circle of Leadership" for the prevention and response to SEA by UN staff<sup>34</sup>. This commitment was confirmed by the President of the Council at the 2018 UNGA with the "Collective Statement"<sup>35</sup>. In August 2017, the UNSG appointed the first Victims' Rights Advocate at the Assistant Secretary-General level to strengthen UN support to victims. This initiative is highly relevant because sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation, which are serious and unacceptable by themselves, also undermine the

<sup>28</sup> The Commission on the Status of Women was established in 1946 to promote, evaluate and monitor issues related to women's political, economic, civil, social and educational rights.

<sup>29</sup> Created by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 1991, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the longest-standing and highest-level humanitarian coordination forum of the UN system bringing together the executive heads of 18 UN and non-UN organisations to ensure coherence of preparedness and response efforts, formulate policy, and agree on priorities for strengthened humanitarian action. It facilitates the role of the UN Secretary General by regularly convening to ensure better preparation for as well as rapid and coherent response to humanitarian crises. The Global Protection Cluster coordinates global inter-agency policies related to protection in complex and natural humanitarian emergencies, particularly about the protection of internally displaced persons.

<sup>30</sup> <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/iasc-six-core-principles-relating-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>

<sup>31</sup> [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/181101\\_iasc\\_champions\\_sea\\_sh\\_strategy\\_final.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/181101_iasc_champions_sea_sh_strategy_final.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/summary-iasc-good-practices-preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-and-sexual-harassment-and-abuse>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/voluntary-compact>

integrity, effectiveness and credibility of the entire international cooperation community when perpetrated by international aid actors against the direct or indirect beneficiaries of aid. These phenomena are deeply rooted in contexts of structural inequality, especially gender inequality, and undermine global efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG5.

## 2.4. EU GENDER POLICIES: GENDER ACTION PLAN II AND III, EUROPEAN CONSENSUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

36 Since its foundation, the European Union (EU) has been striving for gender equality, empowerment and rights of women and girls. On 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the Council adopted the "**Gender Action Plan 2016-2020**" (**GAP II**)<sup>36</sup>. The GAP II is based on the joint paper by the Commission services and the European External Action Service (EEAS) on "Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations (2016-2020)"<sup>37</sup>. The Gender Action Plan (GAP II)<sup>38</sup>, which is the EU framework policy on GEWE, stresses the need for the full realisation of women's and girls' full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. GAP II sets out an ambitious action plan to support the integration of gender perspectives in all EU programmes, in political and strategic dialogues with partner countries and in international negotiations, and to strengthen partnerships with all relevant stakeholders. Through a **twin-track approach**, GAP II identifies four pivotal thematic areas around which to build the European cooperation policy: ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity; promoting the social and economic rights / empowerment of women and girls; strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation; shifting the institutional culture to deliver on EU commitments more effectively. The thematic areas matched with a set of indicators and their implementation by member States is monitored on an annual basis. Systematisation of gender analysis in European bilateral and regional programming and planning is therefore a key aspect.

"Gender equality is at the core of European values and enshrined within the European Union (EU) legal and political framework. The EU is at the forefront of the protection, fulfilment and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls and strongly promotes them in all external relations"

**Gender Action Plan 2016-20**

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/circle-leadership>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/collective-statement-members-secretary-general-circle-leadership>

<sup>36</sup> European Union, Council conclusions on Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, 26 October 2015

<sup>37</sup> 21.9.2015, SWD (2015) 0182.

<sup>38</sup> European Union, Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016 -2020 – the new EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) for 2016-2020.

<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-gender/minisite/eu-gender-action-plan-2016-2020>.

**37** The new Gender Action Plan 2021/2025 (GAP III)<sup>39</sup> provides an even more ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in all EU external actions. It builds on previous GAPs and addresses new challenges and opportunities, thereby ensuring coherence of internal and external policies, and emphasising institutional cultural change within the EU itself ('lead by example' approach). GAP III identifies three framework principles: the **gender-transformative approach**, which aims to bring about positive changes in the socio-economic, cultural, and institutional paradigms that underlie gender discrimination; the **intersectionality approach**, which assesses the multiple discrimination experienced by some women and girls (such as those with disabilities or displaced persons); and the **human rights-based approach**.

GAP III aims to accelerate progress towards gender equality and empowerment of women and girls by setting targets and actions in six key thematic policy areas: 1) gender-based violence; 2) sexual and reproductive health and rights; 3) social and economic rights and empowerment of women and girls; 4) participation and leadership; 5) women, peace, and security; 6) green transition and the digital transformation.

**38** On 7 June 2017, the European Council approved the "**New European Consensus on Development**"<sup>40</sup>, which provides the general framework for a common approach to European development cooperation. For the first time it fully applies to all EU institutions and Member States and embodies a new collective vision, a new action plan for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. The new Consensus strongly reaffirms that poverty eradication remains the overarching objective of the European development policy. In doing so, it aligns European development action with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is a cross-cutting dimension of the EU's overall strategy.

**39** The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a fundamental pillar of the European cooperation policy. In its political dialogue with partner countries, the EU and its Member States will take action to mainstream gender equality<sup>41</sup> and promote the empowerment of women and girls as key agents of development and change; strengthen women's leadership and their participation in social, economic, political and civil life; ensure their physical and psychological integrity<sup>42</sup>.

**40** The EU and its Member States pledged to fulfil their obligations under CEDAW, to promote firmly the protection of and respect for the rights of women and girls and to work with partners to eliminate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination, also in conflict and post-conflict areas, including harmful practices<sup>43</sup>, in particular forced, early and child marriage and female genital mutilation<sup>44</sup>.

**41** Gender mainstreaming will be systematically integrated into all policies as a key contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. The EU and its Member States will "accelerate their efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women by deepening multi-stakeholder partnerships, strengthening the capacity for gender-responsive budgeting, planning, and ensuring the active participation of women and women's organisations in decision-making."<sup>45</sup>

<sup>39</sup> GAP III is due to be adopted by the end of 2020.

<sup>40</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A42017Y0630%2801%29>

<sup>41</sup> Article 14. European Consensus on Development.

<sup>42</sup> Article 33. European Consensus on Development.

<sup>43</sup> Article 68. European Consensus on Development.

<sup>44</sup> Article 33. European Consensus on Development.

<sup>45</sup> Article 34. European Consensus on Development. – Gender equality.

## 2.5. GENDER IN THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDAS OF G7/G8, G20 AND OTHER MULTILATERAL FORA

**42** Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have long been a priority for G7/G8 leaders. In Houston (1990), G7/G8 leaders emphasised efforts to promote women's rights. The fight against trafficking of women and children, on the other hand, drew the attention of countries at the Birmingham Summit (1998), followed by the Kananaskis (2002) commitment to promote equal access to education. This issue was also taken up at the Sea Island Summit (2004) in terms of reducing female illiteracy and facilitating vocational training for women on microfinance.

**43** Maternal health and the eradication of violence against women, also with specific reference to conflict and emergency situations, were recurrent issues of many G7/G8 summits (Hokkaido Toyako, 2008; Muskoka, 2010; London, 2013; Brussels, 2014); the issues of women's economic empowerment and gender equality found their way into the leaders' decisions taken at the Elmau Summit (2015) and at the latest meeting in Taormina (2017), under the Italian presidency, where leaders adopted the "Road-map for a Gender-Responsive Economic Environment" and, for the first time, held the Equal Opportunities Ministerial Meeting.

**44** Gender took centre stage at the 2018 G7, when the background papers for the Charlevoix Summit included advancing gender equality and women's empowerment as a cross-cutting issue, and when the Gender Equality Advisory Council was established to ensure that gender analysis and gender equality were integrated into the summit action.

**45** The results of monitoring G7 commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries are reported every three years in the Comprehensive Progress Report, which is complemented by the annual Progress Report prepared by the Accountability Working Group.

**46** The G20 policy forum began to address gender issues in a more comprehensive way, starting in 2014 with the Brisbane Summit. There, leaders committed to reducing gender labour force participation gap by 25% by 2025. Subsequent G20 Presidencies have increased their attention to gender issues by incorporating it across their working agendas.

**47** The Women 20 engagement group, set up under the Turkish G20 presidency, has been active since 2015. It was designed as a meeting forum for civil society women's organisations and the female business community to promote the G20 goals of women's economic empowerment and development.

**48** The theme of women's entrepreneurship, also in relation to global value chains in developing countries, was enhanced at the Hangzhou Summit (2016). Here leaders supported equity in women's financial access in Africa's industrialisation pathways.

**49** The financial inclusion of women and girls, their education and training as well as the creation of job opportunities in the digital economy and rural contexts marked the Leaders' engagement in Hamburg (2017), with the launch of specific initiatives.

**50** Pursuing the G20 Agenda's action to strengthen gender mainstreaming, the Argentinian Presidency identified the empowerment of women, the elimination of inequalities in the workplace, the fields of science, technology, education and protection from all forms of gender-based violence as priorities for joint work in 2018. The G20 Business Women Leaders Task Force (BWLTF), which was previously established in 2017, with the aim of promoting the economic empowerment of women from all countries and sectors of society, started its activities in 2018.

- 51 The specific G20 commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries are monitored through the Accountability Process of the Development Working Group. The group produces a Comprehensive Accountability Report every three years, supplemented annually by a Progress Report on the sectoral commitments made by leaders at past summits.
- 52 The 2021 Italian Presidency of the G20 keeps the empowerment of women and girls as a cross-cutting theme.
- 53 The OECD, through its Development Assistance Committee (DAC), supports the goal of gender equality and the rights of women and girls by promoting common approaches across different development cooperation agencies. The work is carried out by GENDERNET, a thematic network designed to inform global processes to achieve this goal.

*"The problem of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel disproportionately affects women. Women must therefore be at the core of efforts to find a solution. Just as important, however, is the role of women in preventing the problem from occurring. This means better implementation of the **Women, Peace and Security Agenda**. This means women participating fully in mediation and peacebuilding. This means deploying more women blue helmets and ensuring gender mainstreaming is part of the everyday work of UN peace operations".*

H.E. Miroslav Lajčák. *President of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly*

- 54 In addition, GENDERNET is developing strategies to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid focused on results related to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In particular, the use of the Gender Policy Marker and its minimum criteria allows for the tracking and monitoring of the attention given to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in donor-supported interventions. The use of this marker also enhances transparency and accountability of the actions promoted by these countries.
- 55 Italy adheres to the recommendations that GENDERNET draws up annually with the consensus of the member countries. In this regard, the main recommendations resulting from the 2018 Annual Meeting concern the following topics: the effectiveness of financing for GEWE; gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected situations; prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and sexual harassment (SH) in the international aid sector; women's economic empowerment.
- 56 Regarding the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) in the international aid sector, on 2 June 2018, in Whistler, Italy and other G7 countries adopted the Declaration on "Protection from SEA in International Assistance"<sup>46</sup>. It sets out lines of action to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse in the international aid sector. Afterwards Italy also signed the OECD-DAC Joint Statement "Combating SEA in the Development and Humanitarian Sectors"<sup>47</sup> adopted in Tidewater on 6 June 2018.

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international\\_relations-relations\\_internationales/g7/documents/2018-05-31-whistler-sexual-exploitation-sexuelle.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/g7/documents/2018-05-31-whistler-sexual-exploitation-sexuelle.aspx?lang=eng)

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/tidewater-joint-statement-on-combating-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-in-the-development-and-humanitarian-sectors.htm>

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018, the Summit on "Putting People First: Tackling Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in the International Aid Sector"<sup>48</sup> was held in London, organised by the United Kingdom. During the meeting, 22 major donor countries<sup>49</sup>, including Italy, committed to preventing sexual abuse and harassment in the international aid sector. Finally, on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the OECD Council adopted the DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response.

## 2.6. ITALIAN APPROACH AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT, WOMEN AND GIRLS AS PLAYERS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 57 The Italian Development Cooperation intends to adapt to the new and ambitious international framework through the development of an approach aimed at the individual and collective participation of women and girls in development choices and decisions (**women voice approach**); thus, women are no longer perceived as part of the marginalised and disadvantaged population, but as individuals who lead development processes.

In this respect, the Italian Development Cooperation system commits to:

- 58 Recognise and promote the role of **women and girls as "agents of change"** in all fields of sustainable development through policy dialogue with both public and private cooperation partners, in order to encourage "meaningful" programmes in terms of gender equality and empowerment and agency of women and girls (in line with the application of the OECD-DAC Gender Policy Marker). The concept of agency involves the capacity to act and choose independently and to be agents of change and self-determination; it implies the freedom of women and girls to independently acquire power and capacity.
- 59 Promote action at multiple levels, from local to national and international contexts, to address **the structural causes of inequalities between men and women**, also taking into account the negative impacts of pandemics and COVID-19, and changing the discriminatory social norms that underlie and perpetuate them; support **the ability of women, girls and LGBTI persons to make decisions about their own lives, bodies, and families**, to make economic choices, to have a political voice and influence in society and to take collective action as women, to resist and respond to trauma arising from humanitarian crises, and to strengthen resilience. Greater awareness of the choices that women and men are called upon to make should be achieved through a structured and pervasive commitment by the competent institutions to support actions aimed at eradicating gender stereotypes in early childhood, when the identity and perception of roles are still being formed and can still be oriented.
- 60 Ensure support to institutions and civil society in introducing **national legislation reforms** to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (in line with SDG 5. c. 1) and advocate to **promote respect for humanitarian law**, with special reference to the protection of the population during conflicts and the prevention of gender-based violence.

<sup>48</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/749632/donor-commitments1.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/749632/donor-commitments1.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> Anche l'Unione Europea ha avviato il processo di sottoscrizione dei Donor Commitments del Safeguarding Summit.

**61** Adopt, starting from gender analysis, a **multidimensional and intersectional approach to the empowerment of women and girls**. It will consider all the obstacles that prevent their real participation in the definition of development policies and identifies the axes of oppression (gender, origin, culture, religion, sexual orientation, skills, etc.) that determine greater vulnerability.

**62** **Support women's networks and associations in the definition of macroeconomic policies** by giving visibility to women's unpaid care and social reproduction work to foster processes of social co-responsibility and adequate investment in welfare policies.

**63** **Adopt a gender approach in humanitarian aid programmes**, including in relief interventions, aimed at: avoiding harmful effects of humanitarian action ('do no harm' principle); considering the specific needs of women and girls affected by crises, including sexual and reproductive health; strengthening the capability of women and girls to resist and to respond to crises; enhancing the role of women and girls as actors in emergency response; preventing and responding to gender-based violence and assisting survivors; supporting the participation of women and girls in peace-building, security and stability processes; taking into account the disproportionate impacts of pandemics, including from COVID-19, on women and girls.

**64** Respect international commitments in development cooperation to **prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse** by strengthening an internal process of control, monitoring and protection of abused persons and by supporting the implementation of the **Women Peace and Security Agenda**.

**65** Keep supporting the application of Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000, through the updating, monitoring, evaluation and financing of the **Italian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security**, favouring a multi-stakeholder, integrated and holistic approach, with the full involvement of civil society organisations, the academic world, the private sector, and trade unions.

**66** Launch a profound cultural transformation at institutional level through **training and awareness-raising of staff** on gender equality, women's empowerment, and gender-based violence and adopt a systemic external and internal gender mainstreaming approach at all levels and policy.

**67** Promote the **full participation of men and young boys** so as to act on the building of gender roles based on patriarchal culture and discriminating stereotypes. This starts from education and family dimension; the goal is to raise awareness about the equal sharing of tasks (domestic and family care) between men and women and to bring about a cultural change, which involves the entire society, including men, and modifies behaviours even and especially of men.

**68** Ensure the **identification and implementation**, at national level and in the political dialogue with partner countries, of indicators, as set out in the 2030 Agenda, that allow to assess progress on gender equality and on the empowerment of women and girls in a transparent and results-oriented manner (in line with SDG 17, 19 and 1<sup>50</sup>).

**69** Continue to **participate actively in the implementation of GAP III**, by widening the geographical areas where financial commitments to GEWE can be increased, by monitoring the use of GAP-Country indicators at decentralised level and by setting up a monitoring and evaluation system at central and decentralised level.

**70** Replicate, in priority countries where joint programming is well developed, the experience gained in supporting the development processes of joint programmes in Ethiopia, Senegal and Palestine by ensuring the **mainstreaming of GEWE throughout the structure of the European cooperation programming document**.

<sup>50</sup> DG 17.19 "By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries" and SDG 17.19.1 "Dollar value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries".

# THE ITALIAN COOPERATION SYSTEM

- 71 One of the main innovations introduced by Law 125/2014<sup>51</sup> is the creation of a tangible **Italian Development Cooperation System** (article 23). Creating such a system and promoting coherence between cooperation policies and initiatives are amongst the most important aspects of the new law, which fosters coordination, collaboration and sharing of development principles, policies and strategies among the different and numerous public and private actors of the Italian Cooperation framework.
- 72 All actors of the Italian Cooperation system must align to international commitments on GEWE, ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the Italian Development Cooperation “Guidelines on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls”.
- 73 The “Three-year Programming and Policy Planning Document”, which is the strategic reference framework for the entire Italian Cooperation system (article 12 of Law 125/2014), sets out the objectives and criteria for intervention, sectoral and geographical priorities in line with the international reference framework established by the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of SDGs. The Document reaffirms gender equality as a priority of Cooperation policy and ensures its cross-cutting nature at strategic and operational level.
- 74 The Italian MFAIC (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation), with the technical support of AICS (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation), will ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of these Guidelines and of the principles contained therein.

## 3.1. THE MFAIC AND THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (DGCS)

- 75 Law 125/2014 gives the MFAIC a central role for strategic policy and coordination among all other national actors of development cooperation. In fact, the MFAIC is tasked with analysing and planning development policies, as well as overseeing the aspects linked to international relations. A fundamental task entrusted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is the preparation of the annual report on development cooperation activities with a focus on the results achieved through qualitative and quantitative measurable indicators, in line with the effectiveness indicators formulated in the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC).

<sup>51</sup> Article 23 Law 125/2014: a) state administrations, universities and public entities; b) regions, autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano and local administrations; c) civil society organisations and other non-profit organisations considered under Article 26; d) profit organisations when, acting in compliance with the principles laid down in this law, meet the standards commonly applied to social responsibility and environmental clauses, and comply with human rights legislation in making international investments.

- 76 The Minister of the MFAIC and the Deputy Minister in charge of Cooperation are assisted by the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) in performing these duties. This is in regard to the political responsibility for policy guidelines, the approval of emergency projects, and the unity, coordination, and evaluation of cooperation initiatives.
- 77 To implement these Guidelines, the Three-Year Programming and Policy Planning Document and the sectoral Guidelines will confirm **gender equality and empowerment of women and girls as a priority of the Italian Development Cooperation**. Indications are required on specific initiatives and ensuring **gender mainstreaming** in all other priority areas of action, and the multidimensional and intersectional approach to women’s empowerment.
- 78 At least **10% of voluntary contributions** to international organisations shall be granted annually to entities committed to the implementation of GEWE.
- 79 The MFAIC will use a **data collection system and will set up a scheme for evaluating cooperation interventions**, which will include gender indicators and Gender Policy Marker data, applied in accordance with the minimum criteria identified by OECD-DAC. The results of the evaluation process will be an integral part of the periodical reports to be submitted to the relevant parliamentary Committees<sup>52</sup>.
- 80 In the planning stage at central and local level, the MFAIC will ensure the use of the **twin-track approach**, allocating at least **10% of funding** to specific initiatives to promote GEWE (Gender Policy Marker - Principal) and ensuring gender mainstreaming for other initiatives (Gender Policy Marker - Significant). The systematic use of the OECD-DAC’s Gender Policy Marker will also be crucial in providing financial data for gender budgeting to the Ministry of Economy and Finance<sup>53</sup>.
- 81 The MFAIC will ensure the integration of a specific cross-cutting component to **support partner countries’ statistical institutes and data collection systems**, in relation to SDG 5, through the development of statistical platforms including gender indicators.
- 82 Pursuant to the European Consensus on Development<sup>54</sup> and the Cotonou Agreement<sup>55</sup>, special attention will be paid in European relations to the **political dialogue on the human rights of women and girls**, focusing on the harmonisation of national legislation with relevant international treaties (CEDAW, Convention on the rights of the Child - CRC, etc.) and the application of gender mainstreaming in the preparation of the European Development Fund (EDF), which is the main instrument of EU aid for development cooperation with the ACP States and the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). Furthermore, Italy will consistently support the implementation of the EU GAP, in **joint and delegated programming** and in any other instrument for programming and financing development cooperation initiatives.
- 83 Italy commits to ensure the implementation of the engagements made during the Safeguarding Summit in London “**Putting People First: Tackling Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in the International Aid Sector**”<sup>56</sup>, on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018. This is also reported in “DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response”, with special attention to: I. survivor/victim-centred response and support mechanisms; strengthening the complaint and reporting systems on abuses; fight against impunity; improvement of accountability and transparency; II. promotion of an effective cultural change also through greater organisational transparency, as well as the improvement of personnel selection and training processes; III. adoption of international standards

<sup>52</sup> Article 13 law 125/14.

<sup>53</sup> Article 38-septies Law 196/2009

<sup>54</sup> NEW EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON DEVELOPMENT - ‘OUR WORLD, OUR DIGNITY, OUR FUTURE’ 08/06/2017

<sup>55</sup> 2000/483/EC: Partnership Agreement between the EU, EU countries, and African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000. Although it expired in February 2020 and pending the new framework, the fundamentals of the Agreement remain valid principles for the development of international law.

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/safeguarding-summit-2018>

for the prevention and fight against harassment, abuse, sexual exploitation in international cooperation interventions, ensuring their application also by partners.

**84** At international level, Italy will continue to participate in **UN summits and fora concerning GEWE** and in any other international event relevant to the Italian development cooperation policy, supporting gender mainstreaming, in line with SDG 5 and its targets, and the active participation of the international civil society in the processes of policy definition, monitoring and evaluation.

**85** Italy will pursue the implementation of the **commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit - WHS (Istanbul, 2016) and in the framework of the Call to Action (2013)**. Here Italy pledged to support the inclusion of Call-to-Action considerations in relevant multilateral fora, to promote gender equality in humanitarian actions, to strengthen services in response to gender-based violence.

### 3.2. THE ITALIAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (AICS)

**86** AICS, established by Law 125/14, is charged with implementing development cooperation policies within the framework of the guidelines set out in the Three-Year Programming and Policy Planning Document, approved by the Council of Ministers. Based on criteria such as cost-effectiveness, uniformity and transparency, the Agency performs technical-operational activities associated with preliminary assessment, formulation, financing and management/control of cooperation projects, and contributes to the definition of the annual programming of development policies also through its offices abroad<sup>57</sup>.

**87** In this framework and in application of these Guidelines, AICS will ensure that **gender is mainstreamed in any cooperation initiative carried out by the actors of the Italian Cooperation system**. This is to be achieved by providing technical support, by encouraging the use of a multidimensional approach to the empowerment of women and girls, and the **systematic application of the OECD-DAC Gender Policy Marker**.

**88** AICS will set up a **monitoring system incorporating gender indicators** in line with European and international commitments (EU GAP II and III, Addis Ababa Action Plan and 2030 Agenda), initiating the creation of a mechanism for monitoring and collecting data disaggregated by gender, age and vulnerability (disability, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, etc.).

**89** For each cooperation initiative, AICS will promote the use of the **intersectional approach**, which identifies, according to the context, major vulnerabilities (**cultural, religious, and ethnic affiliation, gender, disability, social class, sexual orientation**, etc.). The intersectional approach responds to the needs of the most discriminated individuals and promotes respect for their rights.

**90** To support DGCS/MFAIC at central level and also diplomatic headquarters at decentralised level, **AICS will ensure that gender analysis is an integral part of each Country programme and that programmes include specific initiatives to promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (for a minimum of 10% of total funding)** and gender is mainstreamed in all other areas identified as priorities.

<sup>57</sup> Chapter IV Law 125/14.

**91** In the preparation of **calls for proposals**, including those relating to humanitarian aid programmes and in fragile situations, AICS **will ensure the application of the Gender Policy Marker**, verifying the compliance with its minimum standards.

**92** In fulfilment of Italy's commitments on preventing and combating harassment, abuse, and sexual exploitation in international aid, as mentioned in paragraph 56, AICS started the **review of its Code of Ethics and Conduct**<sup>58</sup>. Once finally approved, AICS will propose an operational strategy for **the application of minimum standards** by its employees, consultants, agents, or human resources deployed in AICS field offices, as well as by the staff of Italian civil society organisations and companies, providing goods or services, that work for AICS and all public and private entities, referred to in Article 23, paragraph 2, of Law 125/2014, which participate in development cooperation activities receiving public grants.

**93** With reference to the assessments of initiatives, AICS will start developing tools to ensure that **each initiative**, whether bilateral or multilateral, applies the Gender Policy Marker and **contains gender analysis, gender- and age-disaggregated data and a monitoring and evaluation system including gender indicators**.

**94** AICS will carry out **missions to monitor** initiatives, through the mobilisation of specialised staff, in order to assess results, to make the necessary adjustments to ensure that gender equality objectives are achieved and to avoid any negative impact of the actions on the lives of women and girls (do no harm).

**95** **AICS will foster, in line with its mandate, active participation, at local level and in European multi-donor thematic groups**, promoting the inclusion of GEWE in policy dialogue, gender mainstreaming and the identification of common strategies for the implementation of GAP and the achievement of SDG 5.

**96** In selected pilot countries, AICS will **develop coordination mechanisms at local level** between various actors financed and/or co-financed by the Italian Development Cooperation to promote **a common strategy of gender mainstreaming and of monitoring and evaluation including shared gender indicators**; furthermore, it shall support the development of data collection systems to quantify the cross-cutting gender dimension and the traceability of resources allocated to women in development and humanitarian aid programmes for sustainable migration. This initiative will also be developed to support CSOs, the Italian system and their local partners in various geographical areas and priority countries for the Italian Development Cooperation, with a start-up phase in some pilot countries to be identified.

**97** It will endeavour to adopt, in coordination with MFAIC, a **gender-sensitive communication strategy** which will promote, at both central and decentralised level, the exploitation of the results obtained in terms of gender equality and promotion of women's rights.

**98** AICS headquarters **will also support** participation of MFAIC in collegiate bodies of International Organisations, the European Union and the OECD-DAC, while promoting the inclusion of GEWE as a priority and cross-cutting issue.

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.aics.gov.it/home-ita/trasparenza/codice-etico/>. In September 2019 a first draft of the new AICS Code of Ethics and Conduct was submitted for open consultation on the institutional website to acquire any proposals and observations according to the provisions of the National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC) - n. 75/2013. The text of the new code, integrating some proposed amendments and comments, was sent to the secretariat of the National Council for Development Cooperation in order to obtain the latter's opinion, in accordance with article 20 of the Agency's Statute - MAECI Decree n. 113/2015.

### 3.3. LA CASSA DEPOSITI E PRESTITI (CDP)

- 99** Law 125/14 provides for *Cassa Depositi e Prestiti* (CDP) to act, alongside DGCS and AICS, as the Financial Institution for Development Cooperation, in its role of Revolving Fund manager, providing technical assistance to DGCS and AICS in structuring financing and investing its own resources in cooperation initiatives.
- 100** Within the Italian development cooperation system, CDP becomes the instrument for using own resources that CDP, in coordination with the MFAIC, may grant to States, public banks, international institutions or to co-finance public or private entities.
- 101** To implement these Guidelines, through Italian Development Cooperation funds and/or its own funds and/or co-funding, CDP may promote financial instruments and services, to support **female entrepreneurship and access to credit and financial inclusion for women**.
- 102** For the monitoring of concessional and/or soft loans, AICS and CDP will share a common monitoring system, including **sex- and age-disaggregated indicators**, built on a baseline of data/indicators and **gender analysis** that AICS will provide to CDP on a timely basis.
- 103** In addition, in line with the MAECI-CDP Agreement, **training**<sup>59</sup> modules will also be developed for AICS staff on the creation of innovative financial products for the promotion of **inclusive finance and women's access to credit**.

### 3.4. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS) AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION COUNCIL (CONSIGLIO NAZIONALE PER LA COOPERAZIONE ALLO SVILUPPO- CNCS)

- 104** Civil Society Organisations play a leading role in the new Italian Development Cooperation system<sup>60</sup>. This category includes NGOs specialised in cooperation and humanitarian aid, non-profit organisations, fair trade, ethical finance and microcredit organisations, organisations and associations of immigrant communities that have relations with their countries of origin, social cooperatives, trade unions, foundations, volunteer organisations, social promotion associations and organisations that have enjoyed advisory status with the UN ECOSOC for at least four years.
- 105** CSOs play a key role in the implementation of humanitarian aid interventions by delivering relief and assistance to populations and promptly re-establishing the conditions for the recovery of development processes, encouraging the full participation of civil society in the north and south.
- 106** CSOs, financed by the Italian Development Cooperation, will be supported by AICS, at central and decentralised level, in building mechanisms for coordination, exchange of knowledge and know-how in order to improve the effectiveness of interventions aimed at promoting **gender equality and empowerment of women and girls**.

Nell'ambito dell'applicazione delle presenti Linee Guida le OSC si impegnano a:

- 107** Develop a **gender mainstreaming strategy** within each sector of intervention by favouring, through a **multidimensional and women-voice approach**, the full participation of women and women's associations of Partner Countries in **processes of policy definition** and by deploying specialised staff.

<sup>59</sup> *Idem*<sup>21</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Chapter VI Law 125/14*

- 108** Support civil society in the target countries, through **awareness-raising, advocacy and networking actions**, to encourage legislative reforms and any action that promotes de jure and de facto the rights of women and girls in line with CEDAW's convention.
- 109** Ensure the **development of basic social and educational services adjusted to the needs of women and girls** and support services for women and girls who survived gender-based violence, including in conflict, emergency, and post-conflict contexts.
- 110** Carry out **gender analysis** for each sector, develop a baseline of **sex-disaggregated indicators** and systematically use **OECD-DAC's Gender Policy Marker**.

"Gender budgeting in a well-being perspective enables a reinterpretation of the items in the Authority's budget and public policies, in order to shift from an administrative and accounting ranking to an analysis that highlights the institutional meaning of policies, the budget phases, the implementation procedures, the gender impact of public policies, revenues and allocation of resources on the life of women and men, on their individual well-being and on the quality of the social context."

Region of Emilia Romagna 2018

- 111** Develop a **common monitoring and evaluation system** for regional development programmes and initiatives, including gender indicators for impact measurement, to improve the effectiveness of interventions and the identification of common good practices.
- 112** In order to favour the participation and inclusion of civil society in policy-making, Law 125/14 established the **National Council for Development Cooperation**(CNCS)<sup>61</sup> composed of all the main public and private, profit and non-profit actors in development cooperation, including the Ministries involved, the Regions, the Autonomous Provinces, local authorities, Universities and networks of civil society organisations. In this context, CSOs will promote and stimulate gender mainstreaming of strategies, guidelines, programming, actions, and of their effectiveness and evaluation.
- 113** In the framework of the **national public conference, convened every 3 years by the Minister of the MFAIC**, in order to further encourage the participation of citizens in the definition of cooperation policies, **debates, workshops and seminars on GEWE** will be organised, favouring the participation of civil society from the north and the south of the world. A fair representation of women will also be guaranteed among those who will present thematic reports and/or facilitate possible groups and/or sessions.

<sup>61</sup> *Article 16 Law 125/2014*

### 3.5. TERRITORIAL COOPERATION

**114** Territorial partnership actors - regions, autonomous provinces and local authorities - play a crucial role in linking different territorial actors and administrations from the north and the south, to build partnerships aimed at social, cultural, economic, political and civil development. In this context, the Italian Development Cooperation commits to pool their contribution and identify areas of action, in line with the guidelines and programming, within the framework of a shared strategy that ensures the coherence of development policies among the various levels (international, European, national, and regional).

**115** Territorial partnerships traditionally aim at encouraging: support for decentralisation processes; local economic development, notably the creation of value chains by identifying the best development opportunities responding to community needs; fair trade, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) development, micro-finance and financial inclusion; internalisation; co-development, involving diasporas in interventions in their regions of origin; strengthening decentralised governance structures, basic services and systems for collecting data on the population living in the partner countries' regions; education for global citizenship; socio-health services and disability; vocational training.

To implement these Guidelines, Territorial Cooperation commits to:

**116** Encourage, while implementing activities in support of local institutions in partner countries, the **equal participation of men and women** in all institutions and the **participation of women and young people** from civil society in the definition, monitoring and evaluation of local policies.

**117** Support their partners in the design and implementation of **local development policies and gender budgeting**, including the time and financial calculation of unpaid domestic and care work of women. This will be instrumental in initiating processes of shared responsibility of local institutions on **women's social reproduction work** through increased investments in welfare and social protection policies.

**118** Provide for **capacity building** activities and exchanges between local male/female administrators aimed at improving knowledge and skills to promote the active participation of women in local development processes and the development of local **gender-sensitive development policies**.

**119** In activities supporting **Local Economic Development**, build on services to benefit **female entrepreneurship**, through a multidimensional and intersectional approach, which identifies actions aimed at improving access to social services, mobility, management and control of natural resources, from a gender perspective.

**120** Support initiatives to improve the health of the population and the **provision of sexual and reproductive health services and the fight against gender-based violence and harmful practices**.

**121** Attach, in co-development activities, special attention to the needs and participation of **migrant women in development processes of the countries of origin**, also through gender analysis, sector studies and collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data.

**122** Have a **joint monitoring and evaluation system**, including **gender indicators**, developed as a result of **gender analysis**, a baseline of **gender-disaggregated indicators** and the systematic application of the **Gender Policy Marker**.

### 3.6. PRIVATE SECTOR

**123** Law 125/2014<sup>62</sup> recognises that businesses play a crucial role in the Italian System. The objective is to promote a business culture that contributes to achieving the 2030 Agenda goals, in particular to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth that ensures full employment and decent work; support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises; reduce inequalities by promoting social, economic and political inclusion without discrimination; foster partnerships between Italian and local businesses; and encourage sustainable investments with a social and environmental impact.

**124** The main pillars for the involvement of the private sector are the creation of a strategic partnership between private/ public companies, donor countries and civil society in key areas such as infrastructure, water, sustainable energy and rural electrification; the promotion of decent work by ensuring the implementation of the four pillars identified by ILO<sup>63</sup>, i.e. labour rights, job creation, social protection and social dialogue; the creation of quality and sustainable jobs for the transition from informal to formal economy; social dialogue and collective bargaining, through the involvement of social partner.

**125** In this context, the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment becomes a crucial factor in any private sector intervention. The **principles** guiding the actions of the private sector in the Italian Development Cooperation must be oriented towards the **prevention of all types of discrimination, harassment and sexual abuse**; ensure **equal pay** for men and women; guarantee **health and reproductive rights** (including the right to motherhood and breastfeeding) for women workers; carry out **gender analyses** and produce **sex- and age-disaggregated data**. This is in order to measure the impact of actions and all types of investment on the lives of men and women (including access to and control of resources, quality of nutrition, local production; education and training of women and girls).

**126** In any cooperation action, the private sector has committed to ensure compliance with international conventions relating to the right to work and the **7 Principles of Women Empowerment**<sup>64</sup>, with special attention to the participation of women in the development of company policy; a gender-sensitive recruitment process and equal pay between men and women; ensure that the workplace is respectful of women's rights and free from all forms of discrimination; that at least 30% of women participate in decision-making processes; offer flexible work that takes into account women's reproductive and care work; support childcare through the creation of childcare services; guarantee insurance coverage and other services also for women who have survived domestic and gender-based violence; propose partnerships with local women's companies; support solutions that favour women's access to credit and to the most productive supply chains.

<sup>62</sup> Article 27 Law 125/2014

<sup>63</sup> The ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

<sup>64</sup> "The **Women's Empowerment Principles** are a set of Principles for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. They are the result of a collaboration between the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact". *Women's Empowerment Principles, Equality Means Business*. March 2010. [http://www.wepinciples.org/files/attachments/EN\\_WEPs\\_2.pdf](http://www.wepinciples.org/files/attachments/EN_WEPs_2.pdf)

### 3.7. UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES

**127** Law 125/14 assigns to academia the role of development agent of the Italian Cooperation system, in order to contribute to training the future leaders in partner countries on specific topics. This is with a view to integrating knowledge and multi-stakeholder partnerships (public, private, civil society organisations); contributing to the empowerment of universities in partner countries; carrying out experiences of co-design of higher education involving teachers and learners from the north and south of the world on an equal footing.

**128** The role of academic research is fundamental in a fast-changing international context such as the one outlined by 2030Agenda, in terms of creating and developing innovative tools and practices that can ensure the achievement of SDGs and in particular SDG 5. In each field of action, universities and research institutes will strive to use the **gender mainstreaming approach**, especially for the creation of more effective models and methods of **gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation**, both to assess the long-term impact of development cooperation actions and to guide future strategies.

### 3.8. GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND TRACEABILITY OF RESOURCES FOR WOMEN: INTERNAL GENDER MAINSTREAMING

**129** Although the support to the gender mainstreaming strategies of partner countries has achieved substantial results, the gender mainstreaming strategy within the Italian Cooperation is not strong enough and not included in an effective monitoring and evaluation framework. In fact, although it is considered a priority and cross-cutting issue in policy and programme documents at central level, the willingness to ensure its cross-cutting character in the policy documents of individual countries and in specific initiatives has not been transposed into established practices.

**130** In order to guarantee an institutional cultural change, in the short and medium term (2020-2024), these Guidelines outline a three-level intervention. These levels of intervention aim to **improve transparency and effectiveness on the resources allocated to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, to be applied to the planning documents (country programmes, sectoral strategies, etc.) and to the individual initiatives, at field and central level, financed and/or co-financed by the Italian Cooperation and valid for all the actors of the Italian system.**

- **A first level**, to be launched from 2020, provides for the systematic **application of the OECD/DAC Gender Policy Marker** in the programming and evaluation of country programmes and individual initiatives. The Gender Policy Marker, which also provides for mandatory gender analysis for Marker 0, have to comply with minimum application standards. If the initiative has only one objective, it will be structured into several results, at least one of which will be addressed to GEWE, with the corresponding budget allocation. Gender analysis and the related development of gender indicators included in the log frame and the M&E system will be crucial elements for the approval of all initiatives. This process will be backed up by a **monitoring and data collection system**.

- **A second level**, starting from 2021, includes the elaboration of **gender indicators**, already launched in some pilot programmes, establishing a defined path in some priority areas, in order to create a **monitoring and evaluation model** that is easy to apply to all programmes financed by ODA, including the initiatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other public and private actors of the Italian system. The aim is to test **reference templates**, including gender indicators for macro-areas, referring to specific results and objectives, to be adapted at country level through the development of Country Action Plans, which will be a driver and inspiration for the development of a real M&E system of the Italian Cooperation for the application of SDGs.

- **A third level**, in line with the recommendations of the 2014 OECD-DAC Peer Review<sup>65</sup> and with the commitment recognised by the 2019 Peer Review towards an increased share of programmes in the sector<sup>66</sup>, will provide for the **systematisation of gender mainstreaming in the annual and multi-annual programming** of interventions and in all geographical areas of the Italian Development Cooperation. This is to be achieved through the **recruitment of qualified personnel** and the development of a **training plan**. A **Gender Unit** will be set up in priority countries where the country programmes include an important investment on GEWE (more than 20% of the total budget), starting a path to have a gender expert in the other offices. ToRs shall guarantee a 3-year proven experience in recruiting gender experts.

<sup>65</sup> "Gender equality [...], which are considered key objectives and cross-cutting issues, are mostly treated as sectors. To mainstream these themes throughout Italian development co operation, strong leadership is needed, as well as adequate resources, appropriate staff incentives, accountability mechanisms for reporting results, and training" Peer Review Italy 2014, page38.

<sup>66</sup> OECD-DAC, Peer Review dell'OCSE sulla cooperazione allo sviluppo - ITALIA, 2019. [https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PeerReviews\\_Italy-red.pdf](https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PeerReviews_Italy-red.pdf)

# PRIORITY ACTIONS TO PROMOTE GEWE

## 4.1. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

**131** Gender-Based Violence (GBV) includes “all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”, (...) “including domestic violence, which disproportionately affects women” and which includes “all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family”<sup>67</sup>. In addition, the term can be used to describe violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people (LGBTI)<sup>68</sup>. Women with disabilities are highly exposed to violence and experience it 10 times more often than women without disabilities<sup>69</sup>.

**132** Violence against women and girls, which can take many forms and is widespread in the domestic and public spheres, is a global problem and occurs, to varying degrees, in all countries, societies and cultures, preventing women and girls from exercising their rights and participating in development. It is a pervasive and structural phenomenon and occurs through stereotypes that are visible in the social, private, political, and public spheres of human coexistence. In addition, emergency and conflict situations and the resulting mass displacements can intensify the various forms of GBV. This is not only because of the increased physical, economic and psychological vulnerability of individuals, but also due to the absence or weakness of social networks, support and assistance services for female survivors. Therefore, violence against women and girls must be considered a **violation of fundamental human rights** and a **priority for international cooperation**. It must be pursued with the support of institutions at various levels and civil society in partner countries and with the participation of the Italian Cooperation system.

<sup>67</sup> Istanbul Convention of 2011, article 3

<sup>68</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Action*, 2015.

<sup>69</sup> UNFPA, *Young Persons with Disabilities. Global Study on Ending Gender-based Violence and Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*, 2018.

**133** Health crises, including the most recent COVID-19 pandemic, result in a substantial increase in gender-based violence, including domestic violence, as many women and girls remain confined to their homes, sometimes with violent partners or family members, often without access to telephone lines or other ways to seek help. The interruption of care or health services, including programmes to combat female genital mutilation, poses serious risks in terms of prevention. School closures and the progressive impoverishment of families increasingly expose girls to the risk of early and forced marriages, child labour and sexual exploitation<sup>70</sup>.

**134** In line with CEDAW, in particular with recommendations 12, 19 and 35<sup>71</sup>, and with the main international treaties on women’s rights<sup>72</sup>, in application of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in emergencies<sup>73</sup>, through the implementation of specific programmes, Italy is adopting a strategy to combat GBV. This aims to guarantee the de jure and de facto human rights protection of women and girls, promoting, on the one hand, the assistance of partner countries in anti-discrimination regulatory reforms and, on the other, the setting up of an integrated system of territorial services for the protection of women and girls. Violence against women and girls will not only be the key thematic area tackled by specific actions but, in line with its definition and cross-cutting character, will be included in cultural, economic or social initiatives.

### CEDAW GENERAL RECOMMENDATION N° 35:

- It recognises that the prohibition of gender-based violence has become a norm of international customary law;
- It expands the understanding of violence to include violations of sexual and reproductive health rights;
- It stresses the need to change social norms and stereotypes that support violence, in the context of a resurgence of narratives threatening the concept of gender equality in the name of culture, tradition or religion;
- It recognises that gender-based violence can emerge in new contexts such as increased globalisation, militarisation, violent extremism and terrorism;
- It recognises new forms of violence related to technology and cyber-violence;
- It recognises the forms of multiple and intersectional violence and the need for constant training of judicial professionals and once again affirms the prohibition of mediation and conciliation in cases of gender-based violence.

<sup>70</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2020.pdf>; IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action: “Interim Guidance - GENDER ALERT FOR COVID19 OUTBREAK”, March 2020.

[https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/IASC%20Interim%20Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20-%20Gender%20Alert\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/IASC%20Interim%20Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20-%20Gender%20Alert_0.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> General recommendation N° 35 was adopted in July 2017 and updates recommendation N° 19 (introduced in 1992) on gender-based violence.

<sup>72</sup> Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Protocols, the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35, 1961, revised in 1996, ETS No. 163), the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197, 2005) and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, 2007); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (“CEDAW”, 1979) and its Optional Protocol (1999), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocols (2000) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006); Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949) and the Additional Protocols I and II (1977)

<sup>73</sup> Italy made specific commitments in gender-based violence, signing the “Keep Her Safe” communiqué adopted in London in November 2013. It also took specific steps in the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in emergencies and at the most recent World Humanitarian Summit. The Call to Action is an initiative launched by the UK and Sweden in 2013 with the aim of mobilising donor countries and humanitarian workers to protect women and girls in all emergency situations, including conflict and natural disasters.

The Italian Development Cooperation system commits to:

- 135** Maintain a **political dialogue** with partner countries and agencies to support the **implementation of internationally recognised principles and rights** in: the UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (UN/SC Res. 1325/2000) et seq.; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and its Additional Protocol; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC - 1989); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD - 2006); the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of migrant workers and members of their families (CMW - 1990); the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention, 2011); the Inter-American Convention on the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women (Convention of Belém do Pará 1994) and the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa (2003); the "G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual violence in conflict" (London, 2013) and the "Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict" (68<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly, 2013)<sup>74</sup>.
- 136** Support initiatives, institutions and civil society involved in communication, training and **advocacy on international humanitarian law and human rights, as well as raising awareness of partner countries' institutions and civil society in the fight against gender-based violence**, through the creation and support of anti-violence centres, intended as places for the prevention, protection and empowerment of women and girls who have survived violence.
- 137** Support initiatives aimed at activating protection and assistance mechanisms for **health workers** - mainly women - who are particularly exposed to the risks of abuse, intimidation, and violence, especially during health crises.
- 138** Support initiatives aimed at **training staff in partner countries** (legal system, police force, social protection and health system) in order to identify women at risk of violence and to take action in support of those who survived abuse and help partner countries to develop **specific curricula on education and gender-based violence in schools**.
- 139** Promote the **involvement of men and young people** in education and awareness-raising activities focusing on respect for and appreciation of differences as key to preventing forms of discrimination, and physical, sexual or psychological violence, and provide, where possible, **support services for abusive men**.
- 140** Implement agreements between governments and support- also financially - international initiatives to **accelerate the end of "harmful practices"**, such as female genital mutilation and early and forced marriages.
- 141** Include in the operational strategy, especially in **humanitarian actions and in fragile situations caused by violence and armed conflicts or in widespread health hazards**, activities to raise awareness and fight violence against men and children when it is aimed at strengthening a certain idea of masculinity and male power (e.g., sexual violence by men against other men during armed conflicts to strengthen the idea of "femininity" or "masculinity" of the enemy)<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) was promoted by Great Britain in September 2013 aiming at overcoming the culture of impunity, by strengthening the prosecution of sexual violence in conflicts, thus increasing the prospects for successful convictions. On 11 April 2013, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs launched the "Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict" at the G8 in London. Subsequently, in September 2013, 122 countries signed the "Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict" at the 68th UN General Assembly, aimed at protecting women from violence, including sexual violence, perpetrated in many countries in conflict.

<sup>75</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Action, 2015.

- 142** Support, from the earliest stages of emergencies, **humanitarian programmes on the protection of women from gender-based violence** as well as advocacy actions in line with Italy's commitments in the framework of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in emergencies (2013) and of the World Humanitarian Summit.

## 4.2. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- 143** Despite their huge contribution to the economy, through their productive and reproductive, paid and unpaid work, women continue to be exposed to poverty, discrimination and exploitation. The COVID-19 pandemic has further impoverished women, who are more likely to be employed on precarious contracts or work in the informal economy, and who are more at risk during periods of economic crisis and recession. Generally, women and girls undertake most of the burden of family care during the pandemic, often giving up work to care for children out of school and/or sick relatives. This negatively affects their income levels and increases their exposure to the virus<sup>76</sup>
- 144** However, women bring knowledge and skills in land, forest and resource management, as well as in developing agricultural practices, that can adapt to the changing climate. It is widely recognised that their participation in rural economic development is also necessary to achieve the objectives of food security and environmental sustainability which have an impact on the future of our planet and its inhabitants. In addition, an increase in women's income is matched by better nutrition and health of families and education for boys and girls.
- 145** For many years, the Italian Development Cooperation, in application of the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda**, has been supporting the economic and social empowerment of women and their participation in the private sector and in the development of entrepreneurship by applying a multidimensional and intersectoral approach. This takes into account their productive role but also the huge economic contribution of unpaid work, the time-allocation and the aspirations of young women. Economic and social empowerment is not simply about the transfer of material goods and support for financial policies but must look at the complexity of women's lives and consider the set of obstacles, barriers, discrimination as well as the potential and ambitions that influence the processes of empowerment (SDG 5, Target 5.4).

With **Resolution 1325**, the United Nations Security Council recognises for the first time the impact of wars on women's lives, the contribution they can and shall make to conflict resolution and outlines a real system of objectives to ensure the prevention, participation, and protection of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

<sup>76</sup> IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action: "Interim Guidance - GENDER ALERT FOR COVID19 OUTBREAK". March 2020.  
[https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/IASC%20Interim%20Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20-%20Gender%20Alert\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/IASC%20Interim%20Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20-%20Gender%20Alert_0.pdf)

**146** For these reasons, the Italian Development Cooperation has been financing for years actions based simultaneously on the support of shared responsibility processes with local and national institutions on social reproduction work for the creation of effective welfare systems and the promotion of social protection policies<sup>77</sup>; on the improvement of support services for entrepreneurship, innovation and development of financial strategies that respond to women's needs according to a local development approach; on the support to young women and girls in the education processes and on reforms necessary to promote decent work, equal pay, right to motherhood, in line with the numerous ILO international conventions on gender equality; and on the fight against gender-based violence.

The Italian Cooperation system commits to:

**147** Develop in-depth **gender analysis**, with a multidimensional approach, on the **causes of poverty and on the effects of the global economic crisis on women's employment**, in order to foster development partnerships with public and private stakeholders that promote decent work for women (in line with SDG 8.5.1.<sup>78</sup>).

**148** Provide, on the basis of existing policies in partner countries, for **gender budget support** as a possible tool to address gender inequalities and exclusions (in line with SDG 1.2<sup>79</sup>).

**149** **Recognise and alleviate the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women** through the definition of flexible and inclusive economic development programmes to enable women to provide for their economic security and to access the formal labour market through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies (in line with SDG 5.4).

**150** Promote targeted initiatives for the **empowerment of rural women** by prioritising investment in social infrastructure to **eliminate the causes of discrimination** and in physical infrastructure to improve access to **natural resources** (water, land and energy sources) and economic resources - such as property, credit and finance, appropriate technologies and training, and strengthening women's decision-making power in their management.

**151** Promote women's access to credit, innovation and entrepreneurship through the development of financial services adapted to their needs, vocational training, and services for entrepreneurship.

**152** Support programmes for the full and **effective participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels of political, economic and public life**, taking into account the implementation by partner countries of the Recommendations of the CEDAW Convention in this area (in line with SDG 5.5.1.).

<sup>77</sup> SDG 5, Target 5.4: "Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate"

<sup>78</sup> SDG 8.5. "By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value"; SDG 8.5. "Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities".

<sup>79</sup> SDG 1.2. "By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to regional definitions".

## 4.3. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**153** The participation of women in rural and agricultural development activities is essential to achieve the objectives of food security and environmental sustainability on which the future of the planet and its inhabitants depends. However, this political will clashes with a global reality dominated by a stereotyped vision of the division of gender roles within family and community groups, in which women continue to face serious inequalities in access to land and water, technologies, markets, services, information, credit and social protection. Over the last decade, the debate and actions of development and international cooperation initiatives have witnessed a deep interest<sup>80</sup> in rural women. The debate started from the assumption that the agricultural productivity crisis is due to the gender gap in access to resources and job opportunities for women farmers. Closing this gap - through support for the implementation of gender-sensitive development policies and programmes - would produce significant results by accelerating agricultural production, poverty reduction and economic growth<sup>81</sup>.

**154** The 2030 Agenda reiterates the central role of women farmers in rural development processes and the importance of recognising their contribution and rights in order to overcome poverty and hunger, achieve food and nutrition security, and respond to climate change in a sustainable way<sup>82</sup>.

**155** The Italian Development Cooperation, in application of the recommendations adopted at international level on this issue<sup>83</sup>, has oriented its actions towards rural and agricultural development, recognising the central role of women in agriculture and enhancing their individual and collective subjectivity and their demands: it is not, therefore, a matter of including women more in agriculture, but rather of understanding the forms of inclusion that already exist, at all levels of the agricultural supply chains and in family consumption production, and which is deeply discriminatory. Bridging the gender gap in agriculture means, first of all, analysing and understanding the choices of what to produce, how, under which conditions and for which markets. This analysis needs to take into account the daily life of women and men and their use of time, environmental conditions, availability and use of natural resources and the social costs of the shrinking or spreading of women's care work. This vision values the broader agricultural and rural development strategy of the Italian Cooperation, which promotes a development model centred on family farming and support for small producers, enabling the achievement of the right to food, fair governance of common goods - land, seeds, water - promoting sustainable agro-ecological practices and respecting the environment and biodiversity<sup>84</sup>.

The Italian Cooperation system commits to:

**156** Analyse the **gender impact of food security policies**; agricultural and rural development policies considering the different roles of men and women within the household; and encourage the **development of a global "database" with gender indicators in rural areas**.

<sup>80</sup> Interest recently reiterated during the 62<sup>nd</sup> Commission on the Status of Women on "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls": <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw62-2018>

<sup>81</sup> See: <http://www.iao.florence.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/iaogender-it.pdf>

<sup>82</sup> SDG2 aims at, inter alia, "double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women" and one of SDG5 targets is "Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws" (5.A.1)

<sup>83</sup> World Summit on Food Security (Rome, 16-18 November 2009), Second International Conference on Nutrition (19-21 November 2014), Conference on climate change - COP21 (Paris, 30 Nov-12 Dec 2015), COP23 Gender Action Plan (Bonn, 6-17 November 2017).

<sup>84</sup> The Italian Cooperation subscribes to the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development: <https://www.donorplatform.org/>, including "gender" among its priorities.

**157** Use existing analyses at country level and/or encourage **gender analysis** of the political, economic, legal, cultural, technological, environmental factors that determine the condition of women and men in society; foster the collection of gender statistics and support, where possible, the implementation of **gender budgeting** at national and local level.

**158** Use gender analysis in these fields: **qualitative and quantitative definition of agricultural systems**; information on subsistence and cash crops; information related to *on-farm* and *off-farm activities* and to the main sources of income of the rural world; analysis of rural and farmers' associations; information on existing infrastructure, such as markets, access routes, health care, education, water points, mills, forest nurseries, farms/specialised farms; traditional power dynamics in the management of land systems; impact of national and foreign investments in agriculture; impact of climate change on farming practices and community resilience strategies.

**159** Uphold **property, divorce, inheritance laws** that allow women access to the **use and control of land and remove gender discrimination**.

**160** Support access of women and girls to **primary education and secondary, tertiary and vocational training** on agricultural production and conservation of environmental resources.

**161** Support the country's policies for the implementation of **article 14** of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (**CEDAW**).

**162** **Include women's associations** on an equal footing with men's associations in the design of rural development, agricultural and food programmes.

**163** Ensure that programmes adopt a gender analysis so as to take into account the preferences and needs of women and men in the **introduction of new technologies and in the selection of crops, seeds, inputs**.

**164** Support women's access to **better mobility, market information, transport, water and information technology services**.

**165** Support local leadership and foster relations with central ministries and other institutions to create food security conditions that prevent crises, also thanks to the **enhancement of women's knowledge**.

**166** Facilitate **access to credit for women** entrepreneurs in rural areas.

#### 4.4. PROMOTING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

**167** Although women's health has improved globally, gender inequalities persist and still have a very negative impact on their wellbeing. Every year almost 300,000 women die during childbirth, 99% of them in developing countries, around 20 million women suffer from debilitating pregnancy-related complications and 214 million women have no access to modern contraception. Gender inequalities also increase women's vulnerability to HIV and sexually transmitted diseases<sup>85</sup>. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this situation has further deteriorated as a result of overloaded health services, reduced mobility and social distancing measures. Pregnant women are also more likely to have contact with health services, exposing themselves to the risk of infection in health facilities or refraining from medical examinations necessary to protect their health for fear of infection. The difficulty of accessing family planning services can lead to an increase in unplanned pregnancies<sup>86</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*.

<sup>86</sup> UNFPA. "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage", April 2020.

**168** In addition, due to their double role of production and reproduction, women get more ill, consume more drugs and are socially 'disadvantaged' compared to men (physical and psychological violence, higher unemployment, economic difficulties), and are more prone to psychiatric disorders. Moreover, in recent years, the health and human rights of women and girls have come under unprecedented attack in different areas of the world due to legal issues, restrictive policies, conflicts, violence, and catastrophes, especially with regard to sexual and reproductive rights<sup>87</sup>. The gender approach to health starts by recognising the specificities of each woman and man and by promoting the cross-cutting gender dimension as a social health determinant in policies, resource allocation, intervention planning and M&E systems.

**169** The Italian Development Cooperation pursues universal access to health as a fundamental human right (SDG 3), including the right for all to make decisions concerning reproduction, free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in the United Nations documents on human rights and gender equality.

The Italian Cooperation system commits to:

**170** Strengthen health-promoting actions **advocating gender mainstreaming** through support for gender-sensitive financial planning; development of M&E systems, including gender indicators; also, actions promoting sexual and reproductive rights and improved access and quality of services.

#### The International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo was organised in 1994 by the United Nations (UNFPA).

Participants came to the conclusion that a population policy that aims solely at limiting population growth is doomed to failure. In Cairo, 179 states approved the action programme of the World Population Conference, which includes the following objectives for balanced and sustainable demographic development: education for all population groups, especially for girls and women; equality and equal rights for the sexes; protection, support and promotion of the family; general access to reproductive health, family planning and sexual health services; reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality. The right to reproductive health and family planning takes centre stage in a new approach to population policy. The targeted measures do not only concern family planning, but also include basic services in the areas of reproductive health, prenatal and post-natal care, programmes on the prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/Aids, and research and capacity-building activities at the level of national analyses.

<sup>87</sup> WHO *Stratégie mondiale pour la santé de la femme, de l'enfant et de l'adolescent (2016-2030): santé de l'adolescent* [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA70/A70\\_37-fr.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA70/A70_37-fr.pdf)

**171** Promote the implementation of the **1994 Cairo Action Plan** and the **1995 Beijing Platform**, the final documents of the relevant review conferences and subsequent international commitments to **ensure - including in emergency contexts - access to health and social services, without discrimination** on grounds of gender or cultural and religious beliefs.

**172** Include, in every bilateral and multilateral initiative promoted by the Italian Development Cooperation in the field of health - including humanitarian aid initiatives, programmes and projects financed through the Global Fund against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis -, an integrated strategy of **primary health care (PHC), which also envisages the provision of modern contraception services and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV, pre- and post-natal care, childbirth assistance and access to emergency obstetric care at community level.**

**173** Increase the quality and quantity of actions to **improve sexual and reproductive health, including combating gender-based violence and harmful practices**, also considering that women with disabilities have the same sexual and reproductive needs and rights as other women, taking into account the Italian social and health care system, also strengthened through collaboration with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and women's associations.

**174** Support initiatives, institutions and civil society in communication, awareness-raising, training and **advocacy on health and rights of women and girls.**

**175** Prioritise an approach that takes into account women's right to physical and mental health throughout their reproductive life cycle, through the establishment of **family counselling centres** and women's health centres offering a wide range of primary health services, with an integrated local development approach that promotes the prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

**176** **Train health workers and practitioners** with a gender perspective also in the fight against HIV/Aids and other sexually transmissible diseases, in counselling programmes (especially in the areas where gender discrimination is high) involving men, paying special attention to boys and girls and to the fight against GBV.

**177** Include a specific component in health initiatives to support the data collection system and **using qualitative and quantitative gender- and age- disaggregated data based on gender analysis.**

#### 4.5. EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

**178** Women and girls in the developing world are often excluded from access to education. Lack of education limits their life prospects, lowers household income, reduces health and puts women and girls at risk of trafficking and exploitation, negatively affecting the economies of entire countries. The education and vocational training of women and girls is therefore a key lever for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and breaking the cycle of poverty in many partner countries.

**179** The COVID-19 pandemic has further decreased girls' and young women's access to education. School closures, social distancing and containment strategies have a different impact on girls who traditionally take on the burdens of household work and who typically have more limited access to distance learning. School closures and the economic downturn caused by the pandemic may also increase rates of violence against children, child labour, child marriage and early pregnancy. Children from poor families often work to offset the loss of family income. The cost of combating COVID-19 and the economic slowdown are likely to have a negative impact on education spending by governments and international cooperation aid<sup>88</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action: "Interim Guidance - GENDER ALERT FOR COVID19 OUTBREAK". March 2020.  
[https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/IASC%20Interim%20Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20-%20Gender%20Alert\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/IASC%20Interim%20Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20-%20Gender%20Alert_0.pdf)

**180** The 2030 Agenda recognises that promoting gender equality in education requires an approach that not only ensures equal access and completion of education for all but also fosters empowerment processes through education. Poverty, geographical isolation, disability, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, unequal distribution of domestic work, and persistent discrimination are among the major causes that inhibit the exercise of the rights of women and girls to participate in, complete and benefit from education, especially access to secondary schools and universities.

**181** The right to education is even more at risk during emergencies, where school is a key element for girls' physical and mental safety and stability. School attendance can help protect women from the risk of sexual violence, human trafficking, child labour or early marriage.

**182** The Italian Development Cooperation, in line with the principles established in 2002 by the *Global Partnership for Education*<sup>89</sup>, is involved in the promotion of education using a multidimensional and integrated approach that takes into account obstacles, barriers and discrimination, which prevent access, continuation and completion of the education/training cycle of the actors, with special attention to girls in disadvantaged and vulnerable conditions.

The Italian Cooperation system commits to:

**183** Replicate innovative strategies, already tested in some countries and identifiable as flagship initiatives that act simultaneously on: the economic conditions of families; the quality of learning and the promotion of scientific education; socio-cultural obstacles through the fight against gender-based violence (early marriages and pregnancies, child labour exploitation, domestic and care work); including gender diversity in school curricula; infrastructural barriers through rehabilitation and/or construction of buildings/schools taking into account the specific needs of students and teachers; the policy making process through support to local planning and educational policy making.

**184** Should educational activities be discontinued in an emergency, to take preventive measures that ensure girls are not exposed to the risks of violence - including early marriage, sexual abuse and exploitation - and adopt arrangements to enable girls to participate in distance learning activities.

**185** Special attention will be paid to **vocational training** and to the promotion of educational reforms that combine training offer with the needs of the market for the integration of young women into the labour market according to their personal ambitions and by promoting jobs that do not replicate gender stereotypes.

**186** **Increase the initiatives backing vocational education and training for women and girls by 2020 compared to the investments made in 2015** (in line with the commitment made at G7 in Elmau<sup>90</sup>), also in crisis contexts.

**187** **Eliminate gender inequalities in education and vocational training programmes at all levels**, supporting initiatives to remove gender discrimination limiting access to education, and ensuring equal access for the most vulnerable women, such as people with disabilities, indigenous populations, and girls in vulnerable situations.

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.globalpartnership.org>. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has adopted as its vision the Global Goal for education, calling for inclusive, equitable quality education for all by 2030. GPE 2020, GPE's strategic plan for 2016-2020, turns this vision in actionable goals and objectives.

<sup>90</sup> The Leaders' Declaration of G7 Summit in Elmau (7/8 June 2015) includes specific commitments in the area of female empowerment and vocational training. In particular, Leaders committed to increasing the number of women and girls with vocational and technical training in developing countries by 1/3 (compared to « business as usual ») by 2030. The G7 also committed to increasing career training and education for women and girls in G7 countries.

- 188** Integrate in all actions, according to a life chain approach, a cross-cutting component of **fight against gender-based violence**, with special attention to early marriages and pregnancies.
- 189** Adopt a multidimensional approach that takes into account the structural causes of inequality and discrimination, by supporting partner countries in carrying out **gender analysis**, improving the **data collection system** and **developing indicators** for the elaboration and evaluation of educational policies and gender-sensitive financial planning.
- 190** Promote multi-level actions that foster the **participation of boys and girls** in sex education and gender role building processes.
- 191** Strengthen collaboration with university centres in partner countries on **gender studies**.
- 192** Invest in programmes for women's access to information, communication technologies (ICTs).

#### 4.6. GENDER EQUALITY, HUMANITARIAN AID AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS

- 193** Humanitarian aid acts in the aftermath of catastrophic events, whether man-made or natural, with the aim of protecting human life, alleviating or preventing suffering and preserving people's dignity, where governments and local actors are unable or unwilling to respond. Humanitarian Aid also includes disaster risk reduction and human and institutional capacity building activities to prevent and alleviate the impact of disasters and strengthen disaster response.
- 194** Women and men are affected by crises in different ways and possess specific capacities to prepare for and respond to emergencies, not least because they are exposed to diverse forms of vulnerability. Therefore, humanitarian crises have no neutral impact and can expose women and girls to specific risks such as sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation, early marriages and pregnancies. Humanitarian action without a gender lens in action planning can have negative effects, exposing men and women to greater risks.
- 195** Despite the countless forms of discrimination suffered by women, their crucial role in building peace processes in conflict and post-conflict contexts and in promoting the resilience of the most fragile communities is internationally recognised. At the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul (2016), Italy took significant commitments in the fight against gender-based violence in emergencies and in the protection of reproductive, maternal and child health<sup>91</sup>.
- 196** Due to the spread of conflicts, crises and emergencies, the Italian Development Cooperation has considerably increased its intervention by investing important technical and financial resources in target geographical areas, also specifically tailored to women and girls. The strategy adopted is focused on two dimensions: 1) fine-tuning with international commitments on the fight against gender-based violence in emergency contexts, through advocacy and awareness-raising activities towards the donor community and the parties in conflict; 2) the implementation of ad hoc actions to combat gender-based violence and aid people who survived abuse.

<sup>91</sup> The commitments undertaken by Italy at the WHS are available on the portal of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation:  
<https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Gli-impegni-italiani-a-Istanbul.pdf>

Il sistema della Cooperazione Italiana allo Sviluppo si impegna a:

- 197** Strengthen efforts towards **maternal and child health**, emergency obstetrics, pre- and post-natal care, access to sexual and reproductive health information and rights, emergency contraceptive services, family planning, **sanitation, medical and psychological services** for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (**SGBV**), reinforcing local health systems and training of all operators (WHS, Roundtable n.5, Core Commitment2). These activities shall be adapted to allow a safe provision of the relevant services, including preventive measures or the organisation of distance services - where possible.
- 198** Implement the commitments made in the framework of the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in emergencies, i.e. **conduct advocacy actions in multilateral fora to promote the inclusion of Call to Action considerations**, publish new Guidelines on GBV and gender equality in humanitarian aid, strengthen GBV services (WHS, Roundtable n. 5, Core Commitment 3).
- 199** Support requests to the Secretary General that any report by the Secretary General and any briefing to the Council by a UN agency or NGO shall include **gender- and age-disaggregated data** and take into account **findings and recommendations relating to women's rights and gender equality** (WHS, Roundtable n. 5, Core Commitment 5).
- 200** Increase support for **women and girls who have survived sexual violence in armed conflicts** and enhance the role of women in humanitarian aid actions in the field of food security, education and reproductive health, from the early stages of emergencies to the benefit of disaster-stricken communities, refugees and/or displaced persons and host communities.
- 201** Produce operational manuals, promote the collection of **gender- and age-disaggregated data**, encourage the development and use of **qualitative and quantitative indicators** and **Gender Policy Markers** aimed at ascertaining respect for human rights and gender equality in any humanitarian aid programme.
- 202** In application of the EU Council Conclusions on the World Humanitarian Summit<sup>92</sup>, promote actions in support of the role of women in **conflict prevention and mediation**, backing the participation of local women's associations at grassroots level so as to enable them to appropriately participate in peace agreements and reconstruction initiatives for their communities (in line with UNSC Resolution 1325 and following).
- 203** Develop accurate **gender analysis** in any humanitarian aid programme, including in assistance services for refugee populations, to assess the needs of the population affected by the crisis on the basis of gender diversity, to prevent and respond to the risks experienced by women, and girls in crisis contexts, to exclude possible negative effects produced by humanitarian action itself.

<sup>92</sup> "The EU and its Member States recognise the distinct role of women in conflict prevention, resolution and peace processes. The EU and its Member States are committed to ensure the full and equal participation and representation of women and girls in disaster risk reduction (DRR), conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation, and in all phases of the humanitarian assistance and the development process. We reconfirm our commitment to UNSC Resolution 1325 and its follow-up resolutions, and to fully implement the EU's second Gender Action Plan for the period 2016-20207, which provides a results-oriented framework to advance the agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in all EU external relations. The Council encourages all EU Member States to join the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Communiqué and implement the Roadmap".  
<ps://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8850-2016-INIT/it/pdf>



## IN COPERTINA

### SOMALIA



*Project of the Italian Cooperation in Somalia.  
Photo by UNFPA.*

### PALESTINE



*Project of the Italian Cooperation in Palestine.  
Photo by Guia Faglia, during a meeting on the  
16 days campaign.*

### NIGER



*Project of the Italian Cooperation in Niger.  
Photo by Apsatou Bagaya.*

### SENEGAL



*Project of the Italian Cooperation in Senegal.  
Photo by Audy Valera.*

### EL SALVADOR



*Project of the Italian Cooperation in El Salvador.  
Photo by Riccardo Morpurgo.*

### MOZAMBIQUE



*Fishing is a fundamental activity for self-subsistence  
and trade in the coastal areas of the country.  
Photo by Luigi Carta, 2017.*

This document has been drafted by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation in cooperation with the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC). This document is the end result of a consultation process, coordinated by the DGCS of MFAIC, with the Civil Society Organisations and with the "Strategies and guidelines for Italian development cooperation" working group of the National Development Cooperation Council (CNCS), that contributed to revising the text. Thanks are due to all parties involved in the process.



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