

## Written Statement UN Women Germany

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Poverty is one of the main causes of gender inequality. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by poverty in all parts of the world. To fight poverty sustainably, the structural causes of poverty need to be erased. Limited access to free education, lack of sexual and reproductive rights, legal and structural disadvantages for women and girls in all their diversity - especially in the labor market, gender stereotypes and lack of participation in decision-making bodies increase the risk of poverty and violate the right of women and girls to live a life free from poverty and injustice. The complex interaction between poverty and gender inequalities deepens existing discrimination.

Many women and girls have less access to education and higher educational qualifications, health care, economic resources, political participation, and opportunities. The resulting poverty further hinders women's access to resources and rights. Without economic resources, women and girls have less opportunity to lead self-determined lives and escape dependency and (domestic) violence. This can lead to a vicious circle of poverty and violence.

There can be no gender equality without ending poverty. At the same time, comprehensive approaches to gender equality contribute to poverty reduction. Through collaborative efforts at the local, national, and international levels, we can create a more equitable and inclusive society in which women and girls, in all their diversity, can realize their full potential. All efforts for gender equality and poverty reduction need an intersectional perspective that overcomes intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination.

Only strong democratic institutions can realize rights and opportunities for everyone. Economic systems must be based on sustainable, feminist, and human rights-based principles. Consistent gender impact assessment and gender-responsive financing are fundamental components of an inclusive and equal society. They aim to ensure that all laws, policies, and the use of public funds lead to greater gender equality, and that financial resources and opportunities are distributed equally between all genders. Gender equality is the basic prerequisite for sustainable and economically successful development for all.

**UN Women Germany demands Gender justice as a guiding principle in all policy fields: The principles of feminist foreign and development policy - rights, resources, representation - must be anchored in all policy fields. This includes:**

- **Women, peace, and security:** All people have a right to live in security and peace. There needs to be an active commitment to peace at the local, national, regional, and international levels. Women and girls need to be actively involved in all peacebuilding and peacekeeping decisions.

- **Gender-responsive policies:** Active and equal participation of women in political decision-making processes at all levels ensures that their concerns and interests are adequately represented. All policy portfolios must be based on feminist principles. This also includes gender-just climate policy.
- **Equal access to education:** Girls and women have a right to quality education. This includes non-discriminatory access to basic education, higher education, and vocational training. Adequate education enables women and girls to develop their skills, achieve economic independence and improve their position in society.
- **Gender equality in the world of work:** Equal opportunities in the workplace and the participation of women in all sectors of the economy and at all hierarchical levels are a basic prerequisite for gender equality. This includes combating the gender pay gap and the resulting pension gap and thus old-age poverty, the equal participation of women in all decision-making and senior management positions, combating discrimination and violence in the workplace, and decent working conditions.
- **Fair distribution and value of care work:** Paid and unpaid care work must be distributed fairly between the genders and valued both financially and socially. To this end, traditional gender stereotypes must be overcome and a needs-based infrastructure for childcare and support for caregiving relatives must be provided. Only by closing the gender-specific care work gap can we close the wage gap as well as the pension gap. This has a positive impact on women's educational and career opportunities, political and social participation, and health.
- **Economic empowerment:** Women need equal access to bank accounts, credit, insurance, and other financial services. This requires special financial products and programs for women, financial education, and the elimination of discriminatory practices.
- **Ending gender-based violence:** Effective, society-wide measures to prevent and combat gender-based violence must protect women and girls. Only then can women and girls live in safety and freedom and participate fully in education, employment and in social and political life. Affordable medical care and psychological support must be available. Harmful practices such as genital mutilation and forced and child marriages must be ended through effective prevention and education work and legislation so that women and girls can participate fully in economic, social, and political life.
- **Gender-responsive health care:** Women and girls need full and inclusive access to health services and information. This includes reproductive and sexual health (including free menstrual products and contraceptives), self-determined family planning, legal access to abortion, and measures against maternal mortality.
- **Gender-responsive social policies:** Universal, accessible, adequate, available, gender-equal and comprehensive social protection must be accessible for all women and girls, regardless of marital status, employment, or participation in the formal labor market. This includes paid maternity leave, universal and quality childcare, age-appropriate care services and adequate support for single parents.
- **Gender-just tenure and land rights:** All women need equal access to property, housing, food, clean drinking water, and land ownership. They must be actively involved in decisions about land use and resource management.

- **Dismantling discriminatory norms:** Awareness of gender stereotypes and discrimination is urgently needed. We need a culture of respect, tolerance, and non-violence. Sexism and antifeminism must be specifically opposed. The education of boys and men should dismantle traditional gender roles and discriminatory social norms. The right of women and girls to participate in all areas of political, social, cultural, and economic life must be generally recognized and implemented.
- **Access to resources, Gender Impact Assessment, and Gender Budgeting:** Gender-responsive policies and their financing must ensure that all laws, policies, and the provision of public finance lead to gender equality and meet the needs of women and girls.
- **Data and research:** The provision of gender-sensitive data and research is necessary to minimize or eliminate gender inequality. This provides the basis for gender-responsive decision-making and effective action for gender equality.
- **International cooperation:** Efforts for gender equality and the fight against gender-based poverty must be coordinated at the international level and integrated into all free trade agreements. There needs to be a stronger commitment to sustainable, inclusive and gender-responsive development in line with the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Similarly, the "triple nexus" approach of peacebuilding, humanitarian aid and international cooperation involving girls and women needs to be more strongly promoted and pursued at all levels.

UN Women National Committee Germany calls for comprehensive gender equality policy at all levels and in all parts of the world. This includes targeted poverty reduction, the strengthening of democratic institutions, and comprehensive gender-responsive policies and financing. Only coordinated political action at the regional, national, and international levels can make gender equality possible.