

Turning Promises into Progress:

Summary Briefing
March 2015

Gender equality and rights for women and girls -
lessons learnt and actions needed



1. The time is now

This is an important moment for gender equality and women's and girls' rights. Alongside the development and implementation of the post-2015 development framework, 2015 marks the twentieth anniversary of the landmark fourth World Conference on Women resulting in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and fifteen years since the ground-breaking United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted.

In light of these milestones, the Gender and Development Network (GADN), Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS UK) and the UK Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Network have come together to assess the progress made, and to outline actions needed over the next decades in our full report **Turning Promises into Progress**.¹ This briefing summarises key findings from the report and makes recommendations for action. In section three we outline the situation in seven issue areas on which we work, and make recommendations specific to those areas. Common across the issue areas is the failure, thus far, of governments and international institutions to address the underlying causes of gender inequality; in section four we outline the areas of action needed to combat these barriers to

progress. Another common theme is the failure by governments to implement political commitments, and in section four we suggest actions needed to garner sufficient political will and resources to turn these promises into progress towards gender equality.

2. Twenty years since Beijing

Looking back over the last two decades there is a cause for celebration and frustration. Gender equality is now on the political agenda, apparent in the rhetoric around international agreements and accompanied by some new national legislation to promote or protect women's and girls' rights and gender equality. There has been some progress on the ground, especially in areas which were prioritised by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) such as education, national-level political participation and maternal health. There is also an emerging evidence and practice base, particularly through the work of women's rights organisations, providing valuable lessons for the future.

However, despite the commitments made, and a growing understanding as to what gender equality entails and the most effective ways to achieve it, progress has remained slow and uneven. Efforts by governments and donors have largely been piecemeal, focusing on individual women and girls and on too narrowly defined manifestations of their inequality. In every country in the world, women and girls are still disproportionately represented amongst the poorest and most marginalised. They continue to face violence, discrimination, constrained economic choices and exclusion from decisions over their lives; for those in conflict-affected and humanitarian settings, the situation is even worse. One in three women worldwide experiences sexual and/or intimate partner violence.² Every day there are almost 800 preventable deaths of women in pregnancy or childbirth.³ Peace negotiations take place with women almost entirely absent from the table.⁴ Women and girls continue to be disproportionately responsible for care work⁵ and are twice as likely as men to be living in extreme poverty.⁶ Where gender inequality intersects with other inequalities such as income levels, race, ethnicity, disability, caste, age, marital status and sexuality, the abuse of rights is further compounded. For example, less than half of girls with a disability complete primary school.⁷ The examples are endless.⁸

3. Issues and challenges

There is now a wealth of knowledge, especially from women's rights organisations in the Global South, on the causes of gender inequality and how to redress it.⁹ In our full report, **Turning Promises into Progress**, the three networks look more closely at the evidence in each of the areas in which we work, including issues within the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).¹⁰ For each issue we identify progress and challenges, and propose recommendations for future action. In this briefing we provide an overview of the issues, with recommendations for action relevant primarily to international institutions and governments but also to the private sector and INGOs.

Women, peace and security (WPS)

In conflict-affected contexts, women and girls face a range of experiences unique to their gender, from political marginalisation to sexual violence. They also play various roles as combatants, peacebuilders, survivors, witnesses, peacekeepers, service providers and change makers. Yet peace negotiations remain the domain of men and repeatedly fail to reflect the priorities of women and girls. Conflict prevention, post-conflict governance and justice mechanisms, and post-conflict recovery processes must ensure the meaningful inclusion of women and, where appropriate girls, and recognise their experiences and needs. This is both their right, and essential to sustainable peace and ending the cycle of violence. The welcome focus on responding to sexual violence in conflict in recent years must also be broadened to address the root causes of all forms of violence that women and girls experience in times of conflict and peace.

International institutions/governments should:

- Fully implement defence, diplomatic and development commitments in the BPfA and WPS-related UNSCRs with action and funding on the ground.
- Take targeted, comprehensive action on women's, and where appropriate adolescent girls', participation in decision making across political, social, humanitarian and economic spheres from the community through to the international level.
- Work with, systematically consult, and provide funding to women's rights organisations to support their role at the forefront of service provision and promotion of WPS.
- Provide dedicated funding to WPS and track this funding allocation using internationally recognised reporting mechanisms such as the OECD Gender Marker.
- Address the root causes of and social norms attached to violence against women and girls (VAWG), women's and girls' exclusion from economic, social and political participation and wider gender inequality, both during and after conflict.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

VAWG is a pervasive violation of the rights of women and girls and its omission from the MDGs is now widely recognised as a mistake. However, despite recent increased political interest, there are still major gaps in the response by donors and governments. In particular, the primary focus has been on responding to violence, for example through reform of security and justice sectors. In addition, the underlying causes, such as social norms that condone violence and the power imbalance between women and men, should be addressed. There has also been a concentration by many donors on particular forms of violence, such as female genital mutilation, which has not been matched by focus or funding in other less publicised areas. More investment is needed in preventing all forms of VAWG including empowering women and girls, supporting women's rights organisations, investing in survivor-centred support services and working with men and boys and local leaders to challenge discriminatory social norms.

International institutions/governments should:

- Prioritise and invest in preventing VAWG, including empowering women and girls, working with men and boys, challenging discriminatory social norms and working with local leaders including faith leaders.
- Ensure resources and political will address all forms of VAWG and respond to multiple and intersecting discrimination.
- Strengthen multi-sector (health, education, justice) and survivor-centred responses to violence; and ensure survivors have access to comprehensive and appropriate services.
- Recognise and support the role of national and grassroots women's rights organisations in preventing and responding to violence, including by increasing financial support to women's rights organisations.
- Integrate and prioritise VAWG programming into all humanitarian and conflict responses, including prevention.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Sexual and reproductive health and rights span the range of girls' and women's human rights; realising them is necessary for women and girls to stay healthy and to participate in all facets of life, free from violence. The ability to choose when and whether to have children is both a right in itself, and necessary if all women and girls are to benefit from opportunities in education, employment, and decision making. Making this a reality requires access to safe, effective and affordable methods of contraception and comprehensive safe abortion services within a health service that is well-funded, rights-based and accessible to all. Maternal mortality and morbidity, despite progress under the MDGs, remains unacceptably high and requires further investment in health services, including in humanitarian and conflict-affected settings. Freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sexuality is also a vital component of women's rights, and an area where more political will is needed.

International institutions/governments should:

- Improve access to rights-based family planning, skilled attendance at delivery, emergency obstetric care and safe abortion.
- Ensure that quality sexual and reproductive health services are accessible and affordable to all.
- Design services and provide information for adolescent girls to meet their specific needs.
- Mobilise increased resources for sexual, reproductive, maternal and health services including in conflict-affected and humanitarian settings.
- Ensure the regular supply of reproductive health commodities including contraceptives, abortion equipment and medication.

- Ensure that policy is evidence-informed, rights-based and reinforces measures to promote, protect and fulfil sexual and reproductive rights and achieve gender equality.

Women's participation and influence in decision making

Women's equal and meaningful participation and influence in decision making is fundamentally a question of social justice, as well as a necessary requirement to improve governance at all levels. Particularly where a critical mass is achieved, the presence of women can ensure that decisions better reflect the needs and priorities of other women. Affirmative action policies (such as quotas for women in government at all levels) can help to build this critical mass. However, participation alone is not enough, and women should be supported to ensure that they have actual influence over processes. Measurement of women's political participation will therefore need to go beyond numbers, to reflect the importance of influence. Moreover, interventions to promote women's role in decision making should not be confined to national fora (as with the MDGs) but should include international, local, community and household-level participation and influence in informal as well as formal settings. To be successful, interventions to increase women's participation and influence will need to tackle the attitudes and norms that perpetuate the myth that women are not suitable leaders, and which confine women to domestic spheres.

International institutions/governments should:

- Give greater priority to increasing women's political participation and influence in decision making as a central component of achieving gender equality and women's rights, including in conflict and fragile settings.
- Work to tackle the discriminatory social norms and attitudes which assign women to domestic spheres and suggest that public decision making is primarily a man's domain.
- Recognise that supporting women's confidence and capacity to participate in and influence political decision making should be approached as a long-term process that will require appropriate funding, particularly for women's rights organisations, and should focus especially on marginalised and excluded women.
- Use indicators that measure women's influence as well as participation in political decision making from household to international levels, with an explicit focus on bringing the importance of women's local level leadership to the fore.

Education

Quality education has long been recognised as crucial for gender equality, and the numbers of girls and boys enrolling in primary schools is now roughly equal. However the barriers to girls attending and achieving at school, particularly at secondary level, still exist. These include caring responsibilities, violence, early and forced marriage, a shortage of female teachers, and a lack of sanitary facilities. Free high quality public education for all remains a challenge, as does ensuring sufficient investment in adult women's literacy that continues to lag behind that of men. An integrated framework for

action, which focusses on the availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability of education for girls is crucial alongside government investment in teachers, facilities, and gender-sensitive education systems including comprehensive sexuality education.¹¹

International institutions/governments should:

- Take action to address violence against women and girls in and out of schools.
- Design education initiatives to take into account the multiple barriers which impact on girls' access to and achievement in school at all levels of education, prioritising the needs and experiences of the poorest and most marginalised girls.
- Provide sufficient funding for high quality free public education and guarantee education to all without discrimination.
- Implement teacher policies which ensure teachers are motivated and have decent working conditions; that sufficient female teachers are recruited and in senior positions; and that female teachers serve as role models for children in the most disadvantaged and rural areas.
- Implement specific programmes to address women's literacy and open educational opportunities for women, especially those who were not able to access education previously.

Women's economic empowerment and equality

Women's ability to generate and control regular income is a central factor in gaining greater decision making power within households and society, and in achieving gender equality more broadly. Yet women are still poorer than men, and earn less than men even when they do comparable work.¹² Donors' continued focus on increasing the income of individual women (largely through micro-credit or job creation) should be broadened to ensure women have control over their income and time, with access to decent work or sufficient investment opportunities. Further, discriminatory legislation preventing equality should be repealed and, where appropriate, affirmative action used. Discriminatory social norms around gender roles and 'women's work' must be tackled together with support for women's collective organising and participation in all levels of economic decision making. The adoption of alternative economic policies is essential, particularly those which support an increased role for the state, for example, in investing in social infrastructure and providing social protection.

International institutions/governments should:

- Recognise the duty of states to implement human rights-based economic policies and legislation that promotes gender equality, including ensuring that women have access to decent employment opportunities, enjoy safe working conditions, receive equal pay for work of equal value and have the right to organise at all stages of the global value chain.
- Recognise the duty of states to implement fiscal policies that, through progressive tax systems and gender-responsive public financial management systems,

generate and allocate sufficient income to redress discrimination and inequality, including the provision of universal access to adequate, affordable public services and universal social protection.

- Put in place and enforce effective and transparent policies and mechanisms that require corporations to comply with international human rights standards and obligations and guarantee access to remedy when violations occur.
- Repeal discriminatory laws, including customary laws, and actively enforce legislation and regulation promoting women's full and equal access to land, property, technology, credit and other productive resources.
- Promote women's leadership, voice and agency at all levels of economic policy making, from household to international levels.

Unpaid care

Care work is essential for the smooth functioning of economies and societies, yet it is largely unremunerated and unrecognised. In every country, women and girls do a disproportionate amount of this unpaid work, undermining their ability to take part in education, paid work, and political activities. Meanwhile the lack of recognition for care work further reduces women's status in society. The solution lies partly in a transfer of caring responsibility from women to men - primarily through a change in discriminatory social norms around gender roles, partly through increased investment in care technology, but most importantly through an increased role for governments in ensuring that adequate, affordable care is available for all.

International institutions/governments should:¹³

- Measure the extent and nature of unpaid care and recognise its essential social and economic contribution.
- Acknowledge governments' responsibility for the provision of high quality accessible care for all, supported by the necessary progressive revenue-raising and expenditure.
- Work towards a change in social norms to shift responsibility for the provision of care from families to the state and from women and girls to men and boys, and to increase the value and recognition given to care work.
- Use a care-lens in all relevant public policy making and donor programming, including taxation and expenditure, social protection and decent work.
- Invest in appropriate labour-saving technology and infrastructure.
- Tackle the barriers that prevent those who provide care from having a greater voice in decision making.

4. Changes needed – confronting the causes

It is clear across all the ‘issues’ examined that women and girls are disadvantaged not because they are a ‘vulnerable group’ in need of protection, but because society is structured according to unequal power relations that create barriers to equality.¹⁴ Increasing women’s and girls’ access to power and resources is vital, but real progress will only come once structural barriers preventing them from benefiting from these opportunities are challenged. While women and girls face different barriers depending on their local context and the intersectionality of different discriminations, there are strong similarities across societies. Across the board, governments and donors must do more: to remove formal and informal legal discrimination and enforce progressive laws and regulations; to implement affirmative action in employment; to increase public services and reduce women’s unpaid care work; and to ensure that public institutions are responsive to the needs of women and girls.

- **Interventions to tackle the structural barriers to gender equality and the rights of women and girls must be prioritised and funded.**

These barriers, some of which are listed below, are all important, overlapping and mutually reinforcing. The four highlighted areas, expanded on below and more fully in our Report¹⁵, are particularly in need of more attention and political priority, especially if interventions are to benefit marginalised women and those facing intersecting inequalities.

Structural barriers to gender equality:

- ❖ **Women and girls lack sufficient autonomy and agency**
- ❖ Women and girls lack bodily integrity, including freedom from violence and reproductive rights
- ❖ **Women’s rights organisations are under-resourced**
- ❖ Women and girls are excluded from decision making
- ❖ Institutions are discriminatory, unaccountable and lack expertise in gender equality
- ❖ Laws and government policies are discriminatory or fail to recognise the different needs of women and men
- ❖ **Discriminatory social norms perpetuate and condone gender inequality**
- ❖ Women and girls have less access to and control over resources than men and boys
- ❖ Public services are inadequate to address gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights
- ❖ **Macro-economic policies create and perpetuate gender inequality**

Building the autonomy and agency of women and girls

If women and girls are to benefit from opportunities to access more resources and exercise greater power they must have agency, which is the ability to make and act on choices and so control their own lives. Policy and programmes that work directly with marginalised women and girls to build their agency, allowing them to identify their own priorities and solutions, require a move away from perceiving women and girls as simply a ‘vulnerable group’, to active citizens who should be part of decision making processes. To successfully promote self-esteem and confidence, interventions will also need to recognise the specific needs of those women and girls facing multiple discrimination.

- **Interventions to promote gender equality must build marginalised women’s and girls’ agency.**

Supporting women’s collective action

Change occurs when women act collectively, some of the most important advances in women’s and girls’ rights have been secured through the efforts of women’s rights organisations and movements. Organisations with a primary focus on promoting women’s rights and gender equality, led by women for women, are particularly well-equipped to work with marginalised women and girls in order to enable them to build their capacity and agency, speak for themselves and take collective action.¹⁶ Yet funding for these types of organisations remains limited, and is frequently too short-term and restricted to enable the transformative programming needed.

- **Donors should provide far greater political support, and appropriate funding, to women’s rights organisations.**

Challenging discriminatory social norms

Discriminatory social norms - widely shared beliefs, practices and rules - legitimise and perpetuate gender inequality by normalising women’s and girls’ roles, for example as ‘carers’ and followers rather than ‘bread-winners’ and leaders. National institutions such as the police, military, education systems, and particularly the media further reinforce these norms. Occupational segregation, early and forced marriage, exclusion from decision making, responsibility for unpaid care work and the widespread acceptance of VAWG are all ways in which discriminatory social norms adversely impact on women’s and girls’ choices and chances. Change in social norms can be measured, and should therefore be included as targets in international agreements and resourced by governments and donors as a first step. Challenging discriminatory norms requires investment in empowering women and girls to question these norms and go ‘against the grain’ in order to take more control of their own lives. It also means working with communities, particularly influential community leaders, to change what is considered acceptable.

- **Investment should be made in promoting positive social norms working with women and girls, women’s rights organisations, and the wider community.**

Alternative economic policies

Commitments made at and since the Beijing conference reflect an expectation that governments are responsible for implementing policies to improve the lives of women, especially poor women. However the negative impact of neo-liberal policies on governments' ability to do so was not addressed.¹⁷ The inconsistency between such commitments, and the continued pursuit of growth-focussed neo-liberal policies, has had a significant impact on progress in all areas of gender equality. Regressive taxation, cuts in public services, privatisation and deregulation have all taken their toll alongside the impact of austerity measures which fall disproportionately on women. Failure to acknowledge the importance of the care economy and women's unpaid work has also been a major omission.¹⁸

- **Alternative economic policies are needed that explicitly acknowledge governments' duty to promote gender equality, and recognise the importance of care work within the economy.**

5. Looking forward – political will and resources

Political will

The translation of rhetoric into real change in the lives of women and girls has been slow in part due to the lack of resources and political will. Tackling the underlying causes of gender inequality will require substantially more of both. Twenty years ago at the Beijing Conference, governments and donors accepted responsibility for ending violations of women's rights and progressing gender equality, but most have shied away from implementing commitments and making the fundamental changes which are really needed. While there has been increased political rhetoric on gender equality and the rights of women and girls over the last two decades, there has been insufficient political will to translate these commitments into long-term transformative change.

- **Creating and sustaining genuine political will to promote transformative change, among donors, governments, and civil society, is essential to achieving gender equality and the rights of women and girls.**

International institutions and governments

The MDGs demonstrated that international agreements can be useful in creating political will and mobilising resources, and the networks have elsewhere called for gender equality to be a clear priority within the post-2015 framework across the goals and in financing and implementation, and supported by transformative indicators and targets.¹⁹ This approach should be followed in other international negotiations. Donors – whether multilateral, official bilateral, private sector or INGOs – should ensure that the funding they give supports efforts to combat the underlying causes of gender equality, and that any economic conditionality complements rather than restricts this work.²⁰

- **International agreements should include explicit, funded commitments to gender equality and women's and girls' rights.**

Governments too have a clear and central role to play in resourcing and building support for gender equality nationally and should prioritise the promotion of gender equality within their national development plans with sufficient public expenditure, gender-sensitive policy making, supportive legislation and regulation, adequately resourced gender machineries, and affirmative action where needed.

- **National governments should prioritise and fund gender equality in national development plans.**

Accountability

Lack of progress is partly due to an absence of accountability mechanisms. Governments should have clear responsibility for implementing international and national commitments, involving all ministries and agencies (not only national women's machineries). This requires mechanisms and platforms for civil society to have the access and information needed to hold them to account. Investment in data, disaggregated by sex and age among other factors, is also vital to the accountability process, as well as to improve the quality of policy making.

- **Clear accountability mechanisms should be used to hold governments to account for their commitments.**

Women decision makers

The presence of women in decision making processes can help increase focus on gender equality, particularly if a critical mass of women is involved. Engaging men and boys in support of the women's rights movement will also be important, although care should be taken that such engagement does not lead to men taking over the small spaces created for women to enable women to speak for themselves.

- **Ensuring and supporting the participation and real influence of women in decision making is not only just, but can also increase political will to promote gender equality.**

Standalone and mainstreaming approaches

Gender mainstreaming, first introduced at the Beijing conference, has yet to be widely implemented by international institutions, governments or INGOs. Gender mainstreaming seeks to ensure that development organisations and institutions take gender equality and women's and girls' rights into account in all policy and spending decisions, as well as directing resources towards, and consulting with, women and girls.²¹ In contrast, standalone approaches and interventions focus specifically on gender equality or women's and girls' rights. A combination of gender mainstreaming and standalone interventions targeted specifically towards the realisation of the rights of women and girls has proven to be a successful way to leverage the necessary resources and political will, while also building technical expertise across institutions and programmes.

- **Gender mainstreaming and standalone projects on gender equality should be combined.**

Sufficient and fit-for-purpose funding

Political will, once created, must be supported by adequate resources. Financial assistance is required across all areas of gender equality whether this be investment in gender-responsive public services, the provision of adequate social protection, programmes supporting survivors of VAWG, increased training within the judicial system, awareness-raising programmes to shift social norms or affirmative action programmes to support women participating in decision making, including peace processes and conflict prevention. Current resources for programmes aimed at increasing gender equality are not only insufficient, but are also not fit for purpose, partly as a result of the privatisation of aid and the focus on short-term, results-driven donor assistance.²²

- **Donors should provide increased levels of long-term flexible funding for gender equality and women’s rights.**
- **New aid modalities should be reviewed to ensure that they do not mitigate against funding for gender equality.**

Holding firm against opposition

Opposition to the advancement of women’s and girls’ rights is deeply entrenched, challenging and undermining the political will that does exist. For example, since the 1990s, the Vatican has been aligning with Islamic fundamentalist and other states regressive on women’s and girls’ rights issues to threaten progressive agreements on gender equality within the United Nations system. As advances in women’s rights are made we have also seen increasing opposition from organisations purporting to promote the rights of men and boys.²³ Sometimes opposition and backlash against women’s human rights defenders and feminists can also take the form of intimidation, harassment and physical violence. New forms of oppression through social media are also being used against those who advocate for gender equality.

- **Space for gender equality on political agendas must be staunchly defended, the hard-won gains to date protected, and the safety of those defending women’s and girls’ rights secured.**

6. Turning promises to progress

Far too little has been achieved over the last twenty years, and there is still much to do. Furthermore there are new challenges: climate change and environmental degradation; an ageing population putting further pressure on the care economy; and the continued rise of fundamentalist doctrines opposed to women's rights. Moreover, renewed recognition of the importance of 'inequality' in development discourse²⁴ presents both an opportunity and an imperative to demonstrate that gender, like income, is fundamental to the way power is allocated in society.

We can be encouraged by the evidence and knowledge available and, more importantly, by the women's movement that is now stronger than ever. Organisations and networks worldwide are marking the anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by calling on governments to account for the commitments made. These calls for action provide inspiration, and outline recommendations that must be acted upon by international, national and civil society actors well beyond the twentieth anniversary of that landmark conference.²⁵

As the post-2015 agenda is agreed and implemented, and action against commitments made at Beijing and in UNSCR 1325 are reviewed, we call on international institutions, governments, the private sector and INGOs to make gender equality and the rights of women and girls a priority. The time is now.

Over the last twenty years, a plethora of international commitments has been put in place, technical expertise has been developed, and some political will has even been generated. The next decade must be the one in which we garner the necessary resources and will to move from isolated action in a few areas, to confronting the underlying causes of inequality and transforming the unequal power relations between women and men, boys and girls. Only then will gender equality be achieved, and the rights of women and girls secured.

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 - 9 See for example DAWN at <http://www.dawnnet.org/> and AWID at <http://www.awid.org/>
 - 10 See part two of *Turning Promises to Progress Report* (2015) *op cit*.
 - 11 Global Campaign for Education (2011) *Make it right: Ending the crisis for girl's education for girls*, available at: http://www.campaignforeducation.org/docs/reports/makeitright/MakeltRight_Report_07.pdf
 - 12 ILO (2009) *Global Employment Trends for Women*. Geneva: ILO, available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_103456.pdf
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 - 14 See the Institute of Development Studies *Pathways of Empowerment Project*, available at: <http://www.pathwaysofempowerment.org/>
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 - 18 UNIFEM (2000) *Progress of the World's Women 2000*. *op cit*. p. 10
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23 See for example Msimang, S. (2015) *The Backlash against African Women*, The New York Times, January 10th 2015, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/opinion/sunday/the-backlash-against-african-women.html?smid=tw-share&_r=1 visited on 30.1.15 and Justice for Men and Boys at: <https://j4mb.wordpress.com/> visited on 24.1.15

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25 See for example *Asia Pacific Beijing+20 Civil Society Forum Statement* (2014), available at: <http://apwld.org/final-report-asia-pacific-cso-forum-on-beijing-plus-20/> and Africa CSO position paper available at <http://www.acdhrs.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Africa-CSO-Position-Statement-Beijing20.pdf> both visited on 02.02.15.

This *Summary Briefing* is based on the *Turning Promises to Progress Report* available at: www.gadnetwork.org/turning-promises-into-progress and www.gaps-uk.org

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Written by Jessica Woodroffe, Hannah Bond and Sharon Smee, March 2015, London.

Front cover image: To mark International Women's Day and to demand political and policy response to their demands, women led a sit-in protest in Bhopal, India.

Photo credit: Srikanth Kolari/ActionAid 2011

Gender and Development Network (GADN)

GADN brings together over 100 expert NGOs, consultants, academics and individuals committed to working on gender, development and women's rights issues.

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Gender Action for Peace and Security UK (GAPS)

GAPS is the UK's only Women, Peace and Security civil society network. We are an expert membership organisation with 17 members who encompass a range of development, human rights, women's rights, humanitarian and peacebuilding NGOs.

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The UK Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Network

The UK SRHR Network brings together over fifty NGOs and academic institutions and individuals from across the UK international development sector, in order to promote the centrality of SRHR in development policies and programmes.

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