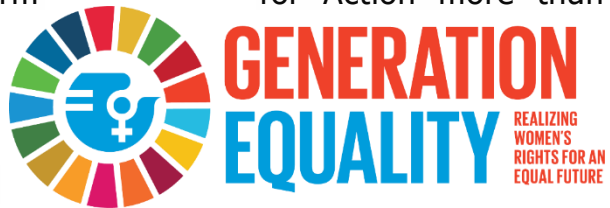




This civil society driven report of recommendations from the Tunis Forum will be sent to the Secretariat of the Beijing +25 process to inform the substantive preparations for the report of the Secretary-General on the Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to be submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) in March 2020. It will also inform the substantive preparations for the 20th anniversary of Security Council resolution on Women, Peace and Security, to be held in 2020.

The Tunis Forum is a critical part of the civil society mobilization of [Generation Equality, 'Beijing+25: Celebrating 25 years of championing women's rights'](#), which - with several other convenings, including Women Deliver 2019, and others through 2019 and 2020 - will continue to bring together the next generations of women's rights activists with the gender equality advocates and visionaries who were instrumental in creating the Beijing Platform for Action more than two decades ago, to collectively demand all stakeholders to tackle the unfinished business of empowering women, ensuring gender equality and realizing women's rights for an equal future.



## Overview

The government of Tunisia in close collaboration with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), UN Women and UNDP organized the Tunis Forum on Gender Equality which was held on 24–26 April 2019 and gathered more than 597

participants from all over the world. 40% of participants were under 35 years old. Participation included women activists and representatives from women's organizations, youth activists and male champions from local and national governments, civil society, private sector, academia, and regional and international organizations, including UN agencies.

The Forum was a follow up to the [Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality](#) which took place in April 2018 and was the first of many global meetings leading up to the landmark year 2020, when the world will observe the [25th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), as well as the [20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security](#).

The Forum was structured around four focus areas including: Beijing to Beijing + 25; Gender Equality for Local Governance Transformation; Women, Peace and Security; and Innovation, Technology and Economic Empowerment.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Overall, the discussion in Tunis focussed on the moment of hope, of diversity, and mobilization of feminist groups for global coordination and action for promoting women's rights, that was Beijing in 1995. To reclaim this space, at a time when we are seeing significant pushback on women's rights and on democratic space, the Beijing +25 process needs to be inclusive, to focus on intersectionality and include new developments including on technology that were not present 25 years ago.

Civil society should have access to government reports on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. CSOs should also play a key part in producing parallel reports which should include the views of all parts of society, including young people.

The importance of integrating work on Women, Peace and Security in the context of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for action was raised as well as the links between disarmament, demilitarisation and the implementation of a feminist peace.

Participants stressed that collaborative action is needed to benefit from technological change and to link the activities of grassroots organisations with national level institutions, policy and reporting mechanisms.

Following discussion in 3 plenary sessions and 18 parallel discussions, the Tunis Forum presented the recommendations listed below.

### **A. The Beijing +25 process**

- Expand the definition of gender beyond the binary framework used at Beijing. This needs to be addressed and expanded in the Beijing+25 process. A broader concept of gender (beyond women's rights) has to be disseminated.
- The Beijing +25 process needs to be inclusive and promote feminist intersectionality as a strategy to ensure no one is left behind. Promoting feminist intersectionality also means advocating for the collection of intersectional disaggregated data at every level,

and to conceive the concept of intersectionality through a research lens (different identities=different challenges).

- Feminist knowledge generation and dissemination should be a priority in the Beijing+25 process. Explicit efforts need to be made to engage the younger generation of feminists in the Beijing+25 process. The conversations about the Beijing +25 process must go beyond those connected/participating in feminist work. Broad outreach beyond the usual constituencies is critical, including using modern communication technologies to bring Beijing to the grassroots level.
- Measures to tackle patriarchal attitudes that prevent women's full access to rights should be defined, adequately funded and implemented. The Beijing+25 process should focus on the de-patriarchalization of social relations and the feminization of the social contract, which means changing the mainstream and not just integrating gender equality within it.
- Beijing +25 is the opportunity to enhance accountability for women's rights and government's gender equality commitments at large, strengthening the important links between CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
- Work with policy makers to lift all reservations on international treaties, conventions and resolutions and build the capacities of gender advocates to work for the full implementation of all treaties.
- Beijing+25 should establish global and regional coalitions or global campaigns of action on specific themes to confront the backlash and advance women's rights.
- Promote coordinated campaigns between civil society, women's rights institutions and Youth Ministries and Women's national councils.
- Beijing +25 should recognise recent attacks on women's rights, defend hard-won achievements, and pledge to bolster their defence. Under women's leadership, build bridges and create long-term partnerships for gender equal communities as well as for enhancing accountability to women's rights.
- The Beijing generation ought to invest in learning new communication technologies and pass on knowledge to be communicated by the youth through this technology, creating for example, platforms for educating the younger generation about historical events such as ICPD (1994) and Beijing (1995).
- Funding is needed to facilitate capacity building, organization and engagement of youth in the Beijing+25 process.

### **Tackle broaden inequalities**

- Sexual and reproductive rights are the non-negotiables of the Beijing +25. If the protections, services and awareness of rights are not in place, gender equality will continue to be a challenge. Gender equality and a human rights approach to curriculum development on Sexual Rights as Human Rights is a critical minimum for the Beijing +25.
- Challenge inequalities of wealth, ownership and distribution including re-directing public funds to childcare, healthcare, education and care of seniors (key areas usually

covered by women's unpaid care work). Recognition, retribution and redistribution of care work would enable women to engage meaningfully in other aspects of society and live the broad opportunities of development.

- States should be encouraged to provide social and economic support to financially vulnerable women, to ensure equality before the law.
- Judges should be trained on international norms and should enforce limits on child marriage laws without exception.
- Enhance the professional and technical skills of women for the objective of mainstreaming gender justice in all public and private institutions.
- Parliaments must ensure that all public budgetary units apply gender responsive budgeting.
- Bearing in mind new emerging threats to the safety and security of women in politics, Parliaments to promote informed policy development and immediate measures to assure women's political participation at international, local, sub-national and national levels.

### **Economic Empowerment**

- Create partnerships with financial institutions and other non-bank partners to inform the development of SME loan products (funding of small and medium-sized enterprises) specifically geared towards the needs of women-owned SMEs.
- Design unique programmes for women's economic empowerment, with a core focus on intersectionality, leadership and the status of women in their different communities. Focus on leadership training as a first step in women's economic empowerment through the introduction of well-designed and well-run youth development programs to promote youth leadership by involving the youth in needs assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Better implement and enforce laws which encourage women's economic empowerment.

### **Promote approaches to women's transformative leadership**

- Acknowledge the role of transformative leadership in setting a course for movement building that drives progression from individual capacity development into wider, collective action. It fosters women's leadership as part of a social movement for the collective transformation of beliefs, attitudes, normativity and institutions
- Acknowledge and enhance women leadership in every context and setting. Transformative leadership is a route towards gender equality where women champion change in their communities – as decision-makers, activists, facilitators, visionaries, and as constituents
- Promote transformative women's leadership to assure the sustained empowerment of women through recognition of their commitments, vision and courage to act, sometimes in impossible circumstances and amplify their efforts globally.

- Encourage leadership of women from an intersectional point of view, connecting with different women movements, including indigenous women, women with disability, rural women, among others, involving them on how Beijing+25 is important in their lives.
- Consider grass roots movements as a unique “pool of women leaders” with capacity to transform, adjust, unite, produce new values, strike, demand accountability, build bridges and create long-term partnerships.
- Challenge and thoroughly address the push-back against women in decision making through bottom-up and top-down strategies.
- Institutionalize gender parity. Push for equal participation for women in all sectors, ensuring women are empowered through access to education. Governments should provide access to university.
- To promote women’s leadership promote access to quality healthcare and social benefits on an equal basis to men and promote the sharing of care responsibilities within the household and care services provision.
- Partner with men in women's empowerment and leadership

### **De-monopolize data collection and analysis**

- Gender segregated data should be collected at local, city and country level by the government to result in data-driven policies, programs and infrastructure investment. The facts and figures will be used as support in evidence-based policy making.
- Governments should collect data on mobility patterns, education and health to point out women and girls' concerns in accessing municipal services. This would help us gain a gender perspective in the planning of a city, its public spaces and transport services.
- Develop wide partnership with national stakeholders, including statistical offices, and civil society organization to ensure bold progress in terms of securing quality and timely gender disaggregated data.
- Encourage sex disaggregated data collection especially basic information such as birth, death and marriage declarations to be able track population changes.
- Take into account the data produced by grass-roots movements and widen data ownership across different sectors.

### **Connect to other solidarity movements**

- Feminist and women’s rights groups have paved the way for women leaders, at all levels, to come together towards achieving much needed social change. There is a need to continue to work collaboratively to generate synergies for social change. Promote beyond women and girls the importance of togetherness and support each other.
- Emphasise that the human rights approach is the common platform that unites and strengthens one another. Gender equality is recognized as a precondition for

sustainable development and included into the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development as a development goal.

### **Enhance the work with masculinities and men and boys**

- When working on masculinities work with women's organizations, to ensure accountability towards women's rights, and respect the principles of do no harm.
- Contextualize interventions and use less sensitive issues as entry points for engaging men and boys and move towards a gender transformative approach. Men need to see the gains and positive impact in their lives and communities of gender equality.
- Address gender equality and harmful forms of masculinities from a life-cycle approach with a wide range of individuals, parents, community and institutions (education, religious institutions, governments, etc.).
- Encourage men to take leadership in addressing levels of political violence against women.
- Promote inclusive education that does not promote gender roles. Education should have an encompassing curriculum which will expose boys and girls to basic human rights including gender equality.

## **B. Gender equality in local governance transformation**

### **Promote an enabling environment for women in leadership at the local level**

- Promote the building of networks and alliances of elected women.
- Promote specific mechanisms and focal points on gender issues at the local level to ensure continued institutional capacity.
- Promote greater awareness among men and women of the issue of gender equality in local governance and decision making.
- Encourage positive engagement with the media and the promotion of a quota on women experts to give opinions and statements in news broadcasting (political, scientific, and all domains of expertise).
- Encourage women candidates and politicians to coordinate with feminist and women's rights organisations on a regular basis and to coordinate with peers from across party lines on issues of common interest and share good practices.
- Promote the implementation of Cities for CEDAW and similar initiatives; and encourage all municipalities to adopt it.
- Promote a flexible pace and work-life-balance in the organisation of local affairs compatible with other social and economic activities for elected representatives.

### **Encourage political participation in local government**

- Introduce and enforce quotas/Special Temporary Measures in all levels of government, national and local as well as in public administration to ensure that women have equal influence and participation in decision making.

- Push for measures to tackle the level of sexual harassment and violence against women who run for political office at all levels of government and eliminate impunity for perpetrators.
- To ensure electoral parity, diversify the composition of election management bodies at central, regional and local levels.
- Encourage the implementation of horizontal and vertical alternation between gender on electoral lists. Where parity exists, between elections replace a person leaving their position by a person of the same gender.

### **Empower candidates**

- Empower women candidates and women elected in politics and provide comprehensive training on good governance and skills development, including, for example, on gender budgeting, how to chair meetings, how to address the media, how to deal with negative attacks in (social) media, how to lead a team, how to manage a budget, including role playing and other concrete exercises.
- Develop media skills of women candidates and elected women, as well as build capacity of journalists to report on elections from a gender perspective.
- Encourage women's organisations to build links with political parties/parliamentarians and politicians to build knowledge amongst women in decision making positions about how to promote gender equality and engage feminist women as trainers for policy makers and nominated candidates.
- Promote mentorship and peer-to-peer experience sharing amongst women in politics, across levels of government, across time (encourage former politicians to help new candidates) and across countries, to exchange good practices, lessons learnt and develop self-confidence.
- Train members of government and local councils on the importance of gender equality.
- Women candidates often have less means and are therefore less visible than male colleagues. Form a new global alliance to campaign for making women candidates visible and help them to gain votes including from other women: "women support women candidates" and mainstream mechanisms that support women's campaign funding.

### **C. Women, Peace and Security**

- Adopt a comprehensive, gendered approach that centres women's participation and analysis across different fields such as governance, protection, and humanitarian response and throughout all phases of conflict.
- Claim space at the table by presenting strategic solutions to problems comprising an intersectional perspective that includes taking account of climate crisis as a cause of armed conflict.
- Link accountability for women, peace and security to CEDAW to ensure stronger accountability mechanisms, inter alia by making the CEDAW Committee's General

recommendation no. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situation, an integral part of CEDAW official and shadow reporting

- Continuously explore clear linkages/coherence/coordination between SDGs, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW and other relevant conventions, and the Security Council's WPS agenda including as expressed in National Action Plans.
- Prioritize disarmament and demilitarization as critical to sustainable peace and call for the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty which prohibits the transfer of arms to conflicts in which women and/or children might be harmed.

### **Protection should be at the core**

- Develop early warning and alert mechanisms to enable women's organizations to report peace and security threats and protection concerns to responsible community, government and international bodies. Work in this area can be improved by continuously collating the impacts of scarcity of resources (including resource-scarcity produced by over-extraction by international corporations), climate violence and warfare. Early warning mechanisms could include research on strategies to recognise disaffection among women leading to potential engagement in violence.
- Protect women human rights defenders and peace makers through national legislation and accountability and response mechanisms, including protection of activists resisting climate violence.
- Ensure protection includes adequate provision of support for post-trauma, healing and mental wellness and issues related to sexual and reproductive rights.
- Ensure that women's economic empowerment is continuously connected to the WPS response, especially for women affected by war (refugees, widows, war disabled and those caring for people with disabilities, orphans, etc.)
- Make gender analysis and planning a pre-requisite to ensure gender-responsive policies and requirements, including gendered allocation and tracking of financial resources.

### **Feminist and inclusive peace processes**

- Turn women's individual work into movements through the creation of intersectional feminist spaces that build alliances to have a common response, engage politically, and support each other, including on emerging issues like climate related violence.
- Involve women in local conflict analysis so that their own words are used to define drivers of conflict.
- Establish a paradigm shift by identifying allies and engaging other sectors like religious leaders, government, community, and the media to build coalitions and networks, whilst ensuring credibility, for example in the case of religious leaders, they should have a track record of: a) advocating for women and girls' rights by way of regular sermons on subject matters such as rights to schooling, self-determination, to reproductive justice, against Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C),



child/forced marriage; b) programming against violence against women, using religious language to forbid violence against women.

- Recognise, support and protect bottom-up local and indigenous women activists and feminist peace work at grass-root and community level, and support interlinkages between track I-III, and at local, national, regional and global level.

## **D. Harnessing technology for economic empowerment**

- Cultivate innovation to empower women economically and foster greater gender equality while creating and harnessing new solutions that offer fresh perspectives to women's unpaid care work problems
- Integrate and apply a gender lens to technological, economic and social innovations that tackle global development challenges to consider how these challenges are affecting women differently.
- Enable women's access to technological tools, especially women living in poverty.
- Design programmes to educate and empower women with disabilities in all sectors of leadership to ensure that they have access to modern technology equipment.

## **Tackle online violence**

- Involve government and decision makers to produce better policies to protect women from cyber violence and make the internet a safer space for Women, girls, and women's rights organizations.
- Define and extend the concept of "violence against women in a public space" to include virtual public spaces. Build active online communities to take action against online violence against women.
- Develop a harmonised intersecting approach and legal definitions of cyber violence against women. Work to improve legal instruments that ensure the criminalisation of the most pervasive forms of cyber violence against women.
- Provide certifying training and Trainers of Trainers (ToT) sessions on how to spot online violence and how to deal with every form of it for those who are handling reports from online platforms to fill the gap between the existing regulations on harassment and violence and our realities.
- Improve data collection and the production of accessible, transparent and clear statistics about online violence to contribute to revealing the full extent of online violence and map the lack of gender sensitivity of cities.