

# Beijing+25: Accelerating Progress for Women and Girls

## The Way Forward



### 1. Support collective action or women, especially grassroots organizations.

During the 2019 revolution in Sudan, women-led demonstrations called for justice and successfully campaigned for the revocation of former President Omar al-Bashir's [Public Order law](#) that regulated what women could wear, whom they spoke to and saw, and any job they might hold. From the Liberian women's sex strike for peace, to the global impact of the #MeToo movement, to Greta Thunberg's youth-led Fridays For Future climate strike, women's collective action has paved the way for large-scale societal change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the energy and resilience of women's civil society leaders and peacebuilders into sharp focus, revealing their tireless work in responding to new pandemic-related needs by providing access to emergency aid, healthcare, and legal services. For example, the [Self-Employed Women's Association \(SEWA\)](#), a trade union in India, is using digital platforms like WhatsApp to distribute information related to COVID-19 to hundreds of thousands of poor women. At the same time, the crisis has threatened the critical work of many local organizations, underscoring the urgent need for resources and support.

To support grassroots organizations, amplify women's voices at the local level, and mobilize their collective power, the report recommends the following strategies:

**Promote global solidarity, strengthen visibility, and build alliances.** Leveraging the support of the international community can drive progress and counter backlash against gender equality. For example, the [Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan](#)—co-chaired by Afghanistan and the United Kingdom—aims through diplomacy to empower and ensure Afghan women's meaningful participation in building peace and prosperity. It stands as a demonstration of international solidarity to “protect and uphold the human rights of the women of Afghanistan.” By monitoring and amplifying the work of local activists on the global stage, such alliances can elevate the voices of women's networks and catalyze collective action at grassroots levels.

## Ensure that local women leaders are involved in decision-making processes at the local, national and international levels

—including peace negotiations, crisis responses, development programs, and resource allocations. Many grassroots organizations lack the ability to engage both as decision-makers and with decision-makers at the highest levels. Strategies for increasing participation include:

- Investing in programs that provide women with skills training, mentoring, access to networks and markets, and financial resources.
- Matching political commitments to gender equality with adequate financial support to women's networks—without imposing external agendas.
- Harnessing technology and new modes of communication to close the gender digital divide.

## Foster collective organization of women peacebuilders and link formal and informal processes to ensure sustainable and inclusive peace agreements.

While women remain largely excluded from formal peace negotiations, they have led efforts at the grassroots level to organize for peace, often through Track II diplomacy, to legitimize formal negotiations and provide critical expertise to formal negotiators.

- In the [Philippines peace process](#) in 2014 that brought an end to decades of civil strife in Mindanao, women participated in both the formal and informal negotiations. [Miriam Coronel Ferrer](#), the first female chief peace negotiator, channeled women's grassroots voices into the formal peace talks. Women's groups also successfully advocated for the adoption of gender provisions in the peace agreement and the establishment of a [Civilian Protection Component](#) with 70 percent female membership, which [monitored the ceasefire](#) and worked to protect civilian communities.
- In the [Colombian peace process](#) leading to the 2016 peace agreement, the Gender Sub-Commission of Negotiating Parties – a new innovation that made clear the gender dimensions of the war – included women and incorporated a gender perspective into the negotiations. The sub-commission played a critical role in engaging women's civil society organizations and in adopting 130 gender-related commitments in the peace accord. [Women's groups](#) also built public support for the peace talks and worked with women negotiators to incorporate gender issues into the agenda, such as land rights for indigenous women and reparations for sexual and gender-based violence.
- In South Sudan, the [Women's Coalition](#)—comprising 44 women's groups—provided technical support for female participants in the formal peace talks in 2018 and helped to successfully negotiate a 35 percent quota for women in executive bodies.