

Beijing+25: Accelerating Progress for Women and Girls The Way Forward



3. Pursue intersectional demands for justice.

Recent surges in intersectional social movements have exposed the overlapping systems of disadvantage that differentially affect diverse groups of women. These movements demonstrate the need to tear down silos and reveal how the ongoing push for gender equality is inseparable from the broader struggles for racial justice, economic empowerment, and climate protection.

Current protests against systemic racism and police brutality in the United States—and around the world—also shed light on the importance of bringing members of indigenous communities and people of color in as leaders and changemakers in the gender equality movement. Their experiences can enrich and strengthen diverse gender constituencies, mobilizing stakeholders to catalyze progress across a broad range of issues.

The report suggests the following strategies to address the issues of race, equity, and environmental justice that are at the nexus of the gender equality agenda:

Prioritize an intersectional approach to gender equality that recognizes the diverse identities and challenges defining women’s experiences—from race and ethnicity to sexual orientation, poverty status, and rural and urban livelihoods.

Women and girls are disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. They also play a critical role in advancing climate solutions. Instead of addressing each challenge separately, innovative programs are addressing climate resilience, security risks, and gender inequality in tandem. For example, The Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT) has helped 25,000 households across Bangladesh, India, and Nepal increase their resilience to climate change. Initiatives include training women as energy auditors to encourage households to adopt sustainable products and facilitating the formation of a women-led distribution network of green energy and building materials.

Build multi-level partnerships across diverse constituencies to sustain and accelerate progress toward gender equality.

Civil society, the private sector, and governments must join together in multi-stakeholder coalitions to leverage investments and align intersectional policy agendas. There are many examples of best practices, particularly on climate change:

- National Climate Change Gender Action Plans—such as those in [Jordan and Mozambique](#)—set strong examples of intersectional policy agendas that prioritize women’s leadership in climate change mitigation, adaptation, and post-COVID-19 resilience-building efforts. Private donors and stakeholders can support similar efforts by erasing the “green divide” in jobs and technical expertise and by ensuring that an intersectional gender lens is used to identify targeted financing for local initiatives.
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Women, the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (UNDPPA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have supported [targeted interventions](#) in the Sudanese state of North Kordofan to increase women’s agency in natural resource management and in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. In situations where women are excluded from leadership roles, natural resources can be an entry point for women’s engagement in peacebuilding and climate action.

Rebuilding after COVID-19 presents an opportunity to accelerate a paradigm shift to address social and economic disparities and intersectional challenges. This involves broad based efforts and networks motivated by shared commitments to advance the status of women and girls. Failure to do so will perpetuate deep social, political, and economic inequalities. And as the evidence consistently shows, narrowing these gaps will yield gains for all.