# Public Policy 101

**Policy** is the government's plan, or course of action, for addressing a problem.

**Public** means that it affects the people.

**Public + Policy** is the government's stance or course of action to solve a problem that's affecting everyone.

Public policy is also how the government—at all levels—affects your daily life.

# Public Policy 101

But most often, public policy leads to the creation of laws that establish regulations or provide provisions.

But many laws only regulate—not outright outlaw—a people's actions.

**Regulations** are rules that limit and control people's behavior. A state won't say that it's illegal to ride in a car, but it will require you to wear a seatbelt if you are. Why would the government restrict people's behavior? *Because it believes the restriction leads to a benefit of some kind*.

**The Court Effect**

State and federal courts can also determine public policy through their rulings. This is especially true for the Supreme Court. For example, when the Court ruled that gay marriage was legal or when it declared that states couldn't restrict the right to bear arms for self-defense, it changed and defined public policy.



# Public Policy 101

The basic ideas behind regulation-related public policy is to solve a problem and protect the well-being of its citizens. As a result, thousands of government regulations affect your daily life—and you're probably unaware of them.

**Social regulations** include rules for the safe production of medicine and food, safety requirements for appliances, car emissions, and even child labor laws.

**Economic regulations** include rules for businesses that protect people's privacy, offer equal credit opportunities, and require truthful advertising. There are even rules for what can be said on TV.

# Public Policy 101

All government regulations have penalties for violators. Punishments can include imposing a fine, suing someone in court, or charging them with a crime.

Who enforces regulations? *Usually, the same groups who make them.*

# Public Policy 101

Is the Benefit Worth It?

When people feel regulations are too restrictive, they can advocate for public policy that **deregulates**, or removes limitations.

We all have our own views, values, and interests, so public policy often leads to passionate disagreements about the government and its actions.



# Public Policy 101

Providing Provisions

Regulations and deregulations aren't the only ways the government solves problems. It can also provide provisions, or supply something.

**Redistributive public policy** is when the government takes public money (tax money) collected from everyone in a country, state, or town and gives it to people in need.

**Distributive public policy** is when the government uses public money to provide goods and services that benefit the whole population.





# Public Policy 101

What other provisions can the government supply?

**Public services**. Services can be physical projects, like building a highway or launching a satellite. They also can be programs that target a specific need.

Whenever the government provides a public service, it rarely benefits everyone—well… at least not directly. Public education is a good example.

But the state provides the service because it believes that having a public education system benefits **the common good**, or the interests of everyone. It's the same for any public service, like transportation, fire departments, law enforcement, and public parks and forests.

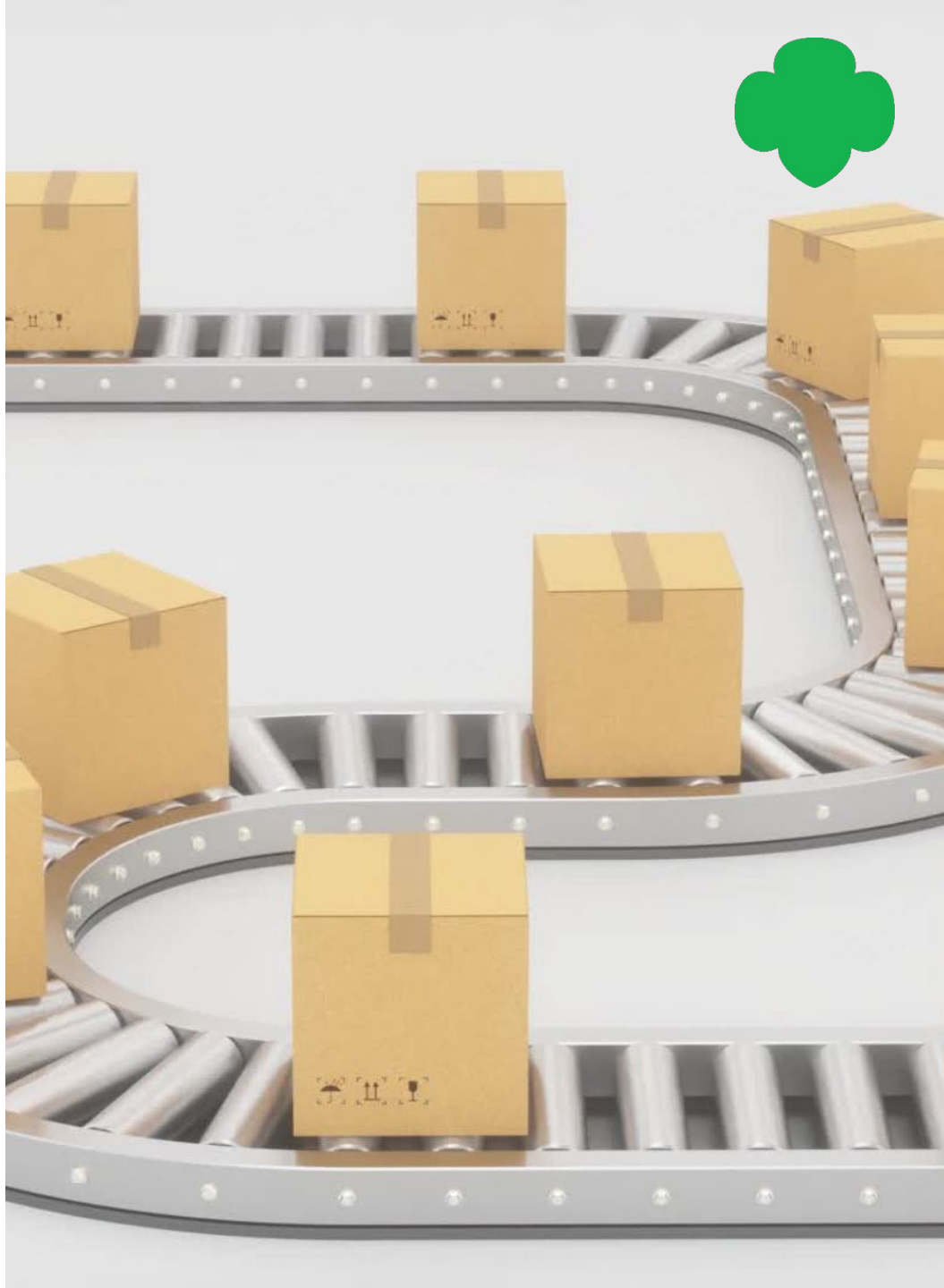
# Public Policy 101

Service Delivery! How does the government provide services to the people? It has a few options!

**Do It Themselves**: Government agencies can do the work. A state's highway division maintains its roadways, while the Parks Department preserves its natural areas.

**Get Help**: The government can hire a private company (owned by individuals) to supply a public service. A city might hire a waste removal company to collect residents' trash, or a state might hire a utility company to carry natural gas to people's homes.

**Collaborate:** Government agencies can work with private companies for large projects like building an airport. Or agencies can work with nonprofit organizations to provide social services like health, food, and housing assistance. The government gives resources to nonprofit organizations that then get them to the people.



# Public Policy 101

## The People's Power

*Do you see where this is going?* No matter what the government decides, some people will be happy with a public policy and praise it, and others will be frustrated and complain.

**Why are people's reactions so strong?**

- Public policy is ***personal***. People can see and feel how it affects their lives, choices, and finances.
- Public policy is ***power***.
- Public policy is about ***people*** (that's you!) and their needs.

A government policy doesn't just happen to you. You have the power to shape it, too. You and others can demand that the government take an action, or not.

You can help determine if a policy is effective. And you can insist that public policy reflect your values, views, and interests—and so can others, too, no matter how different that may be!

Name _____

## Public Policy 101

**A. True or False?** Decide if each statement is true or false. Write **T** or **F** next to each statement.



1. _____ Public policy is only made by the federal government.
2. _____ Low-interest loans are an example of government regulations.
3. _____ The public influences public policy.
4. _____ Regulations can have punishments such as a fine or charging someone with a crime.
5. _____ Constituent public policy focuses on providing services to the people.

**B. Regulation or Provision?** Read each scenario. Decide if it involves a regulation or a provision. Write **R** next to the example for a regulation and **P** for a provision.



1. _____ A city bans skateboarding on all city-owned property.
2. _____ Due to the rising cost of living, the government increases the amount of money distributed in Social Security payments each month.
3. _____ Microwaves must have reinforced seals around the door to prevent radiation leaks.
4. _____ A state's Department of Transportation sends its work crews to repair several towns' bridges.
5. _____ Hairdressers and barbers must renew their licenses every two years.

**C. In Your Words.** Answer the questions.

1. What is public policy? Give an example.

_____

_____

2. What is the difference between a social regulation and an economic regulation?

_____

_____

3. What are three ways the government can get services to people?

Name _____

## Public Policy 101

**D. You Decide.** You are a member of Congress, and the following problems need to be addressed. Read the scenarios and the options that follow. Pick the best option to resolve the issue or provide an alternative option. Then explain why you think your choice is the best solution.

**Scenario 1:**



The airline industry is in trouble. All the major airline carriers are in debt and say they may go out of business if they don't get help soon. The airlines claim the high cost of fuel and the price of new parts are to blame for their financial problems. They say the only way they can rebound is to raise the cost of airplane tickets and baggage charges. Economic experts worry that higher prices for airline tickets will cause fewer people to fly, which will only make matters worse.

**What should the government do? Check one.**



____ Regulate prices for fuel and plane parts
____ Regulate the amount airlines can charge for tickets and baggage fees
____ Provide loans to the airline companies to pay off their debt
____ Take over the airlines and run them
____ Do nothing
____ Other: Explain: _____

**Why do you think this is the best choice to address this public issue?**

_____

_____

**Scenario 2:**

Rural areas in the U.S. lack internet access. This has limited people's access to jobs and health information and has caused students to fall behind in skills and knowledge. Internet providers say the cost of bringing internet access to rural areas is too high and will hurt their profits. Residents claim the providers are discriminating against them. Others say that without the internet, the economy in rural areas suffers greatly and causes people to be more dependent on government assistance.



**What should the government do? Check one.**



____ Regulate by requiring internet providers to serve rural areas
____ Collaborate with private internet providers to bring service to rural areas
____ Provide internet access itself
____ Do nothing
____ Other: Explain:

**Scenario 3:**

Voter turnout in the U.S. is at an all-time low. Some people claim that the lack of participation is threatening democracy's existence. They want the government to do something about it. Others claim that it's up to the people to decide if they want to vote or not. They don't think the government should do anything.




**What should the government do? Check one.**



____ Regulate by fining people who don't vote
____ Regulate by making election day a national holiday when no one is allowed to work
____ Provide community barbecues at polling places to encourage voter turnout
____ Provide free shuttle service to voting sites on election day
____ Do nothing
____ Other: Explain: _____

**Why do you think this is the best choice to address this public issue?**

_____

_____

**E. Is It Worth It?** People disagree with regulations because they feel the benefit gained is not worth the restriction. Read the scenario and then explain if you think the restriction is worth the benefit it creates.

**Helmet Happenings**



Over the last ten years, the state of Roadley has seen a steady increase in motorcycle accidents. Roadley doesn't require riders to wear helmets, and many accidents have caused severe head injuries. The state is proposing a law that will require all motorcycle riders to wear helmets.

Transportation safety groups, law enforcement, and doctors have all publicly backed the bill. They believe the law will save lives and reduce the costs of hospital and emergency services. Many motorcycle owners are against the law. They say riding without a helmet is more natural. They also claim that they know the risks of riding without a helmet, it's their choice whether or not to wear one, and the government shouldn't tell them what to do.



Should the state pass the law? _____ Explain your answer: _____

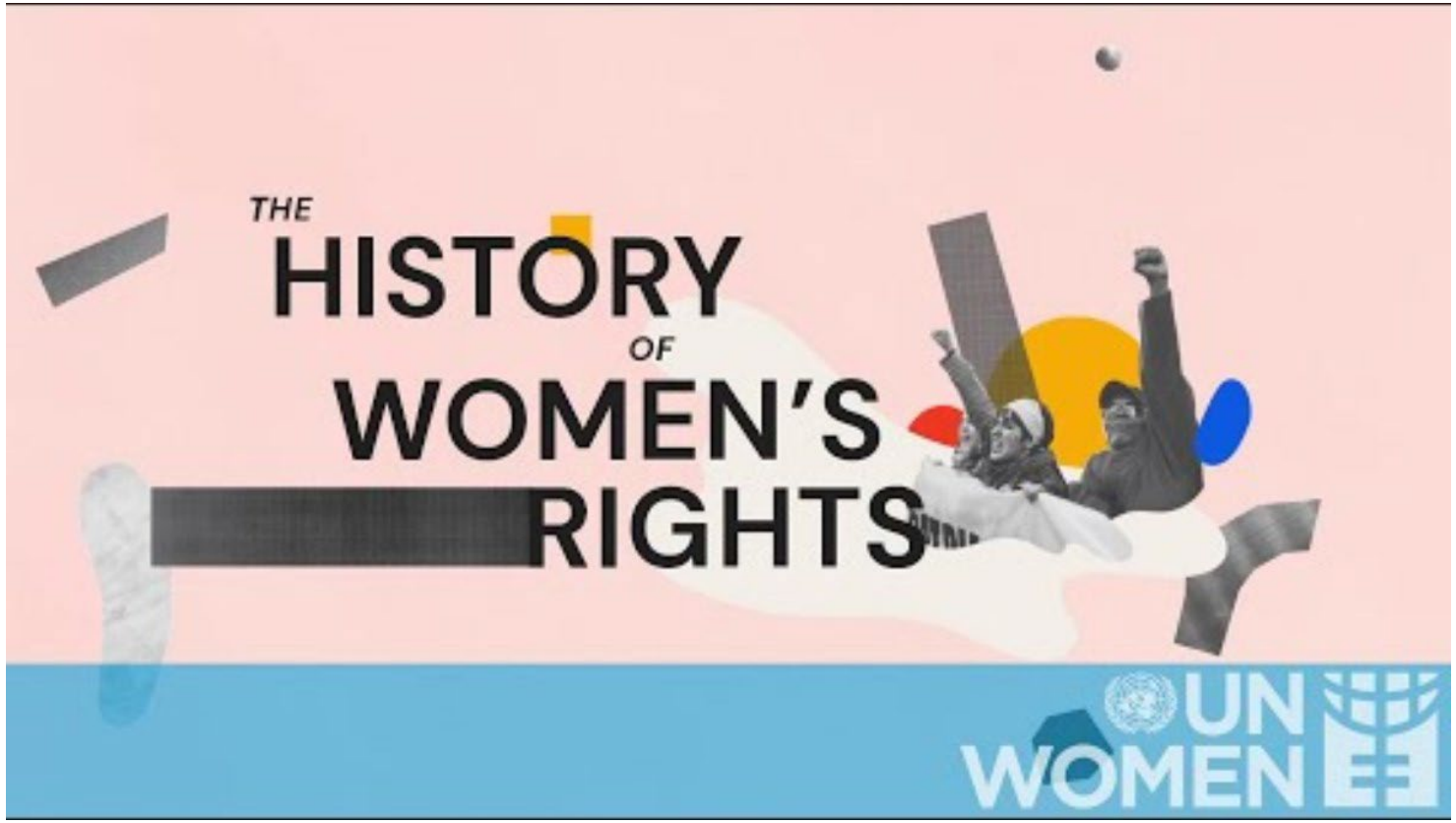
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# Public Policy 101 - worksheets

# A Global History of Women's Rights, in 3 minutes



# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action
# 12 Critical Areas



The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action flagged 12 key areas where urgent action was needed to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys.



It also laid out concrete ways for countries to bring about change. UN Women works with governments and partners to ensure such change is real for women and girls around the world.



Take a look at some of the efforts on each of the 12 Beijing critical areas of concern:

# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Women and poverty

When women are poor, their rights are not protected and they face double discrimination, on account of their gender and economic situation. Women, their families, communities and economies suffer as a result.

UN Women runs myriad programs to provide training, loans and practical skills to empower women economically, give them a voice, strengthen social services and increase awareness of women's rights.

Here are a few examples:

**Changing the landscape with all-women worksites in India**

UN Women interventions have reached more than 100,000 poor and marginalized women across India. As the result of a Fund for Gender Equality project, more than 30,000 marginalized rural women now manage worksites and can ensure wages are paid and demand their rights.

**"I bought a mattress and health insurance" – rural farmer**

Through Farmer Field Schools, more than 350 Rwandan farmers have undergone a six-month course to learn about nutrition, modern agricultural techniques and business skills while creating cooperatives and pooling savings.






# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Education and training of women

Education is essential for women to reach gender equality and become leaders of change. While women and girls today are far more educated than ever before, gaps remain. Educated women benefit entire societies, contributing to flourishing economies and the improved health, nutrition and education of their families. Education and training are also tools to help change harmful gender stereotypes.

UN Women promotes women's right to an education in all fields. We support educational programs to promote gender equality and women's rights, revise formal school curricula and policies, and help train teachers, students and parents.




**"Voices against Violence" curriculum mobilizes youth**

In Pune, western India, more than 50 national trainers and youth leaders from the girl guiding movement across the Asia-Pacific region gathered for the first regional "Training of Trainers Workshop" on delivering a unique non-formal education curriculum that will teach young people how to stop violence against girls and women.

**Closing the sci & tech gender gap in the Dominican Republic**

Overcoming stereotypes, promoting interest in STEM among girls, and eventually reducing the gender digital divide in the Dominican Republic is the objective of the project Gender and Information and Communication Technologies: Equality and Equity in E-Dominican, supported by UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality.

# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action
# 12 Critical Areas

## Women and health

Women need to be healthy in order to realize their full potential. This includes proper nutrition, sexual and reproductive rights, and mental health, as well as freedom from violence.

UN Women advocates for States to better coordinate the provision of health services for women and girls –including for survivors of violence– and supports non-governmental partners providing essential services. We work to end practices that bring danger to women and girls, including child marriage, female genital cutting, dietary restrictions, and others. We act to ensure that women's needs are met during medical humanitarian crises, and support and empower women living with HIV and AIDS.

**UN Women action to confront the Ebola crisis**

UN Women is facilitating mobilization and sensitization and coordinating UN efforts to address gender in the response to the Ebola crisis. From working with local radio stations and traditional leaders to raise awareness and aid prevention, to producing educational materials to train health workers, our efforts and programs are focused primarily in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

**Women living with HIV/AIDS start afresh in Cambodia's villages**

Through the Fund for Gender Equality, more than 1,300 poor women living with HIV/AIDS have received health counselling and home-based care, as well as livelihood skills-training and grants to start their own businesses. Their families have better nutrition and food security as a result. Through self-help groups, they've also increased knowledge of their rights.






# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Violence against women

Violence hurts women and girls and hampers their ability to thrive in multiple ways. Since the Beijing Conference, an historic two-thirds of countries have put laws on the books to stop domestic violence. Yet gaps in laws, implementation of legal protection and lack of access to essential services remain for women globally.

Ending violence against women is one of UN Women's key priorities. We support expanding access to quality multi-sectorial responses for survivors covering safety, shelter, health, justice and other essential services. We advocate for laws and help guide policies and action plans to help step-up investments in prevention—the most cost-effective, long-term means to stop violence against women by addressing its root causes.

**New law spurs action, bringing protection to many**

With support from UN Women, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia adopted a new law against domestic violence in August 2014, which expanded the definition of violence against women and introduced training on gender equality in the formal education system and for civil society service providers.

**Games and children, a new direction to ending sexual violence**

In Cairo, a pilot project uses games and music to teach children to say no to violence. This initiative is part of the city's comprehensive Safe City Program which began in 2011 to prevent and respond to sexual violence in urban spaces, supported by UN Women and local partners.






# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Women and armed conflict

Wars and armed conflict destroy families and societies and leave women and girls particularly vulnerable. Sexual violence is widespread and often used as a war tactic.

UN Women's programs on women, peace and security engage women in all aspects of negotiations, peacebuilding and reconstruction to build inclusive societies. We train peacekeepers to detect, address and stop conflict-related sexual violence, while also supporting the reform of justice and security institutions and ensuring that public services that are fully responsive to women's needs.

**Nobel Peace women visit Colombia to discuss sexual violence**

Women Nobel Peace Prize winners Shirin Ebadi and Jody Williams visited Colombian women survivors of sexual violence in a conflict that has lasted more than 50 years. They also met with President Juan Manuel Santos to ask for increased attention to these crimes throughout the peace process now underway in Havana.

**"I was forced to become one of his 27 'wives'"**

At age 12, Evelyn Amony was abducted by the Ugandan rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army, which for 30 years has committed numerous atrocities. Today, she chairs a women's advocacy network of war-affected Ugandan women. With funding from UN Women, it encouraged the Ugandan Parliament to adopt a landmark resolution addressing war-affected women.






# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Women and the economy

Whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or through unpaid domestic or care work at home, women make enormous contributions to economies. Gender discrimination means women often end up in insecure, low-wage jobs, and constitute a small minority of those in senior positions.

To ensure that women can contribute fully and benefit from the economy, UN Women runs multiple programs for women's economic empowerment. We promote women's ability to secure decent jobs, own land, accumulate assets, and influence institutions and public policies determining growth and development. We also work with partners to ensure that workplaces are free of violence and sexual harassment.

**With sewing and sowing, self-reliance blooms in Central Asia**

Thanks to a regional program, families of migrant laborers in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are receiving training, resources and micro-credit loans to become self-reliant entrepreneurs. More than 520,000 migrant workers and their families have benefitted from a wide range of services. The program also promotes policy development and dialogue on migration.

**Women plant seeds of hope at the Dadaab refugee camp**

A livelihood project implemented with the support of UN Women is helping prevent gender-based violence in the world's largest refugee camp. Vulnerable women are being trained in business management and income-generating agriculture, so they won't have to walk far distances to fetch food or supplies.






# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Women in power and decision-making

Once in leadership roles, women make a difference. But they are under-represented as voters and in top positions, whether in elected office, the civil service, corporate boardrooms or academia.

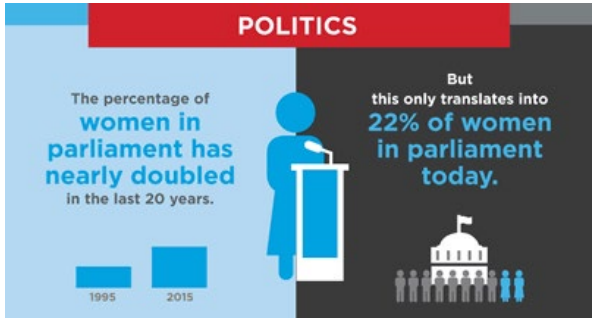
UN Women advocates for reforms to ensure women's fair access to decision-making. Our programmes on leadership and participation provide training for women political candidates to help build their skills, as well as voter and civic education and sensitization campaigns on gender equality. We work with UN country teams, unions and civil society to ensure that elections uphold women's rights, including to vote and campaign free from violence. Through the Fund for Gender Equality, we also support women's grass-roots groups and help give women a greater voice on a range of issues.

### Strengthening Voices for Democracy

From Azerbaijan to Zimbabwe, UN Women is active in more than 70 countries around the world. From lobbying for constitutional changes or quota laws, to voter education and identification programs, we work to strengthen women's voices, leadership and political participation.

### Tunisia's new Constitution: a breakthrough for women's rights

Following the revolution and months of protests, Tunisia's Constituent Assembly adopted a new Constitution in January 2014, considered a harbinger of change for gender equality in the Arab States. It is the result of many months of sustained advocacy led by civil society groups, with the support of UN Women.






# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Institutional mechanisms

Specialized institutions have played an important part in informing laws, policies and programs and advancing gender equality. Robust laws and policies coupled with stronger mechanisms to coordinate various actors and ensure their effective enforcement and implementation can push the agenda.

UN Women works with governments to develop informed national action plans, ensure gender-responsive budgeting, and strengthen coordination among diverse actors for sustained and meaningful action. We partner with governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations and other institutions to build capacity and increase awareness. We support and advocate for evidence-based policymaking. To this end, UN Women stresses the need for sex-disaggregated data and played an important role in the development of 52 gender indicators.

**Cambodia confronts gender violence with multi-pronged plan**

UN Women supported the formulation of Cambodia's 2nd National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Women through a participatory process informed by research and the voices of survivors. A multi-sectorial technical working group will now guide its implementation.

**Budgets respond to the needs of women in Morocco**

The needs of women and girls are increasingly being reflected in how governments spend in Morocco and a new organic law of finance passed in January 2014 by the Council of Government has cemented gender throughout the budgeting process.






# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Human rights of women

Women and girls are entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of all of their human rights. The Beijing Platform for Action confirms that protection and promotion of human rights is the first responsibility of governments and core to the work of the United Nations.

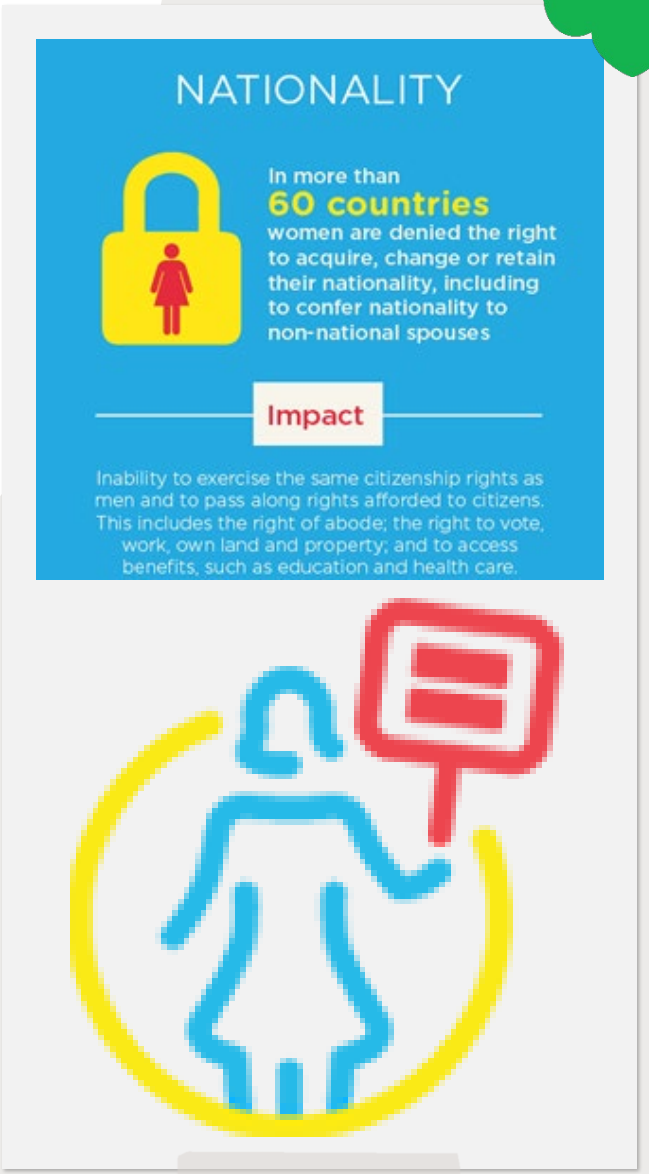
UN Women provides technical assistance to ensure that States create national laws, policies and plans to ensure women's rights and protect them against violations. We promote international treaties, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), lobby decision-makers to ensure that adequate laws are passed and work with partners to train and educate the law enforcement and justice officials who must implement them.

**Specialized prosecutors enhance survivors' access to justice**

UN Women is training a pool of 15 specialized public prosecutors to handle domestic and gender-based violence cases in Palestine. We are also supporting the development of Standard Operating Procedures and helping improve coordination with service providers to ensure access to justice for survivors of violence.

**Ending impunity for femicide across Latin America**

UN Women and the UN Human Rights Office have developed a Model Protocol to guide investigations of gender-based murders. Several Latin American countries are working to implement the Protocol, which seeks is to improve treatment of victims and end impunity for the tens of thousands of women and girls murdered each year.



# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Women and the media

The media plays a significant role in perpetuating and challenging social norms that condone discrimination or violence against women. It can objectify women but also showcase strong women leaders and protagonists who can become role models for their audience.

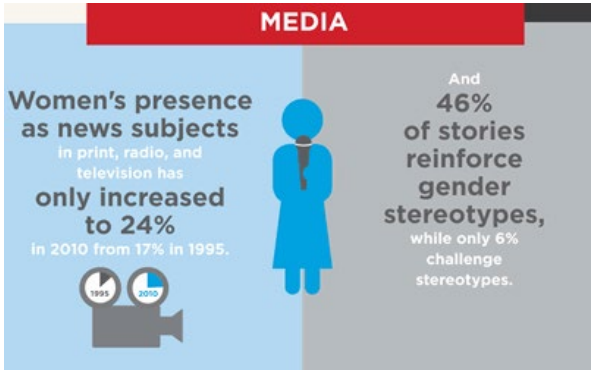
UN Women collaborates closely with the media as a key ally in advancing women's rights. Apart from working with the media to facilitate in-depth coverage on women's rights, we undertake research on the portrayal of women in news media as well as the entertainment industry. Additionally, the Media Compact on Beijing+20, works to increase and sharpen the profile of women in the news. We also conduct special workshops and trainings with journalists globally to encourage gender-sensitive reporting.

**Adjusting the frequency: Women on the airwaves**

UN Women and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters are raising awareness of critical issues through a series of co-productions for the Beijing+20 anniversary. They offer a comparative perspective between 1995 and 2015 from places around the world.

**Stories of survivors portrayed by journalists in Georgia**

Through workshops organized by UN Women, Georgian journalists are being trained on gender-sensitive reporting and how to cover violence against women in the media. Journalists then wrote or produced survivors' stories on domestic violence that were part of an interactive exhibit and theatrical performance.






# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## Women and the environment

Women are among the most affected by climate change. They are often the ones gathering water, fishing or farming land affected by flooding. Meanwhile, their voices are often ignored in environmental planning and management. They also have less access to land and productive resources.

UN Women seeks to ensure women are involved in environmental decision-making at all levels, integrating their concerns in policies and programs, and establishing ways to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women. We take part in international fora, following negotiations and maintaining active outreach to ensure that the decisions incorporate references to gender equality, women's rights and women's contribution in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

**Women at the forefront of disaster response in the Pacific**

Whether training women solar engineers in Fiji or assisting with the humanitarian response plan after a major cyclone in Tonga, UN Women is working with climate-change and disaster-management professionals across the Pacific.

**Caribbean women protect crops through green technologies**

Through workshops on more sustainable farming techniques, women farmers in Barbados, Grenada and Jamaica are finding a more stable and reliable way of making a living. They learn about water conservation, rain-water harvesting and the importance of protecting the environment to secure their livelihood.






# The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action 12 Critical Areas

## The girl child

Specific forms of violence and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and cutting, breast ironing and child marriage, affect girls, including child sexual abuse.

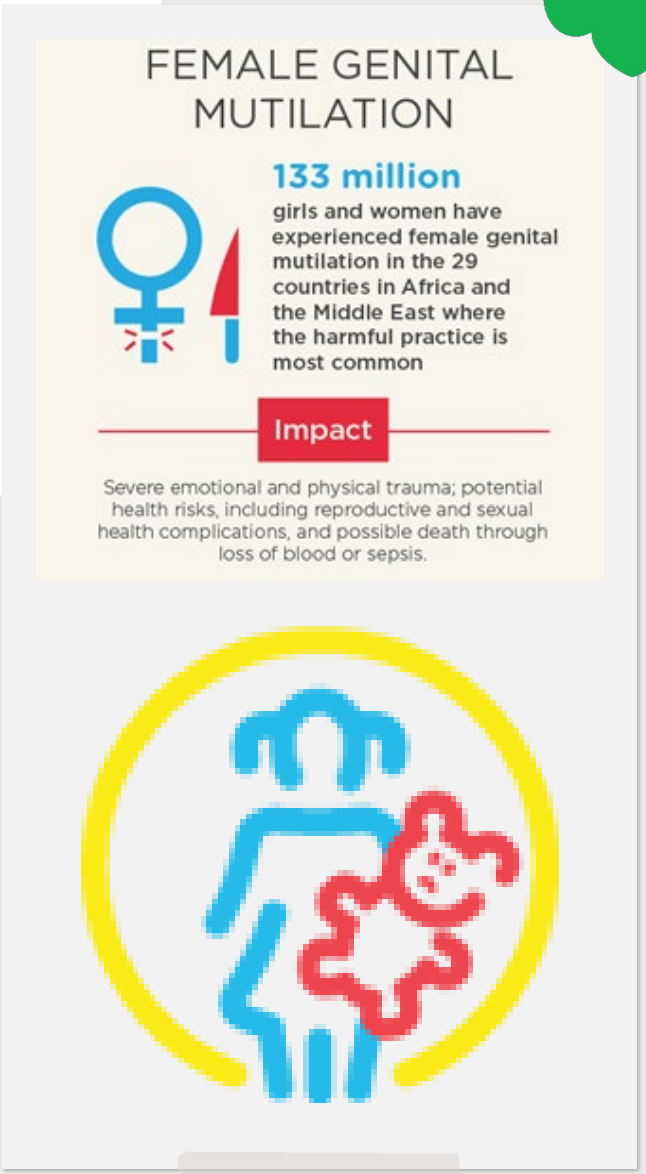
UN Women works to empower girls and young women to pursue their dreams, confront discrimination, and prevent violence of all kinds. We raise awareness of girls' rights, support programs that work with educators, parents and fathers, and with religious leaders. To advance girls' education, health and well-being, we advocate with governments and other partners, striving for a world where girls can live free from fear, violence and discrimination.

**China's 'left-behind girls' learn self-protection**

With China's rapid economic growth, many parents are migrating to cities, leaving "left-behind girls" vulnerable to sexual violence. Through a UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women program, UN Women has helped train 500 teachers, 5,000 students and 2,200 guardians to prevent child sexual abuse.

**Escaping the scourge of female genital mutilation in Tanzania**

At a Maasai girls' school in Tanzania, girls at risk of experiencing female genital mutilation and early marriage are getting a chance to complete their education, thanks to a partnership with UN Women. The girls receive scholarships with full board to ensure they complete a minimum level of education.






# UN WOMEN: WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS 2024