



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



DFAT and UN Women working together this International Women's Month to

MARCH FORWARD

For ALL Women and Girls



Photo: UN Women/Faith Mvula

#MARCH FORWARD

This International Women's Month

Thirty years ago, the world committed to a bold vision for gender equality through the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#). Adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, this landmark document outlined 12 critical areas where progress was urgently needed, from economic empowerment and leadership to media representation and climate justice. It remains the most progressive and widely endorsed blueprint for women's and girls' rights worldwide.

Since 1995, we've seen women break barriers, reshape policies, and ignite movements worldwide.

Yet, despite significant progress, the promises of Beijing remain largely unfulfilled for millions of women. The world is experiencing new and overlapping crises and the erosion of rights. Last year alone, 612 million women and girls lived amidst the brutal realities of armed conflict, a disturbing 50% increase in just a decade.

Systemic inequalities, entrenched socio-cultural norms, rising violence against women, and economic disparities not only obstruct our path forward, but threaten the hard-won gains we have achieved.

We are simply not where we should be.

Countless women and girls are denied their fundamental rights, opportunities, and safety. In every corner of the globe, women and girls face barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential.

This year's theme, **"March Forward: For ALL Women and Girls"**, calls for action that can unlock equal rights, power and opportunities for all and a feminist future where no one is left behind. Central to this vision is empowering the next generation – youth, particularly young women and adolescent girls – as catalysts for lasting change.

Together, we can be the generation to close the gap to achieve gender equality.

This International Women's Day, as we mark Beijing+30, join us as we #MarchForward for women's rights. The world cannot afford a step back.

Did you know?



1 in every 8 women and girls aged 15-49 has been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner. ¹



At current rates, it will take an additional 137 years to end extreme poverty among women. ²



In 2023, women held 26.9% of seats in parliaments, 35.5% of seats in local governments and 27.5% of managerial positions. ³



By 2050, climate change may push up to 158 million more women and girls into extreme poverty (\$2.15 per day), 16 million more than men and boys. ⁴



Progress in women's representation in news media has virtually stalled over the past 20 years. ⁵



At least 1 in 10 women and girls in rural areas across 12 countries did not have a private place to wash and change during their last period. ⁶

DFAT AND UN WOMEN

Working together to advance gender equality globally

The Australian Government is a long-time and valued partner of UN Women. We work together to support programs which protect and promote the human rights of women and girls in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, advancing women's economic empowerment and leadership, tackling sexual and gender-based violence, improving access to education, upholding sexual and reproductive health and rights, and implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

UN Women Australia is responsible for raising funds to advance UN Women's agenda worldwide, with a particular focus on the Pacific region.

The Australian Government and the Department of Foreign Affairs have proudly partnered with UN Women Australia for more than a decade to deliver International Women's Day events across Australia.



Photo: UN Women/Maikolo Fonua

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Australia and UN Women share a commitment to empowering women and girls globally, working to advance gender equality and women's empowerment with a focus on promoting women's economic opportunities, combating violence against women and girls, enhancing women's leadership and political participation, and addressing the gendered impacts of climate change.

Through collaborative efforts, we're implementing innovative programs and initiatives that aim to create lasting positive change in the lives of women and girls, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Working together, Australia and UN Women are striving to build a more equitable world where every woman and girl can reach her full potential.

REFERENCES

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PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Tackling Gender-based Violence in the Solomon Islands

In the remote Solomon Islands, many women face the harsh reality of gender-based violence with little access to support. On Neo Island, where there are no police stations or hospitals, women turn to people like Sophie Rolyn. As a team leader at the Family Support Centre, Sophie is a lifeline for survivors.

‘Women run to us crying, saying [perpetrators] are coming to get them,’ Sophie explains. To get them help, she often starts her day at dawn, guiding survivors on an hour-long boat ride to Santa Cruz Island, where they can access police, medical care, and counselling services.

For years, women in these isolated areas suffered in silence. But in 2019, UN Women, supported by the Australian Government through the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls, expanded SAFENET – a network of coordinated services for survivors of violence – to reach the remote provinces of the Solomon Islands. This partnership has provided vital resources, including training healthcare providers to respond with compassion and professionalism.

‘When more trained providers are available, women feel safer seeking help,’ says Nashly Votozo, a gender-based violence officer who trains nurses across the country. These efforts have tripled the number of cases reported to SAFENET’s health providers.



Photo: UN Women/Shazia Usman

Mary (a pseudonym) is one woman whose life was transformed by SAFENET. After enduring years of abuse that ultimately led to the loss of her unborn baby, Mary sought help. SAFENET’s team secured her medical care, legal assistance, and a protection order. ‘Their support gave me the courage to speak up. I feel safe now,’ she shares.

SAFENET also focuses on prevention, reaching communities through schools, churches, and local leaders. Sophie proudly notes that women on Neo Island are stepping into leadership roles. ‘We now have three women chiefs,’ she says. ‘Women and girls are speaking up and being heard.’

By working together, individuals and communities – supported by UN Women and the Australian Government – are creating safer, stronger, and more supportive environments where women and girls can thrive.