

NEWSLETTER

UN Women Bangladesh
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2025: A PIVOTAL YEAR FOR GENDER EQUALITY



Thirty years ago, world leaders gathered in Beijing and pledged to secure equal rights, opportunities, and safety for women and girls everywhere. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains the most ambitious blueprint for achieving gender equality, and with just five years left to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, fulfilling that promise is more urgent than ever. This year, UN Women launched a global campaign under the banner “For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.” This year’s theme calls for action that can unlock equal rights, power and opportunities for all and a feminist future where no one is left behind.

69th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN: "EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FOR ALL WOMEN, EVERYWHERE"



UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous delivering her remarks at the CSW69 - Opening Session and Adoption of Political Declaration. Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

The 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), held 10–12 March 2025 at UN Headquarters in New York, marked a milestone for gender equality. Bringing together over 13,000 participants, including representatives from 186 Member States and a record 5,845 NGO delegates, the session focused on bold commitments to advance women’s rights. This year marked the commemoration of several significant anniversaries: 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, 25 years since the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325, and 15 years since the founding of UN Women. Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women Sima Bahous called these milestones “rallying cries” and

“powerful reminders that women’s rights are human rights.”

The Political Declaration, adopted by consensus, reaffirmed that gender equality and women’s empowerment are essential to sustainable development, while acknowledging that no country has fully achieved these goals. With 283 side events and a renewed global momentum, CSW69 set the course for transformative action on women’s rights. Welcoming its adoption, Ms. Bahous said, “Rising to the challenges and opportunities of gender equality requires collective, decisive action across Member States, now more than ever. At a time when hard-fought gains for gender equality are under attack, the global community has come together in a show of unity for all women and girls, everywhere.” The



MoWCA Adviser Sharmeen Murshid at the CSW69 - Opening Session and Adoption of Political Declaration. Photo: Dhaka Tribune.

Adviser to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) delivered the country statement at CSW69, reflecting on unfulfilled commitments to women's rights and calling for greater accountability, particularly among men, who are responsible for over 65 per cent of gender-based violence. She

reiterated Bangladesh's priorities in six areas: poverty eradication, ending gender-based violence, promoting women's leadership and participation, advancing peace and security, ensuring digital inclusion and promoting climate justice.

INVESTING IN CARE: A PATHWAY TO ECONOMIC GROWTH AND GENDER EQUALITY

Bangladesh, Nepal, and Finland co-hosted a CSW69 side event on 14 March 2025, titled "Investing in Care: A Pathway to Economic Growth and Gender Equality". MoWCA adviser Sharmeen Murshid, UN Women Regional Director Christine Arab, representatives of Nepal and Finland, youth leaders, and civil society representatives participated. Discussions focused on how unpaid care work, which is mainly shouldered by women, should be recognized as a vital economic contribution and supported through adequate social protection and public investment. Speakers called for gender-responsive policies that recognize and invest in unpaid care work. Highlighting best practices from Finland and ongoing reforms in Bangladesh and Nepal, the discussion emphasised global cooperation and public investment in care as essential to building equitable, resilient economies.



UN Women Regional Director Christine Arab (third from left) and Emdad Chowdhury, Minister (Political), Permanent Mission with civil society leaders and delegates at CSW69. Photo: Samina Yasmin.

BANGLADESHI CIVIL SOCIETY VOICES AT CSW69

Bangladeshi feminist leaders stepped into the spotlight at CSW69. Rowshan Jahan Moni from the Association for Land Reform and Development and Fawzia Khondker from Pragroshor represented civil society, supported by UN Women. Rowshan championed women's land rights and climate justice, highlighting their role in achieving gender equality under the Beijing+30 agenda.

Fawzia, returning to the UN stage three decades after the 1995 Beijing Conference, brought intergenerational feminist perspectives to global dialogues on gender-based violence, economic justice, and digital safety. Both reaffirmed their commitment to translating global commitments into grassroots action through inclusive advocacy and national collaboration.

FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS: ROWSHAN JAHAN MONI ON LAND RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

#ForAllWomenandGirls is a global call to action marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In Bangladesh, Rowshan Jahan Moni advocates for women's land rights as a cornerstone of gender equality and human rights.

A sociologist and long-time development practitioner, Rowshan has dedicated her career to empowering rural women. She is the Deputy Executive Director of the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) and Country Coordinator of the Stand for Her Land (S4HL) Campaign in Bangladesh. ALRD's advocacy aligns with the Generation Equality-Women's Economic Empowerment Action Coalition. She participated in the Beijing+5 review in 2000 and the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) in 2025.



A Lifelong Commitment to Equality

Raised in a family with four sisters and one brother, Rowshan credits her parents for promoting equal opportunities. “But many girls didn’t have the same chances. Discrimination often started at home,” she recalls. That contrast inspired her to pursue a career in social justice and development.

Leading advocacy for women’s land rights in Bangladesh

At ALRD, she focuses on a key but often overlooked issue: land rights. “Even though over 60 per cent of Bangladesh’s agricultural workforce is female, only four to five per cent of women have effective control over the land they own,” she explains. “Women’s access is often conditional on their relationships with men through marriage or inheritance. In both rural and urban areas, land is still viewed as a male domain.”

A discriminatory clause in the public (khas) land distribution policy, which requires women to have an “able-bodied son” to meet the eligibility criteria for applying for Khas land, remains a persistent barrier for women. ALRD has long campaigned for its removal. Recently, the Women’s Affairs Reform Commission recommended eliminating the clause through an executive order – an important step in the fight for gender-equal land rights.

Building knowledge, peer support and grassroots action among women farmers

Through its national network, ALRD supports women farmers and traditional leaders, including Headmen and Karbaries, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Under the S4HL campaign, drawn from the Generation Equality–Women’s Economic Empowerment Action Coalition, ALRD trains women in digital tools, land administration and legal procedures.

This work spans the northern, southern, and central regions, focusing on marginalised women and men from indigenous, coastal, and river-eroded communities. Community paralegal programmes have empowered grassroots women leaders to serve as local knowledge hubs, helping others claim their land rights and access public services. Rowshan emphasizes that global frameworks, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), provide critical guidance. “However, Bangladesh still maintains a reservation on Article 2 of CEDAW, which infringes on women’s property rights.” ALRD advocates for full ratification and works with different UN agencies [UN Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development] to align global goals with local realities.

For all women and girls... equal recognition, dignity and empowerment

Despite a strong women’s movement in Bangladesh, Rowshan says land rights remain peripheral in feminist discourse. “That must change. Land is as essential as health, education and jobs for achieving empowerment,” she says. “Our

MULTISTAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ADVANCES THE CSW69 POLITICAL DECLARATION



Photo 1: (From left): Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) Joint Secretary Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury presenting on the Outcome of CSW69 at the Multistakeholder Consultation. Seated from the right are MoWCA Adviser Sharmeen Murshid, Women Affairs Reform Commission Sheerin Huq, UN Women Representative Gitanjali Singh and MoWCA Joint Secretary Dilara Begum. Photo 2: A youth representative speaking during the open discussion at the Multistakeholder Consultation. Photo: UN Women/Fahad Kaizer.

To mark the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), with support from UN Women, convened a national consultation on 27 May to discuss next steps following the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69).

The consultation brought together government officials, development partners, and civil society organisations, including groups representing diverse

and marginalised communities, to reflect on progress and set national priorities. MoWCA presented a national roadmap aligned with the CSW Political Declaration, outlining concrete steps to advance the Beijing+30 agenda in Bangladesh.

Read more: [Turning commitments into action: Bangladesh's roadmap to advance the Beijing+30 Political Declaration.](#)

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Across Bangladesh, International Women's Day (IWD) 2025 sparked powerful calls for greater accountability and investment towards gender equality. Under the theme "For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment," women's leadership, economic rights and the voices of women and girls were elevated through grassroots events, media campaigns and partner engagement. UN Women worked across sectors to amplify these messages and drive progress on the Beijing Platform for Action.

ADVANCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: URGENT COMMITMENTS AND ACTION

On 6 March, more than 300 participants from six districts, including women farmers, garment workers, Indigenous and gender-diverse community members, development workers, grassroots leaders, academics and activists, came together to mark International Women's Day. The event spotlighted voices from diverse and marginalised groups through

speeches, panel discussions, and a film screening. Under the theme "Women's Political Leadership: Enforce Previous Commitments and Ensure Equal Opportunities," the gathering celebrated solidarity and diversity, echoing the 'Leave No One Behind' principle. Women from across Bangladesh demanded an end to systemic oppression, digital

violence, and barriers to public participation. Their message was clear: a gender-equal world is within our reach, if we choose to build it! The event was organised by UN Women's civil society group members Nijera Kori, Pragroshor, Supporting People and Rebuilding Communities (SPaRC) and the Social Action Committee, with support from UN Women.

At the inauguration, Dilara Begum, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, reflected on the progress made since the Beijing Declaration: "This year marks its 30th anniversary. While we've achieved a lot, many barriers—like child marriage and violence—remain. Nearly 70 per cent of women suffer violence from intimate partners. We must raise our voices more strongly during Women's Day celebrations." She noted that the Ministry is implementing collaborative, women-friendly initiatives with civil society to drive social change.

A plenary session brought centre stage the voices of Dalit, rural, indigenous, transgender, and disability communities. Speakers shared powerful accounts of their struggles against discrimination, exclusion, and violence. Experiences shared included Mamtaj Begum's journey from widowhood to becoming an independent farmer, Dalit and indigenous women's demands for recognition, transgender women's calls for dignity and appeals to include women with disabilities in national discourse, all highlighting the systemic barriers they continue to face.

UN Women Representative Gitanjali Singh emphasised the urgency of action: "Even after 30 years, violence against women remains alarming, and women's representation in decision-making is still low. We also know what is needed to make gender equality a lived reality. Six actions are key: *We need an end to violence, this is non-negotiable; We need equal decision-making power in the public and private domain including by applying temporary*

special measures; We need freedom from poverty, decent and green jobs and the redistribution of the care burden; We need peace and we need climate justice to prioritize women and girls' rights and their access to productive assets and land rights; We need a digital revolution, so women and girls have access to technology, financial services, markets and networks."

The event featured two panel discussions: one on women's political empowerment and another on human rights and violence against women. The first panel, moderated by Professor Dr. Nasim Akhtar Hossain of Jahangirnagar University, included Maria Stridsman from the Embassy of Sweden, Dr. Jarina Rahman Khan from the University of Dhaka, and Monira Begum from Bangladesh Mahila Parishad. Highlighting the need for broader engagement, Maria Stridsman noted, "It's inspiring to see so many women here today. It would be even more impactful if young men also joined these conversations."

The second panel, moderated by Dr. Seuty Sabur of BRAC University, included Tahera Jabin from the British High Commission, Farah Kabir from ActionAid Bangladesh, and Shipra Goswami from BLAST, Faridpur. The panel explored the growing rates of violence against women and declining investments in gender equality. Speakers called for urgent legal reforms and more decisive action to address cybercrime. The conference also included screening of short films - *Chakrabuhya, Laila, Kraty, and Karma* by young female film makers followed by a discussion facilitated by multidisciplinary artist Dibara Mahbub.

Media coverage: [Independent](#) | [Sarabangla.net](#) | [Samakal](#) | [Ajker Patrika](#) | [Womeneye24](#) | [Khaborer Kagoj](#)

A GLIMPSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY NATIONAL EVENT



First row: Photo 1: Participants at the IWD 2025 national event. Photo 2: (From left) Khushi Kabir, Nijera Kori; Dr. Fauzia Moslem, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad; Dilara Begum, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Gitanjali Singh, UN Women at the inauguration session; Photo 3: Tahomina Parvin, Entrepreneur; Chandra Tripura, representing Indigenous Community; Mamtaz Begum, representing Woman Farmer Community; Moni Rani Das, representing Dalit Community; Joya Sikder, Founder of Sompurna and representing Transgender Community; Sharmin Mitu, Student; Sumi Akhter, representing Garment Workers Community; Sharmin Akbori, representing Persons with Disability Community. Second row: Photo 1: Dr. Nasim Akhtar Hossain from Jahangirnagar University moderating panel discussion with Maria Stridsman, Embassy of Sweden, Dr. Jarina Rahman Khan, University of Dhaka, and Monira Begum, BMP; Photo 2: Dr. Seuty Sabur from BRAC University moderating panel discussion with Tahera Jabin, British High Commission, Farah Kabir, ActionAid Bangladesh and Shipra Goswami, BLAST, Faridpur. Photo 3: Participants at the film screening. Third row (from left to right): Organisers including Khushi Kabir, Nijera Kori; Fauzia Khondker, Pragrosor; Dalia Chakma, SPaRC; Jona Goswami, BMP and Social Action Committee; Dibara Mahbub, multidisciplinary artist speaking on stage. Fourth row: Photo 1: A Baul group performing at the inauguration session; Photo 2: A placard from a participant showcasing solidarity; Photo 3: Participants at the event. Photo: UN Women/Emdadul Islam Bitu.

IN THE NEWS: RECENTLY PUBLISHED MEDIA PIECES

- **The fatherhood we owe our children:** The Swedish Ambassador and Representatives of UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP mark the close of the "Swedish and Bangladeshi Baba" campaign (6 March 2025)
- **The world is failing women and girls:** The UN Women Representative shared the UN Secretary-General's Report on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes, 30 years on (7 March 2025)
- **Combating violence against women and adolescent girls in Bangladesh:** The Representatives of UNFPA and UN Women and the UN Resident Coordinator present the key findings and recommendations from the recently released Violence Against Women survey (8 March 2025).
- At the "Power of Women Roundtable: From the Uprising to Greater Political Participation", organised by the Dhaka Tribune with support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka, UN Women Representative, Gitanjali Singh, underscored the urgent need to advance women's political leadership. She called for a culture of zero tolerance for gender-based violence, including online harassment, gender parity in political party committees, accessible election financing for female candidates, and stronger networks for mentorship, solidarity, and peer support to empower and sustain women in leadership. [Read Experts: Women's leadership crucial to Bangladesh's political progress.](#) (17 March 2025)

DHAKA STOCK EXCHANGE RINGS BELL FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN BUSINESS



UN Women Programme Analyst Tapati Saha (centre) speaks during the Ring the Bell for Gender Equality panel discussion. Photo: IFC.

Women's representation in corporate leadership in Bangladesh is gradually shifting. Following the adoption of the 2024 Corporate Governance Code, which mandates at least one female independent director on the boards of listed companies, the proportion of female independent directors rose from 5% to 6.17% in just one year. Women now occupy 19% of board seats in listed companies overall, a promising step toward more inclusive decision-making in the private sector. This progress was celebrated during the "Ring the Bell for Gender

Equality" ceremony, held in Dhaka to mark International Women's Day. Organised by the Dhaka Stock Exchange, in collaboration with UN Women, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the UN Global Compact and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the event called attention to the private sector's vital role in advancing gender equality. Progress remains uneven. Only 42.8% of women in Bangladesh are in the labour force.¹ Just 12% of women aged 15–49 use a bank account, and fewer than 5% of farms are female-led. Women earn 21.8% less than men and perform seven times more unpaid care work.

"Access to finance is not just economic, it's about dignity, power and equality," said Tapati Saha, Programme Analyst at UN Women. She emphasised the need for more vigorous enforcement of inclusive financial policies, greater investment in women-led enterprises, and targeted efforts to close financial and digital literacy gaps. Thirty years after the Beijing Platform for Action, women's economic empowerment remains a critical frontier for gender equality and sustainable development.

¹ Source: [Bangladesh: Labour force survey 2022.](#)

VOICES FOR EQUALITY: DEVELOPMENT PARTNER COMMITMENTS

High-level representatives from eight development partners and UN Women reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality through videos highlighting **12 critical areas of action** outlined in the Beijing Declaration. Shared across social media, the five videos have reached more than **4,300 views**, increasing visibility and advocacy around women's rights and political leadership.



Take Five is a regular interview series featuring people driving change for gender equality in Bangladesh. From ambassadors to activists, each conversation offers personal insight into their work, motivations and bold ideas. As the world marks Beijing+30, the series also shines a light on voices that are often overlooked, particularly young women challenging tokenism and pushing for genuine inclusion in politics and public life.

TAKE FIVE WITH THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER

British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke reflects on the UK's commitment to gender equality in Bangladesh, from supporting women's political leadership to ending gender-based violence and investing in girls' education. Read the full interview: **Take five: "When women are part of decision-making, they help ensure women's rights are at the heart of the work they do"**



TAKE FIVE WITH A STUDENT LEADER

Student activist Taposhi Dey Prapti shares what it means to lead during a crisis, challenge patriarchy, and hold her ground when others tried to silence her. She reflects on the July anti-discrimination movement, the power of sisterhood and what young women in politics need now. Read the full interview: **Take five: "When you build trust and stand firm, no one can take that power away"**

VOICES FOR EQUALITY: CIVIL SOCIETY DEMANDS

Marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, members of the UN Women Civil Society Group in Bangladesh have come together to make a powerful statement. In the face of growing pushback against gender equality, women's leadership and violence against women, these advocates each voiced their *One Ask*—a call to action to accelerate progress on the unfinished agenda of women's rights. This quote campaign amplifies diverse perspectives and lived experiences, reaffirming civil society's vital role in shaping a just, inclusive, and gender-equal future for all. Find all quote cards on [UN Women's Facebook](#).

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All women and girls, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, profession or physical feature are entitled to equal rights in access to resources, entitlements and benefits. Their contribution, to family, society and state should be recognized and honored as essential to the wellbeing, peace and prosperity of the country.

Shaheen Anam
Executive Director
Musharraf Jinnah Foundation
Member of UN Women Civil Society Group



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Thirty years since Beijing, women with disabilities are still fighting to be seen, heard and included. Let us ensure that gender equality efforts are intersectional— inclusive of disability at every level of policy, planning, and action. Equality must mean equality for all women.

Saima Mahbub
Executive Director
IC-DIN
Member of UN Women Civil Society Group



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Women should claim their rights and raise their voice against all unjust acts, rules, traditional values, discriminatory religious practices, both nationally and at international level.

Ferous Ara Begum
Executive Director
The Center for Policy Dialogue
Member of UN Women Civil Society Group



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Asking for our rights is not seeking sympathy—it's claiming what we deserve. This isn't about empathy, it's about equality. Women's presence matters—for peace, for progress, for the future.

Razia Sultana
Executive Director
Bangladesh Anti-Trafficking Centre
Member of UN Women Civil Society Group



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Let's ensure women are not left behind in the journey towards digital literacy.

Sumaiya Islam
Executive Director
Bangladesh Anti-Trafficking Centre
Member of UN Women Civil Society Group



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As we mark 30 years since Beijing, let's remember: gender equality is not just a hope—it's a demand for justice. It's time to turn words into action and promises into transformative change.

Masuma Billah
Executive Director
The Women's Advisory Group



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Honour the Earth, the mother, and hold sacred our collective memory. In a world reawakening under epistemic patriarchal violence, amplify the voices of women, queer and indigenous people, utilizing feminist praxis to remember what systems that oppress are not a luxury—they are blueprints for survival.

Dibarah Mahboob
Executive Director
Baseer Foundation
Member of UN Women Civil Society Group



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We must reaffirm our commitment to protect the rights of women and girls, especially those living through crisis and displacement. Gender equality and the safety and security of women—and girls—must remain non-negotiable in the face of climate change, disaster, violence, and vulnerability. Let us act boldly, not retreat.


Shehryl Sharma
Executive Director
The Center for Policy Dialogue
Member of UN Women Civil Society Group



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Women across Bangladesh must have safety in both physical and digital spaces, equitable and opportunities, and meaningful representation at all levels of government; this is a minimum ask to build a foundation for a just society.

Warda Ashraf
Development Practitioner and Content Advisor
Member of Naripokh, Bangladesh
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



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We should bring back from the hope tank was born in 1995 through the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) in terms of gender equality, unfortunately we could not meet in the last 30 years. We know only 5 years remain to accomplish the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG); therefore, it is high time to expedite our efforts to uphold PFA commitments to contribute to gender equality as well as to achieve SDGs.

Shahnaz Sumi
Executive Director
The Bangladesh Non-Governmental Organisation
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



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Thirty years since Beijing, the call is louder than ever—let every woman and girl live free from fear. Women's rights are human rights and they demand bold action now.

Farah Kabir
Country Director
Actionaid Bangladesh
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



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Thirty years after Beijing, gender equality is still unmet. Let's go beyond words and invest in women—through education, opportunity, and leadership. When a girl is empowered, she transforms her community.

Korvi Rakshand
Executive Director
BRAC Foundation
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



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While stabilization and reform are essential, the budget (for FY 2026) must not lose sight of social equity.

Dr Fahmida Khatun
Executive Director
The Center for Policy Dialogue
Member of UN Women Civil Society Group



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Invest more in grassroots feminist leadership. Discrimination and patriarchy begin at home and are rooted deeply in society. By empowering women—especially those who are aware and actively fighting for justice at the community level—we can create real change from the ground up. It is crucial to support and provide opportunities for these leaders so they can effectively challenge inequality.

Jannatul Mouwa
Executive Director
Sheykh Mujib Foundation
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



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Give every woman the opportunity to develop skills, earn a fair income and take on leadership roles. At TARAACO, we believe, women's hands are more powerful than machines. When they succeed, families and communities succeed—and equality becomes a reality.

Kohinoor Yeasmin
CEO
TARAACO



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Thirty years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we still remain far from reaching where we wanted to be, from achieving equality. Given the current situation, we still have a long struggle ahead of us. As women, we have now become more sensitive and aware of the intersectionalities that exist. The fight for equality has to now be a collective one, with the inclusion of all marginalised and excluded communities—both intersectional and intergenerational.

Khushi Kabir
Coordinator
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



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Women need to believe in themselves for it is the only way to make the world believe in them.

Meghna Guhathakurta
Researcher, Film Producer and Writer
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



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If we talk about gender equality, we must move forward with transgender people and other gender-diverse individuals included in that journey.

Joya Sikder
Executive Director
SADAK
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



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Invest in young people. When youth are meaningfully engaged, they become powerful allies in dismantling discrimination, ending gender-based violence, and driving the promise of Beijing forward.

S M Shaikat
Executive Director
SEBAC Bangladesh
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



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Our path forward lies in bold, intersectional solidarity, where lived experiences across class, ethnicity, ability, and gender identities shape our strategies. We need to centre care, community, and collective liberation as the foundation for lasting change.

Fawzila Khondker
Executive Director
TARAACO
Member of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN COX'S BAZAR SPARKS COLLECTIVE ACTION



Photo 1: Participants in Cox's Bazar at the open dialogue for International Women's Day 2025. Photo: UN Women/Magfuzur Rahman Shana.
Photo 2: UN Women and ActionAid Bangladesh marked IWD at the Women's Market in Camp 5. Photo: ActionAid Bangladesh.

In the lead-up to International Women's Day 2025, over 150 representatives from humanitarian agencies, government counterparts, and women-led organisations gathered in Cox's Bazar to chart a more gender-responsive humanitarian agenda. Building on insights from consultations with more than 300 Rohingya women, men and gender-diverse people across 20 camps, the event highlighted the urgent need to centre women's leadership in crisis response.

Findings from the consultations revealed deep-rooted gender inequalities, from restrictions on mobility and access to services to increased risks of gender-based violence due to ongoing ration cuts. In response, participants called for coordinated action to expand safe spaces, improve vocational training opportunities, foster women's leadership, and

ensure sustainable funding for gender-focused programming. "We need to find solutions where women's voices are heard. It is vital that Rohingya women are part of the solution, especially when discussing security," said Silja Rajander, Head of UN Women's Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar.

Co-hosted by the GiHA Working Group, the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Sub-Sector and the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), the dialogue underscored a commitment to evidence-based, inclusive responses shaped by women and girls. UN Women, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO, UNFPA, ActionAid, and others pledged to invest in community-based solutions and keep women's rights, resilience, and leadership at the heart of humanitarian responses, well beyond International Women's Day.



Lucky (centre) leads a joint planning session on challenges and demands for gender equality during a meeting of Rohingya women leaders at the UN Women multi-purpose women's centre. Photo: UN Women/Allison Joyce.

ROHINGYA YOUTH LEADER CALLS FOR INCLUSIVE ACTION

Born in Rakhine State, Myanmar, Lucky Karim fled to Bangladesh at age 14 after surviving genocidal violence. In the Cox's Bazar refugee camps, she worked to fund her education and became a vocal advocate for gender equality. Her determination led her to the Asian University for Women, and she now continues her studies and activism after being resettled in the United States. Photo: UN Women

Read Lucky's story: [For All Women and Girls: 'Work with us, not just for us', urges Rohingya activist](#)

INTERGENERATIONAL MOVEMENT BUILDING: CHARTER OF DEMANDS DRIVES GENDER EQUALITY MOMENTUM

With support from UN Women, Bonhishikha and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad spearheaded intergenerational movement building and developed an inclusive and intersectional Charter of Demands grounded in the voices and priorities of women across Bangladesh. Designed as a grassroots-informed advocacy tool, the Charter is now contributing to broader national reform dialogues.

Following its dissemination in December 2024, the updated Charter was formally presented to Ms. Sharmeen Murshid, Advisor to MoWCA, who identified priority areas for MoWCA, including full ratification of [CEDAW](#), revising the Child Marriage Restraint Act's special provision and stronger protections against sexual violence in workplaces and institutions.

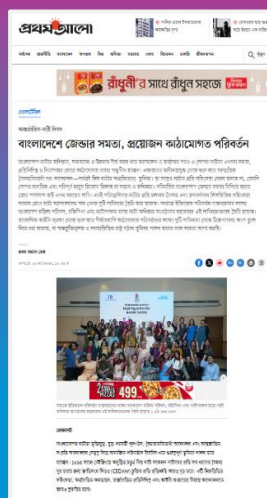
Since then, the Charter has been shared with more than 430 institutions, including the Women's Reform Commission, which recognised its relevance and committed to using it as a reference point in shaping reform proposals to the interim government. This



Members of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Bonhishikha handing over the Charter of Demand to Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Adviser Sharmeen Murshid. Photo: Bonhishikha.

marks a significant step in advancing evidence-based, collective advocacy for structural gender equality reform in Bangladesh. Read the [Charter of Demands](#).

AMPLIFYING VOICES FOR GENDER EQUALITY: CHARTER OF DEMANDS SPOTLIGHTED IN MEDIA



With support from UN Women, Bonhishikha and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad developed an inclusive and intersectional Charter of Demands (CoD) grounded in the voices and priorities of women across Bangladesh. The CoD was featured through two full-page supplements in *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo*, to bring forward priorities for gender equality and women's empowerment. Read the supplements:

- [বাংলাদেশে জেন্ডার সমতা, প্রয়োজন কাঠামোগত পরিবর্তন](#)
- [International Women's Day 2025: For All Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment](#)

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY: FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

As Bangladesh prepares for graduation from Least Developed Country status in 2026, UN Women and the Citizens' Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) co-hosted a national consultation to explore how gender-responsive budgeting can drive more inclusive and sustainable development. The dialogue brought together policymakers, civil society, youth, development partners, and academia to examine persistent financing gaps and structural barriers that limit the impact of gender-responsive budgeting, despite its long-standing integration into the country's public finance framework.

With the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development on the horizon, participants emphasised the urgency of results-based budgeting, greater grassroots engagement and inter-ministerial coordination to ensure public finance truly advances gender equality and fulfils the ambitions of the Beijing Platform for Action.



From left: Nubayra Jeheen, Programme Analyst, UN Women; Tasnim Zeben Bentea Sheikh, Deputy Secretary, MoWCA; Towfiqul Islam Khan, Senior Research Fellow, CPD; Maria Stridsman, Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden; Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya Distinguished Fellow, CPD and Convenor, Citizen's Platform for SDGs; Gitanjali Singh, Representative, UN Women; Abul Kalam Azad, Joint Secretary, ERD; Ferdousi Sultana, Member, Women's Affairs Reform Commission at the consultation. Photo: UN Women/CEMS.

Read more: [Bangladesh holds a National Consultation ahead of the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development \(FfD4\).](#)

GENDER PRIORITIES INTEGRATED IN THE NATIONAL SDG REVIEW



Photo 1: (From left to right) Md. Alamgir Hossen, Deputy Director, BBS; Aleya Akter, Secretary, Ministry of Planning; Lamiya Morshed, Principal Coordinator, SDGs affairs, Chief Adviser's Office; Gwyn Lewis, UN Resident Coordinator; Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, Director General, BBS; Jan Smit, Regional Adviser on Official Statistics, UN ESCAP. Photo: UN Women. Photo 2: UN Women Programme Analyst Nubayra Jeheen speaks at the event. Photo: UN Women Bangladesh.



UN Women, in collaboration with the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), supported a multistakeholder workshop on addressing SDG data gaps and

strengthening inclusive, gender-responsive monitoring systems in Bangladesh. Held on 23–24 March under UN Women's global gender statistics programme, *Women Count Phase II*, the workshop identified priority areas for action, including improved coordination, investment in national data

systems, and the integration of gender across all SDG indicators.

Participants noted persistent gaps in data related to marginalised groups, unpaid care work, climate resilience and social inclusion. The workshop showcased promising initiatives, including the upcoming Household Production Satellite Account, Time-Use Survey, and the proposed Gender and

Environment Survey. It also underscored the potential of citizen-generated data and emerging technologies, such as Geographic Information Systems, artificial intelligence, and machine learning, to fill data gaps, particularly among hard-to-reach populations. Insights from this consultation will inform Bangladesh's Voluntary National Review 2025, ensuring gender equality remains central to national SDG progress.

NATIONAL GENDER TRAINING TO ADVANCE EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING



Photo 1: UN Women Representative Gitanjali Singh (right) speaks at the event with DG Mohammed Mizanur Rahman (centre), and DDG Mohammad Obaidul Islam (left) from BBS, SID, Ministry of Planning. Photo 2: Participants at the training during group work. Photo: UN Women Bangladesh.

National training on gender statistics promoted the importance of open access to data, intersectional disaggregation (by ethnicity, religion, and disability), and data accessibility for persons with disabilities, aiming to ensure inclusive, rights-based data systems that promote gender equality.

BBS conducted the four-day training with support from the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Statistical Institute for

Asia and the Pacific and ESCAP. Participants included representatives from eight ministries, nine civil society organisations, three media outlets, and data experts from the BBS, all of whom were committed to strengthening gender data skills for SDG-related policymaking. The training enhanced participants' capacity to analyse and visualise gender data, as well as access regional and global data sources for evidence-based decision-making.

USER PRODUCER DIALOGUES ON TIME USE STATISTICS CALLS FOR THE VALUATION OF UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

As part of UN Women's global Women Count programme, BBS led a series of User-Producer Dialogues on Time-Use Statistics across Rangpur, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Chattogram, Sylhet, and Mymensingh. These consultations marked a significant step toward strengthening Bangladesh's gender data ecosystem and ensuring that unpaid

care and domestic work are recognised, measured and valued in national policymaking. Participants from government, civil society, and academia called for inclusive, disaggregated data,



particularly for women with disabilities and gender-diverse groups, as well as the integration of time-use data into local planning, climate resilience strategies, and social protection frameworks.



Photo 1: Aleya Akter, Secretary, SID, Ministry of Planning speaks at the dialogue. Photo 2: Mejbahun Nahar, PC (LA & WR), RDRS Bangladesh speaks during the open discussion. Photo: UN Women Bangladesh.

The dialogues affirmed that visibility through measurement is critical to valuing care work and advancing gender equality.



BANGLADESH CARE FORUM 2025: ADVANCING A RESILIENT AND INCLUSIVE LONG-TERM CARE SYSTEM



From left to right: Akira Matsunaga, Deputy Country Director, ADB; Gitanjali Singh, Representative, UN Women; Siddique Zobair, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Education; Professor Md Sayedur Rahman, Honorable Special Assistant (State Minister), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; Tahsin Aman, Vice Chairperson, Aman Group of Industries and Chairperson, AYAT Care Training Institute; Nasheeba Selim, Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist, ADB at the closing plenary. Photo: ADB.

“The vision of a new inclusive Bangladesh cannot be achieved without women’s economic empowerment,” said UN Women Representative Gitanjali Singh at the closing plenary of the Bangladesh Care Forum 2025. “Investing in the care economy would simultaneously reduce women’s time and income poverty, support their labour force participation and expand care-related employment.”

Hosted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in partnership with AYAT Education, the Forum took place on 28–29 May in Dhaka under the theme “Advancing a Resilient and Inclusive Long-Term Care System.” The two-day forum convened more than 100 participants, including government officials, development partners, care providers, NGOs, academics and private sector actors, to assess the

care sector and co-develop policy pathways. It concluded with a high-level plenary session featuring key voices from across sectors, who emphasised the urgency of investing in a sustainable, gender-responsive care ecosystem to meet the needs of Bangladesh’s rapid demographic transition.

“Investing in women and girls continues to be the right and smart choice to make,” Ms. Singh said. “As we mark the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, let us commit to act boldly and deliver true equality for all women and girls.”

DRIVING SOCIAL NORM CHANGE

ADVANCING DISABILITY-INCLUSION IN THE UN



Nazma Ara Begum Popy, National Project Support Officer, UN Women. Photo: UN Women Bangladesh.

As part of efforts to advance the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), Nazma Ara Begum Popy, UN Women’s National Project Support Officer, facilitated an orientation for members of the UN Disability Inclusion Task Team (UNDITT) in Bangladesh. Focal points from ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP, UNDP, UNOPS,

Office participated in the session, which aimed to strengthen both institutional and individual capacities to mainstream disability inclusion.

Participants deepened their understanding of the UNDIS framework, including its guiding principles, key indicators, and relevance to the Bangladeshi context. The session fostered peer-to-peer learning and provided a platform for each agency to reflect on how to embed disability inclusion principles across policies, strategies and programme cycles. As a key output, focal points outlined actionable next steps to support more inclusive and accountable UN operations. The initiative aligns with the UN Country Team’s commitment to implementing the UNDIS and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals through a disability-inclusive approach.

UN Women and the UN Resident Coordinator’s

“HOLD THE BAR, NOT HER SPACE” CAMPAIGN PROMOTES SAFER PUBLIC TRANSPORT



Messages on preventing sexual harassment on public transport. Artworks: Rubab Khan.

Sexual harassment on public transport is not just a women’s issue; it’s a societal challenge that requires

united action. The “Hold the Bar, Not Her Space” campaign urges everyone to speak out, support

survivors, and make public transport safe for everyone. Jointly led by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), and UN Women Bangladesh, with support from the [Embassy of Sweden](#), the campaign promotes gender-sensitive behaviour through training and awareness. MJF have trained more than 160 transport workers, and 34 Dhaka buses now display bold campaign messages through creative artwork to spark public dialogue.

“This is a call to action for every commuter, policymaker, and driver,” said Swedish Ambassador

HE Nicolas Weeks. UN Women Representative Gitanjali Singh added, “Women and girls have the right to move freely, safely, and confidently, anywhere, anytime.”

Media links: [The Daily Star](#) | [Financial Express](#) | [The Business Standard](#) | [Daily Observer](#) | [Dhaka Tribune](#) | [UNB](#) | [Dhaka Post](#) | [Womneeye24.com](#) | [Prothom Alo](#) | [Bangla Tribune](#) | [Protidiner Bangladeshy](#) | [BSS News](#) | [Aiker Patrika](#) | [Sarabangla.net](#) | [Shomoynews.net](#) | [Banglanews.24](#) | [Independent TV](#) | [Desh TV](#).

REIMAGINING FATHERHOOD: “BANGLADESHI AND SWEDISH BABA” CAMPAIGN ENGAGES THOUSANDS

As part of its ongoing commitment to shifting harmful gender norms, UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, and the [Embassy of Sweden](#) continued public awareness efforts through the “Bangladeshi and Swedish Baba” campaign, launched in November 2024. The campaign challenges traditional stereotypes and promotes fatherhood as a shared,

nurturing responsibility. A travelling photo exhibition, launched under the campaign, toured Rajshahi, Chittagong, and Khulna, before returning to Dhaka in 2025, drawing over 17,000 visitors and engaging more than 546,000 people online via social media platforms. Watch the [video](#).



Photos from the Swedish and Bangladeshi Baba exhibition. Photo: Dot Birth.

GOVERNMENT AND UN WOMEN STEP UP GBV ACTION

UN Women is strengthening its partnership with the Government of Bangladesh through consultations with MoWCA to shape a new technical assistance initiative focused on preventing violence against women. Two high-level consultations, held on 25 February and 14 May, explored how the initiative can be implemented in close coordination with the

national women’s machinery, under the [European Union \(EU\)](#) funded project “Ending Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Public Spaces, Workplaces, and Tertiary Educational Institutions.” During the discussions, UN Women Deputy Representative Navanita Sinha and Programme Coordinator Shrabana Datta outlined how the proposed

interventions draw on the global evidence and lessons learned from earlier efforts in Bangladesh. The initiative aims to address structural barriers to ending GBV by promoting social norm change, engaging young people in educational settings and improving safety in public spaces and workplaces.

MoWCA Senior Secretary Mamtaz Ahmed (NDC) reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to prevention-focused strategies, noting the urgency of addressing GBV as a national priority. The collaboration reflects UN Women's ongoing support to embed long-term, evidence-based prevention into national systems and policy priorities.



From left to right: UN Women Consultant Ram Chandra Das and Deputy Representative Navanita Sinha in discussion with MoWCA Senior Secretary Mamtaz Ahmed (NDC) and Joint Secretary Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury. Photo: UN Women Bangladesh.

ROUNDTABLE PUSHES FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN POLICING



UN Women Programme Coordinator Shrabana Datta (centre) speaks during the Roundtable opening panel. Photo: UN Women Bangladesh.

In May, UN Women and UNDP co-hosted a national roundtable with members of the newly formed Executive Committee of the Bangladesh Policewomen Network (BPWN). The workshop aimed to align BPWN's strategic priorities with key recommendations from the Police Reform

Commission Report, in the context of ongoing national discussions following recent civil unrest.

Fifteen Executive Committee members took part, identifying priority areas to strengthen women's leadership in policing and improve survivor-centred services. Key recommendations included structured career planning for women officers, targeted leadership and motivational training, the establishment of district-level cyber support units, and more substantial support for survivors of trauma and

technology-facilitated violence.

The roundtable reaffirmed the importance of creating an enabling environment within the police force. Participants committed to continued stakeholder engagement to develop a coordinated, gender-responsive police reform agenda.

GRASSROOTS WOMEN LEAD LOCAL CALL FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE



UN Women Programme Analyst Kazi Rabeya Ame at the community consultation meeting in Mundapara, Koyra Sadar with Munda community women explaining rainwater harvesting model as a climate adaptation technique. Photo: Subrata Munda.

Across Bangladesh, from Cox's Bazar and Khulna to Satkhira and Jamalpur, women are not just bearing the brunt of climate change. They are leading the charge for adaptation, resilience and justice, often with limited resources but extraordinary resolve. Through the UN Women and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) *EmPower* project, women are taking bold action to ensure their priorities shape local and national climate agendas.

In Cox's Bazar, women from 19 grassroots organisations in Chokoria and Teknaf shared stories of devastating floods, water shortages, and rising unemployment. With support from *EmPower*, their Local Adaptation Plans are being updated through a participatory process, ensuring that community needs and lived experiences guide local climate responses.

In Khulna, where salinity and drought threaten livelihoods and health, women are responding with innovation. Plans are underway to install a Reverse Osmosis plant, managed by a women-led group, to address the urgent need for safe drinking water.

Women are also promoting organic farming and creating new income streams by selling vegetables and compost from door to door. Local women's networks, such as WCAN, are helping members access training, resources, and government support.

In Satkhira, women described the aftermath of an embankment that left their mud homes vulnerable and saline water seeping into their daily lives. Many fear for their daughters' health and safety, with some feeling forced to consider early marriage or relocation. In Jamalpur, women noted that existing local climate plans are more focused on disaster response than long-term adaptation. WCAN and the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group are now working to ensure that women participate in future planning process.

Across all regions, women are calling for concrete action for:

- Clean, safe drinking water through solutions like reverse osmosis plants and tube wells
- Safer infrastructure and emergency shelters, especially in flood-prone areas
- Access to climate-smart training, technology and small grants
- Meaningful participation in planning and decision-making processes at every level
- Stronger government leadership and enforcement of environmental protections
- Support and recognition for grassroots networks

Despite facing structural barriers, women are taking action: organising, advocating and leading. To build a climate-resilient Bangladesh, women's voices must be heard, their leadership recognised, and their solutions funded and scaled up.

FROM THE GROUND UP: WOMEN DRIVING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS IN BANGLADESH



Participants at the National Stakeholder Consultation on Gender Responsive Climate Adaptation on 23 April at the UN House Building, Dhaka. Photo: UN Women/Fahad Abdullah Kaizer.

A national stakeholder consultation hosted by UN Women and UNEP in April 2025 showcased the transformative role of grassroots women in climate action and finance across South and Southeast Asia, under the regional programme EmPower II. Supported by the [Governments of Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, and Switzerland](#) through the EmPower project, the event brought together government officials, financial institutions, civil society organisations, and development partners to explore how women are both adapting to climate change and leading solutions.

In Bangladesh alone, the project has supported over 43,000 nano and micro enterprises, laying the groundwork for a new regional finance facility aimed

at scaling women-led climate solutions. Local adaptation plans are empowering women directly, while financial institutions are introducing faster and greener lending models. However, critical gaps remain, particularly in terms of digital access and economic barriers faced by women in informal sectors. Through community-led adaptation, improved access to finance and clean technology, the initiative is helping shift the narrative from women as climate victims to women as drivers of resilience and innovation.

Read [From the Ground Up: Women Driving Climate Solutions in Bangladesh](#).

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S RESILIENCE AFTER FLOODS AND CYCLONE REMAL

In 2024, four successive climate emergencies, including [Cyclone Remal](#) and widespread flooding, affected over 18 million people across nearly one-third of Bangladesh.² Coastal and floodplain communities were hardest hit, where women and girls continue to face worsening food insecurity, unsafe water, and increased risks to their health, dignity and safety. Many female-headed households still struggle to access relief and recovery support. To ensure a gender-responsive recovery, UN Women's partner, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), worked with women-led civil society organisations under the EmPower-II project to assess community needs following the floods. These grassroots consultations prioritised the voices of women and girls, revealing that critical needs remain unmet; many women-headed households have received little to no support. The findings highlighted a significant gap in recovery assistance and reaffirmed the importance of involving women-led organisations in identifying and driving local solutions.

² [Bangladesh-HCTT-Humanitarian Response Plan-Cyclone and Monsoon Floods 2024-29-09-2024 \(June 2024 to March 2025\).pdf](#)

In response, targeted recovery assistance will be delivered through women-led organisations and community-based partners to ensure it reaches the most affected and marginalised. This includes cash grants for 252 of the poorest women-headed households to repair homes and cattle sheds, seeds

for 350 homestead gardens to boost food security, and business support to help women grow their small enterprises. Additionally, 84 women will be trained as Local Service Providers in livestock care, enabling them to earn a stable income while contributing to local resilience and development.



Photo 1: UN Women Programme Specialist Dilruba Haider (speaking) with Deputy Representative Navanita Sinha and Programme Analyst Kazi Rabeya Ame, moderating a community meeting in Kurigram. Photo: UN Women; Photo 2: Marufa Yesmin used a cash grant after Cyclone Remal to rebuild her home. Photo: UN Women/Kazi Rabeya Ame.

TOWARDS INCLUSIVE REINTEGRATION FOR RETURNEE WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS



Photo 1: UNV Humaira Binte Faruque moderating; Photo 2: Participants at the National Policy Dialogue. Photo: UN Women Bangladesh.

Development Policy 2020, and Women’s Development Policy 2011. These policies currently do not address the specific reintegration needs of returnee women, who face not only economic but also social and psychological barriers. Stakeholders emphasised that reintegration strategies must go beyond a gender-neutral approach to reflect the lived realities of female migrants.

A joint initiative by the International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Women, and the **Government of Switzerland** helped catalyse a deeper policy conversation in Bangladesh on the often-overlooked needs of returnee women migrant workers. A recent policy review identified critical gaps in national frameworks, including the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Policy 2025, National Skills

The exercise paved the way for advocacy to revise policy frameworks with gender-sensitive provisions, improved coordination among ministries, and actionable commitments for inclusion and accountability. This review process generated a set of concrete recommendations from policy experts and civil society, including the integration of skills certification for outbound workers, accessible training databases, embedded psychosocial support

in reintegration programmes, and diversified entrepreneurship support for returnee women.

The exercise strengthened collaboration among UN Women, ILO, and local partners, creating momentum for more inclusive, coordinated, and

accountable policy reform. By centring the dignity, wellbeing and economic participation of returnee women, the initiative advances a more gender-responsive migration and reintegration agenda for Bangladesh.

POLICY DIALOGUE CALLS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



Photo1: UN Women Deputy Representative Navanita Sinha (one the left) with the discussants at the dialogue; Photo 2: UN Women Programme Analyst Md. Siddikur Rahman moderating a session. Photo: UN Women Bangladesh.

A national dialogue on the gender-responsive review of the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2022 revealed significant gaps in ensuring equitable access to quality training and decent employment. Stakeholders raised concerns about barriers faced by women with disabilities and those from marginalised communities. While the NSDP includes firm commitments to inclusion, participants stressed the need for time-bound implementation plans and robust monitoring systems. They also called for a shift from gender mainstreaming to a gender-transformative approach that dismantles discriminatory norms and integrates intersectional perspectives throughout the skills development ecosystem.

Key recommendations included establishing a centralised, disaggregated data system to guide planning, aligning the TVET Gender Strategy with the

NSDP and the Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework, and expanding the NSDA curriculum to reflect global employment trends such as caregiving and green jobs. Participants also advocated enhancing the accessibility and relevance of apprenticeship and workplace-based training models for women, embedding climate resilience into vocational education, and ensuring supportive infrastructures for women with disabilities.

The dialogue brought together government, UN agencies, civil society, and the private sector, reinforcing the importance of coordinated action. Stakeholders agreed that sustainable progress hinges on gender-responsive budgeting, inclusive policy reform, and collaboration across sectors to remove structural and sociocultural barriers. If implemented with these measures, the NSDP 2022 could become a key driver of women's economic empowerment and inclusive national growth.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325: PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN GLOBAL PEACEKEEPING

On 26 May, UN Women facilitated a session on the history of women, peace, and security (WPS) as part of the WPS-12 course at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training (BIPSOT). The session explored the evolution of the WPS agenda, [UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#), and emerging trends in the 21st century. Twenty officers (13 women and 7 men) from the Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police, as well as representatives from Australia, Morocco, Nigeria, and Pakistan, participated. It was facilitated by Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting Analyst Tania Sharmin from UN Women Bangladesh, alongside Governance, Peace, and Security Specialist Gaelle Demolis and Gender, Climate, Peace, and Security Specialist Japhet Eichel from the Asia and the Pacific Regional Office. UN Women has partnered with BIPSOT since 2014 to promote women's leadership in

peacekeeping and advance the WPS agenda at national and global levels, including through the deployment of gender advisors and the Female Military Officers' Course.



From left to right: Gaelle Demolis, Japhet Eichel and Tania Sharmin co-facilitate the session at BIPSOT. Photo: UN Women.

PEACE AND SECURITY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN ROHINGYA CAMPS

On 15 May, more than 300 women, girls and gender-diverse people came together in the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar to share what peace means to them. The campaign, launched by humanitarian partners, featured personal storytelling, role plays and intergenerational dialogue. The event was hosted at the UN Women Multi-Purpose Women's Centre, run by ActionAid Bangladesh, following the inauguration at the Camp-in-Charge (CiC) office.

"For me, peace and security are not just about the absence of violence. It's about living with hope, advocating for our rights, and supporting one another," said a 15-year-old Rohingya girl. The event closed with a symbolic tree-planting ceremony led by senior Rohingya women as a gesture of hope, resilience and unity. The campaign is supported by the [Governments of Sweden, Switzerland, and Japan](#).



Discussion on mental health facilitated by ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) trainer during the Peace and Security campaign at UN Women MPWC-4Ext. Photo: UN Women/AAB.

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITS BANGLADESH IN MARCH



Photo1: UN Secretary-General António Guterres along with the Chief Advisor of the Bangladesh Government Dr Muhammad Yunus joined Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, for Iftar. Photo 2: UN Secretary-General met with Rohingya and host community women and men at an MPWC in Cox's Bazar. Photo: IOM/Masum.

The Secretary-General visited the Cox's Bazar refugee camps, expressing his solidarity with Rohingya refugees. "I have returned to Cox's Bazar to shine a global spotlight on the plight of more than one million Rohingya refugees – and also on their potential," he said. "They are proud. They are resilient. And they need the world's support." While in the camps, he joined a youth dialogue that included UN Women staff and Gender Volunteers.

The conversation centred on advancing the empowerment of women and girls, with a focus on building economic resilience and enhancing access to vocational skills and gender-responsive services. UN Women Gender Volunteer Monowara shared her hopes for a future that offers safety, dignity, and opportunity. She presented the Secretary-General with a tote bag, scarf, laptop sleeve and bookmark, all handcrafted by Rohingya women at the UN Women-supported MPWC.



Photo 1: UN Secretary-General pictured with staff at the new UN House in Dhaka. Photo: UNRCO; Photo 2: UNSG with the UN Bangladesh Country Team. Photo: UNRCO.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres inaugurated the new UN House in Dhaka, raising the UN flag alongside government partners. Now home to 11 UN agencies and nearly 500 staff, the Common Premises is projected to generate USD 1.5 million in cost savings over the next five years while strengthening collaboration and sustainability.

"The establishment of Common Premises for UN agencies at the country level is a core component of my UN reform agenda," said the Secretary-General. "By bringing UN agencies under one roof, we enhance coordination, reduce duplication, lower administrative costs, and consolidate support services." [Read more.](#)



Photo 1: Australian delegation with Rohingya women and UN Women staff at Camp 5. Photo: UN Women/Magfuzur Rahman Shana.

Photo 2: Australian High Commissioner Susan Ryle meets with Rohingya women and Silja Rajander, Head of Cox's Bazar Sub Office. Photo: UN Women/Magfuzur Rahman Shana

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER MEETS WOMEN LEADERS IN CAMPS

A delegation from the [Australian High Commission in Bangladesh](#) visited the Women's Market in Camp 5, operated by ActionAid Bangladesh for UN Women. The delegation met six inspiring Gender Volunteers from across the camps, who spoke about their leadership journeys, the power of women's networks, and how oppressive gender norms are gradually being changed. They noted a shift in community perceptions, particularly an increase in support from male family and community members for women's active participation in humanitarian action.

Camp in Charge (CiCs) and women community members emphasised the importance of involving

Rohingya women in decision-making and listening to their voices on issues that directly affect them. The women also spoke about persistent challenges, ranging from insecurity and gender-based violence, including trafficking, child marriage and polygamy, to the uncertainty of their future.

Australian High Commissioner Susan Ryle, who led the delegation, said, "I feel motivated by hearing how you are supporting other women." The delegation also included Sarah Storey, First Assistant Secretary of the South and Central Asia Division, and Nick McLean, First Secretary and Humanitarian Adviser.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE SERVICES PRIORITISED

In March, UN Women Representative Gitanjali Singh visited Cox's Bazar to assess and advance support for Rohingya refugees and host communities. Her mission included visits to the newly inaugurated MPWC in Camp 25, Whykong, and discussions with

women and girls, as well as partner staff from Jago Nari Unnayan Sangstha (JNUS) and Rights for Women Welfare Society (RWWS). Community members raised concerns, including the gendered consequences of recent food ration cuts that have

heightened protection risks for women and girls. She, along with UN Women Programme Specialist

Dilruba Haider, also met with Additional RRRRC, Suamsud Doza.



Photo 1: UN Women Representative Gitanjali Singh, Gender Analyst Nadira Islam, and Security Associate Ferdousy Sharmin met with Rohingya women and partners at the newly launched MPWC in Camp 25 in Whykong. Photo: UN Women/RWWS; Photo 2: UN Women team meeting with Additional Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, Md. Shamsud Douza. Photo: UN Women/Nadira Islam.

CAMP LEADERS TRAINED ON GENDER-RESPONSIVE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



Photo 1: Participants at the Gender-responsive disaster preparedness and emergency response training. Photo: UN Women/Magfuzur Rahman
Photo 2: UN Women Head of Sub Office in Cox's Bazar Silja Rajander (right) with Anja Menninger, UNV at the training. Photo: UN Women/Magfuzur Rahman.

Camp-in-Charge (CiC) officers in Cox's Bazar strengthened their understanding of the gendered impacts of disasters and their role in emergency coordination through a capacity-building workshop. Organised by UN Women in partnership with RTM International, and with support from the **Government of Japan**, the workshop trained 32 CiC officers on how to deliver more inclusive, gender-sensitive disaster preparedness and response. Participants explored ways to share information in a gender-sensitive way, close response gaps that leave women and girls more vulnerable in crises and

embed gender considerations in emergency planning. Through case studies and group discussions, they identified practical steps to make disaster responses more equitable, inclusive and accountable.

The workshop reinforced the camp leadership's ability to plan and act with a gender lens. As a next step, UN Women will work with Mahjis (community leaders) and train gender volunteers to integrate gender-sensitive disaster preparedness into everyday community practices.

Read more stories from Cox's Bazar:

- [Given an opportunity, a determined Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh cooks up a thriving business](#)
- [Once illiterate and devastated by flight, a Rohingya woman refugee in Bangladesh becomes a leader in her community](#)
- [Greening a small plot transforms a widowed mother's life in a Bangladesh Rohingya refugee camp](#)

PARTNERSHIPS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

EU COMMITS €4.8M TO ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



(From left): EU representatives Nicolas Merville, Finance and Contracts Manager; Laila Jasmin Banu, Programme Manager for Governance and Human Rights and Ambassador Michael Miller with UN Women's Gitanjali Singh, Representative, Navanita Sinha, Deputy Representative, and Shrabana Datta, Programme Coordinator, at the EU office. Photo: UN Women Bangladesh.

The [European Union](#) and UN Women have signed a €4.8 million partnership agreement to improve safety and inclusion for women and girls in public spaces, workplaces, and tertiary education institutions in Bangladesh. Aligned with the Government's National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children, the initiative will strengthen policy frameworks, challenge harmful social norms, and empower civil society and women's rights organisations. It supports Bangladesh's commitments under the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals, including [SDG 5.1.1](#), on ending discrimination against women and girls.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES

The Government of Bangladesh and UNDP have launched the BALLOT Project to support transparent, inclusive, and peaceful elections. With participation from UN Women and UNESCO, the signing ceremony highlighted the importance of integrating gender equality at all stages of the electoral process. The project will strengthen the Election Commission's capacity to promote civic engagement and ensure that women and marginalised groups are fully included as voters, leaders and decision-makers in Bangladesh's democratic future.



(From left): Gitanjali Singh, UN Women Representative; Stefan Liller, Resident Representative, UNDP; Md. Shahriar Kader Siddiky, Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD); Akhtar Ahmed, Senior Secretary, Bangladesh Election Commission and, Dr. Susan Vize, Country Representative, UNESCO, at the signing ceremony in ERD office, Dhaka. Photo: UN Women.



(From left): From Norwegian Embassy, Political Advisor Sarwar Jahan Chowdhury; Communications and Culture Adviser Zohora Farzana Ahmed Bipasha; Deputy Head of Mission Marianne Rabe Knævelsrud, Ambassador Håkon Arald Gulbrandsen; UN Women Deputy Representative Navanita Sinha, UN Women Programme Analyst Tapati Saha, Interns Mathias Sivertsen and Kashish Kaur Sekhon/Intern from Norwegian Embassy. Photo: Norwegian Embassy.

NORWAY SUPPORTS ADVANCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

UN Women Bangladesh and the **Government of Norway** have launched a new partnership of NOK 2 million to strengthen women's political participation. The initiative focuses on empowering young women through mentorship and coaching, building a cross-party network of emerging leaders, and addressing violence against women in politics, especially online abuse and disinformation. This evidence-based initiative reinforces UN Women's commitment to gender equality in democratic processes and will support diverse women leaders to claim their voice, agency, and influence in decision-making spaces.

AFD SUPPORTS EMPOWERING WOMEN TO LEAD CLIMATE ACTION

UN Women and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change signed a Technical Assistance Project Proposal (TAPP) to launch "Increasing the Resilience of Women and Girls Through Gender-Responsive Climate Change Actions in Bangladesh" with support from **Agence Française de Développement (AFD)**. This three-year project (October 2024–September 2027) seeks to strengthen the capacity of government institutions to address the distinct vulnerabilities and priorities of women, girls and gender-diverse groups in climate adaptation. By integrating the newly adopted Climate Change and Gender Action Plan into national strategies, the initiative aims to ensure that climate solutions are inclusive, equitable and sustainable. As Bangladesh confronts climate-induced challenges, this project reinforces collective commitment to leaving no one behind by enhancing the resilience of the most climate-vulnerable populations.



From left: AFD Project Manager Suman Kanti Nath, UN Women Representative Gitanjali Singh, AFD Country Director Cynthia Mela and Deputy Country Director Cecilia Cortese; UN Women Programme Specialist Dilruba Haider and Project Officer Maud Aba'a. Photo: UN Women/AFD.

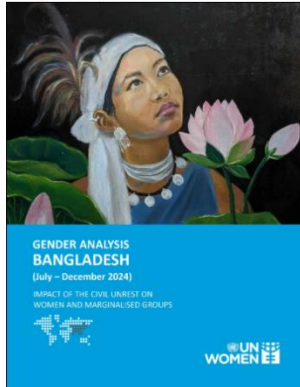
ADVANCING GENDER PARITY IN THE UN: MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN

UN Women and the Gender Equality Theme Group (GETG) continue to lead efforts to create an enabling environment for women working in the UN system. In April, the second round of the UN in Bangladesh Mentorship Programme for Women was launched. Building on lessons from the first round in 2024, the programme connects 46 mentors with mentees to

provide career guidance and peer support. Each pair meets regularly over four months to discuss their experiences working in the UN system, strategies for career advancement, and the skills required for professional progress. The programme is managed by a task team comprising representatives from UN Women, ILO, and UNFPA.

PUBLICATIONS

IMPACT OF THE CIVIL UNREST ON WOMEN AND MARGINALISED GROUPS

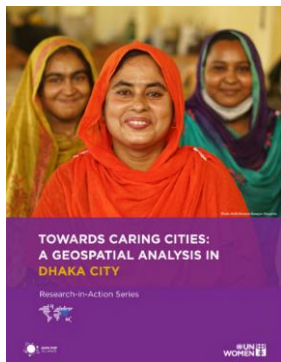


In mid-2024, student-led protests in Bangladesh against the reinstatement of quotas in public service recruitment quickly grew into a broader movement demanding political reform and accountability. The *Gender Analysis Bangladesh 2024* report provides an evidence-based assessment of how the unrest impacted women, girls, gender-diverse individuals, and other marginalised groups. Drawing on data from 24 districts, the report details widespread rights violations, economic insecurity, disrupted services, gendered violence and political exclusion. These impacts disproportionately affected marginalised communities, both during and after the unrest. The Gender Analysis was conducted under the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) Strategic Priority Group 5 on gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence, co-chaired by UN Women and UNFPA.

Read the report: [Gender Analysis Bangladesh 2024: Impact of the Civil Unrest on](#)

[Women and Marginalised Groups.](#)

MAPPING CARE GAPS IN DHAKA CITY



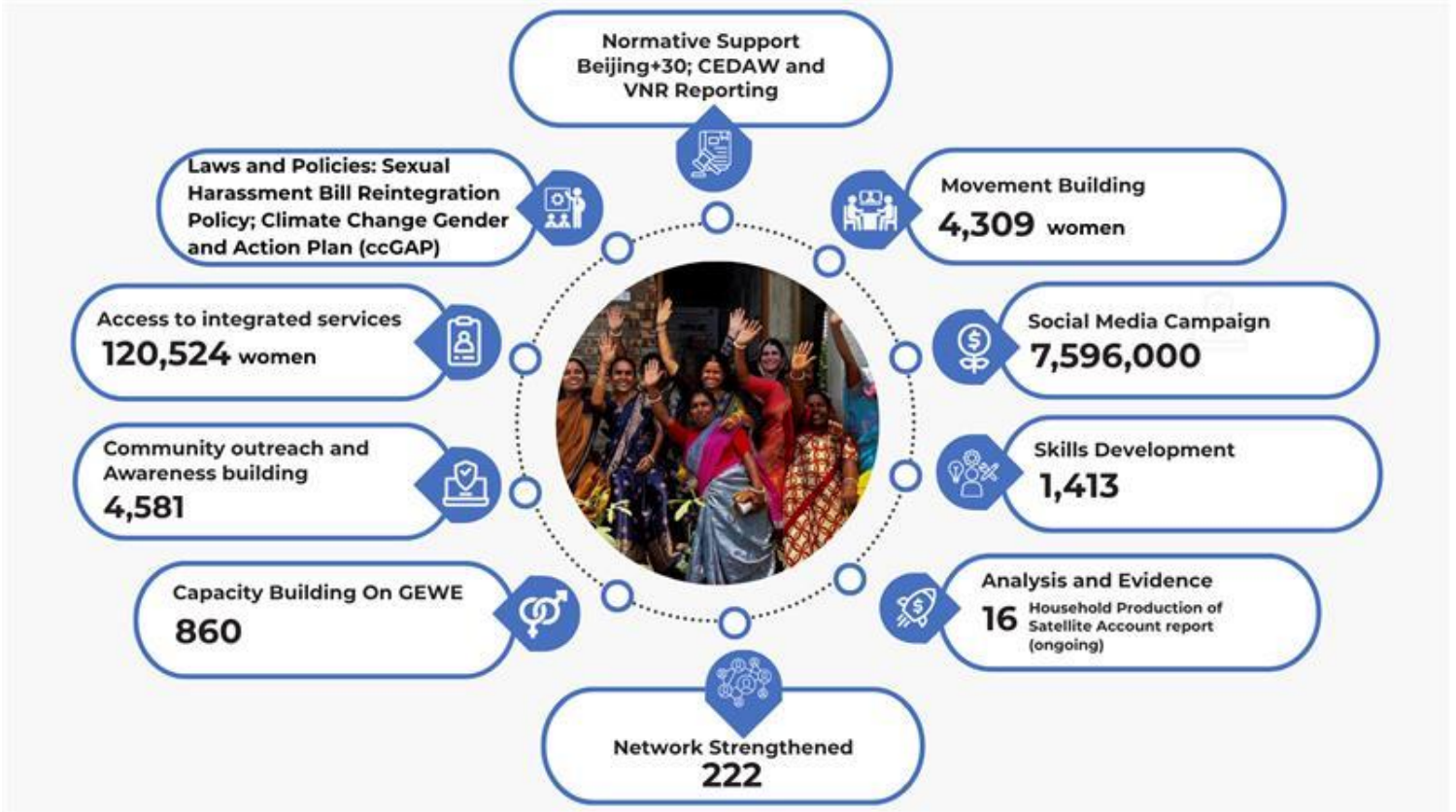
UN Women, in collaboration with Data-Pop Alliance, released a groundbreaking report titled *Towards Caring Cities: A Geospatial Analysis in Dhaka City*. Using innovative geospatial methods, the research maps the supply and demand of care services across Dhaka, demonstrating critical gaps in access, particularly in areas vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. The report emphasises the importance of integrating care infrastructure into urban governance to facilitate women's full economic participation.

CHILD MARRIAGE AND DIGITAL GAPS HOLD GIRLS BACK



A new global report from UNICEF, UN Women, and Plan International reveals that Bangladesh has the highest rate of child marriage in Asia, with more than half (51.4%) of women marrying before the age of 18. Despite progress in education and health, adolescent girls continue to face deep-rooted inequalities, violence and digital skill gaps. Urgent action is needed to meet the SDG targets, improve the quality of education, and enhance adolescent health services. The report recommends investing in girls' empowerment, digital literacy, and economic participation to bridge these gaps and accelerate progress toward national and global development goals. Read [Girl Goals: What has changed for girls? Adolescent girls' rights over 30 years.](#)

RESULTS AT A GLANCE 2024



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