

CASE STUDY

**PROGRESSIVE
POLICY
COMMITMENTS
HERALD IMPROVED
PUBLIC SERVICES**

INTRODUCTION

IMPRINT

UN WOMEN

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women [lead, participate in and benefit equally](#) from governance systems; Women have [income security, decent work and economic autonomy](#); All women and girls live a life free [from all forms of violence](#); and Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in [building sustainable peace and resilience](#), and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and [humanitarian action](#). UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work on advancing gender equality.

GENERATION EQUALITY

Generation Equality is a multistakeholder initiative convened by UN Women in partnership with civil society, youth, governments, the private sector and philanthropists to catalyse partners, increase investments, drive results and accelerate the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals. Generation Equality is anchored in the UN Decade of Action. It emphasizes the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to benefit women and girls in all their diversity.

View the report at: commitments.generationequality.org/annual-report

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The Generation Equality Forums, held in 2021 in Mexico City and Paris to mark the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), emerged as a global multi-stakeholder initiative to accelerate the fight for gender equality. Generation Equality established concrete commitments and action plans for the period from 2021 to 2026. It aims to catalyse global action at local, regional and national levels, spark intergenerational conversations, drive increased public and private investment, and improve accountability. To coordinate and implement commitments, the Forum brings together stakeholders in six [Actions Coalitions](#) and a [Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action](#).

With transformative and measurable actions at its core, Generation Equality emphasizes the need to generate lasting change for women and girls. For that reason, Generation Equality stakeholders pledged to demonstrate how an action can be translated into concrete policy change. Well-resourced policy commitments create an enabling environment for gender equality and provide governments and organizations with frameworks to accelerate investment and implementation.

As 2023 marks the mid-term period of Generation Equality, this is an opportune moment for collective reflection on progress, lessons learned, challenges and opportunities for the future. This case study analyses the nature of policy commitments and sheds light on the progress achieved in their implementation, using the examples provided by the Governments of Argentina, Kenya and Sweden: The Government of Argentina passed a groundbreaking law on women's access to sexual and reproductive health and bodily autonomy in 2020, and in 2023 passed a law which authorized the sale of emergency contraception without a prescription. In 2021, Kenya launched its first policy for police-integrated responses to gender-based violence. And Sweden mainstreams a gender perspective into the requirements for its global work across all country and regional strategies. As a result, 79 per cent of all support provided by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) now includes gender as a main or partial goal. This case study draws insights from the policy experience in these three countries through a series of key informant interviews (KIIs) conducted in August 2023 as well as data from the 2023 Commitments Reporting Survey, to explore how Generation Equality has impacted public policy commitments and offer several key findings and recommendations for Generation Equality policy commitments going forward.

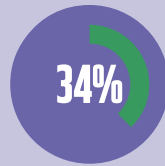


Photo: Un Women DRC/Carlos Ngeleka

KEY FINDINGS



of commitments with a policy component are being implemented in one region, **31%** in **several regions** and **16%** globally.

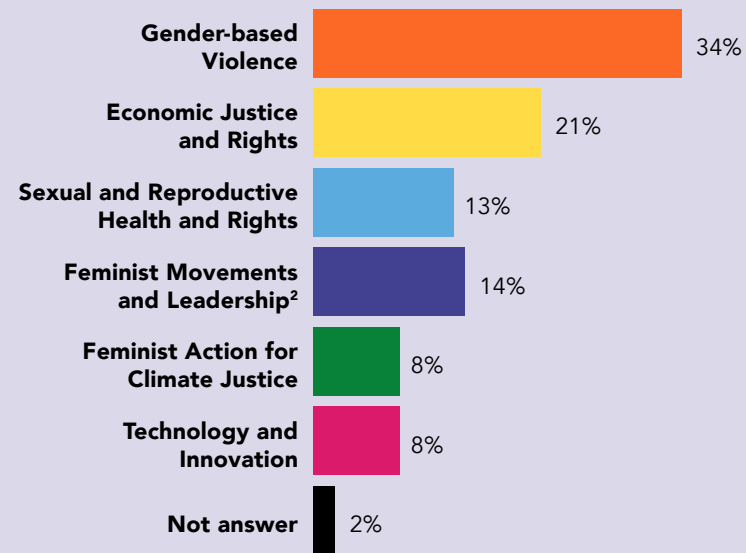


of commitments with a policy component are related to addressing **gender-based violence**, followed by **21%** on promoting **women's economic empowerment**.

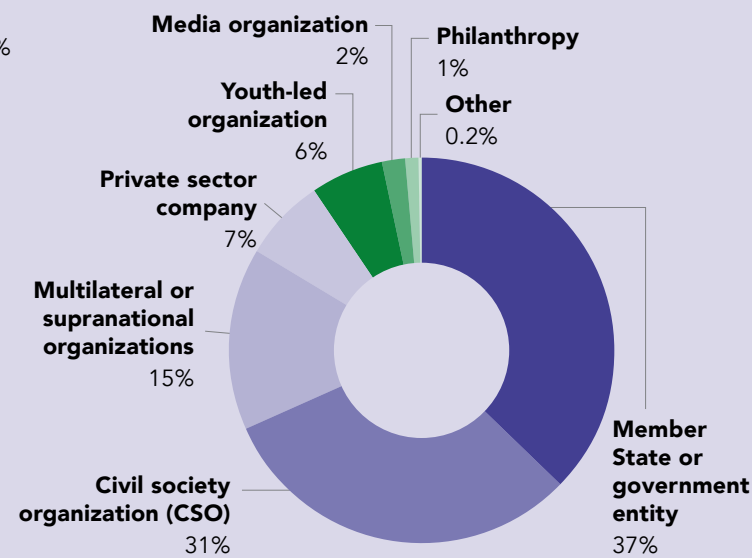


of commitments with a policy component are being implemented with **new or expanded partnerships**.

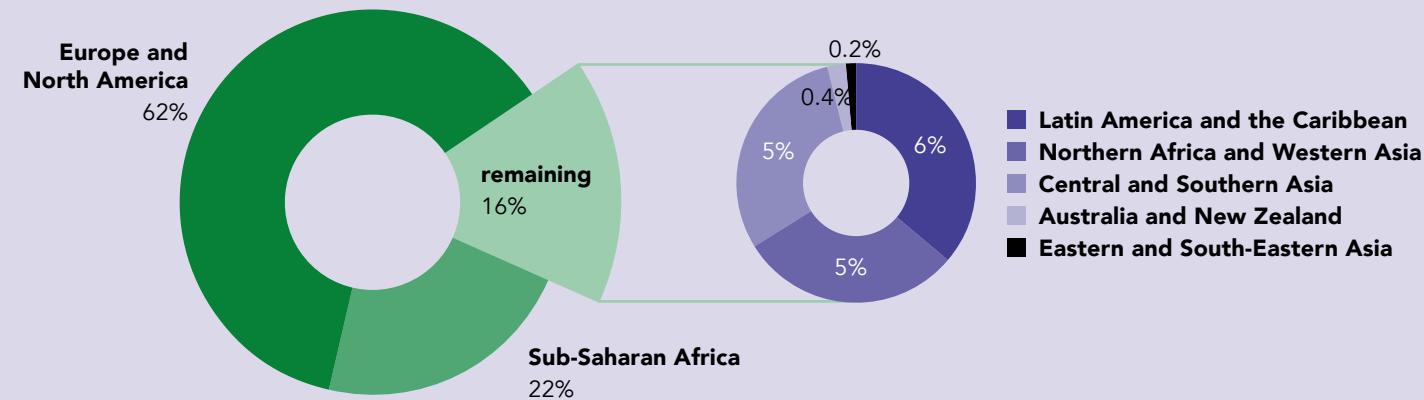
BREAKDOWN OF POLICY COMMITMENTS, BY ACTION COALITION



BREAKDOWN OF POLICY COMMITMENTS BY ORGANIZATION TYPE



GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF POLICY COMMITMENTS



Source: Data are from the [Commitments Dashboard](#) and the second annual [Commitments Reporting Survey](#).¹

¹ Overall, 42 per cent of Commitment Makers have reported (compared to 26 per cent in 2022) on 69 per cent of commitments (more than double last year's reporting rate of 31 per cent of commitments). Despite some methodological limitations, the high survey response rate provides a robust reporting on commitments for an accounting and better understanding of progress made over the past two years. See [Generation Equality 2023 report - Technical Note](#) for details.

1 When governments publicly pledge commitments to Generation Equality, it encourages the reprioritization of national budgets and accountability for the delivery of concrete results.

Through Generation Equality, governments have made public commitments to address gender equality, opening themselves up for greater collaboration between State and non-State actors, peer review and public learning processes. For example, in Kenya, the public announcement of 12 commitments to address gender-based violence by the President of Kenya led to the formulation, financing and implementation of a policare policy, providing GBV survivors with immediate care at two centres (so far), where they can file police reports and receive immediate health care in one place.



2 Generation Equality has generated momentum for governments to intensify their actions to advance gender equality through the creation of new spaces for multilateral dialogue.

Generation Equality has created a space where countries can start to institutionalize certain practices and frameworks and take on new areas of work to advance gender equality. During the co-creation process of Generation Equality in 2021, governments reviewed or consolidated national priorities and fostered dialogue among national stakeholders. In the case of Sweden, women's economic empowerment, which has always been an area of interest and support, became an even higher priority. Similarly, the Government of Argentina decided on a more overt and outspoken approach to its sexual and reproductive health and rights policy, in international and regional fora, especially regarding safe abortion.



3 Coordination and alignment between governmental bodies is fundamental for advancing a cross-cutting gender policy agenda.

The Governments of Argentina, Kenya and Sweden note that the process of formulating policy commitments has increased coordination among government agencies while also raising public awareness. For example, in Argentina, coordination between the Ministries of Education, Health, and of Women, Genders and Diversity, has been necessary for the adequate implementation and monitoring of SRHR policies. While a particular ministry is officially in charge of certain areas of implementation (the Ministry of Education is responsible for the National Comprehensive Sexual Education Programme), open dialogue across ministries has been vital to integrating the expertise of other ministries, leading to a more holistic implementation of policies and programmes.



4 Participation from civil society is fundamental to policy planning, implementation and monitoring.

The 2023 survey data reveal that 73 per cent of policy commitments are being implemented in partnership with CSOs. However, mechanisms must be put in place to ensure their sustained and substantive input. To this end, the Government of Argentina created an Advisory Council composed of CSO members that can make recommendations on policies and also monitor their implementation.



ANALYSIS OF POLICY COMMITMENTS

Generation Equality advances gender-targeted budget allocations

Historically, public policies that speak to gender equality have often lacked necessary financial backing. Generation Equality set out to address this challenge by creating a platform for governments to make high-profile policy and budgetary commitments at the same time. For example, in 2021, President Kenyatta of Kenya publicly announced the country's 12-point plan to address GBV at the Generation Equality Forum in Paris.² This policy commitment was backed by allocations to address GBV and female genital mutilation (FGM) in the national budget – namely, the investment of \$23 billion Kenyan shillings. The development of the Policare Policy is one of the outcomes of this investment. The Government, working with civil society organizations, has: (1) established 54 private shelters and GBV rescue centres in 18 counties; (2) facilitated the integration of GBV services directly into the country's universal health coverage; and (3) created GBV-specialized courts to improve women's access to justice. These achievements demonstrate the importance of having political will anchored at the highest political level. In doing so, public expectation is generated, which then requires the delivery of results. Kenya's efforts to address GBV showcase that if these actions are sufficiently resourced through national budget allocations, public services can be improved significantly. Generation Equality's unique convening power can play a role in securing this kind of high-level buy-in.

In other cases, political will for allocating budgets to gender equality existed prior to Generation Equality but has been key to implementing gender mainstreaming policies within Generation Equality initiatives. For example, Sweden has a long history of gender equality policy, and gender mainstreaming is the country's main strategy for achieving its gender equality policy objectives. Decision A2021/01442 states that "Government offices shall integrate gender equality in its activities 2021-2025."³ It aims

to incorporate gender into all aspects of policy and decision-making, including through the budget, law and government control of agencies, through European Union activities and through international work. Gender budgeting is considered an indispensable tool to realize Sweden's gender equality policy commitments and a best practice for Generation Equality initiatives. The process includes incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budget process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. In collaboration with the Swedish Financial Management Authority, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency (SGEA) has developed a training course on gender budgeting, which is part of the gender mainstreaming guidance material for government agencies. Dialogues during the inception of Generation Equality, among key organisations interested in advancing a multi-stakeholder partnership initiative on gender equality, aided Sweden in solidifying the Government's priorities on women's economic empowerment (WEE) in their domestic and international work by providing an international platform for coordinating gender equality efforts.

In addition to gender-responsive budgeting at the national level, Sweden also works through [Sida](#) to support and facilitate this budgeting in its international development work. For example, Sida supports the [Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation's](#) work in Rwanda to eliminate structural and economic gender inequalities. With the support of the local women's rights organization [Duhozanye](#), Rwandan women have taken steps to influence grass-roots budgeting processes to make sure women's needs and strategic interests are taken into account and reflected in budget allocations at the village- and district-level. Through training, female farmers have learned participatory budget planning and tracking, to monitor whether their needs were included in the budget, and to hold local leaders accountable when budgets

were implemented incorrectly.⁴ **Supporting gender-responsive budgeting in international development projects is a best practice that other**

governments can implement to ensure that their investments/support to other countries are improving public services with a gender lens.

Generation Equality promotes policy development through increased dialogue among stakeholders

The Generation Equality Forum fosters greater communication among multilateral-stakeholders through the creation of dedicated international spaces for dialogue, knowledge-sharing and accountability. Adoption of the multilateral framework established through the Forum has led to co-creation and the revision/development of policies to take into account the realities and needs of all stakeholders, including CSOs and grass-roots organizations. This, in turn, generates good practices that inspire others to create transformative, gender-responsive policies. Through these mechanisms, Generation Equality has provided a space for stakeholders to promote gender equality initiatives in a more united manner.

In the case of Argentina, Generation Equality facilitated intensified dialogues with like-minded governments and led to a more tailored foreign policy. Through its leadership in the Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Action Coalition, Argentina has been in dialogue with countries and civil society organizations in Africa that belong to Action Coalitions. This has enabled them to debate and find common ground and active solutions to issues of diversity and sexual and reproductive rights. Generation Equality is a space to make these connections with a variety of countries. Additionally, leveraging Generation Equality, the Government of Argentina decided to take a more overt and outspoken approach to its SRHR policy in international and regional fora, with a particular focus on safe abortion. It is for this reason that Argentina decided to join Generation Equality and other sexual and reproductive health and rights groups and it became very active in UN negotiations and involved in coordination groups. **Generation Equality brings together like-minded stakeholders in a safe space to exchange ideas on delicate topics and get inspired bring this new thinking to bear in efforts to improve public services.**

Kenyan stakeholders noted that by making a commitment within the Generation Equality framework, they opened themselves up to peer review, collaboration and accountability. This level of collaboration, between State and non-State actors as well as among

other governments, "makes you do your homework," which is to say it establishes a form of accountability by making the Government's gender initiatives more public. For example, Kenya's Policare Policy has benefited from additional support and interest thanks to new and expanded partnerships between the government, CSOs and the private sector that Generation Equality has fostered. This partnership approach supports the sharing of best practices and has strengthened the relationship between the government and grass-roots organizations and created spaces for public accountability. This collaboration has led to increased awareness about GBV in rural communities in particular, as well as new safe spaces within police stations.

Similarly, Sweden noted how Generation Equality has provided a space to present and share information on emerging issues, such as feminist climate justice. They use the insights gained in various dialogues and negotiations and have connected with the private and philanthropic sectors to reach out to new actors. As a result, they have engaged in implementation research about climate justice and have observed significant information sharing on the subject. Moreover, Sida works with country, regional and global strategies that outline sustainable economic development with a specific focus on WEE, mainly through their engagement with the European Union, including through Sweden's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2023.

Generation Equality has the ability to make connections across different and newly emerging thematic areas and support initiatives in a more holistic manner than individual stakeholder initiatives. The Generation Equality structure unites efforts that are happening on many fronts and facilitates connections among governments, ministers and technical staff working on similar issues. For example, the Swedish Government has put increased focus on the nexus of WEE and GBV, including by highlighting economic violence through a conference during the EU presidency in 2023, and at events during the upcoming presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2024.

² See "Generation Equality Forum: Kenya's Roadmap for Advancing Gender Equality and Ending All Forms of Gender Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation by 2026".

³ See Equality integration in the Government Office 2021–2025.

⁴ See Sida's report: [Women's Economic Empowerment – THEMATIC OVERVIEW 2023](#)

Generation Equality has fostered collaboration across government agencies

Generation Equality's distinctive whole-of-society approach to accelerating action for gender equality is evident in a number of commitments that emphasize cross-cutting policies and alignment among multiple government bodies. For example, funding for gender equality, provided by the Swedish Government, is made within the framework of the Gender Mainstreaming Plus Programme, also known as Gender Mainstreaming in Government Agencies (GMGA+). This programme brings governmental agencies together to engage in systematic and strategic sharing and learning, which is vital to creating a common understanding of gender inequality issues. Such common ground forms the basis for strong gender work with societal-level results and provides a model for other countries looking to improve public services by integrating gender mainstreaming at the governmental level. This framework has facilitated the advancement of Sweden's Generation Equality commitments by ensuring that the necessary support and relationships exist to foster gender equality initiatives.

Sida mainstreams gender into its development activities through the use of a Gender Toolbox which provides knowledge, tools and inspiration on how to operationalize gender equality, as well as their

Gender Help Desk, e-learning, gender advisers, gender network and Gender Hub. It recognizes that a solid knowledge and methodological base is more important than ever, due to an increased focus on gender equality in development cooperation. One example of a development project consolidating gender mainstreaming is evident in Sweden's development work in Georgia. By supporting the Joint UN Programme for Gender Equality and organizations working on human rights and women's rights issues in Georgia, Sida contributes to strengthening women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and enhancing women's economic and political power and influence through Generation Equality networking and partnerships.

In Argentina, coordination between the Ministries of Education, Health, and of Women, Genders and Diversity, has been necessary for the adequate implementation and monitoring of SRHR policies. While a particular ministry is officially in charge of certain areas of implementation (e.g., the Ministry of Education is responsible for the National Comprehensive Sexual Education Programme), open dialogue across ministries has been vital to integrating the expertise of other ministries, leading to more holistic implementation of policies and programmes.



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

Participation from civil society is fundamental to policy planning, implementation and monitoring

Engaging CSOs and working across agencies and sectors bolsters public attention and is fundamental to policymaking. This **collaboration among State and non-State actors can help ensure that specific gender equality issues remain a priority for the State despite political shifts and transitions**. Formalizing engagement mechanisms is one way of fostering substantive CSO involvement in policy planning, implementation and monitoring.

For example, Argentina's National Cabinet for the Mainstreaming of Gender Policies has an Advisory Council composed of members of civil society who make policy and implementation recommendations. The Advisory Council meets periodically and holds federal meetings in each of the country's provinces. The Sexual and Reproductive Health Law includes a social monitoring component with collaborative projects carried out between the Government and civil society. The Ministry of Health also formed an Advisory Council to support the National Plan for the Prevention of Unintentional Pregnancy in Adolescence, which complements and reinforces the Sexual and Reproductive Health Law. This council is made up of representatives of various CSOs and its activities strengthen coordination among the Adolescence Directorate, professional councils and other stakeholders working on this issue. Such mechanisms

enable CSOs to play a role in ensuring accountability to public policy commitments, while contributing insights about how public services may be improved over time.

The Kenyan case further demonstrates the value of multi-agency committees and an "all hands-on deck" approach to tackling gender inequality. The Government of Kenya established a three-tier leadership structure to implement and monitor progress on the implementation of Generation Equality commitments, made up of the National Advisory Committee, the National Steering Committee and a Secretariat. The coordination mechanisms have linkages with the National and County gender-based violence and FGM Sector Working Groups. These thematic working groups are committees of the Intergovernmental Forum on Gender and the County Gender Sector Working Group, which were established in 2019 and include both State and non-State actors (see Case Study on Localising Generation Equality for more details). Through the Steering Committee, the State Department develops priorities, monitors progress and discusses budgeting with CSOs, including Equality Now⁵ and youth-led organizations. Leaders in the Government of Kenya report that, as a result of these collective efforts, the number of FGM cases have been reduced across the country.



Photo: UN Women

⁵ The CSO Equality Now has been involved in the development of policies and budgeting, particularly in the work around FGM.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made, each for a specific type of stakeholder, to help improve policymaking and monitor Generation Equality policy commitments:

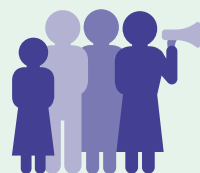
1 For governments:

Increase leadership and senior policy leadership and participation in global gender platforms. As gender equality is a global issue, national policymakers need to be more aware of standards and changes happening at the global level. Commitments made at the highest level – for example, by presidents in global fora – lend authority.



2 For national stakeholders:

Legislation and policy frameworks can be made more robust and national governments could benefit from more technical support and local knowledge provided by non-State actors. Generation Equality can strengthen this collaboration, for example, by yielding such support with database creation and management, or on collecting disaggregated data and monitoring with a gender lens.



3 For governments, CSOs and young people:

Collaborate with each other to generate lasting change, backed by sufficient financial and technical resources for civil society and young people to meaningfully contribute. For game-changing results, governments, donors and international partners need to create environments for the more inclusive and substantive participation of youth and civil society at all levels. Public policy commitments lead to financing and collaboration; CSOs and young people should prioritize demanding these public commitments.



ANNEX

Summary of methodology

The case studies were developed through a mixed-methods scoping review process spanning five stages, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods as well as extensive document analysis. Like other scoping reviews, the proposed methodological approach places equal priority on academic rigour and the need for a rapid and iterative process to develop relevant, timely accounts of impact that demonstrate how Generation Equality is advancing change.

STAGE 1.

Inception and concept development: First, priority themes and relevant cases were identified through consultation with the UN Women Accountability Framework team and refined in light of a preliminary review of Generation Equality background literature. This background literature initially included the Global Acceleration Plan, the draft Action Coalition Accountability Framework, the Generation Equality Accountability Report 2022 and the descriptions of what constitutes a policy, financial and collective commitment.

STAGE 2.

Document analysis: Once the study team has absorbed relevant background information, relevant documents were assembled for each case study. These documents included, for example, internal documents and public reports regarding the work of particular Action Coalitions, the text of commitments that exemplify themes of interest, and the institutional websites and blog posts of organizations that may be featured in the case studies. Preliminary findings from the 2023 Commitments Reporting Survey were reviewed to contextualize the trends and cases to be featured in the case study reports.

STAGE 3.

Data collection: At this stage, the study team conducted key informant interviews with the UN Women Accountability Framework team, Commitment Makers, Generation Equality governance structures and other actors, such as beneficiaries. Informants were selected based on four primary criteria: 1) a high degree of engagement with Generation Equality; 2) substantive participation in Generation Equality initiatives that have demonstrated advanced and progressive results; 3) the relevance of particular institutions and initiatives to the selected case study topics; and 4) representation across Action Coalitions and regions.

STAGE 4.

Data analysis: Documents and interview findings were then charted, analysed thematically and summarized. The central aim of this stage was to triangulate findings from the document analysis and key informant interviews, and to contextualize these qualitative findings in light of the quantitative findings of the 2023 and 2022 Commitments Reporting surveys.

STAGE 5.

Review and finalization: At this stage, the study team produced second drafts of each case study for review by the Accountability Framework team. In addition to drawing out the distinctive features of each case, this stage of writing was also concerned with establishing a consistent voice and format across the case studies.

Resources consulted

- Raw data from the [Generation Equality 2023 - Commitments Reporting Survey](#)
- [GEF Action Coalitions Commitments Dashboard](#)
- Sida - [Women's Economic Empowerment – THEMATIC OVERVIEW 2023](#)
- Swedish Ministry of Employment - [Gender mainstreaming in government agencies](#)
- Sida - [Gender Toolbox](#)
- [Generation equality Forum in Kenya First Anniversary - June 2022](#)
- [Equality Now](#)
- [Spotlight Initiative regional programme for Central Asia and Afghanistan](#)
- [Gabinete Nacional para la Transversalización de las Políticas de Género](#)
- [Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad](#)
- [GABINETE NACIONAL PARA LA TRANSVERSALIZACIÓN DE LAS POLÍTICAS DE GÉNERO Decreto 680/2020](#)
- [EIGE: Sweden](#)

The list of stakeholders interviewed from Kenya, Argentina and Sweden can be found in the list of acknowledgements.



Photo credit: UN Women/Fahad Abdullah Kaizer

