



IN BRIEF



GENDER EQUALITY AND THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

Photo: © UN Women.

Since the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements celebrated in Istanbul in 1996, the world has changed dramatically. In the early 1990s, the percentage of people living in urban areas was just over 42 per cent, in 2015 it was 54 per cent, and in 2030, it is expected to be 60 per cent. By 2050, 7 in 10 people would be urban dwellers, the first time in history that the majority of our global population will be urban. There is a higher proportion of women within the urban population overall, and a concentration of women-headed households in urban centres. Also, the population is becoming younger, and women and youth will continue to make up the majority of people living in poverty with limited control over assets.

We have seen the critical role that urbanization continues to play in accelerating development, how it impacts social cohesion, inclusion, environmental protection, participation and gender equality. Yet the record is mixed. While urbanization patterns have been successful in generating economic growth through increased economic activities in urban areas, they signal less success in the other areas, including in advancing gender equality. Today, twenty years after Habitat II, the majority of women in urban settlements continue to face multiple challenges, and too often women's contributions to city life and creating safe sustainable cities and safe public spaces, are unacknowledged or under resourced.

The structural interlinkages between gender equality and urban sustainable development have been recognized

in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which emphasizes the role of efficient urbanization as the right path towards sustainable development. While SDG 11 calls for making cities and urban settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and commits to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, with explicit reference to women, and a target in relation to eliminating sexual harassment in public spaces, the preamble of the 2030 Agenda states that *“the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.”*

Habitat III gives all stakeholders an opportunity to shape not only the cities and urban spaces of our landscapes, but also the lives of present and future generations.

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UN Women: A strong partner to implement Habitat III

The outcome document of Habitat III, the **New Urban Agenda** (NUA), outlines the challenges and opportunities that the new agenda provides while ensuring that gender equality thrives through sustainable, gender-inclusive and gender-responsive cities. In this context, the NUA strategically supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular mainstreaming gender equality and women’s empowerment across all social development goals. It offers a chance to respond to the challenges and the ever-changing dynamics of human civilization, improve the spatial configuration of cities and human settlements in a gender-inclusive way, and recognize the crucial aspect of women’s rights in the urban development agenda.

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, AND CREATING SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES

The NUA calls for cities to be secure, positive, respectful, and safe places for all people to live and work without fear of violence or intimidation, recognizing that women and girls are disproportionately affected by violence in cities and all human settlements. Violence against women, including sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces is often underreported, for fear of retaliation, mistrust in authorities, shame, and other reasons. Several studies show that this is a universal challenge for cities. In London, a study conducted in 2012 reveals that 43 per cent of young women have experienced some form of harassment in the past year. In Port Moresby, a scoping study reveals that over 90 per cent of women and girls have experienced some form of sexual violence when accessing public transportation.

UN Women promotes the development of an integrated comprehensive evidence-based approach in cities that focuses on strengthening women’s economic empowerment and political participation, and ending violence against women through its Global Flagship Programme Initiative (FPI), “Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces.” The FPI builds on the “Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls” Global Programme, supported by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) launched in November 2010, with leading women’s

organizations, UN agencies and other partners. It is the first-ever global initiative that develops, implements, and evaluates tools, policies and comprehensive approaches on the prevention and response to sexual harassment and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces across different settings.

As part of good urban governance, each champion city that adapts to its context the common global programming framework of the FPI, is poised to significantly contribute to the following sustainable development goals (SDGs): Goal 4 (quality education), Goal 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), Goal 11 (make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), and goal 16 (peace and justice strong institutions). The FPI now spans cities in 22 countries (and growing), generating a number of innovative and sustainable results.

UN Women supports governments, women’s groups and other partners to identify solutions which are gender-responsive, locally relevant and owned, improve attitudes and behaviour related to women’s and girls’ rights to enjoy cities and public spaces free from SVAWG, and empower women to use available, accessible and quality essential services and recover from violence.

In **ECUADOR**, the Quito Safe City Programme was launched in 2011. Based on findings in the Scoping Study on SVAWG in public spaces, and a Women’s Letters Campaign advocating for policy change, the municipality approved an amendment in 2012 to the City Ordinance on Eliminating Violence against Women which now includes the prevention of SVAWG in public spaces. To assist in monitoring the safe city programme and to ensure sustainability in local data collection on sexual harassment in public spaces, the municipal crime observatory was expanded to include this form of violence as a result of the programme. In 2014, the city government approved a Safety City Plan including: transportation free from sexual harassment; safe neighbourhoods for women and girls; children and youth; commitment to eradicate sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in public spaces; and strengthened municipal services for prevention. In 2016, the municipality adopted the Quito Safe City Programme as an emblematic programme with strategies, actions and a budget allocation.

In **EGYPT**, informed by partners (e.g. civil society organizations, ministries, United Nations agencies, and local and international legal experts) coordinated in the

Cairo Safe City Programme since 2011, a penal code article clearly defining and criminalizing sexual harassment was drafted and issued. Egypt's Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development adopted women's safety audits (WSAs) to guide urban planning. Strong participatory mechanisms at the community level in the Cairo Safe City Programme have been established to support implementation. The lead NGO coordinating partner, CARE Egypt, works with an NGO in each of the intervention sites through established community committees. Through different activities (innovative awareness-raising tools through art, theatre, photography and songs), over 20,000 community members have been mobilized to promote women's rights to the city, and to increase understanding in the community on the causes of sexual harassment and its impacts on women and the community. This includes community outreach and training of a broad network of about 100 youth volunteers (50 per cent men and 50 per cent women) who participate in transformative activities in schools and other settings to promote respectful gender relationships, gender equality, and safety in public spaces. A National Strategy on ending violence against women and girls was adopted in April 2015, with 12 Ministries signing a protocol to implement different components of the strategy.

In the **PHILIPPINES**, through a series of consultative processes with authorities, women's grassroots and other community partners in Quezon City, UN Women facilitated the integration of women's safety in a social housing programme – one of the main areas of the Quezon Safe

City Programme. An action plan has been developed to address the lack of systematized data and the lack of legal protection against sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women and girls in public spaces, and the low reporting of SVAWG in public spaces. The Quezon City government in partnership with UN Women and civil society has begun to conduct seminars for the city's 150 Gender and Development (GAD) representatives, and are preparing a training module where the local GAD legislation will be reviewed and amended to address sexual harassment in public spaces.

In **MOROCCO**, the Marrakech Safe City Programme began implementation in 2014. Informed by evidence gathered in the first-ever study conducted on sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in public spaces in Gueliz District, community-based approaches were used to mobilize women and girls and men and boys to promote women's rights to access and use public spaces free from violence and fear of violence. A new partnership established in 2015 with the Autobuses Luarca, S.A. (ALSA) bus company led to the training of over 500 bus drivers on the issue of sexual harassment against women and girls in and around bus stops and on buses and ways to address it. It also included the production and broadcasting in buses of three awareness-raising videos on sexual harassment against women and girls reaching 200,000 transit users daily. In the Rabat Safe City Programme, launched in 2015, transformative initiatives have been developed and integrated into media messaging. This includes strengthened partnerships between UN Women and NGOs



Photo: Giza, Egypt (2015): Art therapy, music and drama can be powerful weapons against sexual abuse and harassment. That's how volunteers with UN Women's Safe Cities initiative teach children and community members important lessons about the value of their bodies and how to prevent sexual violence. Credit: USAID/ Claudia Gutierrez.

Photo on p. 1: Ecuador, Quito. UN Women's Safe Cities Global Initiative was launched in Quito, Ecuador, in 2010 to encourage innovative, locally owned and sustainable approaches to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in public spaces.. Credit: UN Women.

on the ground to conduct an awareness-raising campaign reaching over 80,000 persons. Male agents of change were also trained on how to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces, and were mobilized to increase awareness in the community targeting male-only or male-predominated spaces.

In **VIET NAM**, the project “Community mobilization in prevention of violence against women and girls” has included training members of the Committee for the Advancement of Women, an intergovernmental mechanism promoting gender equality and women’s advancement to better monitor and respond to violence against women and girls at city, district and commune levels. A Safe Community Policy, focusing on gender equality, respectful relationships, and non-violent communication, was developed and implemented by communities. Around 200 members of community reconciliation teams and quick response task forces were coached to change reconciliation approach from “family unity” or “family harmony” to rights-based needs of survivors to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. After two years, they are now able to provide initial counselling for victims and perpetrators independently and support survivors in approaching the formal legal system.

In **AFGHANISTAN**, through the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, UN Women supports 11 Women’s Protection Centers and four Family Guidance Centers across the country, providing women survivors of violence and their children with a safe haven, legal support, health checks and vocational training (e.g. embroidery, tailoring, catering and jewellery making). In 2015, more than 2,800 women and children affected by violence received support through UN Women-funded shelters.

UN Women supports women’s grassroots organizations and NGOs in implementing women’s safety audits (WSAs), and works to encourage governments to adopt WSAs as a multipurpose tool to promote gender-responsive planning.

The WSAs refer to a participatory process where women gather to walk through a physical environment, usually in the evening, evaluating how safe it feels to them, and presenting their findings to the local authorities with recommendations on how to create safe spaces for women and for all. WSAs have been adapted and implemented in several cities, since the tool was first developed by the Metropolitan Toronto Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) in Canada.

Photo: Papua New Guinea (2016). Sergeant Patrina Dikina addresses the crowd gathered at Gordon’s market to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November 2015. Gordon’s Market in Port Moresby has benefited from new infrastructure and better lighting to prevent violence against women, as part of the Port Moresby Safe City Programme. Photo: UN Women/ JosephineSmare.



In **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**, Partners in the Port Moresby Safe City Free of Violence against Women and Girls Programme have taken steps to improve women’s safety in local markets. In 2011, UN Women in partnership with the National Capital District Commission (NCDC) refurbished a large city market which had high rates of violence, and was poorly maintained. The comprehensive efforts put in place from a wide range of partners (NCDC, women’s grassroots, authorities, UN agencies, and NGOs) has helped increase safety, autonomous mobility and income of vendors (the majority of whom are women). As part of gender-responsive planning, several women vendors’ associations have been established in the city’s markets, WSAs have been conducted in markets and along transportation routes, and a gender-sensitive market policy is currently being drafted.

In **INDIA**, as part of the comprehensive Delhi Safe City Programme, with technical support of UN Women and partners such as Jagori, Mission Convergence and the Department of Women and Child Development, 100 WSAs were conducted in 25 areas of Delhi. UTTIPEC (an urban body that brings together stakeholders under the leadership of the Lieutenant Governor and Delhi Development Authority) has adopted WSA guidelines for infrastructure and road improvement projects in the city.

In the way forward, the NUA provides a unique opportunity for many more cities to benefit from the tools, practices and approaches developed under UN Women’s “Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces” Global Flagship Programme Initiative, the Prevention and Essential Services to End Violence against Women and Girls Global Flagship Programme, and other initiatives to ensure that women and girls can live free from violence and fear, and realize their full potential.

The NUA commits Member States to achieve sustainable and inclusive urban economies including through preventing and eliminating all forms of discrimination, violence, and harassment against women and girls in private and public spaces (para 13 c). It aims at ensuring safe, healthy, inclusive, and secure environment in cities and human settlements for all to live, work, and participate in urban life without fear of violence and intimidation, taking into consideration that women and girls, and children and youth, and persons in vulnerable situations are often particularly affected (para 39).

While the NUA supports the provision of well-designed networks of safe, inclusive for all inhabitants, accessible, green, and quality public spaces and streets, free from

crime and violence, including sexual harassment and gender-based violence, considering the human-scale and measures that allow for the best possible commercial use of street-level floors, it also fosters local markets and commerce, both formal and informal, as well as not-for-profit community initiatives, bringing people into the public spaces, promoting walkability and cycling towards improving health and well-being (para 100). Full, effective and accelerated implementation is the challenge now.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

UN Women is working with a variety of partners to promote women’s ability to secure decent jobs, accumulate assets, and influence institutions and public policies determining growth and development. In line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Women strives to “promote women’s economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing its structural causes through changes in economic structures, ensuring equal access for all women (...) as vital development agents, to productive resources, opportunities and public services” (Beijing Declaration, Paragraph 26).

In **AFGHANISTAN**, more and more women are entering the labour force, however that number is growing slowly and women continue to face restrictions, harassment and violence when trying to take up employment. A UN Women-funded survey of seven provinces showed that despite a growing acceptance of women’s economic rights, there are significant gaps between women’s and men’s knowledge and understanding of those rights, and a further gap in realizing them on the ground. UN Women is supporting women entrepreneurs in order to help them increase their business skills, network with other women entrepreneurs and business contacts, and gain better access to markets. This support has resulted in a number of entrepreneurs closing multi-million-dollar export contracts with international buyers. These women are in turn prioritizing the employment and training of other women within their businesses and are sharing their stories with other aspiring women entrepreneurs.

In **BUTHAN**, data indicates that women are active entrepreneurs and that the private sector is an important source of employment. UN Women’s initiatives in support of the craft cottage industry have helped preserve dying craft traditions and address social challenges associated with rapid rural-urban migration. The main objective is to train women in different trades that will help generate

income for their families and improve their living standards. They are also trained in financial literacy and leadership skills that will enable them to take greater roles in the development of their communities.

In **ECUADOR**, UN Women has supported women's economic organizations in four areas; i) building capacities for entrepreneurship, developing business initiatives including in local value chains linking rural production with urban process commerce; ii) marketing and financial leveraging; iii) generating new business ideas to improve their craft production; and iv) participation in local economic policy.

We also work with the local government for the inclusion of gender perspectives in local policies, particularly productive and employment generation. The earthquake in April 2016 showed important economic vulnerabilities for the economic recovery of women, since their former livelihoods were already unstable and insecure. UN Women is working with women in: immediate recovery of businesses focusing on tourism and food production; and technical training for women in masonry and building, for employment in housing and community infrastructure reconstruction. In addition, UN Women is supporting UNDP and the Ministry of Housing in infrastructure recovery to guarantee that community infrastructure includes care services (in order that mothers have opportunities to be involved in economic recovery and training activities), and that safe approaches for women and girls are included in building back better efforts.

UN Women has consistently recognized that investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home. To further strengthen women's economic rights and opportunities, the NUA commits to promote safe, inclusive, accessible, green and quality public spaces as drivers of social and economic development, sustainably leveraging their potential to generate increased social and economic value, including property value, and to facilitate business, public and private investments, and livelihood opportunities for all (para 53).

In **INDIA**, recognizing the paucity of evidence on the gender implications of macroeconomic policies, two research studies were completed with the support of UN Women. The studies raise critical issues on the hitherto unexplored linkages between patriarchy, labour and property rights

and the declining workforce participation with a focus on urban areas. Preliminary findings of the study on Patriarchy and Female Urban Employment were shared at a gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) partners' meeting organized by UN Women in December 2015.

In **KENYA**, a minimum 30 per cent of annual government spending is reserved for women, youth and people with disabilities, following the 2013 regulation resulted from a UN Women-supported review of Kenyan public procurement. UN Women assists women entrepreneurs and women's associations in Kenya to take advantage of the opportunities unleashed by this regulation and increase women's participation in the supply chain. In collaboration with partners, we supported training of 1,500 women entrepreneurs and we are now taking the training to the county level.

In **UGANDA**, UN Women provided technical support for the establishment of a coalition for urban poor women's rights to property and housing. There has been substantial progress towards increasing stakeholder partnership and proactive advocacy at both the national and local levels. We also facilitated access to livelihood resources for survivors of violence against women and girls. The network under this project strengthened coalitions and partnerships with different stakeholders as an incentive to proactive advocacy for poor urban women's housing and property rights.

UN Women advocates for employment policies that improve labour market conditions and advances decent work for women, including domestic workers. We also promote women's economic leadership, whether in public decision-making, on corporate boards or in labour unions. In the same way, the NUA commits to and recognizes the contribution of the working poor in the informal economy, particularly women, including the unpaid, domestic, and migrant workers to the urban economies, taking into account national circumstances. Their livelihoods, working conditions and income security, legal and social protection, access to skills, assets and other support services, and voice and representation should be enhanced (para 59).

In **KAZAKHSTAN**, UN Women helped implement the Regional Migration Programme (RMP), which put the priorities and needs of labour migrants—domestic workers who work in the biggest cities of Kazakhstan—into the policy agenda. The comprehensive advocacy exercise included international networking for experience sharing, analysis of legislation and review of existing intergovernmental agreements on labour migration to capture how issues



Photo: Gujarat, India. An “information fair” in Shihore, Gujarat, bringing together local women and their elected leaders, where community members shared their experiences of using technology to catalyse change. Photo: UN Women/Gaganjit Singh.

concerning domestic workers was undertaken. A gender analysis was also undertaken on the procedures and activities of private employment agencies in order to reveal gaps and give views on following the principles of decent work for domestic workers. The analysis was shared with the ministries responsible for labour migration in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the RMP provided support with the development of a Code of Honour (Conduct) for private employers and employment agencies and a model labour contract for domestic workers. Additionally, UN Women presented women’s empowerment principles and HeForShe at the Astana Economic Forum 2016. This annual event brings together representatives of the world’s economic community, current and former Heads of State, figures from the scientific world and business people to discuss economic development issues and changes in the global economy.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATORY CITIES

As cities develop, UN Women works to ensure that women’s voices and needs are heard, that women participate equally in decision-making and that development policies and efforts include a gender perspective. We foster women’s collective action and the participation of grassroots civil society constituencies, feminist think tanks and universities necessary to build strategic alliances with political institutions at a local, national and global level.

Ensuring a conducive legal framework for women’s organizing; including measures to protect spaces for women’s rights advocacy; scaling up funding for women’s organizations to engage in political advocacy with their governments; ensuring that women are equally represented in leadership, trade unions and other social movements;



Photo: In Ethiopia, UN Women is working with the Government to introduce gender-sensitive budgeting in construction.
Credits: World Bank/Stephan Gladieu.

prioritizing women's rights issues in collective bargaining processes on urban planning; funding training on gender implications for urban policies; and creating feedback loops for urban policy implementation through social audits by women's organizations and service users are all critical to improve performance on gender-responsiveness of urban regulation, social protection and social services. The NUA

knowledge in productive development and environmental management. In this process the participation of the women was fundamental: the local committees set up were the space women used to both prioritize demands as well as to negotiate with the authorities to include specific action that responds to the women's agenda.

In **ETHIOPIA**, With the financial support of UN Women, the Ministry of Urban Construction and Development has formulated gender indicators and directives in the Ministry's programme budget manual. The Ministry also ensured every year at least two per cent of the total budget is allocated to address gender issues. In addition, they are working toward ensuring more women benefit from the employment opportunities and at the same time addressing the gender pay gap in the construction sector through different awareness creation activities.

In **HONDURAS**, awareness-raising among women and general public knowledge on the link between urban violence and gender inequalities has been a key action by UN Women resulting in the collective formulation of a Citizen Security Agenda for Women in the Central District. Women in other communities view the document as a powerful advocacy instrument and the Citizen Security Agenda is being expanded to include the voices of women in 13 neighbourhoods. The Citizen Security Agenda includes concrete proposals and demands on domestic and intrafamily violence, sexual violence, citizen security for women's rights defenders, safe public spaces and recovery of public spaces for women's use and enjoyment.

In **IRAQ**, UN Women is working with women candidates towards change. Many candidates have been successful, thanks in part to a quota law to ensure at least one-quarter representation in Parliament, and also making inroads on

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