



The Beijing Commitment:

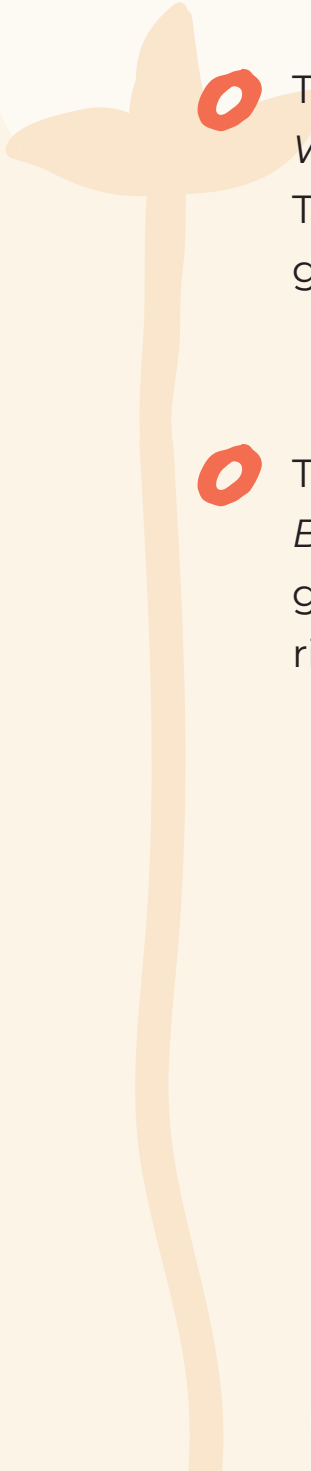
Progress and Unfinished Business in Ending Violence Against Women

A deeper look into the
history and evolution of
the Beijing Platform for
Action's critical area on
Violence Against Women





The Beijing Conference: A Milestone for Women's Rights



 The 1995 *Fourth World Conference on Women* was held in Beijing in 1995. The conference brought together **189** governments and **17,000** activists.

 The Conference resulted in the *Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)*, a groundbreaking agenda for women's rights at a global scale.



30 years later, the BPfA remains one of the foundational texts in the movement for gender justice.

A Global Blueprint for Global Women's Rights

The BPfA is a comprehensive and strategic framework that aims to advance women's rights in all spheres of life, identifying 12 critical areas of concern:

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|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Education & Training of Women | 2. Power & Decision-Making |
| 3. Women & Health | 4. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women |
| 5. Violence against Women | 6. Human Rights of Women |
| 7. Women & Armed Conflict | 8. Media and Information |
| 9. Women & Poverty | 10. The Environment |
| 11. Women & the Economy | 12. The Girl Child |

Each area has specific targets and action points for governments, international organizations and civil society to realize gender equality. The UN Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) is one global accountability mechanism where governments report on their progress.

Every 5 years, there has been a review of the progress made in Beijing that brings fresh insights and priorities.

Ending Violence Against Women: A Core Issue in Focus



The BfPA invites governments to take action to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against women, framing VAW as both a violation of human rights and a barrier to achieving gender equality.

Violence against women is defined as:

“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”

In addition, BPfA states that “violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women’s full advancement.”

The document references specific types of violence such as: domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, forced sterilization and forced abortion, female infanticide, and female genital mutilation (FGM).



Key Strategies from the BPfA to Address Violence Against Women



There are 3 strategic objectives defined in BPfA:

D.1 Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women, such as:

- Governments must condemn violence, enact/reinforce a legal framework for VAW, ratify human rights norms, mainstream gender, provide mechanisms of justice for survivors, among others.
- Governments, community orgs, NGOs, public & private sectors are compelled to provide well-funded, linguistic and culturally accessible response services, fund information campaigns for communities to effectively respond and prevent VAW, among others.
- Governments, employers, trade unions, community and youth organizations, and NGOs to eliminate sexual harassment and VAW in institutions & workplaces, provide support programs for girls, adolescents & young women, and take special measures for the most vulnerable including young women, displaced women, women with disabilities, among others.

D.2 Study the causes and consequences of VAW and the effectiveness of preventive measure, such as:

- Governments should promote research and data collection, disseminate findings, and encourage media to examine gender stereotypes.

D.3 Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking trafficking, such as:

- Governments of countries of origin, transit and destination, regional and international organizations should ratify international conventions on slavery and trafficking, address root factors of trafficking, coordinate action among law enforcement authorities and institutions, and develop training programs to prevent sex tourism & trafficking.
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Progress and Gaps Over the Last 30 Years

Beijing + 5 (2000): Reaffirming Commitments, Recognizing Gaps

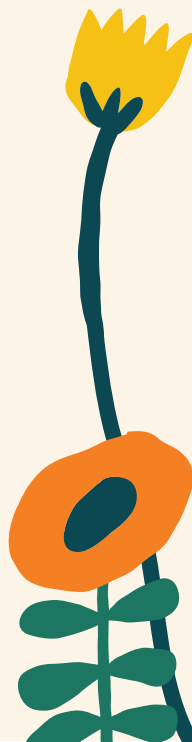
- **Successes:** reaffirming global commitment to end VAW, increased attention on VAW as a gender equality issue
- **Challenges:** lack of implementation, inadequate data collection
- **Key demands:** better data collection and reporting

Beijing +10 (2005): Increasing Focus on Prevention and Comprehensive Responses

- **Successes:** new laws adopted, recognizing need for comprehensive services
- **Challenges:** inconsistent enforcement of laws, under-resourced and inaccessible services, especially for rural and marginalized communities
- **Key demands:** greater enforcement of laws and policies, integration of VAW into national action plans, improved access to services

Beijing +15 (2010): Integration of VAW into Broader Human Rights Framework

- **Successes:** recognition of VAW as a human rights issue, integration into national development policies, increased attention to intersectional nature of VAW
- **Challenges:** inconsistent enforcement of laws, disproportionate levels of violence for refugees and ethnic minorities
- **Key demands:** Greater funding for VAW prevention programs, continued advocacy for accountability on commitments made



Beijing +20 (2015): Spotlight on the Digital Age and New Forms of Violence

- **Successes:** increased legislation on VAW, recognized intersectionality of violence
- **Challenges:** inconsistent enforcement of laws, limited funding, rise of cyber harassment
- **Key demands:** stronger law enforcement, protections against digital and online violence in legal frameworks, increased support for women in conflict-affected areas

Beijing +25 (2020): Addressing Violence in the Context of Global Crises

- **Successes:** recognition of link between crises (like COVID-19) and domestic violence, more attention to online violence and digital safety
- **Challenges:** surge in violence during lockdowns, inadequate responses to violence in emergencies, lack of resources & political will to implement EVAW strategies
- **Key demands:** urgent funding for VAW prevention & response in emergency response and recovery plans, protection of women from digital violence

Looking Ahead: A Call for Continued Advocacy and Action at Beijing +30



Beijing +30 calls for a renewed global commitment to ending violence against women, offering an opportunity to take stock of the progress made and to recommit to actions that prevent violence and support survivors.

Specific attention will be made to:

- **Accountability**
 - Strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure the full implementation of laws and policies that address VAW
- **Resources**
 - Demanding sustained funding especially as violence continues to manifest in new ways, including digitally and in post-pandemic contexts
- **Recommitment**
 - Encouraging BPfA stakeholders to recommit to their initial political pact

As we enter the Beijing +30 era, we invite the following questions:

- Which commitments have been held or honored?
- Which commitments are lagging or need attention?
- How can the gaps be addressed and by who?

We all have a role to play in realizing a world where all women and girls are free from violence in this generation by building stronger, more accessible accountability mechanisms, urging funders to resource feminist movements working to end VAW and advocating to policymakers that to fulfil their commitments under BPfA.



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