

# FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

Speaker's notes for Power Point slides  
(text in English for translation)

## Slide 1:

### Feminist foreign policy

- Sweden has a long tradition of promoting human rights and gender equality both nationally and internationally.
- In October 2014, yet another step was taken as Sweden became the first country in the world to launch a feminist foreign policy.

## Slide 2:

### Why a feminist foreign policy?

- Discrimination, violence and systematic subordination still mark the daily lives of countless women and girls around the world.

### Some examples of many - looking at *Rights, Representation and Resources*:

#### Rights

104 countries around the world have laws preventing women from carrying out certain jobs (for example in mining, manufacturing, the construction industry, energy, agriculture, water and transport) (According to the World Bank publication "Women, Business and the Law 2018")

The World Health Organization estimates that 30 - 60 percent of all women around the world have been subjected to physical and/ or sexual attacks at some point in their lives.

#### Representation

A study of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 revealed that only nine per cent of negotiators were women. Of those who signed peace agreements, more than 96 per cent were men. (According to data published in a Global Study commissioned by UN Women in 2015).

Statistics from 2017 show that there are only 17 women heads of state in all the world's nations.

### **Resources**

Women own less than 20 per cent of the world's land resources. In many countries, women do not have the legal right to own land. (World Economic Forum)

- The goal of a feminist foreign policy is to promote a gender equal world by countering this kind of discrimination with full force and everywhere
- This is in line with Sweden's conviction that gender equality is a goal in itself but also a prerequisite for reaching other goals such as peace, security and sustainable development

### **Slide 3:**

So, let us explore **what the feminist foreign policy is and isn't.**

1. It is not a fixed package that always looks the same. Instead, the policy is:

- a perspective
- an approach
- and a way of working

2. It is not something that only concerns one/some of the areas of foreign policy. Instead, the policy means that:

- all aspects and areas of the foreign policy are to be gender mainstreamed.

3. It is not something that is done sometimes and ad hoc or is left to dedicated persons with "gender" in their portfolios.

Instead, the policy is:

- a responsibility for everyone in the organization/system to be applied within each person's area of work.

4. And it is not a women's issue. Instead, gender equality:

- concerns and benefits everyone.

Research shows that gender equal societies enjoy better health, stronger economic growth and higher security. It also shows that gender equality contributes to peace, and that peace negotiations in which women have taken

part have a better chance of leading to sustainable results. Just to mention some examples...

#### **Slide 4:**

The feminist foreign policy begins and ends with **Reality**. The policy is based on facts and statistics about girls' and women's everyday lives, and produces results in people's lives. Otherwise, it loses its relevance.

This means that the perspective and working method we use is based on the **Reality** in the context at hand and structured according to three other **Rs**: **Rights, Representation and Resources**.

*So for example;*

- What does the **Reality** captured by statistics say about the differences between women and men, girls and boys?
- Do they have the same **rights** – to education, work, marriage, divorce and inheritance?
- Are women **represented** where decisions affecting them are made – in parliaments, on boards and in legal systems?
- Is gender equality taken into consideration when **resources** are allocated – in central government budgets or development projects?

The analysis also has to go deeper and take into account that there are groups within the groups where people have different living conditions, levels of influence and needs (= *intersectionality*).

#### **Slide 5:**

**Sweden's work is guided by:**

- International conventions and frameworks.
- EU and national laws and goals.

**And in the case of the Foreign Service:**

- The perspective of the four R's.
- And a yearly action plan.

**Some of the overarching areas we focus on are:**

- **Human rights** overall, and that all women and girls must be able to enjoy them, in full.
- **Violence** and the fact that all women and girls should be able to enjoy freedom from both physical, psychological and sexual violence

- **Peace** and the vital importance of women's participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and in post-conflict peacebuilding
- **Political participation** and influence in all areas of society – which still lag behind in the case of women
- **Economic empowerment**, participation and influence – where a lot remains to be done in the area of gender equality
- And **sexual and reproductive health and rights** which is crucial in itself but also linked to everything else (economy, possibilities to influence etc.)

**Slide 6:**

Different realities demand different approaches but it is always crucial to identify actors and instruments that are key for change in the reality at hand.

**Actors**

- A broad range of actors, both nationally and internationally
- Alliances and joint ventures are essential
- And to engage men and boys for gender equality

**Instruments**

***Both external ones:***

- political dialogue,
- accountability,
- agenda setting for highlighting women and girls as actors and promoting their rights and opportunities

***And internal ones:***

- data collection
- gender analyses

**Four components have been essential both internally and externally**, since they are key if you want to change something, both within a state or an organization:

- Leadership
- Ownership
- Guidance
- Support

***Internally***

Clear leadership was early combined with an invitation to the whole organization to join the thinking of how the policy should be developed. This created ownership that has since then been supported by clear guidance via

regular systems and processes, and support by a coordination hub. This combination has been very successful.

### ***Externally***

We promote the same four components using all our different entry points, as partners, board members, donors etc.

### ***Examples:***

- We continuously talk to leaders and managers about the importance and gains of gender equality,
- We create platforms where ownership can be spread and articulated,
- We promote (in states) or demand (in organizations where we are co-owners) guidance through legislation and/or strategies,
- We suggest new functions of support and coordination if they do not exist (ex. EEAS Principal Adviser on Gender and Women, Peace and Security)

### **Slide 7:**

#### **Working with norms:**

Norms play a big role in relation to gender equality and the possibilities for women and girls to fully enjoy human rights.

Therefore, a feminist foreign policy needs to deal with stereotypical norms.

As norms often lie deep within us, there is a need to work in different ways. Here are some of many examples of how you can do it;

- Highlight gender equality as a goal in itself, but also as a prerequisite for achieving other goals, like social and economic development etc.
- Use arguments that are built on facts, research and examples.
- Forge partnerships with more and new actors who, in turn, have the possibility to reach new groups.
- Use communication and campaigns in a strategic way, linking broad messages to the local context (Wikigap, Swedish Dads, Midwives4All).
- Identify common challenges (men's violence against women, differences in pay etc) and how gender equality can be part of the solutions.
- And use every possibility for dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.

### **Slide 8:**

**And what has happened so far** after working with actors, instrument, leadership, ownership, guidance, support and norms?

*In short:*

The feminist foreign policy has:

- been met with great engagement internally
- which has led to implementation world wide
- and a substantial international interest

We have assembled experiences and examples from four years of work in a handbook, available for free download online, but here are some of them.

**Slide 9:**

### **Examples of the policy in action**

So, how can the policy look like and lead to?

- As chair of the multi-stakeholder initiative **“Call to Action on protection from gender-based violence in emergencies”** (2016-17) Sweden managed to increase the number of members substantially (17 new ones) and also facilitated that the members adopted over 300 concrete commitments in relation to the road map.
- We continuously **raise questions about women’s and girls’ rights, representation and resources all over the world**. On Rights we have – for example - promoted new legislation related to violence against women and supported national justice systems in implementing such legislation. On Representation we have facilitated the increase of women in parliaments and in peace processes. And on Resources we have supported the economic empowerment of women through local, regional and international initiatives for jobs, entrepreneurship and trade.
- **One initiative in the area of trade** has been to develop a **Gender Tool Box** together with UNCTAD. The toolbox aims to help governments, officials and other actors to predict and assess the effects of trade policy initiatives for women and gender equality. In this way, the toolbox can contribute to trade playing greater role for inclusive development and for women’s economic empowerment.
- **We work in/through the EU**. Gains for ex: Gender Action Plan for all external action, post as Principal Advisor to EEAS on Gender and Women, Peace and Security.
- We also work in/through the **United Nations** as a major donor but also as an active member, including of the Security Council (non-permanent

member 2017-18) where we have been able to promote a more integrated and sustained way of promoting the women peace and security agenda.

- We also take **concrete initiatives** to address gaps, such as the lack of women in peace dialogue and mediation. In line with this we launched a Swedish and Nordic network of women mediators in the autumn of 2015.
- We have reached millions of people through **communication campaigns like #midwiveforall and #wikigap**. *#Midwivesforall* has reached more than 4,5 million people only in Uganda but one of the targeted initiatives and hashtags that has had the greatest impact is *#WikiGap*. Wikipedia is the world's biggest online and user-generated encyclopedia. Its content influences users' knowledge about the world. However, there is a great imbalance. Ninety per cent of the content has been created by men, and there are four times more articles about men than about women. To help bring about change, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in partnership with Wikimedia and a number of local partners – launched an initiative called *#WikiGap* to add information about women to Wikipedia. Many embassies hosted workshops in connection to the International Women's Day on 8 March 2018 but work continues and has also transformed into a tool box for everyone to use and set up.

We hope to be able to keep the momentum and to achieve more real results for gender equality and for the human rights of all women and girls.

**Slide 10:**

Thank you!