

Twentieth Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325:

Financing gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile contexts

OECD DAC NETWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY (GENDERNET) • 2020

Policy brief

This policy brief has been developed for the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security.¹ It provides an overview of OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members' aid to gender equality and women's empowerment in 57 fragile and conflict-affected countries and territories (hereafter referred to as contexts). In particular, it takes stock of financing gaps that need to close in order to deliver on gender equality commitments, especially in the challenging context of the COVID-19 pandemic.²

Introduction

Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever before to provide support for gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected contexts and to encourage additional financing efforts on the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. As indicated in the OECD policy brief on "Response, recovery and prevention in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in developing countries: Women and girls on the frontlines",³ recovery efforts must be gender-responsive if there is to be sustainable and inclusive growth.

Before the pandemic, almost 80 million people were fleeing war, persecution and conflict.⁴ That level, the highest ever recorded, is likely to increase due to COVID-19. It is projected that poverty rates for women will increase to 9.1% by 2021 as a result of the pandemic, with the largest increases in extreme poverty foreseen for sub-Saharan Africa and Central/South Asia.⁵ While none of the fragile countries was on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment before the pandemic, mounting evidence indicates that hard-won progress is rapidly backsliding.⁶

Gender inequality, conflict and fragility are inextricably linked. Almost all countries that feature at the bottom of global gender equality indexes are also classified by the OECD as fragile countries.⁷ Inequalities are in fact a key driver of conflict and fragility.⁸ Conflict and fragility often have very negative impacts on women and girls, such as increased rates of violence against them. At the same time, women have an important role to play in conflict prevention and resolution. It is therefore imperative to enhance gender equality in order to achieve Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the development of peaceful, and inclusive societies.

UNSCR 1325 and the Security Council's nine subsequent resolutions call for progress on different aspects of the women, peace and security agenda (see the box below). These resolutions are also relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, as Resolution 2242 (2015) recognises health pandemics as part of the peace and security agenda, and highlights the need for including a gender equality perspective. In its Resolution 2532 (adopted in July 2020), the Security Council supports the UN Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire and calls for women's participation in the development and implementation of COVID-19 response measures.⁹ UNSCRs are legally binding for UN Member States – thus, not only fragile countries and territories but also DAC members are obliged to take action to implement the resolutions.

International frameworks on the women, peace and security agenda

In 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, laying out four central engagement pillars for women in conflict settings: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. The WPS agenda has today developed from UNSCR 1325 into a fully fledged policy and institutional framework with nine more UNSC resolutions – two of which focus on agenda setting (1325, 2242), three on participation (1889, 2122, 2493), and four on protection (1820, 1888, 1960, 2106, 2467), in particular from sexual violence.

In addition to the UN Resolutions, in 2013 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Recommendation No. 30 was adopted on the rights of women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict reconstruction. The recommendation extends the Convention's mandate to address the situation of women in all stages of the conflict cycle, and mandates states to collect data on the WPS agenda and report on national governments' compliance with UN benchmarks. Furthermore, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development recognises that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to peace, security and sustainable development, even though neither SDG 5 on gender equality nor SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions explicitly references the WPS agenda.

Twenty years following adoption of UNSCR 1325, there is important political momentum to assess progress made by the women, peace and security agenda. The year 2020 brings together a number of milestone anniversaries on gender equality and women's empowerment, including the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325; the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; and the 5th anniversary of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. In addition, five years have passed since publication of the reviews of the UN peace-building and peace operations architecture, which issued specific recommendations on gender equality directed at the United Nations and its Member States.

The Security Council progress reports on the women, peace and security agenda¹⁰ offer a comprehensive overview of the main achievements and remaining challenges in this area of work. Overall, the Security Council finds that “few actors have fully implemented commitments... Many initiatives remain small in scale, ad hoc and project-based, without guarantees of longer-term support. Increased political leadership, resourcing and accountability for results are needed from all actors.”¹¹ These findings are echoed in the UN Women Report on the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform of Action, which points out that an increasingly militarised peace and security agenda fails to uphold women's human, economic and social rights. The report outlines that military expenditure has nearly doubled over the past 25 years – reaching USD 1.82 trillion in 2018 – and strongly advocates investment of this funding into efforts to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment.¹²

Financing gender equality in fragile contexts

This section provides an overview of how much aid goes to gender equality in fragile contexts, the main donors and recipients, and the priority sectors.

How much aid goes to gender equality in fragile contexts?

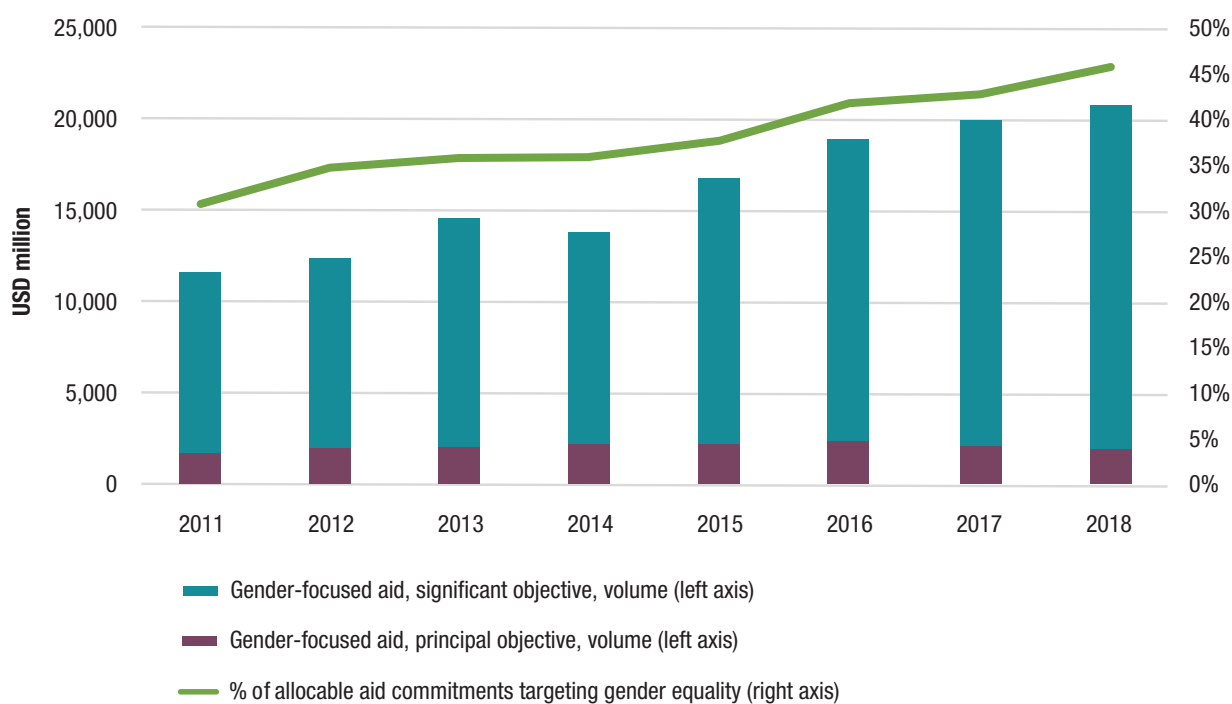
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DAC members are reprogramming their agendas and trying to find ways to step up their support to developing countries – efforts that may be challenging given the dire economic situation in their own countries. While there is as yet no comprehensive overview of these funding efforts, DAC members issued a COVID-19 statement mentioning that they would strive to protect Official Development Assistance (ODA).¹³ The statement also highlighted the importance of taking into account the role of women and girls in crisis response.

ODA¹⁴ to developing countries overall reached USD 153 billion in 2019. USD 48.7 billion of bilateral allocable aid (on average per year) focused on gender equality in 2017-18. That corresponds to 42% and is higher than ever before. The bulk of this amount (USD 44.2 billion) was committed to programmes that integrate gender equality

as a significant, or mainstreamed, policy objective. Only USD 4.6 billion was dedicated to gender equality as the principal objective of the programme, corresponding to 4% of bilateral aid.

In fragile countries and territories, ODA is the second most important source of external finance after remittances. In 2018, DAC members provided 82% of this ODA and therefore have a key role to play in the financing landscape of fragile contexts.¹⁵ Total bilateral aid from DAC members to fragile contexts has been steadily rising over the past ten years, reaching USD 46.8 billion in 2017-18. Figure 1 indicates that USD 20.5 billion of bilateral aid (on average per year) focused on gender equality in fragile contexts in 2017-18. This corresponds to 45% of bilateral aid, a share almost doubling over the past ten years. The bulk of this aid (USD 18.4 billion or 40%) was committed to programmes that integrate gender equality as a significant, or mainstreamed, policy objective. Only USD 2.06 billion was dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective of the programme, corresponding to 4.5% of bilateral aid to fragile contexts. As compared to five years ago, the share of aid to fragile contexts dedicated to gender equality as the main objective has decreased (it stood at 6% in 2012-13) and as a secondary objective has increased (the figure then was 29%).

Figure 1: Aid in support of gender equality and women’s rights in fragile contexts, 2011-18,
■ annual commitments



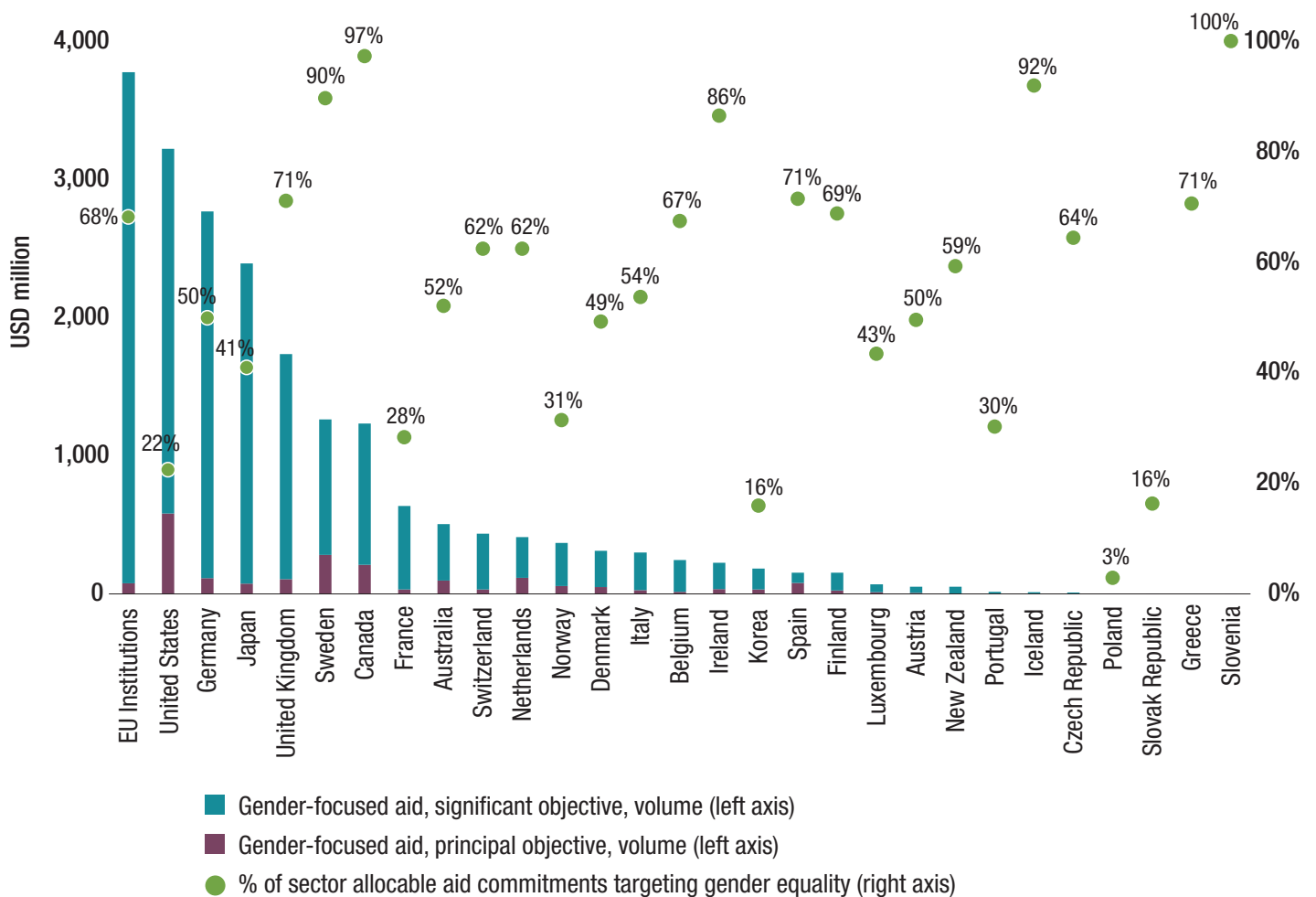
Note: Constant 2018 prices.

Who are the main donors?

The left axis of figure 2 shows that in fragile contexts, the European Union (USD 3.8 million), United States (USD 3.2 million), Germany (USD 2.8 million) and Japan (USD 2.4 million) remain the leading donors in terms of volumes of aid focused on gender equality in 2017-18; these amounts have remained relatively stable over the past five years. They are also the top donors in developing countries overall. The largest increases in aid to gender equality in fragile contexts since 2014-15 were reported by Slovenia, Switzerland and the Czech Republic.

In fragile contexts, Canada (97%), Iceland (92%), Sweden (90%) and Ireland (86%) have the highest shares of aid focused on gender equality. All aid to fragile contexts from Slovenia focuses on gender equality even though the volume of this aid is low.¹⁶ Canada, Iceland, Sweden and Ireland also have the highest shares of gender-focused aid to developing countries overall. The majority of DAC members have allocated a larger share of aid to fragile contexts focused on gender equality in 2017-18 than in 2014-15. However, not all of them made progress. The largest decreases took place for Denmark (minus 17 percentage points [pps]), Germany (minus 12 pps), and Belgium (minus 10 pps) over the same period.

Figure 2: Aid from DAC members focused on gender equality in fragile contexts, 2017-18,
■ annual commitments

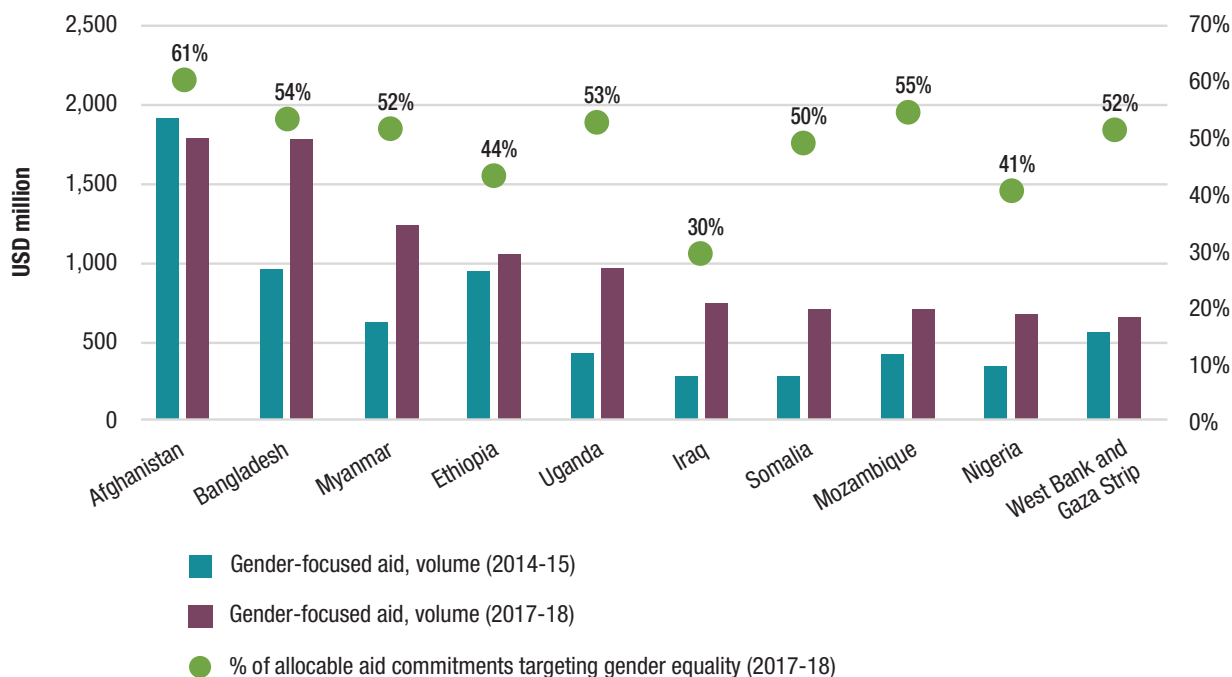


Note: Constant 2018 prices.

Who are the main recipients, and what are some key regional trends?

The priority accorded to gender equality in the funding of fragile contexts differs vastly, in terms of both volume and percentage of aid targeting gender equality. Figure 3 shows that over 50% of aid to gender equality in the 57 fragile contexts identified by the OECD is concentrated in just 10 of those contexts.¹⁷ As indicated in Figure 5 only five of the ten largest fragile recipients of aid have 50% (or more) of aid focused on gender equality, with large differences among countries.¹⁸ Since large sums of aid go to fragile contexts, the potential for integrating gender equality or designating it a principal objective is huge.

Figure 3: Ten largest fragile recipients of gender equality focused aid, in volume (2014-15 vs. 2017-18), annual commitments



Note: Constant 2018 prices.

Figure 4: Ten largest fragile recipients of aid focused on gender equality, in percentage (2014-15 vs. 2017-18), annual commitments

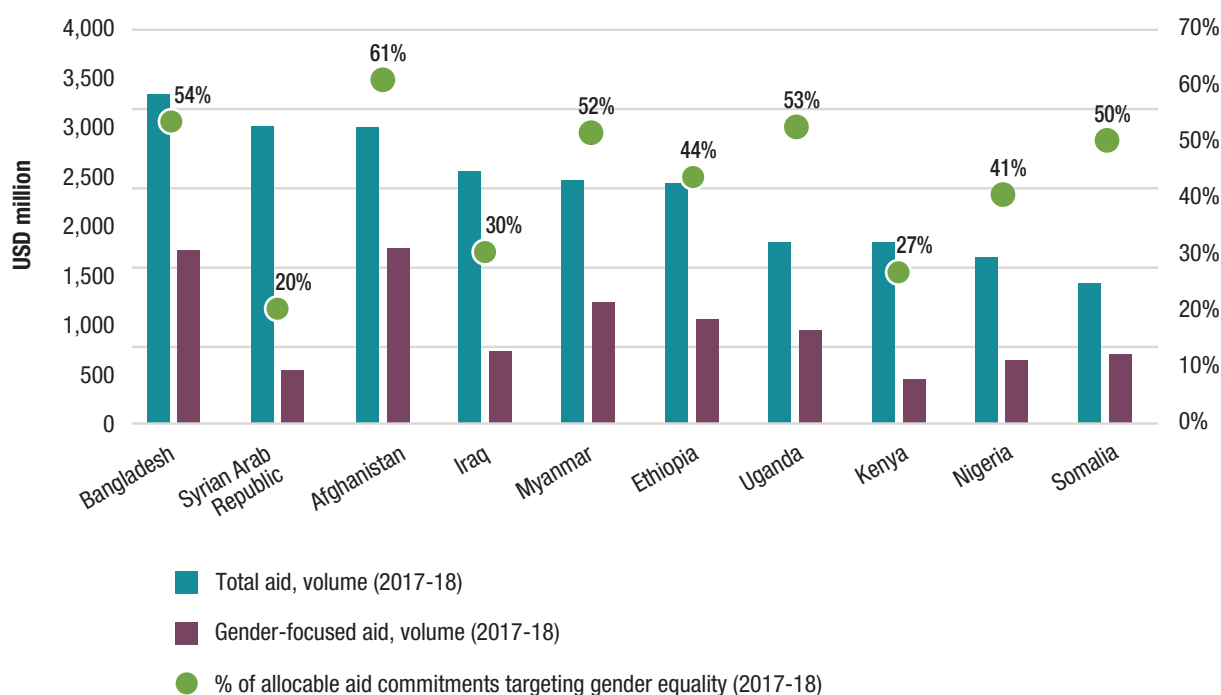


Note: Constant 2018 prices.

A number of regional trends with regard to aid recipients can be observed. The ten largest fragile recipients of (gender equality-focused) aid in volume include five African, three Asian and three Middle Eastern contexts (Figure 3 and 5). The ten largest fragile recipients of gender equality-focused aid in percentage include nine African countries and one Asian country (Figure 4). Within different regions, the largest fragile recipients of gender aid (in terms of both volume and percentage) are not always the countries with the highest levels of gender inequalities. For example, while Niger, the Central African Republic and Chad are the bottom three countries of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 2018 Gender Development Index,¹⁹ they are not among the top ten fragile recipients of gender-focused aid.

Provision of gender-focused aid in fragile contexts seems to be volatile. Countries that received high levels of gender-focused aid in the past do not necessarily receive similar levels today, even though significant gender inequalities continue to exist. For example, Tanzania, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – respectively the fourth, fifth and seventh largest fragile recipients of gender equality-focused aid in 2014-15 – were no longer among the top ten recipients in 2017-18. Uganda, which was not ranked among the top ten fragile recipients of gender equality-focused aid in 2014-15, has become the fifth largest recipient. There have also been changes in other countries. Since 2014-15, Pakistan and South Sudan have moved out of the top ten fragile recipients of gender equality-focused aid, while Iraq, Somalia, Mozambique and Nigeria have moved into the top ten.

Figure 5: Ten largest fragile recipients of aid and share of aid integrating gender equality, 2017-18, annual commitments



Note: Constant 2018 prices.

The analysis below provides more detailed information on trends of gender-focused aid in regions/sub-regions:

Asia

- In 2017-18, aid in support of gender equality has almost doubled in Bangladesh and Myanmar since 2014-15. This may be a result of the response to the Rohingya refugee crisis.
- In Afghanistan, aid volumes focused on gender equality have increased steadily over the past ten years, with the percentage of that aid increasing from 44% in 2009-10 to 61% in 2017-18. The country also receives high volumes of per capita aid focused on gender equality: USD 49, compared to an average of just over USD 23 per capita across all fragile contexts.
- Pakistan and Iran do not feature among the top ten fragile recipients of gender aid, while they do feature among the bottom ten countries in the various global gender indexes²⁰.

Africa

- **West Africa.** Seven out of ten of the largest fragile recipients of gender equality-focused aid in percentages are West African countries²¹ (Figure 4). Three of these countries are located in the Sahel region (Mauritania, Gambia and Mali). Nigeria receives high volumes of aid focused on gender equality (Figure 3). However, when population size is taken into account, Nigeria fares poorly – receiving just USD 4 per capita of aid to gender equality. The priority on gender equality is particularly relevant in this region, which faces political instability and the surge of local terrorist groups trying to curtail women's rights. Niger and Chad do not feature among the top ten fragile recipients of gender aid, while they do feature among the bottom ten countries in the various global gender indexes²².
- **Horn of Africa.** Aid to gender equality in Ethiopia has increased slightly since 2014-15. Progress on gender equality in the country has been made recently, especially with regard to women's leadership and political empowerment. Ethiopia is currently the only African country with a female head of state in office. Aid in support of gender equality has more than doubled in Somalia since 2014-15, and Somalia receives high volumes of per capita aid focused on gender equality (USD 50). While the political empowerment of women in the country has improved recently, Somalia has the world's highest maternal mortality rates and women continue to suffer from the effects of instability, including violent extremism.²³ In Eritrea, 92% of aid focused on gender equality in 2017-18, up from only 19% in 2014-15. This is the highest percentage of aid focused on gender equality in any fragile context even though most projects are not dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective. Djibouti also has a high percentage of aid focused on gender equality (65%) and receives high volumes of per capita aid focused on gender equality (USD 72). While South Sudan is among the bottom ten countries in the UNDP Global Gender Index, it is not included in the top ten fragile recipients of gender aid.
- **Eastern, Central and Southern Africa.** Aid in support of gender equality has more than doubled in Uganda since 2014-15. The volume of aid to that country is much higher than in neighbouring countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which faces serious gender inequalities including high incidences of violence against women. The higher amounts of aid in Uganda may be due to the country's active role in SDG processes, which can lead to better capacity to mobilise funding. Mozambique also features in the top ten list of recipients of gender-focused aid. Aid to that country has been rising steadily since 2014-15, in line with its high rates of poverty and gender inequality.²⁴ While overall volumes of aid focused

on gender equality in Angola are relatively low (USD 220 million), the percentage of aid focused on gender is high (74%). The Central African Republic, the DRC, Burundi and Zimbabwe do not feature among the top ten fragile recipients of gender aid, while they do feature among the bottom ten countries in global gender indexes²⁵.

Middle East

- The volume and percentage of aid focused on gender equality in Iraq has more than doubled over the past five years. Even though there is progress, still only a small percentage (30%) of aid to the country focuses on gender equality; this is nowhere near meeting the extensive challenges the country faces in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. While Syria was the second largest fragile recipient of aid (USD 598 million), only a very small percentage of that aid (20%) focused on gender equality in 2017-18. The same scenario is seen in Yemen, which receives high amounts of aid (USD 387 million) but only 27% of which is focused on gender equality. The volume of gender-focused aid to the West Bank and Gaza has increased steadily over the past ten years, reaching USD 673 million in 2017-18. The West Bank and Gaza are also the largest fragile recipients of per capita aid to gender equality (USD 149).

Which sectors are prioritised?

This section focuses on the different sectors that figure prominently in the implementation of Resolution 1325 in fragile contexts. The government and civil society sector (84%) as well as social sectors such as education (70%) and health (62%) have high percentages of aid targeting gender equality. While large amounts of aid go to the economic and productive sectors (USD 11.7 billion) and humanitarian sector (USD 12 billion) in fragile contexts, the percentages of aid targeting gender equality in these sectors are rather low. The following sections provide further details per sector.

Humanitarian sector, peace and security

In 2017-18, almost USD 12 billion of aid was allocated to the humanitarian sector in fragile contexts.²⁶ However, only 23% of these large amounts of aid focused on gender equality, up from 19% in 2014-15. That percentage is especially low, considering the key role of women in the resilience of their families and communities in emergency situations. At the same time however, this percentage of aid to the humanitarian sectors masks differences among the sub-sectors. For example, 78% of aid to immediate post-emergency reconstruction and rehabilitation in fragile contexts focused on gender equality, as compared to only 10% for emergency food assistance.

In order to raise funding for the COVID-19 response in the most vulnerable countries, a UN-co-ordinated humanitarian appeal was launched, in the form of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 (GHRP). Acknowledging the additional challenges that women face in humanitarian contexts, the GHRP makes reference to the importance of paying attention to gender inequalities. Currently, of the USD 10.19 billion requested in the GHRP, only 31.5% has been funded. In addition, a complementary gender programme²⁷ to the GHRP was adopted, and it is estimated that USD 30.4 million would be required to implement this programme.

In 2017-18, 42% of aid to the peace and security sector²⁸ in fragile contexts focused on gender equality. This is an increase over 2014-15, when it stood at 37%. However, only 3% of aid to the peace and security sector in fragile contexts was dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective, and this percentage has not changed since 2014-15. The sub-sectors of peace and security show the following results:

- The gender equality focus of aid on “hard” security issues, such as security system management and reform, increased significantly over the past decade, from 27% in 2009-10 to 64% in 2017-18.

- The proportion of gender-focused aid to fragile contexts for “participation in international peacekeeping operations” has almost doubled since 2014-15, and now stands at 49%. This is in line with the recommendations of the 2015 UN peace-building and peace operations architecture reviews, which prescribe the need to mainstream a gender equality perspective throughout all stages of peacekeeping operations.²⁹ Further progress is nevertheless necessary, as illustrated by the fact that only 5.4% of military personnel in UN peacekeeping missions are women³⁰.
- In 2017-18, 42% of aid to fragile contexts on “civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution” focused on gender equality. While this is a slight increase over 2014-15, additional funding could be allocated to encourage better results. Even though the UN tries to ensure the participation of women in peace negotiation delegations, women’s participation remains limited. It is also reported that only 22% of peace agreements include a gender equality perspective.³¹
- In order to increase gender funding going to the peace and security sector, the UN Secretary-General recommends that at least 15% of UN-managed funds in support of peace-building should be dedicated to projects that focus on gender equality as a primary objective.³² This target could be applied more broadly by the DAC community with the aim of dedicating 15% of funding going to peace and security to gender equality as a primary objective.

Health and education

As early as 2015, UN Security Council Resolution 2242 recognised health pandemics as part of the peace and security agenda, and highlighted the need for including a gender equality perspective. The COVID-19 crisis has put gender equality issues in the health sector squarely into the limelight. Globally, women comprise 70% of the health and social care workforce, and make up the majority of front-line health workers such as nurses, midwives and community health workers.³³ In addition, the pandemic highlighted the key role that women play in keeping their families and communities healthy and in caring for sick relatives. This is even more so for women in fragile contexts, where the number and capacity of health facilities may be limited. Women’s unpaid contributions to healthcare make up 2.35% of global GDP, the equivalent of USD 1.5 trillion.³⁴ The ongoing pandemic will also have significant negative impacts on women’s sexual and reproductive health, especially in fragile contexts where access to contraceptives as well as to quality pregnancy-related and newborn care is limited. It is estimated that one year’s disruptions to health services due to the COVID-19 pandemic may result in 15 million unintended pregnancies, 28 000 maternal deaths, and 3.3 million unsafe abortions in low- and middle-income countries.³⁵

The 2014 Ebola crisis made clear the importance of taking into account a gender equality perspective in pandemics and in the health sector more broadly. Nevertheless, gender-focused aid to the health sector in fragile contexts decreased slightly after 2014. In 2017-18, 62% (USD 1.6 billion) of aid to health³⁶ in fragile contexts focused on gender equality, of which USD 265 million was dedicated to gender equality as a primary objective. This percentage is higher than in developing countries overall, where it stood at 42%. Over 38% (USD 1.5 billion) of aid to population policies and reproductive health³⁷ focused on gender equality. Particularly relevant in the current health crisis is that only 36% of aid (USD 106 million) to infectious disease control in fragile contexts focused on gender equality in 2017-18. This percentage is higher than in developing countries overall, where it stood at 24%. Thus aid in support of gender equality should be further increased to help better address the crisis and ensure that the health sector fully considers the needs of women and girls.

UNESCO estimates that 11 million girls may not return to school this year due to the disruptions caused by the ongoing pandemic.³⁸ In many fragile contexts, girls that are out of school will take on more unpaid care work at home and may be at higher risk of gender-based violence. In 2017-18, 70% (USD 2.1 billion) of aid to education in fragile contexts focused on gender equality, out of which USD 171 million was dedicated to gender equality as a primary objective.

Economic and productive sectors

Enhancing women's economic empowerment is a prerequisite for reducing poverty and achieving more sustainable and inclusive growth in fragile contexts. The McKinsey Global Institute estimates that equal participation in the economy by women and men could increase the GDP of sub-Saharan Africa (which hosts most of the world's fragile countries), and the Middle East and North Africa by 27% and 47%, respectively.³⁹ Around the world, women still have less access to assets and productive resources such as land and financial resources. In addition, women have more difficulties than men in finding decent work opportunities. These challenges are further compounded for women living in fragile contexts, where competition over these scarce resources and opportunities often leads to conflict.

While both women and men are suffering from the economic consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak, evidence increasingly points to sharper effects on women than on men.⁴⁰ In fragile contexts, the vast majority of the workforce is active in the informal sector. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa 74% of women in non-agricultural jobs work in the informal sector, and their income fell by 81% during the first month of the pandemic.⁴¹

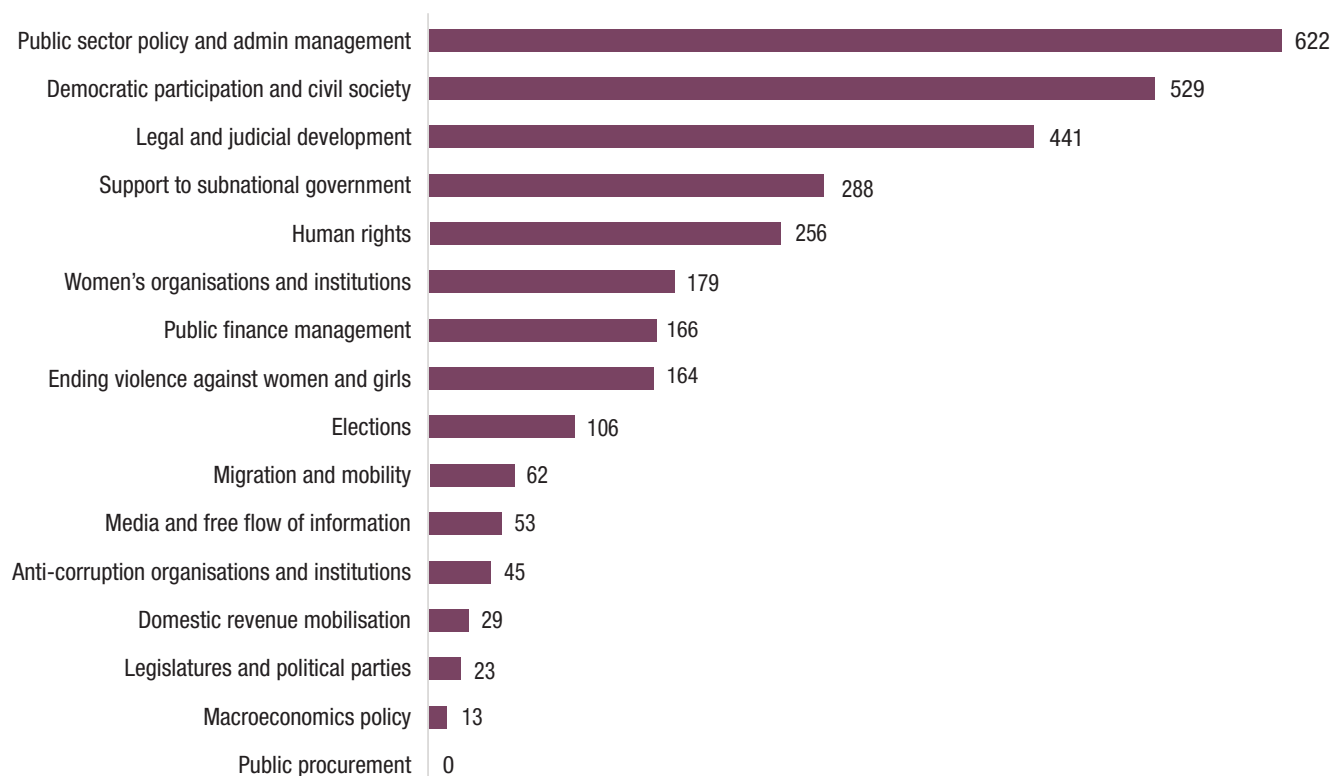
DAC donors invest large amounts in the economic and productive sectors in fragile contexts – USD 11.7 billion per year in 2017-18 – and 49% (USD 5.6 billion) of this amount focused on gender equality. Only USD 228 million (2%) of the USD 11.7 billion was dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective. The UN has indicated that at least 30% of funding for economic recovery programmes in conflict and post-conflict situations should be dedicated specifically to gender equality.⁴²

Within the economic and productive sub-sectors, the banking and financial services sector has the lowest percentage of aid focused on gender equality in fragile contexts in 2017-18 with 12%, and that percentage has remained roughly the same over the past five years. While the energy sector has the second lowest percentage of aid focused on gender equality at 13%, the percentage has more than doubled over the past five years. At 68% and 63%, the agriculture and tourism sectors have the highest percentage of gender-focused aid in fragile contexts in 2017-18. This is an increase of 20 percentage points and 24 percentage points respectively since 2014-15. Further improvements could also be made on trade policies and regulations, where only 26% of aid focused on gender equality in 2017-18, down from 40% in 2014-15. The percentage of aid focused on gender equality in transport and storage (47%) as well as in industry, mining and construction (39%) has gone up significantly over the past five years, but there is still room for improvement.

Government and civil society

Women's participation in leadership is key towards building lasting peace and creating more inclusive and sustainable economies. COVID-19 has further amplified the need for bringing women to the decision-making tables in order to ensure that response and recovery measures include a gender equality perspective. DAC donors are placing a relatively strong emphasis on gender equality in their aid to the government and civil society sector in fragile contexts, which includes support for institution-building and citizen's democratic participation. This reflects the priorities agreed in the women, peace and security resolutions, which call for greater participation of women at all decision-making levels in post-conflict situations.

Figure 6: Volume of gender equality-focused aid to sub-sectors of government and civil society in fragile contexts, 2017-18 average commitments



Note: Constant 2018 prices.

A total of 84% of aid to government and civil society in fragile contexts focused on gender equality in 2017-18, up from 77% in 2014-15. This percentage is high partly because some sub-sectors, such as ending violence against women and girls and women's organisations, are fully focused on gender equality. In most of the other sub-sectors, over 60% of aid was focused on gender equality in 2017-18. In 2017-18, 67% of aid to democratic participation and civil society (USD 529 million) and 59% of aid to elections (USD 106 million), both in fragile contexts, had a focus on gender equality.

UNSCR 2122 (2013) recognises the crucial contribution of women's organisations to conflict resolution and peace-building.⁴³ The resolution calls on Member States to develop dedicated funding mechanisms and increase their contributions to women's organisations at the local level. The 2015 reviews of the UN peace-building and peace operations architecture further emphasised the importance of systematically involving women's organisations in conflict resolution and peace-building.⁴⁴ Women's organisations in fragile contexts have also significantly contributed to providing support to families and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, these organisations continue to lack sustainable funding beyond short-term project support. In 2017-18, women's organisations and institutions in fragile contexts received USD 179 million, which represents 0.39% of gender equality-focused aid to fragile contexts. This is an increase from 2014-15, when these organisations in fragile contexts received USD 174 million. Multi-year, flexible and accessible core funding remains critical to support women's organisations in their key contributions towards building lasting peace. Therefore, the UN Secretary-General has set a new target of multiplying by five the percentage of funding going directly to women's organisations.

A number of resolutions on women, peace and security have called upon parties to prevent and end sexual violence in conflict. Data from before the COVID-19 pandemic indicate that globally, 18% of ever partnered women and girls (from 15 to 49 years old) have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner in the last year.⁴⁵ Emerging data show that violence against women and girls has gone up since the COVID-19 outbreak. Women and girls living in fragile contexts often suffer from violence, and there is evidence that sexual violence is used as a tactic of war and terrorism in a number of fragile contexts.⁴⁶ In fragile contexts, aid focused on violence against women and girls stood at USD 164 million in 2017-18.⁴⁷ Addressing gender-based violence is one best funded areas of the COVID-19 GHRP, so far receiving over USD 41.1 million – which is almost 60% of the requested sum.

Recommendations for upholding women, peace and security commitments

While DAC members' aid in support of gender equality and women's rights in fragile contexts has increased rapidly, it falls far short of the political commitments that governments have made. Many of the recommendations issued on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 are still valid today.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic risks reversing hard-won progress on gender equality, especially in fragile contexts. The 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 – in parallel with the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 5th anniversary of the SDGs – offers a critical opportunity to ensure that ambitious commitments are matched by ambitious investments. This will require that governments:

- Live up to their commitment to “strive to protect” ODA in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments should at least maintain the current levels of ODA going to gender equality in fragile contexts and ideally increase levels of funding, bearing in mind the gender impacts of the pandemic. In particular, they should:
 - address areas of underinvestment in DAC donor support for gender equality in fragile contexts, particularly in the economic and productive sectors as well as the humanitarian sector
 - increase dedicated efforts and targeted funding in addition to gender mainstreaming
 - increase predictable, accessible and flexible funding for women's organisations working on peace and security at all levels, and work towards achieving the UN Secretary-General's target on multiplying by five the percentage of funding going directly to women's organisations
 - enhance efforts to attain the UN Secretary-General's target of dedicating at least 15% of UN-managed funds to peace-building to projects that focus on gender equality as a primary objective, while ensuring that the remaining 85% mainstreams a gender equality perspective.
- Better co-ordinate DAC donor aid to gender equality in fragile contexts so that aid is going to the countries where the needs are highest. Financing strategies should adopt a holistic sub-regional approach, since conflict often crosses boundaries and similar issues may arise in different countries/contexts of a sub-region.
- Monitor the results of the investments made on gender equality, making sure that funding allocated to different types of stakeholders has an impact on the ground.
- Continue providing detailed data on aid in support of gender equality in fragile contexts and increase the capacity to analyse and communicate data.

- Exchange promising practices on funding gender equality in fragile contexts. The DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) offers a platform for peer learning and exchange of experiences among different types of stakeholders on this topic.
- Support the development of further analysis on other official flows beyond ODA that focus on gender equality in fragile contexts. These other official flows include loans that do not qualify as aid; grants to the private sector to soften its lending terms; and funds – such as blended finance – in support of private investment.

Methodology

The list of fragile contexts used in this report is based on the classification of the 2020 OECD fragility framework⁴⁸ and includes the following 57 countries and territories: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of the Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Venezuela, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The figures in this paper are based on the amounts of DAC members' aid that have been screened using the gender equality policy marker – a statistical tool to measure whether aid activities target gender equality as a policy objective.⁴⁹ Aid activities can be classified as targeting gender equality as a “principal” or “significant” objective, or as “not targeted”. “Principal” means that gender equality was the primary objective of the activity. “Significant” means that gender equality was an important but secondary objective. “Not targeted” means that the activity was screened using the gender equality policy marker but was found to have no focus on gender equality. The latest available data go back to 2017-18, bearing in mind DAC members' reporting cycles and the time needed to process this information. In 2017-18, 96% of all bilateral “sector-allocable” aid was screened against the gender equality marker.

1 Security Council resolution 1325, S/RES/1325(2000) (31 October 2000), available from undocs.org/en/S/RES/1325 (2000).

2 This publication is the follow-up to the OECD policy brief on the same topic in the framework of the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. See OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (2015), *Financing UN Security Council Resolution 1325: Aid in support of gender equality and women's rights in fragile contexts*, available from <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/financingunsecuritycouncilresolution1325aidinsupportofgenderequalityandwomensrightsinfragilecontexts.htm>

3 OECD (2020), *Response, recovery and prevention in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in developing countries: Women and girls on the frontlines*, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/response-recovery-and-prevention-in-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-in-developing-countries-women-and-girls-on-the-frontlines-23d645da/>

4 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>

5 UN Women (2020), *From insights to action. Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19*, <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5142>

6 OECD (2020), *States of Fragility*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ba7c22e7-en>.

7 The bottom ten countries in the OECD 2019 Social Institutions and Gender Equality Index are Yemen, Pakistan, Iran, Jordan, Guinea, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Iraq, Philippines and Afghanistan.

The bottom ten countries in the United Nations Development Program 2018 Gender Development Index are Niger, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Pakistan, Burundi, Mali, Eritrea and Zimbabwe.

The bottom ten countries in the WEF 2020 Global Gender Gap Index are Yemen, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Chad, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Oman.

8 OECD (2017), "Gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected situations: A review of donor support", *OECD Development Policy Papers*, No. 8, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b75a1229-en>.

9 Security Council resolution 2532, S/RES/2532(2020) (1 July 2020), available from [undocs.org/en/S/RES/2532\(2020\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2532(2020)).

10 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security*, 9 October 2019, S/2019/800, available from undocs.org/en/S/2019/800; and UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security*, 25 September 2020, S/2020/946, available from undocs.org/en/S/2020/946.

11 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security*, 9 October 2019, S/2019/800, available from undocs.org/en/S/2019/800.

12 UN Women (2020), *Women's rights in review 25 years after Beijing*, unwo.men/eDNK50yyBhA.

13 Development Assistance Committee DAC of the OECD, *COVID-19 global pandemic joint statement*, 9 April 2020, <http://www.oecd.org/development/joint-statement-by-the-oecd-development-assistance-committee-on-the-covid-19-crisis.htm>.

14 Official development assistance (ODA) is defined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee as government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Check the on-line database on ODA-eligibility: <http://oe.cd/oda-eligibility-database>

15 OECD (2020), *States of Fragility 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ba7c22e7-en>.

16 This can be explained by the types of programmes funded by Slovenia; nearly all focus on the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls.

17 Those ten countries and territories are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Uganda, Iraq, Somalia, Mozambique, Nigeria and West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Territorial disclaimer: The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

18 Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Uganda and Somalia.

19 United Nations Development Program 2018 Gender Development Index.

20 OECD 2019 Social Institutions and Gender Equality Index; United Nations Development Program 2018 Gender Development Index; World Economic Forum 2020 Global Gender Gap Index.

21 Angola, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritania, Gambia and Mali.

22 OECD 2019 Social Institutions and Gender Equality Index; United Nations Development Program 2018 Gender Development Index; World Economic Forum 2020 Global Gender Gap Index.

23 UN Somalia, Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2020, available from https://unsom.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/un_somalia_gender_equality_strategy2_0.pdf.

24 Mozambique is among the bottom ten countries in the UNDP Human Development Index, gender equality 2018.

25 OECD 2019 Social Institutions and Gender Equality Index; United Nations Development Program 2018 Gender Development Index; World Economic Forum 2020 Global Gender Gap Index.

- 26** The humanitarian sector includes the following items from the OECD database: material relief assistance and services; emergency food assistance; relief co-ordination and support services; immediate post-emergency reconstruction and rehabilitation; and multi-hazard response preparedness.
- 27** UN Women, *Gender-Responsive Humanitarian Life-Saving Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Saving Lives, Reducing Impact & Building Resilience*, July 2020, available from <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/proposal-gender-responsive-humanitarian-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2311>.
- 28** The peace and security sector includes the following items from the OECD database: security system management and reform; civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution; participation in international peacekeeping operations; reintegration and small arms and light weapons (SALW) control; removal of land mines and explosive remnants of war; child soldiers (prevention and demobilisation).
- 29** UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security*, 9 October 2019, S/2019/80, available from undocs.org/en/S/2019/80.
- 30** UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security*, 25 September 2020, S/2020/946, available from undocs.org/en/S/2020/946.
- 31** UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security*, 25 September 2020, S/2020/946, available from undocs.org/en/S/2020/946.
- 32** UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security*, 9 October 2019, S/2019/80, available from undocs.org/en/S/2019/80.
- 33** UN Women (2020), *From insights to action. Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19*, <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5142>
- 34** UN Women (2020), *From insights to action. Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19*, <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5142>
- 35** Guttmacher Institute, “Estimates of the Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Low- and Middle-Income Countries”, *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, Volume 46, 2020, pages 73-76. <https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/ipshr/2020/04/estimates-potential-impact-covid-19-pandemic-sexual-and-reproductive-health>.
- 36** The health sector includes the following items from the OECD database: health policy and administrative management; health statistics and data; medical education/training; medical research; medical services; basic healthcare; basic health infrastructure; basic nutrition; infectious disease control; health education; malaria control; tuberculosis control; health personnel development; non-communicable disease (NCD) control, general; tobacco use control; control of harmful use of alcohol and drugs; promotion of mental health and well-being ; other prevention and treatment of NCDs; research for prevention and control of NCDs.
- 37** The population policies and reproductive health sector includes the following items from the OECD database: population policy and administrative management; population statistics and data; reproductive healthcare; family planning; sexually transmitted disease (STD) control, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS); personnel development for population and reproductive health.
- 38** UNESCO, *Keeping girls in the picture*, <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/girlseducation> (accessed on 17 November 2020).
- 39** McKinsey Global Institute, *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women’s Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth*, September 2015, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth>.
- 40** OECD (2020), *Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis*, https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=127_127000-awfnqj80me&title=Women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-COVID-19-crisis and OECD (2020), *COVID-19 crisis in the MENA region: impact on gender equality and policy responses*, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-crisis-in-the-mena-region-impact-on-gender-equality-and-policy-responses-ee4cd4f4/#section-d1e240>.
- 41** UN Women (2020), *From insights to action. Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19*, <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5142>
- 42** UN Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security: 2011-2020, July 2011, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/Strategic_Framework_2011-2020.pdf.
- 45** UN Women (2020), *From insights to action. Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19*, <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5142>
- 46** World Bank, “Working to address gender-based violence in fragile situations”, *World Bank Blogs*, 15 November 2016, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/working-address-gender-based-violence-fragile-situations> and Security Council resolution 2467, S/RES/2467 (2019) (23 April 2019), available from undocs.org/en/S/RES/2467 (2019).
- 47** Data on aid targeting gender equality in the area of violence against women (VAW) were not yet available in the OECD database before 2017-18.
- 48** OECD (2020), *States of Fragility 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ba7c22e7-en>.
- 49** The DAC has 30 members as of September 2020. The statistics in this paper are based on data reported by all DAC members excepting Hungary, which is one of the newer DAC members and has not yet reported on the gender equality policy marker. For a complete definition of the DAC gender equality policy marker, see <http://www.oecd.org/development/stats/aidinsupportofgenderequalityandwomensempowerment.htm>.

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