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# GENERATION EQUALITY FORUM

Policy Brief on Iceland's  
Roadmap for Ending Gender-  
based Violence by 2026

**Government of Iceland**

Prime Minister Office and Ministry for Foreign Affairs



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# SUMMARY

The Generation Equality Forum is a global gathering for gender equality convened by UN Women and co-chaired by France and Mexico in partnership with civil society and youth. The global initiative seeks to take stock and accelerate the gender equality commitments grounded in the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action from 1995 to achieve transformative change. The main objective is to spur financial and political commitments for gender equality and drive a multi-sectoral movement to ensure action and accountability. Participating is an opportunity to advance women's rights, strive to achieve full and real gender equality, and strengthen political efforts to fully and effectively implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

The Icelandic Government's leadership in the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence aligns with Iceland's commitment to fully implement Agenda 2030 nationally and internationally. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been integrated into government policy on social, economic, and environmental affairs, emphasizing building a peaceful and just society, free from fear and violence.

This policy paper outlines 23 commitments by the Government of Iceland to ending all form of gender-based and sexual violence as a prerequisite for receiving gender equality and accelerate action at the national and the international level by:

- **Strengthening** the implementation of Iceland's legal and policy framework addressing gender-based violence, which has gone through a thorough review during the last decade. This review has led to fundamental changes in legislation, drastically improved police procedures, and led to a more open debate about all forms of gender-based violence.
- **Responding** to the realities of digital forms of sexual abuse and violence by implementing policy measures.
- **Enabling** women's rights organizations and girl-led initiatives to exercise their expertise and provide spaces for sharing WRO's priorities and strategies to end violence against women and girls.
- **Implementing** evidence-based comprehensive and nationwide policies to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and sexual harassment before 2025.
- **Reducing** gender-based violence in close relationships, sexual abuse, and digital violence through increased cooperation between the education system, the judicial system, and the welfare system.
- **Increasing** the participation of men and boys in all gender-equality activities and mainstream policies to integrate better men position in society. For that purpose, Iceland will continue to actively engage men and boys to become agents of change in promoting gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence against women and girls.
- **Ensuring** finance to services and treatment for both victim-survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- **Advocating** for gender equality, women's empowerment, and eliminating gender-based violence and harmful practices within Iceland's Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation Policy.
- **Responding** to the increase in gender-based violence cases due to the COVID-19 pandemic by mainstreaming a gendered approach to Iceland's national and international response plans.

# I. INTRODUCTION

Iceland is co-leader in the Gender-based violence Action Coalition alongside the U.K., Uruguay, and Kenya as member states; UN Women and the World Health Organization as UN organizations; the European Union; Ford Foundation and civil society and private sector partners.

The Action Coalition on gender-based violence is mobilizing governments, civil society, international organizations, philanthropies, and the private sector to deliver transformational progress towards the elimination and prevention of gender-based violence through four concrete actions: (1) Creating enabling policy, legal and resource environments; (2) scaling up evidence-driven prevention programming; (3) Scaling up comprehensive, accessible and quality services for survivors; and (4) Enabling and empowering autonomous girl-led & women's rights organizations to exercise their expertise. Tactics have been identified under each theme that should guide the commitments.

In the spirit of the multistakeholder approach of the Generation Equality Forum, consultations were organised with Icelandic stakeholders in civil society, academia, the public sector, the organization of social partners, the national youth council, and social influencers.

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE -DEFINITION

The definition of Gender-Based Violence for the purpose of the Action Coalition is "violence which is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately". Recognizing that gender-based violence affects women and girls in all their diversity, the Action Coalition on GBV adopts the definition of gender-based violence derived from the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."



Iceland



United Kingdom



European Union



World Health Organization



OutRight



FORD FOUNDATION



Kenya



Kenya



Uruguay



UN WOMEN



Breakthrough



abjad



BINI'AS LIDERAN



ACCOR



## 3. ICELAND'S COMMITMENTS

Iceland's commitments in the Action Coalition on gender-based violence are based on the themes outlined by the Action Coalition, Iceland's legislative framework on gender equality, Iceland's Foreign Policy and Strategy for International Development Cooperation, and the outcomes of multistakeholder consultations. It further seeks to incorporate an approach of intersectionality, feminist leadership and transformation of structures to achieve the objectives of eliminating gender-based violence and sexual abuse.

The main emphasizes of Iceland's leadership framework are increasing support for women's rights organizations, improving service delivery for survivors, and their access to justice. Iceland will also continue engaging men and boys in all gender-equality activities and to enhance work in transforming harmful masculinities.

### **Iceland's commitments are further based on the following set of actions defined by the Action Coalition on gender-based violence:**

1. Create an enabling legal and policy environment for the elimination of GBV against women and girls in all their diversity.
2. Adapt and scale up evidence-driven prevention programming for the elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.
3. Scale up comprehensive, accessible, and quality services for survivors of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.
4. Autonomous Girl-Led & Women's rights organisations are enabled and empowered to exercise their expertise in addressing GBV against women and girls in all their diversity.

### **Actions will Accelerate Progress on the SDGs targets**

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- 6.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.
- 16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.
- 16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.
- 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.
- 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
- 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.



### 3. 1. Create an enabling legal and policy environment for the elimination of GBV against women and girls in all their diversity.

To advance progress on the SDGs, the following priority tactics will be deployed for this action:



**LAWS AND POLICIES:** Advocacy for, ratification and implementation of international and regional conventions to address gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity. Strengthen and implement laws and policies in both public and private sectors and reinforce related accountability and redress mechanisms to enhance rule of law and ensure access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence.



**FINANCING:** Increase financing and budgetary allocation for gender-based violence prevention and response including for reform and implementation of laws, policies and multi-sectoral national action plans in domestic resources across sectors (both government and private) and in ODA.



**DATA:** Improve the production, availability, accessibility and use of quality data and statistics on gender-based violence, disaggregated by sex, disability, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, migrant status, geographic location, and other socio-economic dimensions to support development, adoption, reform and implementation of legislation and policies to address violence against women and girls in all their diversity.

#### **Commitment 1: Ratification and implementation of ILO's Convention no. 190 by 2022.**

The Icelandic government commits to ratify by 2022 ILO's Convention and recommendation on violence and harassment in the world of work (no.190). The implementation of the Convention measures shall be in close cooperation with the organisations of the social partners and ensure a sound base to support human dignity and a working environment free from gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

In doing so:

- All public organizations and private companies will commit to adopting action plans to address harassment and sexual abuse in the workplace and grant victims of domestic violence supportive measures in the world of work.
- In cooperation with the social partners, the Directorate of Equality will run an awareness-raising campaign on the importance of active prevention policies and response mechanism to gender-based violence against women in the world of work.

This commitment falls under *Action 1 - Tactic: Laws and Policies*.

#### **Commitment 2: Promotion and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).**

Iceland will organize a seminar on the Convention's impact on policy reforms of criminal laws in European countries in support of access to justice for women victims of gender-based violence and sexual violence. The seminar will be linked to Iceland's presidency in the Council of Europe (November 2022-May 2023).

This commitment falls under *Action 1 - Tactic: Laws and Policies*.



### **Commitment 3: National Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.**

The Icelandic government commits to submit a national action plan regarding the enforcement of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The action plan will entail the following measures:

To create an overview of the introduction of laws, regulatory actions and other measures, including data collection and research,

To advocate and educate the general public on the provision of the Istanbul Convention.

Along with the action plan the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Justice will launch a new project related to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and steering committee for the project has been appointed.

This commitment falls under *Action 1 - Tactic: Laws and Policies*.

### **Commitment 4: Reform of the criminal law to protect sexual privacy.**

The Icelandic Government commits to implement policy measures to support a newly adopted reform of the Criminal Law which amended the legislation in early 2021 with a clause protecting individuals from sexual violations by digital means. The legislation makes sharing sexual material and images without consent punishable. The threat of sharing such content is also punishable.

This is a flagship commitment and falls under *Action 1 - Tactic: Laws and Policies*.

### **Commitment 5: Support to UNICEF and UNFPA Joint Programme on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation.**

Iceland will provide financial support to UNICEF and UNFPA's Joint Programme on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation with a multi-year agreement. The Joint Programme works with communities to transform social norms from within, while partnering with Governments to promote laws banning the practice and to ensure that girls have access to quality services for child protection and sexual and reproductive health.

This commitment falls under *Action 1 - Tactic: Laws and Policies* and *Action 2 - Tactic: Prevention Strategies/Norms*.

### **Commitment 6: Joint commitment with the Government of Finland: Advocacy for the integration of online gender-based violence in international fora, processes, and instruments.**

Finland and Iceland commit to advocating for the integration of online gender-based violence in relevant international fora, processes and instruments that address gender-based violence to ensure visibility of online gender-based violence, understanding of its seriousness, and for measures to be taken to comprehensively tackle it as part of gender-based violence. As our realities are shifting more towards digitalization, including communication, participation, services, etc., online gender-based violence has also increased.

Gender-based violence online has further increased during Covid-19 and is as severe, and unacceptable problem as offline gender-based violence. Online gender-based violence is also a threat to women's and girls' participation in public life and, consequently, a threat to democracy. To tackle online gender-based violence effectively, it is necessary to increase visibility and understanding of the problem and take effective measures against it. COVID pandemic has increased the urgency of the matter.

This commitment falls under *Action 1 - Tactic: Laws and Policies*.

### 3.2. Adapt and scale up evidence driven prevention programming for the elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.

To advance progress on the SDGs, the following priority tactics will be deployed for this action:



**PREVENTION STRATEGIES / NORMS:** Context specific adaptation and scaled up coordinated, cross sectoral implementation of evidence-driven prevention strategies which address social and gender norms including harmful masculinities to end all forms of gender-based violence including harmful practices against women and girls in all their diversity.



**LAWS AND POLICIES:** Adopt and implement policies and legislation that aims to shift inequitable social and gender norms and to address gender inequalities which are the root causes of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.



**FINANCING:** Increase domestic, ODA, private and philanthropic financing for scale up of practitioner-led and evidence-driven strategies to prevent all forms of gender-based violence against all women and girls.



**EDUCATION:** Work with the education sector to prevent gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity by ensuring that schools and educational institutions are safe for all girls, adolescents and young women, and implement evidence-driven prevention strategies which promote gender equality, challenge gender stereotypes and foster equitable norms, attitudes and beliefs from a young age, including through gender-sensitive curricula and comprehensive sexuality education.

#### **Commitment 7: Iceland and UN Women enhance work on prevention and response to gender-based violence through engaging men and boys and transforming harmful masculinities.**

In a joint commitment between Iceland and UN Women, the two parties commit to enhance work in the areas of masculinities and engaging men and boys. Iceland will support UN Women in this field with a financial contribution of 1 million USD for the next two years.

The support will be focused on enhancing UN Women's work on prevention and response to gender-based violence through engaging men and boys and transforming harmful masculinities. The two mutually reinforcing and complementary areas of work include:

- Internal capacity on Engaging Men and Boys and Masculinities: Focused on building up internal capacity in UN Women on Engaging Men and Boys and Masculinities as it related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan with a specific focus on gender-based violence.
- Engaging Men and Boys in Advocacy and Mobilization: Scaling the Movement to localize the global campaign to a network of in-country and regional campaigns via regional offices, country offices and national committees.
- Prevention of GBV through male engagement; Generation Equality Action Coalition Leadership: Transforming societal and corporate norms through commitment to and achievement of the Generation Equality Action Coalition work.

This is a flagship commitment and falls under *Action 2 - Tactic: Prevention Strategies/Norms and Financing*.

**Commitment 8: Barbershop Conferences in partnership with international organizations.**

The Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs will in the period 2021 - 2026 hold annual 'Barbershop' conferences within international organizations and/or with key partners in development cooperation. The Barbershop events encourage men and boys to become actively engaged in promoting gender equality by better understanding how gender inequality limits the ability of individuals, businesses, and communities to reach their full human, economic and social potential. Barbershop events provide men with tools to address this inequality and become agents of change.

This commitment falls under Action 2 - Tactic: Prevention Strategies/Norms and Financing.

**Commitment 9: Raising awareness about responsibilities of men and boys with regards to the #metoo movement in Iceland.**

The Icelandic Directorate for Equality and the Prime Minister's Office will implement a project to raise awareness about the responsibilities and roles of men with regard to the #metoo, disclosure of harmful masculinities and gender-based and sexual harassment and violence. The project will, inter alia, cover the relationship between gender-based and sexual harassment and violence on the one hand and ideas about masculinity, boundaries and consent on the other. A steering committee for the project has been appointed.

The importance to raise awareness about responsibilities and roles of men with the regard to #metoo is clear. As well as the importance to address negative stereotypes of masculinity.

This commitment falls under Action 2 - Tactic: Prevention Strategies/Norms.



**Commitment 10: Implementation of a comprehensive policy on preventing sexual and gender-based violence and sexual harassment with an action plan.**

The Icelandic government commits to implement a newly approved comprehensive policy on preventing sexual and gender-based violence and sexual harassment with an action plan for the years 2021 – 2025.

It includes 26 actions and the budget allocation for the term 2021-2026 will be ISK 170 million. The focus is on children and youth within educational institutions. The overarching goal is to increase education on preventing and acting on gender-based violence, deepening the discussion, raising awareness, and understanding in society. This will be done at all school levels in collaboration with health care, leisure centers and community centers.

The main purpose of the prevention policy is to:

- Develop age-based and gender-sensitive education and prevention material about GBV, emphasizing digital/online violence.
- Develop and promote gender-sensitive education at all levels of the curriculum that informs students of their rights and paths of recourse. As well as equips them with the skills to understand and analyze social norms, gendered stereotypes, and power dynamics.

There will be a formal follow up twice a year and the results will be published as a dashboard at the government website.

This is a flagship commitment and falls under *Action 2 - Tactic: Prevention Strategies/Norms and Education.*



**Commitment 11: Preventing and combatting digital forms of sexual abuse.**

The Icelandic government is committed to reducing gender-based violence in close relationships, sexual abuse and digital violence by increasing cooperation between the education system, the judicial system and the welfare system.

Increased internet use can increase the risk of sexual exploitation. Actions to prevent abuse or violence will include:

- Age based education and prevention to counter harmful gender stereotypes, shift



mind-sets and reduce gender-based violence online. Police will seek cooperation with local authorities in developing an awareness raising campaign in cooperation with the National HelpLine's 112 web portal against violence and the Directorate of Education.

- Offer improved preventive support and resources for victims of online sexual abuse.
- Improve the investigation of digital forms of sexual abuse by police by improved training, reviewing procedures and criterias for collection, form and presentation of digital evidence and increase dissemination of information on digital abuse including.

This is a flagship commitment and falls under *Action 2 - Tactic: Prevention Strategies/Norms and Education*.

### **Commitment 12: Service and treatment for adult and minor perpetrators of gender-based and sexual violence.**

Gender-based violence will not be prevented without perpetrators ceasing to use violence. The police is a key player, often being the first persons in identifying the situation and consequently can be the one to provide first support in order to prevent repeat offending and encourage perpetrators to seek help in order to stop the violent behavior.

Actions will include:

- Developing a digital solution of the risk assessment system and police checklist connected to the National Police Database to use at the crime scenes and during questioning,
- Developing a pilot on a risk assessment system for sexual abuse for adult perpetrators by the police,
- Improving risk communication to potential victims and relevant partners of the police,
- Developing motivational interviewing by the police with perpetrators in order to encourage them to seek help,
- And by making information available for perpetrators at the National HelpLine's 112 web portal against violence.

This commitment falls under *Action 3 - Tactic: Prevention Strategies*

### **Commitment 13: Support and guidance for minors that are perpetrators of violence.**

A special focus will also be placed on perpetrators that are minors in cases of abuse or violence, for support and guidance. Harm reduction and preventing reoffending are key issues.

Actions will include:

- Facilitating an effective and secure cooperative platform for services in cooperation with local authorities (schools, social services, children's protective services), the local magistrate, the local police and other key institutions in the lives of children, and
- Formulating national procedural guidelines for the police on investigating violent crimes committed by children, on cooperation with other entities on crime prevention among minors and on awareness raising, and
- Developing further police's community policing capabilities.

This commitment falls under *Action 3 - Tactic: Prevention Strategies*

### 3. 3. Scale up comprehensive, accessible, and quality services for survivors of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.

To advance progress on the SDGs, the following priority tactics will be deployed for this action:



**SERVICE DELIVERY:** Increase awareness of and access to coordinated, survivor-centered, comprehensive, quality and affordable police, justice, health and social services for women and girls in all their diversity subjected to gender-based violence including for adolescent girls and young women and in response to COVID-19 and other conflict and crisis contexts. Ensure that mental health and SRH services address gender-based violence and act as an entry point for survivors' access to support services.



**FINANCING:** Increase public and private financing and gender responsive budgeting (at sectoral and cross sectoral level and to specialized and grassroots women's rights organizations) for scale up of quality, affordable multi-sectoral services to survivors of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.



**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Strengthen coordination of multi-sectoral service provision and application of accountability mechanisms to ensure adherence to agreed global standards of service provision for survivors of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.



**CAPACITY BUILDING:** Strengthen capacities, leadership and accountability of police, justice, health and social service institutions to provide comprehensive, coordinated, survivor-centered and quality services to all gender-based violence survivors including by applying a focus on intersectionality to address institutional discrimination, gender stereotypes, and norms that perpetuate gender-based violence against women and girls, re-victimization and impunity. Build specialist gender-based violence expertise in humanitarian emergencies, at field level and in senior management, including through deployment of GBV experts from the outset of a crisis.

#### **Commitment 14: Increased Core Contributions to the United Nations Population Fund.**

Iceland commits to make a three-year framework agreement with UNFPA and double the annual core contributions for the year 2021 and aim to triple the core contributions by 2022 (compared to contributions in 2020 and earlier). This commitment will support UNFPA with flexible funding to effectively provide essential sexual and reproductive health services to those most in need, including in crisis situations.

Gender-based violence is one of UNFPA's primary areas of intervention. UNFPA's programmes offer psychosocial assistance, medical treatment and rape kits to survivors, and promote the right of all women and girls to live free of violence and abuse. UNFPA's comparative advantage lies in its unique approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence, which bridges protection, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights in humanitarian action. Health facilities are often critical entry points for survivors to receive support and be referred to other life-saving services.

UNFPA also establishes safe spaces for women and girls, provides holistic response through

one-stop centres for survivors, and engages affected communities in prevention and response.

This is a flagship commitment and falls under *Action 3 - Tactic: Service Delivery and Financing*.

### **Commitment 15: Reducing violence in close relationships, ending sexual abuse and gender-based violence by increasing cooperation between stakeholders.**

The Icelandic government commits to reducing violence in close relationships, sexual abuse, and gender-based violence by increasing cooperation between the education system, the judicial system and the welfare system. Results on that commitment are measured by the percentage of victims of gender-based violence reporting to the police.

- Domestic abuse: In 2018, 5.8% of participants in the survey had been victims of domestic abuse and 20% of them reported it to the police. In 2019, 7.1% of the participants in the survey had been victims of domestic abuse and 21% had reported it to the police. The government's goal for 2024 is that 35% of victims will report domestic abuse to the police.
- Sexual abuse: In 2018, 2.5% of the participants in the survey had been sexually abused and 7.2% of them had reported it to the police. In 2019, 2.7% had been victims of sexual abuse and 13.5% of them had reported it. The government's goal for 2024 is that 20% will have reported the abuse to the police.
- This commitment falls under *Action 3 - Tactic: Service Delivery and Capacity Building*.

### **Commitment 16: Development and coordination of procedures in the health sector to combat gender-based violence.**

The Icelandic Directorate of Health Services in cooperation with the Capital Area's Healthcare Centers and the National Commissioner of Police in Iceland as a part of the Icelandic government's actions against gender-based violence are committed to the following actions in order:

- To improve the healthcare services of victims of gender-based violence,
- Improve health data collection on violence in Iceland, and
- Increase the proportion of victims reporting gender-based violence to the police as they are helped to heal after the trauma.

Actions will include:

- training healthcare professionals in diagnosing, treating and preventing domestic violence on the Icelandic Health Care Development Center,
- developing secure ways for victims to reach healthcare professionals through Heilsuvera, the national health portal,
- ensuring that information regarding violent incidents in medical records is not accessible to perpetrators,
- setting up an emergency button to report violence on My pages in Heilsuvera,
- ensuring that reliable data on violence can be obtained from Saga (the national medical record system),
- improving work procedures for caring for victims of gender-based violence,
- ensuring that correct procedures on documenting the violence is available in Saga, so that the healthcare personnel have the knowledge to use the solutions in the right way and
- develop web-based cognitive processing therapy for victims of gender-based violence available through Heilsuvera.

This commitment falls under *Action 3 - Tactic: Service Delivery and Capacity Building*.



**Commitment 17: Eliminate the waiting lists for the survivors of gender-based violence at women's shelters and counselling centers.**

The Icelandic Government is committed to eliminate waiting lists for the survivors of gender-based violence at women's shelters and counselling centers. A special grant will be provided to shorten waiting lists and to increase access for all with technological solutions. The budget allocation for the grant will be ISK 15 million.

This commitment falls under *Action 3 - Tactic: Service Delivery*.

**Commitment 18: Development of a web portal of the National Emergency Helpline.**

The Icelandic government commits to the development of the 112-web portal of the National Emergency HelpLine (Neydarlinan) to include information about GBV, and by connecting and coordinating the 112 portal with other available services in order to help victims, perpetrators and bystanders to reach help and stop the violence as a virtual "one-stop-shop". The web portal includes a direct web chat with the emergency operators and connects directly to the national health service's web chat at Heilsuvera with a registered nurse and the Red cross national HelpLine 1717.

The 112-app will be updated and made available in the Winter of 2021-2022 with several safety features, with a special emphasis on reaching out to children and other vulnerable groups. The 112-app will be designed to allow users to quickly communicate information to emergency responders. Emphasis is on imagery so that even those who have difficulty expressing themselves in spoken language can deliver the most important information in order to receive help. Both the app and the web portal will be available in three languages: Icelandic, English and Polish.

In cooperation with The National Emergency HelpLine (112) awareness campaign has been launched, based on the new 112 portal on violence. The awareness campaign will be carried out in stages, with each stage focusing on approaching different groups that are at an increased risk of violence, along with a general awareness-raising where people are encouraged to report and contact 112 if concerns arise about violence.

This commitment falls under *Action 3 - Tactic: Service Delivery and Capacity Building*.

**Commitment 19: Participation of the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs in UNDP's Gender Seal Programme.**

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland is committed to implement gender-equality reforms in the Icelandic Foreign Service and Development Cooperation. The Ministry has signed a cooperation agreement with the UNDP to take part in the Gender Seal Certification Programme. To obtain the certification by the end of the year 2021 Iceland will focus on implementing standards according to a time-bound action plan outlined by the UNDP. Iceland aims to be the first state to receive this certification.

This commitment falls under *Action 3 - Tactic: Accountability*.

**Commitment 20: Mutual Learning Seminar, collective commitment of the European Commission and the Government of Iceland.**

The European Commission and the government of Iceland, co-leaders of the Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence commit to reinforce mutual learning among EU countries to support access to Justice for women victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

This commitment falls under *Action 3 - Tactic: Service Delivery and Capacity Building*.

### 3. 4. Autonomous Girl-Led and Women's rights organizations are enabled and empowered to exercise their expertise in addressing gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.

To advance progress on the SDGs, the following priority tactics will be deployed for this action:



**FINANCING:** Increase quality, coordinated, flexible and sustainable funding from private sector, foundations, states, and other donors in consultation with and for girl-led and women's rights organizations and movements on the frontline of addressing gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.



**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:** Support institutional strengthening and programming capacity of girl-led and women's rights organizations working to end gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity, to increase organizational sustainability and impact and drive transformative change.



**LEADERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY:** Strengthen the accountability of public institutions and private sector organizations to women's rights organizations to ensure their increased leadership and participation in decision making at all levels including in the context of COVID-19 and in other conflict and crisis settings.

#### **Commitment 21: The Reykjavik Conference and Dialogues, Renewing Activism to End Violence Against Women.**



**The Icelandic Prime Minister Office and the City of Reykjavik, in cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers and the University of Iceland, commit to provide and finance a global platform for women's rights organizations, activists, practitioners and service providers to**

**share their priorities and strategies to end violence against women. The event the The Reykjavik Conference and Dialogues on ending violence against women will be held in Reykjavik on 16-18 August 2021.**

The event has three objectives:

1. To strategize and shape activism against gender-based violence against women over the next five years.
2. To find common ground and ways of working together across borders and communities.
3. To enable collective, activist review of the outcomes and plans associated with the events of the Generation Equality Forum, the 25th anniversary of Beijing Platform of Action, led by inter-governmental organizations.

This commitment falls under *Action 4 - Tactic: Financing*.

**Commitment 22: The Gender Equality Council.**

The Icelandic government commits to implement gender equality consultation platform. It will be assembled at least once a year and will include representatives of the social partners, the academic community and gender equality organisations working within the provisions of this Act. The role of the consultation platform is to act in an advisory role for the Minister’s professional policymaking on issues relating to gender equality; the Minister shall meet with the consultation platform once a year. The gender equality consultation platform, the Gender Equality Council, will submit its meeting minutes to the Minister. The ministry that is responsible for matters concerning equality oversees the administration of the gender equality consultation platform, including making the forum known to the public and offering opportunities for participation. The expenses of the gender equality consultation platform’s activities are paid by the State Treasury.

This commitment falls under *Action 4 - Tactic: Leadership and Accountability.*

**Commitment 23: Multi-year contribution agreement between the Icelandic Women’s Rights Association and the Government of Iceland.**

The Icelandic government and the Icelandic Women’s Rights Association have signed a contribution agreement for the period of 2021 to 2023. The main objective of the Agreement is for the Women’s Rights Association to conduct various forms of education related work, including the creation of information material in Icelandic and English, organising events, and developing educational material on gender equality.

This commitment falls under *Action 4 - Tactic: Financing.*



## 4. CONCLUSION: TURNING WORDS INTO ACTION – THE WAY FORWARD!

The platform of the coalition of the Progressive Party, the Independence Party and the Left-Green Movement, for their co-operation in government from 2017 states that one of the tasks facing the new government is to work on reforms in the handling of sexual offences. The government intends to do this through a new action plan, review and reform of legislation and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, which aims to protect women and children from violence.

From 2017 – 2021 the following reforms have been undertaken:

- Legislation on sexual privacy was adopted in February 2021 to address decisively the threat posed by digital sexual violence.
- Legislation on stalking was adopted in February 2021, making such behaviour a criminal offence and better ensuring the protection offered to persons subjected to it.
- A bill has been submitted expanding hate speech provisions and the maximum penalty for child abuse.
- A bill has been submitted to provide legal redress for survivors of violence.
- A bill has been submitted to abolish exemptions allowing marriages of persons under 18 years of age.
- A bill has been submitted that addresses human trafficking.
- The first comprehensive plan for preventive action against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment for the period 2021-2025 was adopted and has received full budget appropriations.
- A special action team on violence was set up by the Minister of Social Affairs and Children and the Minister of Justice for the purpose of directing and co-ordinating work on the implementation of measures against violence. The action team has submitted proposals concerning, for instance, perpetrators, housing solutions for survivors of violence, prevention and education program for parents, children and youths, and measures for violence against people with disabilities. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasis is placed on the development of technological solutions to combat violence with the intent to continue after the pandemic.
- The emergency number service 112 is being reinforced and developed to handle calls concerning domestic violence and violence against children. Information on services and resources provided by public bodies, NGOs and the private sector is available on the 112 website.
- Funding of ISK 100 million was provided to the Women's Shelter to improve access to the service, support construction of a new house, and design of a new emergency shelter.
- The education and counselling centre for survivors of sexual abuse and violence; Stígamót received ISK 20 million to respond to increased demand for its services and reduce waiting time.
- Funding contributions to service centres for survivors of violence: Bjarkarhlíð in Reykjavík and Bjarmahlíð in Akureyri.
- Grants to organisations that work against sexual and domestic violence; Aflið in Akureyri, DrekaSlóð in Reykjavík and Sigurhæðir in Selfoss.
- An agreement with Heimilisfriður on treatment for perpetrators of violence.
- Funding of ISK 85 million provided to the City of Reykjavík to finance temporary housing for people without housing with complex needs, including housing for women who are survivors of abuse.

- Awareness raising against domestic violence, by making resources more visible on social media, increasing education and disseminating information in many areas of society.
- Opening of a Women's Shelter in North Iceland as a pilot project.
- Grant to the Children's Home, to expand its activities and shorten the waiting list.
- A communications consultant in sports and youth affairs began work in 2020.
- Working group appointed to strengthen sex education in schools.
- Handbook on the welfare and security of children in preschools.
- Educational material against violence for children and youths.
- Development of teaching materials promoting prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and harassment for upper secondary schools.
- Career development for compulsory school teachers - gender and equality education.
- Awakening campaign for safe and positive use of electronic and new media.
- Law enforcement strengthened and fully funded action plan introduced on how sexual offences are handled in the justice system. The measures include various aspects of the justice system, as well as actions concerning survivors, accused violators, prevention and education. On the basis of this plan, action has already been taken to improve police handling of sexual offence cases.
- Supplementary funding over ISK 200 million provided to add fifteen new full-time equivalent police positions throughout the country, with the aim of equipping all offices to investigate and deal with sexual offences. An additional ISK 40 million allocated to update procedures and investigative equipment of the police.
- The District Prosecutor's Office received funding for two new full-time positions to improve its handling of sexual offences.
- Funding provided for the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development and the State Prosecutor to increase continuing education for police and prosecutors in this field.
- A strategy and programme against bullying, sexual harassment, violence and other inappropriate behaviour approved for Government Offices at the end of 2017.
- One of the largest international conferences on #Metoo was held in Reykjavík in the autumn of 2019.
- A report investigating the prevalence and nature of harassment in the Icelandic labour market, Violence in the Workplace, was discussed at the #Metoo conference in Reykjavík in the autumn of 2019.
- The government provided support for a meeting of international women's organisations combating sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, which will be held in Reykjavík 16-18 August 2021.

Through its leadership role in the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition, Iceland will continue to secure de jure and de facto gender equality to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls to leave no groups or individuals behind.

