

Stakeholder engagement workshops on Scotland's feminist approach to foreign policy: evidence report

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evidence report

This report was prepared for the Scottish Government by Scotland's International Development Alliance and the Scottish Council for Global Affairs.

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1. Executive summary

The [2021-2022 Programme for Government](#) promised that Scotland's global affairs framework will be "grounded in a values-based approach, and a feminist approach to foreign policy". This report details recommendations from a diverse range of stakeholders as to how the Scottish Government can develop its feminist approach to foreign policy.

The stakeholder engagement process aimed to:

- Inform the policy focus and measurable outcomes of Scotland's feminist approach to foreign policy;
- Identify and fill gaps in existing knowledge about global gender issues, thereby improving the Scottish Government's evidence base;
- Help to shape the definition of the Scottish Government's feminist approach to foreign policy; and
- Build relationships with key stakeholders and develop long-term networks.

The report provides a synthesis of evidence and recommendations distilled through five consultative workshops. These involved 97 participants from Scotland and the Global South, including from the Scottish Government's international development partner countries (Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Pakistan).

The report presents detailed recommendations for Scottish Government policy and action, organised according to four themes: international development, peace and security, climate and environmental justice and trade justice. Workshop participants were asked what actions and policies they would like to see from the Scottish Government in terms of a feminist approach to foreign policy; these suggestions and recommendations were written up by the authors, then circulated to all the participants for verification and comment.

Complementing these detailed recommendations, the following five cross-cutting key recommendations emerged from the consultations:

- 1. Support women's organisations, feminist networks and other grassroots movements.** The Scottish Government should further develop its political and financial support to women's organisations and feminist networks (in particular, grassroots organisations and networks and those for rural and other marginalised women), marginalised communities and Indigenous peoples. Political support means enabling activists to influence global agendas and processes meaningfully.

2. **Make funding feminist.** Funding for women’s organisations and feminist networks needs to be accessible, flexible and long term, provided in a manner that enables communities to define and meet their own priorities, and with monitoring and evaluation aligned to what they understand as success. Eligibility, application, reporting and compliance processes must be as simple as possible, especially for small grants.
3. **Be an innovator and influencer.** Scotland, although small, should seek to be a “norm entrepreneur”. The Scottish Government should showcase on the global stage the alternative models of development and progressive policies it supports at home, such as the Wellbeing Economy, Community Wealth Building, Just Transition, Circular Economy, Equally Safe and gender budgeting. All these policies contribute to a more gender-just society, as well as being more generally fairer and greener, and should be promoted beyond Scotland. International partnerships will be central to making this happen.
4. **Speak out for structural change.** The Scottish Government may not have all the levers of an independent state, but it can provide moral and intellectual leadership by calling for the transformation of the global systems that drive gendered insecurities and inequalities. Its work on Loss and Damage shows Scotland can put issues on the agenda that bigger states are unwilling to address. The Scottish Government should seek to play a similarly progressive role in international development, peace and security, and trade justice to address gendered insecurities and inequalities at their root.
5. **Ensure coherence between international, domestic and local policies.** The Scottish Government should ensure that its domestic policies are in line with its efforts to be a good global citizen, and bring together different policy areas to work cooperatively toward feminist goals.

To take strong steps forward in developing and implementing its feminist approach to foreign policy, the Scottish Government should move quickly to set out its policy statement concerning its feminist approach to international engagement; ramp up communication with its staff and the Scottish people about the whys and hows of a feminist approach; and set up a standing consultation mechanism across Scottish communities and with Global South stakeholders (beyond the Global South panel) to ensure a feedback loop as the policy is implemented.

2. Context

The Scottish Government's [2021-2022 Programme for Government](#) promised a new “global affairs framework ... to guide Scotland’s international engagement, grounded in a values-based approach, and a feminist approach to foreign policy”.

The Scottish Government published a [Background Note](#) on its intended approach to feminist foreign policies in November 2022. This set out the initial three key areas of focus as *a just transition to net zero, economic justice and peace* – each underpinned by human rights and gender equality. The Scottish government also conducted [preliminary research](#) involving interviews with individuals who have knowledge of and experience in the field of feminist foreign policy. In parallel, [Scotland’s International Development Alliance](#) and the [Scottish Council for Global Affairs](#) were contracted to facilitate consultative workshops with a diverse range of stakeholders and experts in Scotland, the wider UK and the Global South and Global North to consider what a feminist approach might look like in practice and what it might mean for a sub-state, without a foreign policy remit, to develop a feminist approach to foreign policy.

This report synthesises the findings and recommendations emerging from this process. This section provides context: it presents some brief background on feminist foreign policies; sets out the powers of the Scottish Government on external relations; and reflects upon what the limits of Scottish Government powers mean for the development of a feminist approach to foreign policy.

What is feminist foreign policy?

At least 14 countries have declared the adoption of or intention to adopt a feminist foreign policy (widely referred to as an “FFP”).¹ Sweden pioneered the idea in 2014, and developed an extensive FFP portfolio focusing on issues such as women’s rights defenders, women peace mediators, and gender perspectives on development finance.² For countries with the most developed FFPs, some key features can be identified. Most follow the original Swedish approach in focusing on strengthening what it termed the “three Rs,” women’s rights, representation and resources, applying this approach across various foreign policy issues such as peace and security, climate change, international development and trade. Most adopt a human-rights-based approach, with a focus on sexual and reproductive health rights, sexual and gender-based

¹ Alongside Scotland are Sweden (2014), Canada (2015), Luxembourg (2018), France (2019), Mexico (2019), Spain (2021), Libya (2021), Germany (2021), Chile (2022), the Netherlands (2022), Colombia (2022), Liberia (2022) and Slovenia (2023).

² With the election of a more right-wing government in 2022, Sweden has since jettisoned its FFP.

violence, and women's economic and political participation. FFPs also tend to encompass a commitment to multilateralism in global politics and a focus on policy coherence, such that there is consistency between policies at home and abroad.

FFPs can thus be said to represent an innovative and progressive approach to foreign policy, rooted in human rights. Yet FFPs formulated by governments to date tend to focus on addressing the gendered *impacts* of global dynamics such as war or climate breakdown, and ensuring the *participation* of women in existing power structures: *working within, rather than transforming*, existing global systems. Amid [intensifying inequalities](#), [pandemic- and austerity-induced poverty and precarity](#), [eco-systems on the point of collapse](#), [increased militarisation](#), [record-breaking refugee numbers](#) and [endemic violence against women and girls](#), many feminists in [civil society](#) and academia argue that the goal of an FFP should not just be inclusion and equality within existing structures and the status quo, but changing those structures for the better.³ That is, an FFP should contribute to the *systemic transformation of the root causes* of inequalities and insecurities – competitive and militaristic international relations, an economic system organised around extracting profit from natural resources and labour, and patriarchal gender relations.

Scottish powers concerning foreign affairs

The [Scotland Act \(1998\)](#) states that “international relations, including relations with territories outside the United Kingdom, the European Union (and their institutions) and other international organisations, regulation of international trade, and international development assistance and cooperation are reserved matters”. This means that powers over defence and national security, foreign affairs, immigration and asylum, trade and industry – areas that are part of other countries' FFPs – are reserved to the Government of the United Kingdom.

Notes on clauses to The Scotland Act 1998 explain that Scottish Ministers can communicate with other countries, regions, or international institutions so long as they do not purport to speak for the UK or to reach agreements which commit the UK. In addition, Scottish Ministers are not prevented from pursuing their interests internationally and Scottish Ministers can sign agreements that are not binding Treaties. Scottish Ministers may, under the 1998 Act, assist

³ For feminist scholarship on this point see, for example: Columba Achilleos-Sarll, “Reconceptualising foreign policy as gendered, sexualised and racialised: Towards a postcolonial feminist foreign policy (analysis)”, *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19(1): 34–49, 2018; Yolande Bouka, “Make foreign policies as if black and brown lives mattered”, in Megan Mackenzie and Nicole Wegner (eds), *Feminist Solutions for Ending War*, 2022, Pluto; and Carol Cohn, “What does the ‘feminist’ in FFP mean, and how does that constrain FFP's approach to the climate crisis?”, *International Studies Review*, 25(1), 2023.

Ministers of the Crown with international relations, including international development assistance. Through this understanding the Scottish Government has established its international development footprint. The Scottish Government has nine international offices to promote its international relationships, plus engagement strategies with the USA, China, Canada, India and Pakistan. It is active in a range of regional and subnational multilateral coalitions. Within Scotland, private and public sector bodies have a good deal of autonomy over procurement and investment, which has implications for relations with countries outside Scotland.

The Scottish Government has a [stated ambition](#) to be a good global citizen, “making a constructive contribution to addressing global challenges”. It has developed an increasingly ambitious role in the international arena, centred around its international development strategy, climate justice work, Vision for Trade and commitments to upholding human rights, the rule of law and multilateralism. The Scottish Government is committed to working towards the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its domestic and foreign dealings, and has a National Performance Framework (NPF) aligned to the SDGs. In addition, the Scottish Government is committed to “Policy Coherence in Sustainable Development,” an approach that the [OECD highlights](#) as key to achieving the SDGs.

Scotland is not a member of the United Nations, however, and cannot negotiate nor ratify any international treaties. Likewise, it is not a member of the World Trade Organisation and does not negotiate any trade agreements.

The fact that Scotland is not a sovereign state with the full range of powers arguably makes it challenging for the Scottish Government to implement a feminist approach to global affairs. It has few levers with which to contribute to reform of the global economic system driving inequalities and ecological collapse, or the militaristic and competitive system of nation-states. Nonetheless – as will be evident in the consultation recommendations outlined in this report – the Scottish Government has a range of mechanisms through which it can pursue a feminist approach to its external relations: using soft power to make the case for systemic transformations, practicing and championing fairer, greener, gender-just economic and social policies, and improving its own processes to contribute to system change.

3. Methodology

In October 2022, Scotland's International Development Alliance and the Scottish Council for Global Affairs were contracted by the Scottish Government to hold a series of consultative workshops to explore further what Scotland's feminist approach to foreign policy could look like in practice.

Four online workshops, organised in collaboration with the Scottish Government, were held between November 2022 and January 2023. They each focused on one of four key areas:

- International development
- Peace and security
- Climate justice
- Trade justice

The 97 workshop participants represented diverse organisations and networks from Scotland and other parts of the UK; from across the Global South, including Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Turkey, Yemen and Zambia; and from countries that have already adopted FFPs or have active civil society constituencies pushing for FFP, including Canada, Sweden, France, the USA and Switzerland.

Participants were leaders of women's networks, civil society leaders, activists, development professionals, scholars and staff of international organisations. They were invited based on their knowledge and expertise of the issues. Consideration was also given to their ability to represent wider networks.

We prioritised hearing from individuals in the Global South⁴, ensuring in particular participation from Scotland's key partner countries: Malawi, Zambia and Rwanda, as we made the assumption that it makes strategic sense for the Scottish Government to focus its efforts on areas where it already has relationships.⁵ We also wanted good representation from Scottish civil society, both women's organisations and groups involved in the issue areas: international development, peacebuilding, climate justice, and trade. We also sought to learn from feminists in countries that have the longest experience

⁴ Participants from the Global south were offered a contribution of \$50 per hour for their time. All participants were offered help with childcare or other costs necessary to facilitate their participation, including travel costs for the in-person workshop.

⁵ The Scottish Government has a small assistance programme targeted at partner countries in Malawi, Zambia and Rwanda, which includes a specific programme dedicated to working towards climate justice.

with Feminist Foreign Policies, namely Sweden and Canada, and feminists with international organisations such as UN Women.

Serious efforts were made to ensure at least 50% of participants in all workshops were from the Global South, including by inviting extra potential participants. Unfortunately, there was in practice a relatively high drop-out rate even from those who had confirmed their attendance. In some cases, participants attended part of the discussion but had to leave early.

Participants received a short briefing paper a week before each workshop, introducing the topic, the Scottish Government's powers and record to date, what other FFPs have included on the topic, and setting out discussion questions. The workshops involved brief introductions to the topic, small group discussions, facilitated by independent facilitators, leaving us free to take comprehensive notes, and a plenary. Within a fortnight of each workshop, reports were drafted and circulated to participants for verification and comment.

A fifth in-person workshop was held with 25 participants in Edinburgh in February 2023. It aimed to develop the suggestions generated in the online workshops into more concrete and measurable recommendations for policy and actions for the Scottish Government. As it was designed as an in-person, interactive, collaborative, policy-writing workshop, participants were mostly from Scotland. Participants were reminded, however, that their task was to be guided by the voices of women, particularly those from the Global South who had contributed the ideas in the online workshops.

Participants were sent the workshop reports in advance and asked to come prepared to work-up the ideas into policies that would enable the Scottish Government achieve what the online workshop participants want to see happen. Participants at the in-person workshop represented human rights organisations, peace and development organisations, community organisations, climate action groups, academia and the Scottish Government.

Participants were tasked with developing SMART policies. This is a familiar acronym from the policy-making world but in this workshop was given a feminist tweak. It was explained that the aim was to develop policies and actions that are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Actionable
- Relevant
- Transformative

The first two are relatively self-explanatory. Our aim with the third, "actionable," was to ensure proposed actions and policies fall within the remit of the Scottish Government, rather than requiring powers reserved to the UK

Government. Our aim with “relevant” was to ensure that the proposed actions and policies fall under Scotland’s external affairs more than domestic policy.⁶

Most importantly, we tweaked the T from its traditional use in this acronym as “time-bound,” to mean “transformative.” In order to develop a feminist approach, as we have seen in the discussion of FFPs above, an emphasis on transformation of the structures driving gendered inequalities and insecurities is crucial. With this bullet point, we were encouraging participants to ask: does the policy do more than include women; does it contribute to tackling the structures that drive gendered inequalities, insecurities and injustice?

In writing up the ideas and recommendations, we drew primarily upon the notes from the final workshop but also referred back to the initial workshop reports so as to avoid omitting any SMART policy recommendations. Due to the time-constraints of the online and in-person workshops, not all of the recommendations are as SMART as we had aimed for. Where a suggestion is not yet fully developed into a SMART proposal, we have erred on the side of inclusion, so as to capture the range of creative feminist recommendations made in the workshops.⁷

All the recommendations in this report come from workshop participants but as many ideas have multiple originators, especially as proposals from the online workshops were further developed in the final workshop, we have summarised and synthesised for clarity and concision.⁸ We have endeavoured to stay as true to the views expressed as possible. All participants have had two opportunities to comment on the findings: on the individual reports of each workshop as well as on a draft version of this report.

We have sought to include the views of those who commented on the reports where possible, subject to the SMART conditions set out above. We acknowledge that the nature of this process means that some participants will be dissatisfied. We have indicated where an idea or recommendation seemed to garner a high degree of consensus and where not.

It is important to note that there was not always consensus. Particularly perhaps in trade, some of the views from different women’s organisations and feminists from the Global South were not just diverse, but actually diametrically opposed. Some argued that the Scottish Government should do more to support women entrepreneurs in the Global South gain access to

⁶ This is complicated, because policy coherence is an important element of feminism and FFPs (and a principle to which the Scottish Government has already committed). Nonetheless, in order to help develop a distinctive “foreign policy”, we were aiming for policies that are primarily focused on making a difference to women and girls *overseas* and to achieving *global* justice, peace and security, rather than making a difference to women and girls in Scotland and achieving peace and justice in Scotland.

⁷ This also seemed ethically appropriate, so as not to risk wasting the valuable time of the participants.

⁸ Where a participant made reference to a source of evidence or recommended a toolkit, we have sought to include a link to it. We have also added links to many of the claims made in the discussion, so that the reader can find more information and evidence on the point the participant was making.

markets and finance, for example, and others argued that this is precisely the wrong thing to do as it risks trapping women in a global trade system that is inherently exploitative of women and destructive of the environment.

These sorts of debates were not confined to the trade workshop and are common in all deliberations over FFPs. They present a challenge to the Scottish Government. Our approach in this process and report has been to try and respect both the more “reformist” and more “radical” positions, in the belief that reforms can – if they are designed with the intention of so doing – contribute to structural change. As such, in the case of trade, we include recommendations that encourage the Scottish Government to contribute to transforming the trade system *and* to take actions that make it less harmful to women, other marginalized groups, and the environment in the meantime.

Participants in all the workshops are listed in Appendix 1.

The five workshops produced a wealth of dynamic, creative and potentially transformative ideas and recommendations. These are set out in the remainder of this report. The recommendations are grouped under the themes used for the online workshops, but many of the recommendations address a multiplicity of sectors, such that this report should ideally be read in its entirety.

4. Stakeholder Responses: Defining Scotland's feminist approach to foreign policy

Through the workshops, participants identified important elements in how the Scottish Government defines its feminist approach to foreign policy.

- 1) **Set out a transformative vision of the goals of FFP.** Scotland should articulate its feminist approach to foreign policy around a human-rights-based understanding of what makes Scotland and the world fairer, greener and more secure. It should emphasise tackling the drivers and root causes of women's and girls' insecurity, including patriarchy, militarism and extractive capitalism. It should dare to be bold and challenging, and be prepared to push against any backlash.
- 2) **Have an intersectional lens on vulnerability and marginalisation.** Scotland should ensure its feminist approach to foreign policy goes beyond a focus only on women as a group. It should recognise that individuals' lived experiences are shaped by interlocking systems of subordination and privilege based on gender, class and race/ethnicity, among other factors. Working with an "intersectionality" lens means challenging those systems and how they affect different women and girls differently, as well as other marginalised groups.
- 3) **Be actively anticolonial and antiracist.** Scotland should connect its feminist approach to foreign policy with its commitment to be antiracist and address colonialism, slavery and historic injustice. This means seeking to invert the systemic power dynamics in international relations, development programming and trade; and striving always to give people most affected by structural inequalities and injustice, conflict, climate change and environmental damage a platform to speak for themselves and influence decisions, rather than speak for them.
- 4) **Adopt a participatory approach at home and overseas.** The Scottish Government should be in continuous dialogue with diverse civil society in Scotland and abroad. Scotland's diverse communities should be engaged more actively in discussion on international issues to make better use of the knowledge and expertise available in Scotland. Women's organisations, networks of feminist peacebuilders and activists, and experts and networks in the Global South should be involved in regular consultations and feedback, and mechanisms should be in place to ensure policies can be adapted and changed to reflect their views.

5) Commit to clarity, transparency and accountability. The Scottish Government should make specific commitments under its feminist approach to foreign policy. Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure transparency and accountability around steps taken and progress achieved. As well as being accountable to the people of Scotland, FFP should seek to be accountable to the local communities in the Global South whose lives the policy seeks to enhance.

5. Stakeholder Responses: Policies and actions by which the Scottish Government can realise a feminist approach to foreign policy

International Development

This chapter sets out the policies and actions by which the Scottish Government can realise a feminist approach to foreign policy in the sphere of International Development, drawing from the recommendations made by participants both the online workshop on International Development and the final in-person workshop. It starts with a brief introduction to what the Scottish Government is already doing, and what it aims to do.

What is the Scottish Government already doing, and what does it aim to do?

The Scottish Government [reviewed](#) its International Development Strategy in 2020/2021, and has since set out a twin-track approach to advancing gender equality, committing to:

- Establishing a new Equalities Programme with a linked Women and Girls Fund of £500,000 per annum to focus on the empowerment of women and girls in international development partner countries (Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia); and
- Mainstreaming gender equality throughout its future international development programming, ensuring that funding provided by the International Development Fund supports work that considers gender inequalities and does no harm.

The Scottish Government is considering reporting its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) spending against the [OECD DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker](#).

More generally, in its International Development Strategy the [Scottish Government aims](#) to enable partner countries to build back from Covid in ways that are “fairer and stronger” and is restructuring its current funding streams to focus on four key strands; Health, Inclusive Education, Equalities, and Global Solidarity.

The International Development Strategy is underpinned by a set of [principles](#) which commit the Scottish Government to partner-country-led development, collaboration, equality, inclusion and diversity.

Summary of workshop discussions

Discussions on potential feminist approaches to international development covered both the need to tackle the structural issues driving global gendered inequalities and the more immediate things the Scottish Government might be able to do with its International Development programming.

There was a high level of consensus across the discussions on international development. Many of the participants from the Global South stressed that the

root causes of the insecurity of women and girls are found in two interrelated dynamics. Firstly, patriarchal gender relations mean women are predominantly responsible for unpaid care work. Participants described how women's unequal care load acts as a major barrier to women securing decent paid work and participating in educational and training opportunities, as well as participating in social dialogue and political decision-making to advance and defend their rights. Secondly, the global economic system effectively prevents states in the Global South from investing in the gender-responsive public services or "social infrastructure," and the sustainable, gender-responsive industrialisation strategies, needed to support gender equality.

Participants argued that resources are systematically drained from the Global South to the Global North through debt repayments, tax avoidance by multinational corporations and wealthy elites, unfair tax regimes, illicit financial flows, unfair trade rules and the imposition of austerity policies by the IMF, World Bank and others, coupled with an agenda of privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation that profits multinationals while eroding the policy space of states to uphold their rights commitments.⁹ They emphasised that their nations need investment in services such as healthcare, education, water and sanitation, safe and secure housing and gender-responsive road and transportation systems, as well as social infrastructure to support care.¹⁰ Participants noted the growing campaigns of activists, scholars and others in the Global South who are advocating for national care systems based on human rights, bringing together the rights of unpaid carers, paid care workers and those who are cared for, and suggested the Scottish Government could amplify these calls.

Participants felt strongly that the Scottish Government could take advantage of Scotland's sub-state status and put on the agenda systemic injustices that bigger states are unwilling to address. Just as it has on Loss and Damage, the Scottish Government could raise the issue of the need to reform global financial and trade systems in order to ensure countries in the Global South have the fiscal space to provide the social infrastructure and to pursue

⁹ These arguments are developed in a range of expert reports. See, for example, Roos Saalbrink, "[The Care Contradiction – The IMF, Gender and Austerity](#)", ActionAid International, 2022; "[A Feminist Agenda for People and Planet: Principles and Recommendations for a Global Feminist Economic Justice Agenda](#)", WEDO, WWG-FFD, FEMNET and PACJA, 2021 and Oxfam and NAWI 2023, [Assault of Austerity](#).

¹⁰ Feminist economists in the Global North and Global South have advocated for a focus on the care economy for many years, arguing that investing in the care economy in sectors such as health and education is a key means to create decent jobs for women, given that women are overrepresented in these sectors. Many of their insights are collected in [UN Women Reports](#), which provide concrete actions for a range of actors to take, including governments. The ideas are sometimes conceptualised as a new [feminist and antiracist social contract](#). Care infrastructure tends to mean universal, publicly funded and publicly delivered services – see the various feminist Global South movements who are signatories to [The Global Manifesto for Public Services](#). Many feminists also note that [jobs in the care sector are relatively low-carbon and non-polluting](#).

industrialisation strategies that would enable gender-justice and greener, fairer development for all.

Participants urged the Scottish Government, as a pioneer of the Wellbeing Economy, a Just Transition, Community Wealth Building, a Circular Economy and Gender Budgeting, to do more to champion and showcase these fairer, greener approaches to economic development in international spaces. Some suggested the [Wellbeing Economy Governments partnership \(WEGo\)](#) as an avenue through which this can be progressed. Others highlighted the [proposed Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill](#) as an opportunity both to strengthen practice at home and connect it to Scotland's impact overseas in line with SDG target 17:14. Others noted that the UN Secretary-General has [called for states](#) to move beyond GDP and adopt a Wellbeing Economy approach, which provides an opportunity for the Scottish Government to highlight its progress and champion the approach.

Another central theme of the discussion was the importance of providing generous, flexible, long-term funding to women's organisations and feminist networks. Feminist organisations and movements [have been identified](#) as the most significant drivers of sustainable policy change for women's rights. Feminist funding means enabling partners to define for themselves the priorities for funding, not imposing them as the donor. Funding channels need to be accessible (recognising that grassroots organisations might not be formally registered or externally audited, for example) and without onerous administration and reporting requirements (especially for small grants). Overly technical accountability structures prevent feminist movements from applying for and receiving funding.

Participants in the workshops highlighted international good practice, including making use of women's funds (for example, [Mama Cash](#) and [Madre](#)) and the pioneering approaches of the Netherlands and Canada.

Some participants highlighted that feminist funding does not necessarily mean funding *only* for women and girls. They argued it also needs to extend to non-binary, trans and other gender-diverse people, who face discrimination, violence and oppression because their identities do not conform to the patriarchal and hetero-normative gender binary and corresponding gender norms on "femininity" and "masculinity". Some also argued that the Scottish Government should also support initiatives that include men and boys, in recognition of the fact that many are also harmed by current economic structures, that both men and women have an interest in gender equality, and because not doing so is to risk backlash. Others noted in response that any

work with men and boys should focus on transforming masculinities, not just reaching men.¹¹

Participants generally agreed with the Scottish Government's approach of, as well as funding women's organisations and feminist networks, ensuring that *all* international development funding actively contributes to gender equality as far as possible, and is at least gender-aware and doing no harm. To enable this, [gender mainstreaming tools](#) and processes need to be systemically integrated. Participants highlighted that all Scottish-funded International Development programmes should:

- Recognise diversity among women and the importance of intersectionality, and be inclusive of different groups, including the most marginalised;
- Ensure recipient organisations include diverse women and other marginalised groups at all stages of the project planning process, ensuring their voices are heard and taken into consideration;
- Set benchmark commitments for gender equality;
- Collect reliable data in participatory ways; and
- Monitor and report against the OECD Gender Equality Policy Marker and provide greater transparency around international development funding.

A final major theme of the discussion that resonated widely was that women's organisations and feminist networks do not just need and want resources, but "space to shape the agenda". Participants, especially those from the Global South, argued that the Scottish Government should give partners and beneficiaries greater control of development priorities, including defining the terms. Several suggested that a concrete, innovative and potentially game-changing way in which this could be done is through funding women's movements and feminist networks in the Global South to monitor and evaluate the Scottish Government's international development funding.

Others added that it is crucial to ensure that this monitoring and evaluation should not be an onerous, technical endeavour. They stressed the risk of adding to the workload of women's organisations, and argued monitoring should be resourced by the Scottish Government. Enabling grassroots women's movements in the Global South to define what success is would enable the Scottish Government to realise its ambition of a decolonial approach and ensure meaningful accountability.

Some participants suggested the Scottish Government could usefully encourage links between women's organisations and feminist networks in

¹¹ Some suggested drawing on initiatives developed in Scotland, such as Police Scotland's [Don't be that Guy](#) campaign.

Scotland and partner countries. They could also connect grassroots organisations in partner countries to national-level organisations through supporting network building and resourcing women's organisations to network, and promote more solidarity between funders either working in the same geographical or on similar themes to encourage complementary rather than contradictory approaches.

Recommendations for policy and action

1) Raise the issue of the need for structural changes to tackle gendered inequalities at their root

- In International Development strategies, speeches and meetings, make the case for the structural changes in global finance and trade systems and institutions (such as debt cancellation, a UN tax convention, reform of the trade regime, binding human rights due diligence requirements on multinational corporations, an end to the IMF's imposition of austerity policies) such that governments in the Global South can achieve gender equality through gender-responsive public services and industrialisation strategies.
- Amplify the call of activists, scholars and others in the Global South who advocate for national care systems based on human rights, and other forms of gender-responsive social infrastructure.

2) Be a beacon for alternative models of development

- Promote the alternative models of development being pioneered domestically overseas, including in partner countries, through the [Wellbeing Economy Governments partnership \(WEGo\)](#) and International Development work more generally.
- Ensure such models are fully feminist, and being progressed consistently and maximally at home through:
 - Adding a new national outcome on Care to the National Performance Framework
 - Ensuring the inclusion of women and other marginalised groups in Just Transition plans
- Support the [proposed Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill](#).

3) Follow the principles of feminist funding

- Provide flexible, long-term funding to women's organisations and feminist networks.¹²
- Ensure eligibility, application, reporting and compliance processes are as simple as possible - especially for small grants.

4) Adopt an intersectional and inclusive approach to all development funding and programming

- Systematically adopt [gender mainstreaming tools](#) and processes.
- Monitor and report against the OECD Gender Equality Policy Marker.

5) "Shift the power"

- Give partners and beneficiaries greater control over development priorities.
- Fund women's organisations in partner countries to monitor and evaluate the Scottish Government's international development funding.

6) Promote global solidarity

- Resource women's organisations to network within their country and with international feminist movements.
- Facilitate connections between funders either working in the same geographical area or on similar themes to encourage complementary rather than contradictory approaches.

¹² Participants shared useful research and guides on best practice in this area, for example Emilie Tant and Diana Jiménez Thomas Rodríguez, "[How to partner with feminist movements for transformative change](#)", policy brief, ODI, 2022.

Peace and Security

This chapter sets out the policies and actions by which the Scottish Government can realise a feminist approach to foreign policy in the sphere of peace and security, drawing from the recommendations made by participants in both the online workshop on peace and security and the final in-person workshop. It starts with a brief introduction to what the Scottish Government is already doing, and what it aims to do.

What is the Scottish Government already doing, and what does it aim to do?

The Scottish Government has made commitments to multilateralism and peace. It funds the NGO Beyond Borders [Women in Conflict 1325 Fellowships](#), which has delivered conflict and mediation training to some 300 women from 33 countries, and has committed to developing a Peace Institute. Police Scotland are engaged in [overseas training](#) on gender-based violence.

In 2021, in setting out its position on climate, defence, security and external affairs, the [Scottish Government confirmed](#) its opposition to nuclear weapons and commitment to pursuing the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from Scotland. It also called for growth in defence and security companies operating in Scotland, including manufacturing fighter aircraft and warships, and a role in military space technologies. It looked for more armed forces personnel to be based in Scotland. About [10,000 people](#) are employed in the arms industry in Scotland. According to the [Glasgow Herald](#), the Government defends grants from Scottish Enterprise on the basis that it is not funding the arms themselves, but “is primarily focused on helping firms to diversify their activities and technologies”.

The Scottish government has announced £1.6 million to refresh its [“New Scots” Refugee Integration Strategy](#), aimed at ensuring refugees and asylum seekers are supported to make their new communities their home.

Summary of discussions

Discussions ranged between the practical aspects of supporting women peacebuilders and what the Scottish Government can do about the impacts of violence and militarism.

All participants wanted the Scottish Government to develop further its support for the participation, empowerment, and leadership of organisations and networks of women and feminist peacebuilders and activists, including at the grassroots, across Scottish Government programming. Participants acknowledged the work that the Scottish government is already doing but some noted that the expertise of the Women in Conflict 1325 Fellows and other Human Rights Defenders supported by the Scottish Government could

be better drawn into policymaking. Some participants raised the need to evaluate these support programmes so as to increase their transformative impact.

Concrete steps to facilitate women peacebuilders' influence raised by participants include ensuring that when Scottish Government delegations organise meetings, they always have women in the delegation and meet with representatives of women's movements (and of marginalised groups, as relevant to the context and issue), and in Scotland-hosted global events, quotas and funding are introduced to ensure equal participation of women. Participants flagged that in many contexts enabling women's participation demands attention to providing support to their security and caregiving responsibilities. They also flagged the importance of deploying an intersectionality lens in order to include groups marginalised in peace and conflict, such as grassroots and rural organisations, young people's organisations, Indigenous Peoples' groups, and migrant- and refugee-led organisations.

Some participants argued for a broad understanding of peace and security, reflecting the [feminist insight](#) that the main sources of insecurity for women are often found in the home or community. They urged the Scottish Government to include a focus on protection of women against gender-based violence, including violations of their sexual and reproductive rights, drawing on the [good practice](#) that exists in Scotland.

Participants discussed how the current [levels of military spending](#) translate into a massive proliferation of arms around the world, with numerous gendered impacts. Experts from the Global South talked about how arms proliferation manifests in domestic violence murders, electoral violence and heightened risks of conflict in their communities.¹³ Particular concern was voiced around evidence that missiles used in [Yemen](#) and [Palestine](#) may have been manufactured in Scotland, and on the devastating impacts of war, militarism and nuclear radiation on women's health, climate change and the environment.¹⁴ Participants want the Scottish Government to [recognise the links](#) between its domestic defence, arms and nuclear policies and global peace, climate and environment. Some suggested broadening the Just Transition from the oil and gas sector to include the arms and wider military

¹³ This is evidenced in numerous reports, such as in [Small Arms Survey's 2014 report 'Women and Guns'](#); also see Ray Acheson and Madeleine Rees, "A feminist approach for addressing excessive military spending," in *Rethinking Unconstrained Military Spending* UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2020.

¹⁴ Research finds that women and girls are most acutely affected by nuclear weapon development, testing and use. See According to the [United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research](#), women in Hiroshima and Nagasaki had nearly double the risk of developing and dying from cancer due to ionising radiation exposure; girls are considerably more likely than boys to develop thyroid cancer from nuclear fallout; and pregnant women exposed to nuclear radiation face a greater likelihood of delivering children with physical malformations and stillbirths, leading to increased maternal mortality.

industry, to support workers in the arms industry into more productive employment.

Participants discussed the importance of the Scottish Government putting pressure on the UK Government to terminate contracts enabling arms sales to abusive regimes, to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the UK military and to support the abolition of nuclear weapons. Participants suggested the Scottish Government should also seek to more effectively influence UK policy regarding engagement with foreign regimes more generally, including guarding against support to regimes committing serious human rights violations.

Some participants urged the Scottish Government to be active in the UK-wide (Governmental) Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Working Group, bringing forward issues that the Westminster Government tends to exclude from WPS policymaking, especially refugees and asylum seekers, disarmament, arms sales, nuclear weapons, the role of extractive industries in fuelling violence, and peace education.¹⁵ Whether through the WPS Working Group or other mechanism, participants wanted the Scottish Government to put pressure on the UK Government to more actively support women's and diverse groups' participation in peace processes (for example by funding women to be at the peace table and imposing conditions on UK funding for peace security processes to require women's participation) and to more systematically protect Women Human Rights Defenders and LGBTQI+ Human Rights Defenders.

Many participants pointed to the need to build competence on the gendered impacts and drivers of war among Scottish civil servants to improve engagement with the Westminster Government and parliamentary committee hearings. Some noted that there should be greater transparency around Scottish Government positions on such matters, for example through reporting on Scottish Government interventions to Westminster Parliament Committee hearings and counterparts on FFP issues.

Some participants thought the Scottish Government should consider a WPS NAP for Scotland, focused on what Scotland can do within its powers. Others felt this would not be needed on top of a well-defined feminist approach to foreign policy. Whether it was a WPS NAP or FFP approach, the process of developing and implementing it should help to engage communities on Scotland's role in peace and security and other global issues.

Finally, on this theme, many participants raised the issue of how the Scottish Government could create a more welcoming environment for refugees, people seeking asylum and migrants, and how it could strengthen mechanisms to

¹⁵ Some suggested the Scottish Government should promote recognition of the universality of the WPS Agenda – that it is relevant across all of the UK, not just overseas, a point finally recognised in the new [UK Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan](#) (WPS NAP), launched just after the final workshop, on 23 February 2023.

ensure asylum-seeker and refugee safeguarding and well-being. Experts on this issue raised the problems of short-term housing options and digital poverty (lack of access to Wi-Fi and digital devices); children often having to change schools, and feeling afraid to speak at school about their housing and family situation; and women from migrant communities not being effectively protected from family violence when they travel outside of Britain.

Recommendations for policy and action

1) Support women and feminist peacebuilders and activists at home and abroad

- Make space for the voices of organisations/networks of women and feminist peacebuilders and activists to be heard in policymaking processes, and “stand with them”.¹⁶
- Support programmes that equip and empower women to be influential, for example, to build knowledge and expertise to participate in policymaking processes.
- As part of international development funding, prioritise funding for *policy advocacy* activities: upstream, transformative activities, rather than activities that merely address gendered impacts of conflict.
- Set a benchmark for funding peace and security work that targets gender equality as a primary or significant policy objective (using the OECD Gender Marker).¹⁷
- Support cross-context movement sharing / twinning on peace-making and rebuilding.
- Resource and support women peacebuilders at home so that they can network with and support women peacebuilders overseas.
- Strengthen peace education in Scotland, and ensure curricula explore the structural drivers of conflict, including colonialism, militarism and the arms trade.

2) Provide Feminist Funding for peacebuilders

- Provide funding that is long-term, flexible and that enables organisations and communities to set and meet their own priorities.
- Ensure eligibility, application, reporting and compliance processes are as simple as possible - especially for small grants.

¹⁶ The GAPS UK tool on [meaningful engagement of women](#) was recommended.

¹⁷ Noting that the UN Secretary-General and the OECD have [recommended](#) that at least 15 per cent peace and security funding has gender equality as a primary objective.

3) Disarm and divest from military industries

- Discourage arms manufacture in Scotland and the nuclear industry, including stopping subsidising defence and military companies and banning lobbying by arms manufacturers.
- Broaden the Just Transition from the oil and gas sector to include the arms and wider military industry.
- Adopt laws and regulations to strengthen transparency around the Scottish arms and nuclear industry; for example, requiring companies to publish data on where weapons manufactured and defence technologies developed in Scotland are used, or including arms exports in the National Performance Framework.
- Put pressure on the UK Government to terminate contracts enabling arms sales to abusive regimes, to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the UK military and to support the abolition of nuclear weapons.

4) Protect refugees and migrants.

- Support local organisations that provide services to asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants and support their social, cultural and economic integration.
- Provide funding for refugee services and community groups that is long-term and flexible, and provided to meet organisations' and communities' own priorities.
- Avoid re-traumatising individuals during the asylum-seeking process; use trauma-informed approaches; ensure accessible mental health/trauma assistance.
- Provide services such as free bus travel, bikes and access to libraries to support education and volunteering.
- Provide English language classes and further adult learning, even without immigration status confirmed, that is supported by provision for other caring responsibilities.
- Offer the support and welcome provided to Ukrainian refugees to all refugees and asylum seekers.
- Push back on the UK Government's repressive approach to borders and migration.

5) Lobby the UK government more systematically on human rights and gender issues pertaining to peace and security.

- Seek to influence UK policy regarding engagement with foreign regimes, including guarding against support to regimes committing serious human rights violations.

- Push the UK Government to support women's and diverse groups' participation in peace processes (for example by funding women to be at the peace table and imposing conditions on UK funding for peace security processes to require women's participation); and to do more to protect Women Human Rights Defenders and LGBTQI+ Human Rights Defenders.
- Engage more pro-actively in the UK NAP and insist on devolved nations' participation, raising the issues the UK government tends to exclude, especially refugees and asylum seekers, disarmament, arms sales, nuclear weapons, the role of extractive industries in fuelling violence, and peace education.
- Build competence on gendered nature of war among Scottish civil servants so as to improve engagement with the UK Government.

Climate and Environmental Justice

This chapter sets out the policies and actions by which the Scottish Government can realise a feminist approach to foreign policy in the sphere of climate and environmental justice, drawing from the recommendations made by participants in both the online workshop on climate and environmental justice and the final in-person workshop. It starts with a brief introduction to what the Scottish Government is already doing, and what it aims to do.

What is the Scottish Government already doing, and what does it aim to do?

International climate justice is a priority for the Scottish Government in its efforts to be a good global citizen. It was the first government to pledge funding to [Loss and Damage finance](#), [framing the contribution](#) not as an act of charity but as an act of global solidarity out of moral responsibility for the damage driven by the Global North. The Scottish Government also manages a £36 million [Climate Justice Fund](#).

The Scottish Government has made [gender equality a central part of its climate justice work](#) through funding the [Women's Environment & Development Organisation \(WEDO\)](#),¹⁸ supporting a [Human Rights Defender Fellowship](#) for a woman working on environment, and funding a climate focus within the Beyond Borders Women in Conflict 1325 Fellowships. It has committed to advancing gender equality through its [Loss and Damage finance](#) and all Climate Justice Fund programmes, with a new focus on climate-just communities. The Scottish Government also commissioned a [Scoping Study on International Climate Justice, Conflict and Gender](#), which proposed options for feminist international climate justice, including ways in which the Government could advocate for transitions to more just, inclusive and sustainable economic models internationally, in line with its advocacy for a Wellbeing Economy at home.

Scotland has relatively strong emissions targets – net zero by 2045, five years ahead of the rest of the UK. The Scottish Government is committed to a [Just Transition](#) from fossil fuels to cleaner, greener, renewable energy in ways that are fair and do not penalise workers in the oil and gas industries, but support them to use their skills in new, good-quality green jobs.

¹⁸ WEDO supports women from the Global South to attend climate conferences; supports indigenous women leaders' [climate solutions](#); and enhances the analysis, communication, use of and learning from cross-sector data and information in relation to gender and the environment (the "[Gender Climate Tracker](#)") to ensure effective policy-making and implementation.

Summary of discussions

Participants welcomed the Scottish Government's commitment to Loss and Damage funding: framing climate funding not as charity but as an act of global solidarity out of moral responsibility for historical emissions reflects feminist demands for climate justice. They encouraged the Scottish Government to continue to champion a Loss and Damage fund.

There was a high degree of consensus amongst participants who felt the Scottish Government's work to pursue a feminist international climate justice approach, while pioneering in many ways, falls short of the demands of [women in the Global South](#) and [Indigenous women](#). These include an immediate halt to all new investments in fossil fuels and nuclear energy; the defunding of untested, unsustainable and imposed technological fixes such as carbon capture and storage and geoengineering; and the transformation of "economic models that excessively, unjustly, and unsustainably exploit natural resources and women's bodies to fuel the greed of a few individuals and countries at the expense of sustainable development for many developing countries and the health of the planet".¹⁹

Participants thus also wanted the Scottish Government to speak out for international climate justice beyond Loss and Damage, including calling for the changes to the extractive economic system needed to tackle climate problems at their roots and for other elements of a more [gender-equitable and just system of responding to the climate crisis, such as the principle that "polluters pay"](#).

Many participants felt strongly that if the Scottish Government wants to protect its influencing power as a good global citizen and voice for climate justice, it needs to match its global commitments with doing more domestically. The central issues here were the Scottish Government's [failure to meet its greenhouse gas emissions targets](#), the need to acknowledge that the targets fall short of what is required to prevent climate catastrophe, and its [prevarication over joining the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance](#).

Participants also raised the importance of *how* we meet the targets, arguing that the Scottish Government has to ensure that the measures taken to meet the targets are gender-equitable and just, such as insulating all homes (rather than just providing grants for well-off homeowners) and ensuring accessible affordable mass public transport (rather than just focusing on transitioning from petrol to electric vehicles). Some questioned the commitment to Hydrogen in the new [Energy Strategy](#), as its resource implications will have impacts on justice.

¹⁹ African Feminist Taskforce and Women and Gender Constituency at the UNFCCC, "[Standing in our power: African women's and girls' demands for COP27](#)".

Some participants underlined that to be just, Scotland's Just Transition cannot be focused only on new green jobs for those previously employed in fossil fuel extraction, predominantly men. It needs – as a bare minimum – to ensure jobs for marginalised groups in the green economy and invest in those sectors that are already relatively green and already dominated by women (such as health, care and education). Moreover, the Just Transition should consider the impact of “clean energy” in the Global North on the lives of the most marginalised, including women, in the Global South. Participants talked about how the mining of high-value minerals required for batteries and other elements of green technology and the piles of e-waste generated in the Global North are devastating the lives and lands of the Global South. As such, the transition cannot just be from fossil fuels to renewables, but must be a transition from “extract, pollute, consume, discard” to models based on regeneration and care.

Participants underscored the importance of participatory policymaking concerning Scotland's climate-related policies in nations Scotland supports, and in regional and international fora. As highlighted under other themes, participants argued the Scottish Government should move away from project-based funding to flexible, long-term support to local organisations, which enables sustainable interventions, and enables activists to “grow into” policymaking processes.

Participants also raised the importance of bi-directional peer-to-peer learning on climate mitigation and adaptation techniques. They suggested that the Scottish Government should facilitate technology transfers to local communities to enable access to energy that is both renewable and affordable, including for women. As well as technology transfer from Scotland to partner countries, participants highlighted the importance of learning from partners in the Global South on adaptation/sustainable agriculture/ traditional building techniques that avoid carbon-intensive technologies. They want the Scottish Government to catalyse peer-to-peer learning between communities, across countries (including Scotland), across research communities including universities, and across different sectors.

Participants suggested these types of support to climate activists should be funded through new mechanisms including taxes on polluters.

Recommendations for policy and action

1) Speak out for structural change to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises at their roots

- As well as continuing to campaign for Loss and Damage as an act of global solidarity out of moral responsibility, use all multilateral fora related to the twinned ecological emergencies to push for binding environmental and human rights regulations on extractive corporations and the Polluter Pays principle.
- Give platforms in international forums to climate activists, women's land rights and climate rights defenders and amplify their call for system change.
- Join the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance and work with it and others to implement the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty.

2) Scale up work on climate justice at home

- Set more ambitious greenhouse gas emissions targets, including introduction of new consumption-based emission targets.
- Tackle consumption through, for example, promoting the circular economy.
- Broaden the scope of the Just Transition to include justice for women, especially the most marginalised in the Global South.
- Include in the proposed Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill clear duties for public bodies to ensure climate action.
- Increase the public pot by implementing the polluters pay principle and introducing, for example, a frequent flyers' levy.
- Consider imaginative use of incentives on business taxes, for example reductions for setting out a climate action plan and senior management training.
- Revamp the Business Pledge to include global damage in the environment element and make it mandatory.
- Include material footprint data in the National Performance Framework.
- Incorporate the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment into Scottish law, policy and practice.

3) Empower grassroots, rural and other marginalised women and Indigenous peoples in climate policy- and decision-making at local, national and international levels

- Continue and scale up support to climate activists, grassroots, rural and other marginalised women (including women farmers and

fisherwomen), Indigenous peoples and climate refugees to facilitate their meaningful participation in all climate policy-making.

- Use community-based data sources to inform climate policy and programming.
- Revise M&E processes within climate programming to ensure that projects are responsive to community needs and measure inclusivity of processes.
- Support twinning projects between activists in the Global North and Global South.
- Strengthen local groups' capacity to participate effectively in Environmental Impact Assessments in partner countries.

4) Provide feminist funding

- Provide funding that is long-term and flexible so that climate activists can set and meet their own priorities.
- Provide direct funding to grassroots, rural and other marginalised women, and Indigenous peoples for transformative action.
- Ensure eligibility, application, reporting and compliance processes are as simple as possible - especially for small grants.

5) Catalyse peer-to-peer learning and technology transfer

- Facilitate technology transfers to local communities to enable access to energy that is both renewable and affordable, including for women.
- Encourage learning from partners in the Global South on adaptation/sustainable agriculture/ traditional building techniques that avoid carbon-intensive technologies.
- Catalyse peer-to-peer learning between communities, across countries (including Scotland), across research communities including universities, and across different sectors.

Trade Justice

This chapter sets out the policies and actions by which the Scottish Government can realise a feminist approach to foreign policy in the sphere of Trade Justice, drawing from the recommendations made by participants in both the online workshop on trade justice and the final in-person workshop. It starts with a brief introduction to what the Scottish Government is already doing, and what it aims to do.

What is the Scottish Government already doing, and what does it aim to do?

Scotland is not a party to trade agreements and not a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), but it is a [self-professed Trading Nation](#), with a comprehensive [Vision for Trade](#) and does engage through the UK Government with the work of the WTO through its committees. Trade represents around [21 per cent of Scottish GDP](#), with key exports of food and drink, engineering services and manufacturing, life and chemical sciences, technology, digital and media, financial and business services and, of course, oil and gas.

The Vision for Trade sets out the Scottish Government's principles and the values it hopes will underpin its future trading relationships: Inclusive Growth; wellbeing, sustainability, net zero and good governance. It sets out how it hopes to use trade to promote gender equality, human rights and environmental protection – both what it intends to do itself and what it will call upon the UK Government to do.

Summary of Discussions

A range of views were expressed during the trade discussions. Feminist trade experts explained how the current global trade system promotes a model of economic competitiveness that depends on a “flexible” and deregulated labour market that puts downward pressure on wages. This model often reinforces the marginalisation of women in the Global South, as they tend to be concentrated in the most poorly paid, vulnerable and part-time roles in the economy.²⁰ Additionally, trade liberalisation – the reduction of tariffs – [denies Global South governments revenue](#) that could be used to strengthen public services such as childcare, education, water, and sanitation—all critical to advancing women's human rights. It also [denies Global South governments the fiscal space to promote sustainable industrialisation and economic](#)

²⁰ See, for example, Matthias Busse and Christian Spielmann, “Gender inequality and trade”, *Review of International Economics*, 14(3), 362–79, 2006.

[diversification](#) through investing in domestic sectors, reinforcing the concentration of women at the foot of supply chains in the garment sector, agriculture, or electronic manufacturing.

Further, the revenue losses from liberalisation are often compensated through [regressive taxes](#), such as value added taxes or sales and service taxes, which disproportionately affect the poor and already marginalised groups, including women.

Many Global South countries are [caught in a cycle](#) of liberalising in an attempt to boost exports, but instead suffer the instability of boom-bust financial cycles, growing market concentration and tax avoidance of multinational corporations (MNCs), and imports that displace fragile domestic industries.

In addition, participants highlighted the [detrimental impacts of agricultural and fisheries subsidies](#), [Intellectual Property Rights](#) (with respect to vaccines and medicines but also [seeds](#)), the [privatisation agenda](#), as well as investor protections such as [ISDS \(Investor State Dispute Settlement\)](#) that give companies the right to sue states but not the other way around, on women in the Global South. Participants also discussed the environmental impacts of trade, which include emissions from transportation (though it was noted that these can be lower than that which would be generated by localising food production), deforestation, and trade agreements that prevent governments from enacting or enforcing environmental protections that harm corporate profits.

For some of these feminists, increasing women's participation in trade, the position of many mainstream approaches, means little more than exponential extraction, destruction and human rights violations in the Global South. They argue for a feminism of *rupture*, not inclusion. Others stressed that the problem is not trade *per se*, but how the current system is governed. Many participants therefore asked that the Scottish Government do more to raise these issues of structural harm and inequality, and call for the reforms that would address the issues above, and foster a trade system that drives up human rights, women's rights and environmental standards over time.²¹

Participants welcomed the Scottish Government as a pioneer of a wellbeing economy, and that the Vision for Trade makes clear that trade should be in the service of wellbeing, environment, human rights and gender equality. Participants thought the Scottish Government should do more, however, to promote the approach set out in the Vision for Trade on the global stage,

²¹ This is set out in the [Gender and Trade Coalition's vision for a gender-just trade system](#). For more detail on the reforms required, see [Oxfam International's proposals for trade justice](#) and [Action Aid's proposals for gender-just trade](#).

through partnerships such as the [Wellbeing Economy Governments network \(WEGo\)](#), and in other multilateral fora.

To be a “norm entrepreneur” in this way, participants agreed the Scottish Government needs to implement the Vision for Trade more consistently and effectively. Some participants pointed to [tensions](#) between a focus on export-led growth on the one hand, and tackling the climate and nature crises, reducing global inequalities or building international cooperation around common goals on the other. A more consistent implementation of the Vision for Trade, they suggest, means prioritising wellbeing, the environment, human rights and women’s rights in *all* trade and economic policies and practice. It also means stopping doing the things that undermine the progressive vision. In other words, Scotland should seek to adopt a ‘do no harm’ approach to trade.

Participants argued that when assessing trade, the Scottish Government should use the wider metrics in the Vision for Trade (such as whether trade contributes to well-being), not only the narrow measures used in for example A Trading Nation (such as GDP growth, levels of investment, or export league tables). More specifically, participants suggested that assessments of the impact of trade should measure whether it enhances people’s wellbeing both in Scotland *and in the Global South*, with specific attention to its gendered impacts. This means analysing the impacts of Scotland’s trade and trade policies upon women, men and communities in Scotland’s trading partners and through its supply chains. The analysis should pay special attention to migrant workers, rural and other marginalised women and Indigenous people, who are at particular risk of labour exploitation.

Participants felt that there is scope for Scotland to carry out its own gender impact assessments of Free Trade agreements. One option suggested was to follow the recent review process of [Gender and Trade carried out by New Zealand](#) but go further and add an impact assessment of Scotland’s trade on women in the Global South. There was wide consensus on this suggestion that the Scottish Government could fund collaborative research on the impacts of trade (including the UK’s free trade agreements) on women (with a focus on Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia), and do more to support women's rights organisations and feminist networks to campaign for change on the basis of the findings.

Participants discussed how Scottish companies are already encouraged to ensure fair pay and sustainability, through, for example, the Business Pledge. Some also highlighted Scotland’s commitment to Fair Trade. Yet, it was argued more could be done to apply these approaches more thoroughly to ensure that Scottish companies are “good global citizens” throughout their supply chains, championing the highest standards of human rights and environmental protection.

Discussion also covered how the Scottish Government could support small-scale female producers and traders, particularly in its partner countries, such that they can benefit from trade. Ideas included support to form cooperatives and collectives to help diversify into and supply large volumes of potentially exportable goods; support to trade unions in feminised sectors in the Global South; and support to NGOs that work with women workers. Some raised the opportunity for policy coherence and Scottish Government to support Scottish-based cooperatives, collectives and women-led small/medium businesses.

Finally, participants discussed how the Scottish Government's approach to the Global South's access to the technologies required for sustainable development should be about collaborating and partnering, sharing expertise and best practice, instead of focusing only on increasing exports.

Recommendations for policy and action

1) Speak out for structural change

- Speak out for change and support women's rights organisations and feminist networks to campaign for change on specific problematic aspects of the international trade system, including those detailed in the discussion above.
- Fund collaborative research on the impacts of trade, or more specifically the UK's free trade agreements, on women, with a focus on Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia, and support local women's rights organisations and feminist networks to campaign for change on the basis of the findings.

2) Be a beacon for an alternative approach to trade

- Promote internationally the approach of the Vision for Trade and its prioritisation of wellbeing, the environment, human rights and women's rights in all trade and economic policies and practice; and ensure policy coherence and consistency.

3) Assess trade success according to wellbeing and sustainability criteria

- Use reviews of the National Performance Framework and Wellbeing Monitor to develop indicators on the impact of trade on wellbeing, including wellbeing overseas.²²

4) Push businesses to be Human Rights and Environment Champions throughout their supply chains

- Require Scottish based companies to publish environmental and HR audits of their global supply chain.²³
- Ensure companies cannot win Scottish Government procurement contracts or financial support without publishing such audits.
- Incentivise procurement from women-led social purpose businesses and social enterprises in the Global South and support them to meet high environmental standards.
- Produce clear, binding obligations for Scottish based businesses on labour rights, human rights and women's rights, including mandatory requirements to undertake gender-responsive human rights due diligence checks.²⁴

5) Foster collaborative approaches to develop, share and trade research and technology for sustainable development

- Develop memoranda of understanding with partner countries (including Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia) and Scottish firms and/or educational establishments to transfer identified technologies (for example green technologies and pharmaceuticals) that can support the development of new, high-value industries with equal job opportunities for women.
- Create the enabling conditions for Scottish companies to share technologies in collaborative ways through positive incentives.
- Fund research and development grants for Global South and Scottish universities and businesses to collaborate on these technologies and initiatives, with grants restricted to teams that are inclusive of women and other marginalised groups.²⁵

²² A new Alliance report, [Measuring Scotland's Global Impact in the National Performance Framework](#), suggests ways in which adding oil and gas and arms exports to the National Performance Framework could enable the Scottish Government to better measure Scotland's "spill over" impacts on human rights and the environment.

²³ Oxfam's [Behind the Barcode campaign](#) was highlighted as example of good practice.

²⁴ Noting the standards set in the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#).

²⁵ Participants suggested as examples of good practice the [EASE project](#) and [WATERSPOUTT](#).

- Make Scottish Government funding to, for example, vaccine developers conditional on fair access for the Global South to vaccines and sharing intellectual property.²⁶
- Support – politically and financially – alternatives to the current model of intellectual property rights concerning global public goods such as vaccines and green technology.

6) Support women in the Global South to benefit from trade

- Support small-scale female producers and traders to form cooperatives and collectives to help diversify into and supply large volumes of potentially exportable goods.
- Support trade unions in feminised sectors in the Global South;
- Support NGOs that work with women workers.
- Lead by example by improving policies at home for cooperatives, collectives and women-led small/medium businesses.

7) Influence the UK's trade agreements

- Push for UK trade negotiations and agreements to consider gender in all phases of negotiating trade agreements and in their implementation; and for agreements to include *ex-ante* and *ex-poste* gender-specific impact analysis, gender-responsive labour rights provisions, and strong monitoring and institutional support around these provisions.

²⁶ Good practice was noted regarding a hub in South Africa making an alternative to the Moderna Covid vaccine, training scientists and sharing the vaccine technology.

6. Conclusions and next steps

The many activists, organisations, scholars and experts who participated in this consultation process were positive and excited about the Scottish Government's commitment to a feminist approach to foreign policy and international engagement. This was seen as an area in which the Scottish Government can build progressive alliances and demonstrate its "good global citizenship".

To move forward, the Scottish Government is recommended to take the following immediate steps, in order to ensure the recommendations for policy and action made in this report are implemented effectively and in a timely and participatory way:

- Put in place a mechanism for ongoing engagement around its feminist approach to global affairs to ensure regular, ongoing, productive dialogue with and feedback from civil society, academia and other experts, including women's groups and feminist networks. Many of the individuals and organisations that took part in this stakeholder engagement process expressed themselves as ready to be part of such a mechanism.
- Put in place a Global South consultation mechanism around its feminist approach to global affairs, including women's groups and feminist networks. This might build upon existing structures or be something new.
- Promote and support structures that encourage knowledge sharing on foreign policy issues between civil society groups, women's groups and feminist networks in Scotland and elsewhere.

Work should, in parallel, be scaled up to ensure that all Scottish Government staff working on all portfolios with a global impact (which includes any departments engaged in procurement of products produced outside Scotland) have training, guidelines, reporting mechanisms and expert support to integrate a feminist approach in their day-to-day work.

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Annex A – Workshop Participants

Participants from the following organisations participated in the workshops. Where an organisation is mentioned more than once it is because more than one representative attended from more than one country. In addition to the organisations mentioned below, a small number of individual experts participated, as did representatives from UNWomen and UNDP based in regional or global offices.

Malawi: UNWomen, ActionAid, Wateraid, Trocaire Malawi, Caritas Malawi, Gender and Justice organisation, Civil Society Network for Climate Change

Rwanda: Institute of Policy Analysis and Research, Rwanda Women’s Network, WaterAid, the Green Protector

Zambia: Sistah Sistah, Zambia Peace Conflict Resolution and Development

Kenya: ActionAid, Thousand Currents, Groots, World Resources Institute, African Eco-Feminists

Mexico: Equidad, The Women's Working Group on Financing for Development, Christian Aid

Sweden: Lund University

Canada: University of Ottawa, Carleton University, Oxfam Canada

Pakistan: Network of Women Peacebuilders, Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom

Ethiopia: Christian Aid

India: UNDP, UNCTAD

Cameroun: International Indigenous Women’s Network

Bangladesh: ActionAid

Uganda: East Africa Farmers Federation

Jamaica: Gender and Trade Coalition,

UK (not based in Scotland): GAPS, Global Justice Now; Oxfam; University of East Anglia, Institute of Development Studies, ODI, FFP collective, University of Manchester

Scotland: Beyond Borders, CND, WILPF, Oxfam, Scottish Fair Trade Forum, Freedom Scotland, CAAT - Campaign for Action Against the Arms Trade, Amina-Muslim Women’s Resource Centre, Friends of the Earth, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, SCIAF, Common Wealth, Wellbeing Economy Alliance, UNCTAD, Scottish Development International, Edinburgh University, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scottish Refugee Council, Scottish Women’s Aid, Scottish Women’s Budget Group, Corra Foundation, Yemeni Scottish Foundation

Annex B – Workshop Guidance

Questions used in consultative online workshops:

Participants were sent a summary background paper summarising the context of the issues as they pertain to Scotland and were asked key questions to reflect upon before joining the discussion. For all workshops the structure of the questions was similar. For example, the text for the first workshop was:

The key question we will ask you to focus on in your small group discussions during the workshop is:

“What could Scotland do with its proposed feminist approach to international development that would make a difference to you and your work?”

It might help to structure your discussion to consider:

- *What is it you think the Scottish Government, given its particular status, would be best to address, and what specific actions could they take to do this (please consider potential priorities, funding mechanisms, implementation methods or any other approaches you think relevant)?*
- *Are there policies or programmes that Scotland is already delivering domestically or internationally that could be built upon? What could be done to promote change?*
- *How would these changes contribute to the feminist goal of tackling gendered inequalities and insecurities at their root?*

For climate justice participants were asked:

- *What could the Scottish Government do in its proposed feminist approach to foreign policy that would make a difference to you and your work on climate justice?”*

And for the discussion on trade. Participants were asked:

- *Thinking about your particular background and expertise, what do you think the Scottish Government could do to implement a feminist approach as part of its work on trade?*



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