

## FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

### WHY IT IS CRITICAL TO INVEST IN GENDER-RESPONSIVE CLIMATE FINANCING



(From left to right): Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and Member of Parliament (MP) interacts with women CSO leaders; Ms. Farida Easmin, an entrepreneur and Chairperson of Nari Association for Revival, and Initiative – NARI from Kurigram sharing her opinion during the Q/A session with the Minister; Ms. Gitanjali Singh, UN Women Representative, delivering remarks with the MoEFCC Secretary Dr. Farhina Ahmed and the MoEFCC Minister Mr. Chowdhury seated at the table. Photo: UN Women/Emdadul Islam.

Important recommendations were developed by civil society organizations and women’s groups to make the upcoming national budget and budgeting process more gender-responsive. The recommendations include: (a) strengthening the participation of stakeholders, especially women and marginalized groups, in budget-related discussions; (b) improving monitoring of expenditures; (c) assessment of the differential impacts of budgets on women and girls; and (d) effective coordination at all levels to ensure that resources reach people who are being left behind, including women with disabilities, gender-diverse people, and women from the most marginalized groups. The consultation concluded with group discussions that framed key substantive recommendations for the forthcoming budget including more investments in resilient gender-responsive infrastructure, access to clean drinking water, renewable energy, and climate-resilient livelihoods for women.

The recommendations were formulated during a multi-stakeholder consultation on “Gender-Responsive Climate Financing in Bangladesh” held in Dhaka on 6 March 2024. In line with the theme, “Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress”, of the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

(CSW) and International Women’s Day, the consultation brought together around forty representatives from government, women’s rights organizations, NGOs, development partners and academia to discuss policy and budgetary recommendations for integrating gender equality into the upcoming national budget for fiscal year 2024-25. UN Women is in the process of developing a policy brief based on the recommendations to take forward the advocacy with government.

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*“Gender equality is a fundamental prerequisite for building climate resilience and achieving sustainable development. Our policies and strategies, such as the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan, National Adaptation Plan, and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, reflect our determination to confront the climate crisis head-on.”*

**-Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, MP**

*Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change*

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Read [Making climate finance more gender-responsive in Bangladesh](#). Find photos [here](#).

## INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN BANGLADESH



International Women's Day (IWD) 2024 represented a significant moment as the world united under the theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress." In the spirit of this global call to action, three chiefs of missions from international financial institutions working in Bangladesh offered their perspectives on the significance of investing in women to accelerate sustainable development. Read: [International](#)

[financial institutions advancing gender equality in Bangladesh.](#)

## JOINT OP-ED BY THE UNRC, UN WOMEN AND UNFPA ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



"The UN has made a commitment to work towards gender parity within our workforce and commit that all joint programming in Bangladesh prioritizes gender equality. Commitment to women's empowerment means little if it is not backed up by resources. Investing in women and girls sets a direct path towards gender equality, sustainable development, and

inclusive economic growth."

Co-authored by UNRC Ms. Gwyn Lewis, UN Women Representative Ms. Gitanjali Singh, and UNFPA Representative Ms. Kristine Blokhuis, an op-ed titled "[Invest in Women to Accelerate Progress](#)" was published in the Daily Star on International Women's Day 2024.

## 68<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW 68): BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT DELEGATION JOINS PRE-CSW DIALOGUE IN THAILAND



(Left photo) The Government of Bangladesh delegates to the pre-CSW consultation in Thailand were: Ms. Nahid Monjura Afroz, Joint Secretary, MoWCA and Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury, Joint Secretary, MoWCA. (Right photo) Ms. Alia Alia El-Yassir, former Regional Director, UN Women Asia and the Pacific Region, in the middle, and standing on her right is Ms. Nahid Monjura Afroz, Joint Secretary of MoWCA. To her left is Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury, Joint Secretary of MoWCA. UN Women/Ploy Phutpheng.

A Bangladesh government delegation participated in the regional pre-CSW dialogue in Thailand in February 2024. This was hosted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Thailand. The delegation provided

valuable perspectives from the Bangladeshi context on addressing poverty, strengthening institutions, and financing with a gender perspective. The results contributed to the region's inputs to the draft conclusions.

## UN WOMEN STRENGTHENS TIES WITH BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT

UN Women extended congratulations to the newly appointed Honorable State Minister of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Ms. Simeen Hussain Rimi, (MP), and Honorable Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud, (MP), of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. UN Women Representative Ms. Gitanjali Singh, Deputy Representative Ms. Navanita Sinha and the UN Women team engaged in productive discussions with the MoWCA State Minister. The main topics included the roadmap for the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) in 2025, advancing gender-responsive budgeting, and co-hosting the



(Left to Right): Ms. Navanita Sinha, UN Women Deputy Representative; Ms. Tapati Saha, UN Women Programme Analyst; Hon. Simeen Hussain Rimi, MP and State Minister for MoWCA; Ms. Gitanjali Singh, UN Women Representative; and Ms. Shararat Islam, UN Women Communications Analyst. Photo: UN Women.



[2024 Asia-Pacific Care Forum](#) from 27-29 August 2024. UN Women reaffirmed its commitment to working with Government to further women's empowerment and gender equality, strengthening cooperation with Bangladesh to translate these commitments into actionable outcomes.

The Foreign Minister expressed his appreciation for the ongoing collaboration between the Government of Bangladesh and UN Women. He reiterated the steadfast commitment of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to gender equality and women's empowerment and acknowledged UN Women's vital role in this journey. The dialogue focused on commemorating the Beijing Declaration's 30th anniversary and the 25th anniversary of [UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#).



(Left to Right): Ms. Gitanjali Singh, UN Women Representative; Hon. Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP and Foreign Affairs Minister; and Ms. Tania Sharmin, Monitoring and Reporting Analyst, UN Women. Photo: MOFA.

## INVESTING IN CARE ECONOMY TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY



The hon. state minister and secretary of MoWCA with the UNRC, representatives from development partners, UN Women and ILO after an engaging conversation on the importance of investing in care economy. Photo: UN Women/Monon Muntaka.

Under the leadership of MoWCA and in collaboration with ILO, UN Women organized a dialogue with development partners on “Transforming the Care Economy in Bangladesh” to increase investments in the care economy. This

includes focusing on better access to gender-sensitive care policies and services, improving social and physical infrastructure, enhancing decent work opportunities, and addressing adverse social norms and gendered division of labor.

Representatives from nine development partners, including Foreign, Commonwealth and the Development Office of the United Kingdom, High Commission of Canada, Embassies of Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and USAID joined the dialogue. The participants spoke about the need for programming in the care economy, adopting a life-cycle approach, multiplying decent work opportunities, and building skills, particularly for women, to address the growing needs in the care sector.

Ms. Navanita Sinha, Deputy Representative of UN Women Bangladesh and Ms. Anne Drong, National

Programme Coordinator of ILO, made a presentation on the UN Women and ILO joint concept on “Transforming the Care Economy” in Bangladesh. The joint concept highlighted the need to address discriminatory social norms on care work and strengthen integration of gender-transformative measures in national and sectoral policy frameworks, in line with the global [SR framework](#) on care, improved labour market policies, and governance to promote decent jobs in care work and strengthen availability and access to mechanisms, social care infrastructures and service delivery.

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*“It is important to recognize that ‘care’ is an integral part of us, that the need for care be recognized first, and the means to redistribute care be identified to reduce the care burden of women.”*

*- Ms. Simeen Hussain Rimi, MP and State Minister of MoWCA.*

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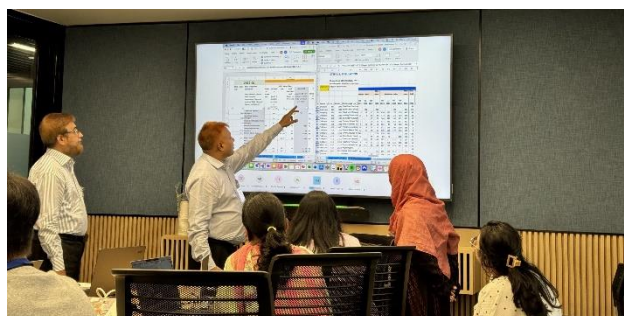
Read [Government and development partners discuss how to advance the care economy in Bangladesh](#).

See photos [here](#).

## RECOGNIZING WOMEN'S UNPAID WORK: DEVELOPING BANGLADESH'S HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION SATELLITE ACCOUNT



The mission team comprising of UN Women, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Statistics and Informatics Division and the Asian Development Bank pose for a group photo. Photo: UN Women/Nubayra Jeheen.



Led by Mr. Mashud Alam, Director of the Demography and Health Wing, eight officials from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the Statistics and Informatics Division during the wage review process. Photo: The Asian Development Bank.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), UN Women, and the Asian Development Bank are

working towards the development of a satellite account in response to the Honourable Prime Minister’s call to recognize women’s unpaid care



and domestic work in the country's gross domestic product (GDP). This effort builds upon the Time Use Survey conducted in 2021 by BBS with support from UN Women. In May 2024, eight officials from BBS attended a statistical capacity building training on the development of a Household Production Satellite Account during which the teams conducted an assessment of the economic statistics produced in Bangladesh and reviewed the selection of average hourly wage per occupation, by sex, to

enable the valuation of unpaid domestic and care work. In Bangladesh, women spend 7.3 times as much time on unpaid care and domestic work as men per day. A Household Production Satellite Account will bring to public and private attention the contribution of unpaid care and domestic work that underpins our societies, equipping decision-makers with information and data to enable evidence-based and gender-responsive policies, programmes, and budgets.

## ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH A GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING FORWARD LOOKING ASSESSMENT



Ms. Navanita Sinha, Deputy Representative, UN Women and Mr. Noor Ali Shah, Project Support Officer, UN Women along with GRB experts Ms. Reyhan Karababa and Dr. Emel Memiş, meet officials from Power Division, Mr. A. K Mohammad Shamsul Ahsan, Joint Secretary and Mr. Irfan Ul Hoque, Assistant Chief on 15 May 2024. Photo: UN Women/Abu Bakar Siddik.



GRB experts Ms. Reyhan Karababa and Dr. Emel Memiş engage with Women Members of the Chanchra and Nowapara Union Parishad, Jashore during the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) workshop organized on 16 May 2024 under the Women's Empowerment for Inclusive Growth (WING) project. Photo credit: UN Women/Joyantee Reza.

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a strategic policy approach and tool to strengthen planning and budgeting for the implementation of gender equality commitments. To further strengthen the application of GRB in Bangladesh, UN Women, in collaboration with MoWCA, successfully conducted a stakeholder engagement mission to Bangladesh in May to inform the ongoing comprehensive GRB Forward Looking Assessment. The GRB experts

leading the assessment met with 26 stakeholders, including government and civil society, at the national and district levels, in addition to development partners. The Forward-Looking Assessment aims to explore the effectiveness of GRB in Bangladesh and provide recommendations and a forward looking approach for more effective application of GRB to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the 9<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

## UN WOMEN LOCALIZES GENDER RESPONSIVE PLANNING AND BUDGETING

The Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) guideline and monitoring tool for local government was adopted at a national level workshop in Dhaka, in the presence of Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MoWCA) and Mr. Abu Salim Mahmud-Ul Hasan, Joint Secretary, Local Government Division.

Developed by MoWCA with technical support from UN Women, the 2023 GRPB guidelines have been introduced to build capacity at the union level.

Following the adoption of the guidelines, UN Women, in collaboration with its CSO partner, Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangathan (BNPS), organized workshops in four districts -Thakurgaon, Jessore, Cox's Bazar and Manikganj.

Around 86 participants, including women from diverse marginalized groups, are now equipped to

engage in gender responsive budget preparation at the union level.

The sessions gave participants a clear understanding of key concepts, such as gender, gender roles, the difference between gender and sex, gender mainstreaming, gender equality, and gender responsiveness. They also provided the essentials of preparing gender-responsive budgets- focused on each phase of budget formation. Participants engaged in a simulated exercise to identify primary challenges in their ward, such as child marriage, and presented strategies in solving them, that included awareness campaigns and training initiatives.

Find photos [here](#).



(Left to Right): Ms. Rokeya Kabir, BNPS ED; Ms. Navanita Sinha, UN Women Deputy Representative; Dr. Prakash Chowdhury, MoWCA Joint Secretary; Ms. Mushfiqna Satiar, Senior Policy Adviser, Embassy of Netherlands; and Mr. Prosenjit Chakma, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP at the GRPB validation workshop in Dhaka. Participants with organizers after completion of the GRPB validation workshop in Cox's Bazar. Photo: UN Women/Joyantee Reza.

## UN WOMEN HIGHLIGHTS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AT NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN (NAP) EXPO 2024 FOR CLIMATE CHANGE



Ms. Lipika Boiragi, Executive Director of the Association for Social Development and Distressed Welfare, sharing her journey on combatting climate crisis through locally led adaptation with Ms. Dilruba Haider, Programme Specialist of UN Women Bangladesh, during a short talk at the NAP Expo 2024. Photo: UN Women/Maud Aba'a.

Women's leadership in locally-led climate change adaptation model was once again center-staged at the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Expo 2024, held in Dhaka, in April. Building on UN Women's side event at the COP-28 on [women-led adaptations](#) at grassroots level, Khulna CSO leader Ms. Lipika Boiragi, joined UN Women Programme Specialist for DRR and Climate Change, Ms. Dilruba Haider, to share her journey on finding solutions to combat climate change challenges in Khulna. Organized by the Least Developed Countries Expert Group under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Expo convened global leaders, experts, and advocates to advance climate national adaptation plans (NAPs), facilitate exchange of experiences, foster partnerships, and promote the

development and implementation of effective adaptation strategies. In an interactive dialogue, Ms. Boiragi shed light on the solar panel that collects rain water to boost agriculture in Dacope, Khulna. Here, the high salinity of water makes regular irrigation difficult. Throughout the Expo, UN Women conducted training sessions, distributed knowledge products, and showcased successful projects, highlighting the importance of gender-transformative adaptation strategies. The efforts emphasized the critical role of women in driving sustainable climate solutions and the significant benefits of incorporating gender perspectives into national adaptation plans. Read [UN Women leads gender-responsive climate adaptation at NAP Expo 2024](#).



## GIHA LOCALIZATION : ACCELERATING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION



(Left) Group photo of local government representatives, women-led civil society organizations, local journalists and UN Women representatives at the Satkhira GiHA Working Group chapter launch on 12 February 2024. Photo: UN Women/Arup Barua.

UN Women continues to expand its efforts in strengthening women's leadership and voices in humanitarian response across the country. Recently, two new local chapters of the Inter-Cluster Gender in Humanitarian Action (GIHA) Working Group were launched in Khulna and Satkhira districts after establishing the [first local chapter in Kurigram](#) last year.

Co-chaired by UN Women and the Department of Women Affairs, the GIHA Working Group has been instrumental in promoting women's leadership in disaster preparedness and response since its inception in 2017. At the launch in Khulna, the focus was on forming community-based women's groups to facilitate swift disaster response. It was attended by over 50

representatives from various organizations, including women-led NGOs and media professionals. Ms. Hasna Hena from the Department of Women Affairs of Khulna highlighted the chapter's potential to empower women through direct involvement in relief efforts. Similarly, the launch in Satkhira gathered more than 40 participants who emphasized the urgent need to ensure women's safety and prevent exploitation in disaster scenarios. Discussions also underscored the importance of structured data collection to tailor effective humanitarian responses. Moving forward, these local chapters will play a crucial role in integrating women's perspectives into disaster management policies and practices, ensuring a more inclusive and responsive approach to humanitarian crises nationwide. [Read more.](#)

## ENHANCING GENDER-RESPONSIVE HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS: A RAPID GENDER ANALYSIS TRAINING IN BANGLADESH



Group photo of the participants and organizers after completion of the three-day long RGA training. Photo: UN Women/CEMS.

A total of 24 humanitarian practitioners from diverse organizations, including UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, and government officials, gained crucial skills for conducting rapid gender analysis through a three-day Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) training in April. In a significant step towards enhancing gender-responsive humanitarian efforts, the Inter-Cluster Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA) Bangladesh, led by the Department of Women's Affairs and co-chaired by UN Women, hosted the training.

The first in-person training of its kind brought together humanitarian practitioners from both Dhaka and Cox's Bazar, creating a pool of RGA experts ready to address gender-specific needs during crises. This significantly enhances the humanitarian response across Bangladesh. Several participants of the training were part of the task team that piloted the drafting of the RGA on

Cyclone Remal in June 2024. Supported by the Needs Assessment Working Group (NAWG) and CARE Bangladesh, the training built on the achievements of previous online RGA trainings conducted in 2021 and 2022, demonstrating continued progress in enhancing gender-responsive humanitarian interventions.

Ms. Keya Khan, Director General of the Department of Women's Affairs, emphasized the importance of gender-specific data in humanitarian action at the inauguration ceremony. The training highlighted the critical cooperation between GiHA Bangladesh and GiHA Cox's Bazar, as practitioners from both contexts committed to further mainstreaming gender into their work.



## REMAL'S IMPACT ON WOMEN OF BANGLADESH



(Left to right) Ms. Rahima Khatun and Ms. Sarjina Begum in front of their houses destroyed by cyclone Remal. Photo: UN Women

Cyclone Remal struck Bangladesh on May 26, 2024, impacting a staggering 4.6 million people. This devastating storm slammed into the country near the India-Bangladesh border, heavily impacting the southwest coastal districts. Remal's wrath caused widespread damage and disruption, leaving many vulnerable. The stories collected present the plight of two women Ms. Rahima Khatun and Ms Sarjina Begum from the affected population. Read [Remal's Impact on Women of Bangladesh](#).

### RAPID GENDER ANALYSIS ON CYCLONE REMAL: PRIORITIZING WOMEN'S SAFETY AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY

Chaired by the Department of Women's Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh and co-chaired by UN Women, the GiHA working group in Bangladesh completed a preliminary rapid gender analysis of Cyclone Remal. The analysis focuses on seven key areas, namely: (1) emergency shelter, (2) cyclone-induced housing disruptions, (3) food and income, (4) safety and security of women and girls, (5) access to reproductive health services, (6) access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities; and (7) role of women-led organizations and women rights organizations. The loss of housing, assets, disrupted education, diminished income, and severe food insecurity have exacerbated the crisis for the most vulnerable women, children, and gender-diverse groups. The top priorities include shelter, clean water, sanitation, food, and reproductive health

services. Long-term recovery should focus on reconstructing houses and infrastructure, revitalizing livelihoods, and reinforcing protective structures. The key immediate and long-term recommendations included:

**Emergency Shelter:** Immediate recommendations included arrangement of shelter for female headed households (FHHs) and single elderly women, adequate lighting in shelters and house repair support through Cash-for-Work programs. Long-term recommendations highlighted inclusion of women in shelter management committees, increasing separate latrines, providing housing grants to FHHs, offering loans for rebuilding homes and connecting them with the government's Asrayan project.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Asrayan: Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development](#)





Local partners of GiHA are quickly mobilized to collect information and data, ensuring a comprehensive and timely analysis of the cyclone's impacts on women, girls, and vulnerable populations. Photo: UN Women.

**Food and Income:** Short-term recommendation included distribution of food packages with utensils and fuel wood, Cash-for-Work programs, livelihood training and cash assistance and lifting the fishing ban in affected districts. The long-term recommendations focused on providing resilient livelihood skills training, creating provisions for interest-free or low-interest loans to women and FHHs, exploring alternative livelihoods, and ensuring support for the development of women-friendly market systems.

**Women and Girls safety, access to reproductive health services and WASH:** Immediate recommendations were: making information about gender-based violence (GBV) services and safety

measures available, providing trainings to first responders on GBV risks, distributing dignity kits and ensuring safe spaces, repairing latrines and rehabilitating tube wells. Long-term recommendations included installing solar street lamps to protect women's mobility and ensuring access to healthcare and other services, ensuring early warnings reach the most vulnerable groups, including FHHs, the elderly, and gender-diverse individuals, ensuring ante-natal care services, arranging transportation to healthcare providers, deploying trained birth attendants, distributing sanitary pads and birth control options, desalinizing ponds, installing solar-powered pumps with wells, and rebuilding sanitary latrines. Read the [Rapid Gender Analysis of Cyclone Remal](#).

## EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS: UN DELEGATION EXPLORES SOLUTIONS IN RURAL BANGLADESH



Women farmers in Rangpur sharing their experience with the UN team on how UN support has helped them to access resources and grow their businesses. Photo: UNRC.



Community members sharing insights on the importance of early warning system in reducing losses caused by floods in their area with the UN team in Kurigram. Photo: UNRC.

In January, the UN Resident Coordinator, in collaboration with UN Women, led a mission for the Rome-based UN agencies (RBA) FAO, IFAD, and WFP, to visit Rangpur and Kurigram. The mission explored innovative ways to better support women through existing food security, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and climate change adaptation programmes.

The UN, with the government, has been contributing to achieving women's empowerment and gender equality in Bangladesh, yet diverse challenges remain. Addressing these challenges will require both comprehensive institutional changes, targeted interventions at the local level, along with changing the social norms. It is essential to address mobility restrictions, sexual harassment, domestic violence, and care burden. Collective action and integrated approaches are necessary to create gender-friendly rural infrastructure and market connectivity, ensuring women's participation in economic activities. Discussions with local

government officials emphasized the need for partnerships to improve women's access to information, financial services, and social services. Practical solutions include establishing dedicated market sections for women and enhancing digital literacy. Addressing policy issues such as land rights, child marriage, and access to family planning requires ongoing UN advocacy to promote sustainable change, women's empowerment, and gender equality.

The key findings and recommendations from the mission include: promoting a gender-transformative mindset, deeper community engagement, structural changes for women's participation, addressing challenges in agricultural production, advancing gender equality in family and community relations, and improving access to resources.

Read [UN's efforts assessed in promoting gender in agriculture, food security, and rural development in Kurigram.](#)

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*“The work of the UN in Rangpur prioritizes gender equality. Gains have been made in amplifying women’s voice and agency. However, women farmers still demand dedicated spaces in markets, farmer cards, seed banks, female-friendly toilets, and the redistribution of the care burden. We also observed how social norms, linked to mobility restrictions, continue to pose a barrier”. -Ms. Gitanjali Singh, UN Women Representative.*

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## UN WOMEN SUPPORTS INTERGENERATIONAL MOVEMENT BUILDING IN BANGLADESH

In 2023, UN Women bolstered its support to the women’s movement in Bangladesh in a context of pushback on gender equality, with a focus on inter-generational and intersectional dialogue.

Ahead of the national election in January 2024, women’s organizations presented a collective Charter of Demands to political parties and government. The Charter of Demands represents the voices of feminist activists, indigenous groups, women with disabilities, diverse gender groups, and people engaged in sex work among others. It calls for legislative revisions related to inheritance, domestic violence, and sexual harassment; improved access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services for women in all their diversity; engagement of grassroots women-led organizations in climate change action; and recognition of unpaid care work in national gross domestic product, among other demands. The Charter of Demands was developed in consultation with 45 networks and organizations from the women’s movement, consolidating their collective priorities and concerns. It was later validated by a wider group of

61 representatives from various member organizations of the movement. Building on the Charter of Demands, UN Women’s partners who led the initiative, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Bonhishikha – Unlearn Gender, have carried out four divisional dialogues (Barishal, Chattogram, Sylhet, and Rajshahi) in 2024. These further deepened the discussion and exploration of diverse experiences, priorities, and concerns of women, in all their diversity, across Bangladesh. The dialogues will inform future iterations of the Charter of Demands and the development of a position paper on key advocacy issues identified in the charter. The Charter of Demands is a living document that will continue to inform collective advocacy of women’s organizations to amplify their voice in the country’s development journey. It also seeks to influence the upcoming transition strategy, Beijing+30 review and national 9th Five-Year Plan as the country graduates from ‘Least Developed Country’ status in 2026.

Read the [Charter of Demand](#). Find photos [here](#).



(Left photo) Young women leaders presenting the need to promote gender-sensitive content on social media platforms and raising awareness on cyber security issues; (Right photo) A veteran woman leader from Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) highlighting the need for mapping and listing of destitute/homeless people with disabilities to ensure their safety and provide special healthcare services. Photo: UN Women/Monon Muntaka.



## CELEBRATING WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH ART AND INTERGENERATIONAL EXCHANGE

UN Women, in collaboration with the Charukola Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, and Plat-Forms, organized a month-long art competition celebrating women's achievements in Bangladesh. Over 350 female artists aged 16 and above participated, interpreting the International Women's Day theme "Empower Her: Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress." The competition culminated on 8 March with an exhibition featuring the top 30 artworks, showcasing experiences and challenges women go through in a lifetime. The event was inaugurated by Honorable State Minister

for Cultural Affairs Ms. Naheed Ezaher Khan, UN Women Representative Ms. Gitanjali Singh, Dean of the Fine Arts Faculty Professor Nisar Hossain, Vice Chancellor of Jagannath University Professor Sadeka Halim and Founder of Plat-Forms Ms. Rayana Hossain. It featured a panel discussion on the critical role of arts in achieving gender equality and a live intergenerational art exchange. This exchange illustrated the persistent structural barriers and unsafe conditions women face, while also celebrating their resilience and determination to overcome these challenges. See the photos [here](#).



(First row-left to right): The exhibition at Charukola showcasing the art works from the competition; (second row-left to right) : "Canvas Connection" Ms. Naima Haque, veteran female artist and Ms. Mehrukh Azad, young female artist in a live art exchange on the IWD theme; The completed art works; Ms. Naima Haque and Ms. Mehrukh Azad sharing their experience on the live exchange; (third row left to right) seated from the left Fine Arts Faculty Dean Professor Nisar Hossain, Plat-Forms Founder Ms. Rayana Hossain, Hon. State Minister Ms. Naheed Ezaher Khan, Jagannath University VC Professor Sadeka Halim and UN Women Representative Ms. Gitanjali Singh at the panel discussion; the art works at the exhibition; Top three winners from the art competition with the guests. Photo: UN Women/Robin Gazi.

## UN WOMEN HOSTS DOCUMENTARY SCREENING AND PHOTO EXHIBITION TO HIGHLIGHT GLOBAL EFFORTS IN ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

UN Women hosted a screening of a new documentary series “UNSILENCED: Stories of Survival, Hope and Activism” at the EMK Center, Dhaka on March 11, that aims to shed light on violence against women and girls, while also presenting solutions and advocating for action. The 23-minute episode includes stories from Bangladesh, Ecuador, Serbia, the Solomon Islands, and Uganda. The docuseries is part of UN Women’s worldwide campaign to raise awareness about ending violence against women - illustrating its various forms and how it is manifested and addressed in different contexts by getting people to care and act. Featuring survivors, service providers, and activists across 16 countries, the series explores a wide range of threats women face—and the myriad ways they are standing up to them. Around 50 participants, including development partners, civil society representatives, feminists and human rights activists attended the event.

Read [UN Women docuseries sheds light on Global Efforts to End Violence Against Women](#).

Watch [UNSILENCED: Stories Survival, Hope and Activism](#). See photos [here](#).

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*“Globally and in Bangladesh, we have seen advancements on women’s empowerment and gender equality. However, eliminating violence against women and girls remains a distant reality and we are progressing too slowly. As we commemorate International Women’s Day, I hope the docuseries serves as a powerful reminder that we are all accountable, no one can remain a bystander. Let us collectively push forward to end violence against women and girls once and for all.”*

*-Ms. Gitanjali Singh, UN Women Representative.*

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Following the screening, a photo exhibition titled "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" paid tribute to the resilience, survival, and strength of Bangladeshi women. Curated by artist and feminist activist Monon Muntaka, the exhibition will be open for public viewing until March 23, 2024.



(Left): A visitor at the exhibition; (Right) UN Women EAW Programme Coordinator Ms. Shrabana Datta introducing the docu-series to the audience. Photo: UN Women/Monon Muntaka.



## BREAKING BARRIERS: YOUTH-LED ADVOCACY WORKSHOP FOR GENDER EQUALITY



(Left) Group photo of the participants, facilitators and organizers after the dialogue; (Right) Participants sharing key advocacy messages developed from the group work during the session. Photo: UN Women/Monon Muntaka.

“The Breaking Barriers: Designing Equality” a youth-led workshop for gender equality was held in Dhaka in June by the Swedish Embassy, UN Women, Manusher Jonne Foundation and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad. Prior to these, two similar workshops were conducted in Barishal and Kurigram. It provided a space for representatives of youth associations, organizations, and activists to come together, exchange ideas, and collaborate on initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality. Participants were also introduced to the concept of design thinking as a methodology for problem-

solving and idea generation, encouraging them to approach gender equality issues with fresh perspectives. Through interactive activities and discussions, participants developed concrete advocacy messages and dialogue frameworks that resonate with diverse communities and promote gender equality norms. Ms Syeda Samara Mortada, Coordination and Partnerships Analyst and Ms. Nubayra Jeheen, Communications Officer-Gender Statistics, from UN Women Bangladesh facilitated the sessions together with the Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka.

## CELEBRATING THE STRENGTH OF WOMEN PEACEKEEPERS: AN INTERVIEW WITH LIEUTENANT COLONEL RUBANA NOWSHIN MITHILA

To mark the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers (29 May), the United Nations paid tribute to the dedication and sacrifice of peacekeepers worldwide and interviewed Lieutenant Colonel Rubana Nowshin Mithila about her experience as a woman in peacekeeping. Read her story [“Women Peacekeepers are stronger than you think”](#).



Portrait of Peacekeeper Lieutenant Colonel Rubana Mithila of Bangladesh, taken at the UN Women headquarters on 14 May 2024. Photo: UN.



## BANGLADESH POLICE WOMEN NETWORK DEVELOPS STRATEGIC PLAN (2024-2027) WITH UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT

The Bangladesh Police Women Network (BPWN) reviewed its final annual performance plan under the Strategic Plan (2021-2023) and developed the next phase of its strategic plan (2024-2027) with technical support from UN Women. The President of BPWN pledged to commit to and promote the five Global Gender-Responsive Policing Principles. The strategic plan was finalized in a workshop titled “Finalization of Strategic Plan: BPWN’s Roadmap 2024-2027” where 23 police officers (20 women, 3 men) from BPWN and different other units of Bangladesh police such as, police headquarters, criminal investigation department and Dhaka metropolitan police were present. BPWN members will develop a work plan to implement the strategic plan and present it to the Inspector General in July 2024.



Group photo of BPWN members and UN Women team after the Strategic Planning Workshop. Photo: UN Women/CEMS.

## ENHANCING GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT SKILLS AMONG BANGLADESH POLICE OFFICIALS



(Left to right) Ms. Jane Townsley, Senior Police Advisor at UN Women headquarters, Ms. Amena Begum, DIG (Protection and Protocol), Special Branch, Bangladesh Police conducting the training. Photo: UN Women/CEMS.

A total of 29 high-level police officials (22 women, 7 men) from the BPWN and the Police Headquarters were capacitated on conducting Gender Impact Assessment (GIA). Focused on the recently adopted Strategic Plan 2024-2025 of the Bangladesh Police Ms. Jane Townsley, Senior Police Advisor at UN Women headquarters, led the workshop. She engaged participants in sample exercises of gender impact assessments and provided tools and techniques for conducting effective GIA before or after the adoption of any policy, procedure, or operational framework within the Bangladesh Police. The workshop was highly successful, with participants expressing enthusiasm to cascade their learning and apply the GIA process to future decision-making, strategy, and policy development.

## STRENGTHENING LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES: A CALL FOR POLICY REFORM AND ADVOCACY

A roundtable discussion hosted by the Prothom Alo highlighted the critical need to address the laws to safeguard the rights of women with disabilities in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Organized by Women Disability Development Forum (WDDF) with the technical support from UN Women the roundtable discussion focused on the preliminary findings of the legal analysis by UN Women that identified gaps in terms of human rights-based approach in the existing laws and policies to address the discrimination and violence against women with disabilities. Grounded in the leaving no one behind principle, this initiative is also a step towards UN Women's normative work on CRPD implementation. The key recommendations from the roundtable are:

- a) Ensure the needs of women with disabilities in legal frameworks.
- b) Amend the existing laws to safeguard the rights of women with disabilities. Clarify the definition of 'non-discrimination' in alignment with international conventions.
- c) Ensure assistive devices for persons with disabilities according to their needs.
- d) Functionalize existing relevant committees from under the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act (2013) and UNCRPD.
- e) Nominate two women with disabilities for reserved seats in the National Parliament of Bangladesh.
- f) Ensure a dedicated budget for persons with disabilities in all ministries.
- g) Ensure coordination among the ministries for disability inclusion. Continue capacity building of disability focal points of departments and ministries on disability issues.
- h) Mainstream the education of persons with disabilities under the Ministry of Education.
- i) Ensure access to scribe in the educational institutions for persons with visual disability
- j) Ensure employment quota for persons with disabilities.
- k) Establish a separate department for persons with disabilities.
- l) Revive the parliamentary caucus related to persons with disabilities.



Participants at the roundtable dialogue in Prothom Alo office. Photo: Prothom Alo.

Find the full supplement in Bangla: [প্রতিবন্ধী নারীর সুরক্ষায় আইনি কাঠামো: চ্যালেঞ্জ ও করণীয় ; প্রতিবন্ধী নারীর উন্নয়নে চাই অগ্রাধিকার.](#)

Supplement in English: [Empowering Women with Disabilities: Legal Framework and Development Initiatives | Prothom Alo](#)



## COX'S BAZAR UPDATE

### COX'S BAZAR MARKS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH OPEN DIALOGUE "INVEST IN WOMEN: ACCELERATE PROGRESS"



(Seated from left to right) Ms. Dalim Khatun, ActionAid Bangladesh; Ms. Reem Elmeleegy, UN Women; Ms. Silja Rajander, UN Women; Ms. Tahmina Akter, UNHCR; Ms. Johanna Reina Picalua; Protection sector, ISCG. (Standing from left to right) Mr. Bora Ozbek, PSEA Network, ISCG; Ms. Taznun Nahar Hamid, Research, Training and Management (RTM) International; Ms. Jasmina Ujkanovic, Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector, ISCG; Ms. Rokeya Kabir, Executive Director and founder of Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS); Ms. Joy Galvez, Head of Office in Cox's Bazar, FAO; Mr. Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, RRRRC; Mr Faruk Faisal, Article 19; Mr. Vivek Prakash, Counsellor and Head of Cooperation (Rohingya refugee response), High Commission of Canada at the "Open Dialogue on Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress," hosted to celebrate IWD 2024 in Cox's Bazar. Photo Credit: UNHCR/ Sumayet Naiyer Oshmita.

The discussion at the IWD open dialogue in Cox's Bazar focused on the importance of investing in women to elevate their status within families, communities, and society, as well as ensuring their rights. Hosted by the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group in collaboration with the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), the dialogue also emphasized the need to further strengthen partnerships and share responsibilities to advance

gender equality in Cox's Bazar. Embracing the global theme of investing in women, the dialogue brought together camp-in-charges; Armed Police Battalion personnel from different camps; RRRRC officials; representatives of women's rights organizations and women-led organizations as well as the UN.

Read [Cox's Bazar marks International Women's Day with open dialogue "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress"](#)

*"52 per cent of women and girls in the camps lag behind in different aspects. The government encourages deploying women government officials. The camp environment should be women-friendly. Women are the center of the community"*

**-Mr. Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, Cox's Bazar Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner.**

## DEPUTY SECRETARY OF RRRR OFFICE IN COX'S BAZAR MR. MD SHAMSUD DOUZA IN CONVERSATION WITH UN WOMEN



Mr. Md. Shamsud Douza, Deputy Secretary of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, at his office in Cox's Bazar. Photo: UN Women/ Magfuzur Rahman Shana.

The RRRR Office is in charge of providing relief to Rohingya refugees. As of 2024, the 33 camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf, two sub-districts of Cox's Bazar, have been sheltering almost a million Rohingya people. The office of the RRRR is leading the response in Cox's Bazar and all humanitarian actors, including UN Women and other UN agencies along with their partners, coordinate with the RRRR on the implementation of humanitarian response activities. The Deputy Secretary of the RRRR Office in Cox's Bazar Mr. Md Shamsud Douza was interviewed by UN Women where he spoke about RRRR's strategies to prevent and eliminate violence against Rohingya women and girls. Read his full interview "[We are working hand-in-hand together to reduce gender-based violence in the camps](#)"

### A GLIMPSE OF WOMEN'S MARKET IN CAMP-5

The Women's Market in Camp-5 was established in 2021. The women's market is a safe and inclusive platform tailored for women's and children's unique needs. It features 24 shops, including a cloth shop, tailoring services, handicrafts, stationary, beauty parlour, grocery store, women led canteen, display corner, and cosmetics store. The market also hosts fairs on key days, with several external women shopkeepers participating.

The Women's Market strives to support the economic empowerment of women in the Rohingya camps. Watch the [video](#).



A screenshot of the video



## THE CROWN PRINCESS OF SWEDEN AND SWEDISH DELEGATES ENGAGE WITH ROHINGYA WOMEN LEADERS ON GENDER NORM CHANGE AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS



(Left photo) UN Women Cox's Bazar Head of Sub Office Ms. Silja Rajander, UNRC Ms. Gwyn Lewis; Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden with Swedish Ambassador H.E. Ms. Alexandra Berg von Linde and Assistant Secretary-General of UNDP Ms. Ulrika Modéer, interacting with the Maitree Apas at the camp. Photo: UNFPA/Alka Jahan. (Right photo) The Swedish Ambassador H.E. Ms. Alexandra Berg von Linde showing her mobile to the gender volunteers after the discussion at the camp. Photo: UN Women/Magfuzur Rahman Shana.

Women leaders at the Rohingya camps are committed to continuing their work in raising awareness for women's empowerment and ending violence against women. They shared their future aspirations and vision with Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden during her visit to the Rohingya refugee camps at the Multi-Purpose Women's Center (MPWC) in Camp 4. During her visit, she interacted with MPWC participants and volunteers, and engaged in intensive discussions with Rohingya refugee women, UN Women gender volunteers, and Ain-O-Salish Kendra (ASK) Maitree Apa's. The delegation also explored family planning and midwifery services provided at the MPWC through a partnership with UNFPA. This visit is expected to strengthen advocacy for increased investments in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the Rohingya camps.

The Ambassador of Sweden to Bangladesh, H.E. Ms. Alexandra Berg von Linde recently made a farewell visit to Cox's Bazar Rohingya Camp. Accompanied by Ms. Matilda Svensson, First Secretary and Coordinator of Humanitarian and Development Assistance, Embassy of Sweden and Ms. Navanita Sinha, Deputy Representative UN Women, she visited the Multi-Purpose Women's Center (MPWC) at Camp 4 and the Women's Market at Camp 5. The delegation also engaged in intensive discussions with gender volunteers on the current safety and security situation in the camps. Watch a [video message from the Ambassador](#).

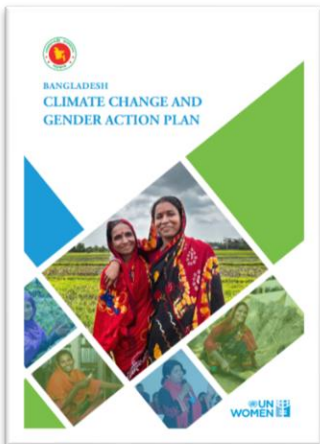
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*"I've visited Cox's Bazar over a dozen times in the past four years. The plight and the resilience of Rohingya women - surviving violence, fires, cyclones, ration cuts, and insecurity - will stay with me. Sweden has been engaged in the Rohingya refugee response since the beginning and we will continue to do so. This must not become a forgotten crisis."*

***-H.E. Ms. Alexandra Berg von Linde, Ambassador of Sweden to Bangladesh.***

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## KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS



### BANGLADESH CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER ACTION PLAN (ccGAP)

The Climate Change and Gender Action Plan (ccGAP), formulated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in 2013, has been updated with technical support from UN Women. The updated ccGAP, a pivotal step forward in Bangladesh's efforts to build a more inclusive and sustainable future identifies six priority areas including: natural resources; livelihood; infrastructure & settlements; women's leadership and participation; gender responsive means of implementation; capacity- building; knowledge management and communication. Read [Bangladesh Climate Change and Gender Action Plan \(ccGAP\)](#).



### SUMMARY BRIEF: BANGLADESH TIME-USE SURVEY 2021 | UN WOMEN DATA HUB

In 2021, with technical and financial support from UN Women, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics conducted its first-ever time-use survey (TUS) – a timely undertaking as the COVID-19 pandemic unravelled a care crisis. The TUS offers important insights into how gender roles shape the division of labour between women and men, and according to various demographic criteria beyond sex, such as geographical location, age, marital status, educational attainment and employment. This brief summarizes the key findings and policy implications in the report. Read [Summary brief: Bangladesh Time-Use Survey 2021 | UN Women Data Hub](#).



### GENDER EQUALITY BRIEF | UN WOMEN BANGLADESH

UN Women Gender Equality Brief provides a comprehensive situation analysis of gender equality in Bangladesh, offering a snapshot of the nation's advancements in key areas including governance; women, peace, and security; ending violence against women; economic empowerment; climate change and disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian response. Read [Gender Equality Brief](#).

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