

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2022



On International Women's Day, 8 March, the government, donors, partners and civil society members joined together to call for climate action for and by women. This year's theme, "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow" recognised and celebrated the contribution of women and girls around the world, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation and response to build a more sustainable future for all. "The climate crisis is not a 'gender-neutral' global crisis. Women and girls experience the greatest impacts of climate change. Women and girls are essential, effective leaders and change makers and must be included in the design and implementation of climate action," said Gitanjali Singh, Head of Office, a.i., UN Women Bangladesh at the national event hosted by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs on 8 March 2022, where she was present as the special guest. [Read more.](#)



PLEDGE FOR INCLUSION IN DIALOGUE

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Representation matters. Ensuring voice and leadership of all groups irrespective of their sex, gender, age, socio-economic background, and geography will counter singular and stereotypical narratives. Promoting inclusion is critical to advancing the principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB) enshrined in the 2030 Agenda.

Today on International Women's Day we join together in recommending to the equal participation of all women in all aspects of life, and to improving the representation and leadership of women and marginalised groups in dialogue.



So, on International Women's Day, the UN and development partners in Bangladesh joined to pledge for "Inclusion in Dialogue" to promote equal participation of all women in all aspects of life and to improve the representation and leadership of women and marginalised groups in dialogue. The "Inclusion in Dialogue" checklist includes detailed steps for organisers and panelists to ensure the presence of a variety of arguments, expertise, and inclusion in public forums. Read the [pledge here](#).

[Watch video message from the Resident Coordinator, a.i.](#)

INSPIRING WOMEN VOLUNTEER AWARD 2022

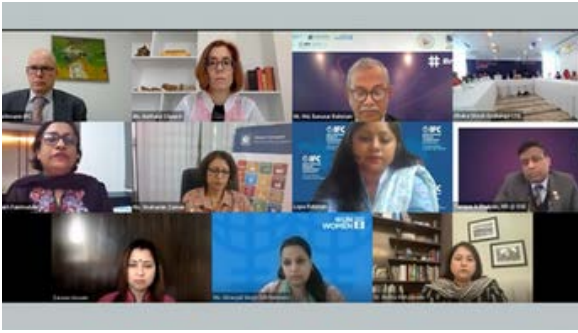
UN Women Bangladesh, along with UNV Bangladesh, VSO Bangladesh, Plan International and ActionAid Bangladesh, jointly launched a countrywide campaign on the Inspiring Women Volunteer Award 2022.

The three month long Award campaign engaged women from grassroots, women volunteers, youth, Volunteers Involving Organizations (VIO), civil society, government representatives and development partners. It aimed to create a space that fosters women's leadership in community development and to recognise the significant efforts of women volunteers in supporting gender equality and community development.

[Watch the webinar here](#)



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO INVEST IN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT?



While Bangladesh tops the South Asia region in terms of women's leadership in listed companies (according to a new study of International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSS)), women entrepreneurs still face challenges in accessing financial services available and leveraging them for sustaining their businesses. IFC shared a report at the "Ring the Bell for Gender Equality" webinar organised by IFC, DSS, UN Women Bangladesh and UN Global Compact.



Implementation of Bangladesh Bank's existing policies with support from all stakeholders including all financial institutions is key to ensure women's financial inclusion, stressed stakeholders at a discussion organised by UNDP, UN Women Bangladesh and UNCDF jointly to mark International Women's Day. Top management of major financial institutions in Bangladesh joined to discuss better and easier access to finance for women. [Read more.](#)

WOMEN FROM ROHINGYA AND HOST COMMUNITY CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



International Women's Day was observed in four UN Women Multi-Purpose Women Centres in Cox's Bazar for the Rohingya community, in collaboration with ActionAid Bangladesh. Activities such as indoor games, art and livelihood competitions engaged adolescent girls and women from the camps to showcase their creativity and craft. Around 140 women and girls participated at the fair. An awareness building session on gender-based violence was also held. [Read more.](#)

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW66): REFLECTIONS ON THE AGREED CONCLUSIONS BY GOVERNMENT, CSO AND YOUTH

The 66th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66), the UN's largest annual gathering on gender equality and women's empowerment, was held this year from 14 to 25 March 2022. This year's theme was "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes". The session ended with adoption of Agreed Conclusions negotiated by all Member States, a blueprint for world leaders to promote women's and girls' full and equal participation and leadership in the design and implementation of measures to combat climate change and to reduce disaster risk. UN Women Bangladesh conducted an interview series to highlight government, civil society and youth reflections on the agreed conclusions and how can they bring sustainable solutions to the lives of women and girls in Bangladesh.



Take Five: "To reach the most marginalized, especially women and girls, we need data, so we can make our policies comprehensive and implementations inclusive" - Keya Khan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of the Government of Bangladesh



Take Five: "To truly address climate change, we must work with people of all genders: not with charity, but with their full agency."- Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh



Take Five: "The Voices of Bangladeshi young people on climate action are loud and clear. We need to act now for a better future, and this cannot wait."- Jannatul Maowa, Youth Activist

YOUNG WOMEN PROMOTING PEACE SOCIAL COHESION AS CHANGE AGENTS



So far 106 Women Peace Ambassadors selected for innovative social entrepreneurship have engaged 290 volunteers that further benefitted 580 community women across 30 districts. The four WPCs continue to train female students on social entrepreneurship, peacebuilding, leadership, social cohesion and digital literacy benefiting over 15,000 students and community members. [Read more.](#)

"I was very impressed by young female leaders from respective universities from Rangpur, Mymensingh and Dhaka, who empowered vulnerable communities at a grassroots level in partnership with Center for Peace and Justice, BRAC University and UN Women. The change will not take place in one day; however, they are the leaders who will change their communities. I hope that young leaders will continue each initiative even after their graduation towards achieving peaceful and cohesive society," said H.E. Mr. Ito Naoki, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh, at the National Colloquium on Learnings from the Women Peace Café (WPC) initiative in Bangladesh.

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICING



See message from Additional Superintendent of Police on gender responsive policing

UN Women has been providing strategic and technical support to the Bangladesh Police Women's Network (BPWN) in building capacity for gender-responsive policing and strengthening women's leadership in the police force. The initiatives include developing knowledge and skills of first responders to gender-based violence cases, so they can support survivors and facilitate effective investigation; and providing leadership training for gender-responsive policing and performance management. In partnership with Bangladesh Police, UN Women Bangladesh is also enhancing capacity of Bangladesh Armed Police Battalion deployed at the Rohingya Camps in Cox's Bazar. A total of 87 police officials from senior-to mid-levels in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Cox's Bazar have been oriented on gender-responsive policing

Read the BPWN five-year strategy [here](#).



Tarikul Islam is a Commanding Officer and Superintendent of Police at Bangladesh Police's Armed Police Battalion in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Since 2019, UN Women Bangladesh has supported the Bangladesh Police to strengthen gender-responsive policing in Cox's Bazar and improve the availability, accessibility and quality of services in alignment with the United Nations "essential services package" for women and girls subject to violence.

Read in the words of Tarikul Islam: "We don't want anyone suffering from violence to feel like there is no one beside them."

ZERO TOLERANCE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY



A Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment Policy was launched in Bogra, Cumilla and Patuakhali Chambers of Commerce, in an effort to create a conducive working environment free from all forms of harassment and violence. Under the initiative of the Combatting Gender-Based Violence (CGBV) project funded by the Government of Canada. This

policy implementation seeks to minimise the trauma associated with the reporting and complaint process while ensuring confidentiality and protection of all factory employees and stakeholders who disclose or formally report sexual harassment.

GOVERNMENT AMENDS EVIDENCE ACT FOR RAPE SURVIVORS

The cabinet has recently approved the draft Evidence (Amendment) Act 2022 section 155(4). This is a landmark achievement of the Rape Law Reform Coalition and UN Women who have long been advocating for this amendment. The Act proposes the repeal of provisions that allow questions

during cross-examinations about a rape survivor's character and contains a provision allowing the submission of digital evidence before a court. Click [here](#) to learn more.



GRASSROOTS WOMEN LEADERS SHARE HOW A SWEDEN-FUNDED PROJECT HAS CHANGED LIVES IN DISASTER-PRONE BANGLADESH



[Watch a snapshot of the discussion here](#)

Heads of four women-led grassroots civil society organisations (CSO) in Bangladesh shared their experiences with senior Swedish Government officials in an online dialogue on how they have been able to support community women and girls during natural disasters through the EmPower project interventions. The dialogue was designed to demonstrate the results and impact of the partnership between UN Women and the Swedish Government. The Swedish officials included Jenny Ohlsson, the State Secretary for International Development Cooperation, and Alexandra Berg von Linde, the Ambassador in Dhaka. The EmPower project works to reduce the vulnerabilities of women and girls in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Viet Nam. In Bangladesh, 56 CSOs help vulnerable people during disasters and try to create sustainable change by helping communities rebuild in more charitable, gender equal ways. [Read more.](#)

REFLECTIONS FROM CSO LEADERS AT THE VIRTUAL EXCHANGE



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES (WEPs): THREE NEW SIGNATORIES



Nineteen enterprises across the country have been strengthened to implement gender equality and women's empowerment at the workplace, marketplace and in the community. Under the UN joint programme Women's Empowerment for Inclusive Growth (WING), UN Women Bangladesh has built the capacity of these enterprises on UN Global Compact's Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). Out of these nineteen, three enterprises – BornoIT, Joyoti Society from Jashore and Karupanya from Thakurgaon – became signatories to WEPs. Around 279 employees (254 women) will benefit through gender-responsive business practices from these three signatories to WEPs. [Know more about WEPs here.](#)

MAKING EVERY WOMEN AND GIRL COUNT: TIME USE SURVEY

UN Women supported the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) to conduct a time-use survey for the first time in Bangladesh, that aims to collect data on how, on average, people spend their time. This will help measure and compare the time women and men spend on unpaid care and domestic work, which is recognised in the SDGs as a hindrance to gender equality. Supported by Women Count, a global flagship programme by UN Women, the time-use survey will also provide a basis for calculating the monetary value of women's unpaid work that contributes to the economy but is unaccounted for in the national GDP.

[Read more.](#)



POLICY BRIEFS



WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

For three decades, Bangladesh has been led by female prime ministers. The National Parliament has had a female speaker since 2013. Women hold 20.6 percent of parliamentary seats. However, women's participation across the political spectrum is still skewed. Women face higher levels of poverty, limited access to finance, a greater share of unpaid care duties, and challenges in realising their sexual and reproductive health and rights. At the same time, institutional rules and procedures and gender-discriminatory social norms still hinder women as they try to exercise their voice, choice, and agency. UN Women Bangladesh has developed an advocacy brief that critically analyses the hindrances and recommends changes for the existing policies and system, so that women can enjoy full and effective participation and decision-making in private and public life that is free from violence. Read the advocacy brief [here](#).



SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR TEA-GARDEN WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

UN Women Bangladesh published a policy brief offering a critical analysis of gender-related issues among tea garden workers and their family members in Bangladesh. Under the Joint SDG Fund, UN Women Bangladesh, in partnership with UNICEF, UNFPA and ILO, developed the brief to create a clear understanding of female tea garden workers' social protection issues while leveraging gender-responsive planning and budgeting as a tool. The aim is to ensure that national policies, plans and strategies are responsive to the immediate and long-term needs of tea garden workers and their family members. [Read more.](#)

INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

MAKING GENDER EQUALITY A 'LIVED REALITY' IN BANGLADESH: UN WOMEN JOINS HAND WITH ILO AND UNDP

UN Women Bangladesh has signed inter-agency letters of collaboration with UNDP and ILO for the period of 2022-2026 to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in Bangladesh. UN Women and UNDP will be working together to advance gender responsive policies, plans and financing and address discriminatory social norms. ILO and UN Women Bangladesh will work together with the government to address women's unpaid care work and gender-based violence at the workplace, increase women's economic leadership, social protection and generate gender statistics for policy reforms.



[UN Women and ILO deepen cooperation to advance women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh](#)



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GENDER PARITY IN COVID VACCINATION



Responding to the Bangladesh Preparedness and Response Plan (BPRP) call to emergency action, the United Nations Country Team and BRAC initiated a Community Support Team (CST) intervention platform under the leadership of the Bangladesh Government's Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). As part of that initiative, UN Women contributed to the Government's phase II of the national vaccination campaign. As of October 2021, the male-to-female vaccination ratio was 55:45 according to WHO. Gender-related barriers, including women's limited mobility and lack of agency and access, were the reasons behind the gap. In this context, UN Women Bangladesh joined the interagency initiative to increase female vaccination, which ultimately contributed to reaching gender parity for vaccination in Bangladesh by December 2021, according to [DGHS](#).

ROHINGYA RESPONSE

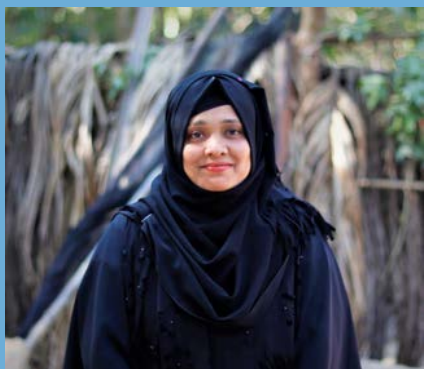
ROHINGYA WOMEN SHARED THEIR STORIES WITH THE SWEDISH AND DUTCH DELEGATIONS



UN Women Bangladesh and its partners shared inspiring stories of change with representatives from the Government of Sweden during a high-level visit. The delegation met the Commanding Officer of the Armed Police Battalion to discuss the importance of having women police officers deployed in the camps and the need for additional gender-sensitive policing training. They also visited UN Women's Multi-Purpose Women's Centre, toured the Women's Market and had a dialogue session with UN Women Rohingya volunteers, students from the Second Chance Education Programme and Rohingya women's representatives.



A delegation from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands visited UN Women's MPWC in Rohingya Camp 4. The Rohingya women at the center shared their thoughts with the delegation on how the livelihood training has helped them to increase their self-confidence. They feel empowered now that they have an income and can contribute to their families.



"Participating in the Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning Programme has made me confident," says Bulbul Akter, 24, a seamstress, turkey farmer and community outreach volunteer from Ukhiya Cox's Bazar. "Now, I am known to my relatives and neighbours as a self-reliant woman. I am contributing to my family and the wider community, and I can support my daughter's studies. I have requested that my two sisters also enrol in this programme."

Read the impact story

GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

UN Women Bangladesh is advocating with Camp-in-Charge office staff, NGOs, INGOs, community leaders, majhi (community leader) and imams (religious leaders) in Cox's Bazar to build understanding on gender and equality at the workplace. Discussions included intimate partner violence, child marriage prevention, and other social issues related to gender equality, that enhanced their knowledge and understanding as service providers

