

GOVERNMENT PASSES EVIDENCE ACT FOR RAPE SURVIVORS

Marking a landmark achievement for survivors of sexual violence, the Parliament passed the [Evidence Act \(Amendment\) Bill 2022](#) in November 2022. The result of concerted advocacy of civil society, women rights activists and the Rape Law Reform Coalition, the Bill disallows the questioning of a rape survivor's character during cross-examinations and contains a provision allowing the submission of digital evidence before a court. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Read a joint Op-ed by the Resident Coordinator, Country Representative of UNFPA and Country Representative of UN Women on the UN's efforts to end violence against women in Bangladesh published in the Daily Star. [THE 'ORIGINAL PANDEMIC' OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CONTINUES UNABATED.](#)



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

RECOGNISING WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN BANGLADESH

UN Women Bangladesh interviewed two feminist activists to mark this year's 16 Days of Activism in order to recognize their contribution in advancing gender equality. A veteran feminist Sultana Kamal and a young activist, Tosiba Akter (pseudonym) from Cox's Bazar, were interviewed to bring out the intergenerational feminist movement aspects of Bangladesh.



[Take five with Sultana Kamal: If you believe in Human Dignity, then the Principle of Leaving No One Behind should automatically be in your agenda](#)



[Take Five: "I am also your child, and you should treat me equally."](#)

DIALOGUE WITH MEDIA



“Newsrooms are mostly dominated by men which impacts the way headlines and stories are published. So, it is crucial to ensure gender parity at the decision-making levels and editorial boards of media houses and enabling environment for women in media.” Urged speakers at the ‘Dialogue with Media’ organized by UN Women Bangladesh on 8 December 2022. Nine of the most influential news Editors/Deputy Editors from the leading media houses in Bangladesh including Prothom Alo, Daily Star, ATN News joined the dialogue. The aim was to find areas of collaboration to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) with media houses. [Read the full report.](#)

NATIONAL DIALOGUE



“Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a human rights violation. Many factors including cultural and social norms, beliefs, attitudes, and gender discriminatory behavior lead to violence against women (VAW). So, to end VAW, the government, CSOs, media, communities, men and boys, and young people must work together to dispel the cultural beliefs and attitudes that perpetuate violence.” said the Honorable State Minister Fazilatun Nessa Indira, MP at the inaugural National Dialogue for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (GBV). The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Development Partners under the Local Consultative Group for Women’s Advancement and Gender

Equality (LCG-WAGE) and the United Nations in Bangladesh jointly organized the dialogue on 23 November 2022. Recognizing the contributions of feminists and women’s movements this year, the national dialogue brought together the Government of Bangladesh, civil society organizations (CSOs), women’s groups, and development partners. It also provided a space to identify areas of collaboration and share commitments to support the country’s dynamic feminist movement and their efforts to eliminate VAWG.

VIDEO MESSAGE SERIES FROM MALE AMBASSADORS



H.E. Jeremy Bruer
Australian High Commissioner



H.E. Robert Chatterton Dickson
British High Commissioner



H.E. Charles Whiteley
EU Ambassador and Head of Delegation to Bangladesh



H.E. Anne Van Leeuwen
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands



H.E. Espen Rikter-Svendsen
Ambassador, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka



H.E. Peter Haas
US Ambassador

A series of video messages from six male Ambassadors were aired during 16 Day of Activism. The Ambassadors focused on the need to prioritize women's meaningful representation and leadership in decision-making, and on their access to education, healthcare, and livelihoods, in order to end GBV. They also spoke about their own roles in working with survivors of violence,

on women's financial empowerment and how working with men and boys will be key, in achieving gender equality. Watch the series here [Message from Australian High Commissioner](#); [British High Commissioner](#); [EU Ambassador](#); [Dutch Ambassador](#); [Norwegian Ambassador](#); and [US Ambassador](#).

VIDEO MESSAGE FROM WOMEN AMBASSADORS



H.E. Lilly Nicholls, High Commissioner of Canada,
H.E. Winnie Estrup Peterson, Ambassador, Embassy of Denmark,
H.E. Haznah Md Hashim, High Commissioner of Malaysia,
H.E. Alexandra Berg von Linde, Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden,
H.E. Nathalie Chuard, Ambassador, Embassy of Switzerland

In light of this year's 16 Days of Activism to end GBV theme "UNiTE! Activism to End Violence against Women & Girls", five female ambassadors in Bangladesh gave a joint video message to amplify the feminist and activist voices from the country and demonstrate their commitment to ending gender-based violence. [Watch the video here.](#)

GRASSROOT VOICES



A video documentary focused on grassroots voices and organizations sharing their stories on preventing GBV at the community level was showcased at the National Dialogue. The video highlighted the tireless work of women-led organizations on creating awareness around VAWG in climate vulnerable areas, with a number of excluded groups such as sex workers, with men and boys, and adolescents. The video ended with a call for long-term support and investment in their activism in order to achieve transformative change in the lives of women and girls in Bangladesh. [Watch the video.](#)

‘PEACE ADDA’ BY BRAC UNIVERSITY PEACE CAFÉ

Engaging young women and men to become active agents of peace has been a core component of UN Women’s work on women peace and security, through the Women Peace Cafés co-created by UN Women and Centre for Peace and Justice of BRAC University. During the 16 Days of Activism, the [BRAC University Peace Café](#) held a “Peace Adda (informal dialogue)” on 7 December 2022 which focused on preventing and countering cyberbullying, as well as identifying the root causes of violence against women in Bangladesh. Moderated by the Peace Café members, the event included a session on cyberbullying led by Mahfuza Liza, Additional Police Commissioner. The peace cafe members agreed to continue working on building awareness on cyberbullying in the campus.



UNITE! 16 DAYS JOINT CAMPAIGN LAUNCH IN COX’S BAZAR

Hundreds of people marched through the streets of Cox’s Bazar to mark the start of the 16 Days of Activism campaign. The Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG), co-chaired by UN Women and UNHCR, coordinated the rally bringing together the Government, development and humanitarian actors, civil society, women’s organizations, young people, the private sector, the media, and the UN system to support the activism of women leaders and women’s movements working to end violence against women and girls. The launch also included a photography exhibition and cultural shows. GiHA WG partners organized more than 300 local events in the Rohingya refugee camps. [Watch this short video](#) of UN Women Rohingya Volunteers speaking up to end violence against women and girls.



BREAKING BARRIERS ONE STEP AT A TIME: IMPACT STORYBOOK



“It struck me that men abuse their authority and power to torture women. I also realized my own role in inciting the men in my village. Now, in any religious gathering, I talk about the equality of men and women and raise my voice against violence against women.” - Abul Bashar of Cumilla district takes his role as a mosque imam seriously. As a community activist, he speaks out against VAW in religious gatherings and tries to build awareness among villagers. He has been supported by UN Women and partners WE CAN and DRISTI through the Combatting Gender-Based Violence (CGBV) Project, funded by the Government of Canada.

VIDEO STORIES

A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW DUO PROMOTE RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN FAMILIES



A mother and daughter-in-law duo has been promoting healthy relationships within their family and community by breaking stereotypes around gender roles. A family-based intervention under UN Women's Combatting Gender-Based Violence Project funded by the Government of Canada. [Watch the video.](#)

TAHERA BEGUM, A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER



A survivor of violence herself, Tahera Begum, hailing from Bogura, Bangladesh is now a Human Rights Defender in her factory. A strong voice advocating for a sexual harassment-free workplace, she is also the first-ever President of the Sexual Harassment Prevention Committee within the factory she works at, which empowers her fellow workers to challenge gender stereotypes in their workplace. [Watch her story.](#)

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

“FROM WHERE I STAND”: A TRIBUTE TO GENDER EQUALITY CHAMPIONS



UN Women Bangladesh launched a photo-story book “From Where I Stand” that captures contributions of women and girls in combatting climate change and disaster risk reduction on 9 November. Marking the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence, the book pays tribute to the resilience of women who are combatting disasters and climate change. Developed under the [National Resilience Programme](#) that has shaped the development of an inclusive disaster management system keeping women and girls at its center, the book showcases the stories of resilience, hope and aspirations of grass-root change-makers.

SEX, AGE AND DISABILITY DISAGGREGATED DATA (SADDD) PILOT SURVEY

A pilot survey report on Sex, Age, Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction was launched on 21 September 2022. The survey was conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) with technical support from UN Women. Acknowledging the critical need to address how climate change and disasters affect different groups of people differently, this pilot SADDD survey demonstrates the “how” to integrate gender equality data into national surveys for climate change and disaster statistics to address the nexus between gender equality, climate change and disaster risk reduction from the local to the national level to inform policies and programmes. [Read the full report here.](#)

Read the news coverage on the launching event [Prothom Alo](#); [Daily Sun](#); [Kaler Kantho](#); [United News of Bangladesh](#); [Barta24](#); [News Bangla 24](#).



NATIONAL ASSESSMENT ON THE STATE OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN BANGLADESH



National Assessment on the [State of Gender Equality and Climate Change in Bangladesh](#) launched on 22 September 2022 revealed that the effects of climate change increase the social and economic vulnerabilities of Bangladeshi women by directly impacting their access to food, water, and income. Social conventions, limited land ownership, unrecognized work and low level of decision making were identified in the study as the barriers that women face. Jointly conducted by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Women, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the study recommended to establish a strong monitoring mechanism that would generate evidence which links gender equality and climate change in

priority sectors such as agriculture, water resource management, and forestry. Read the policy brief [here](#).

Find the news coverage on the event - [Daily Star](#) ; [Dhaka Tribune](#) ; [Ittefaq](#) ; [Kalbela](#); [Asia Politik](#).

GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

KNOWLEDGE SHARING ON TIME USE SURVEY



“Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work between women and men is 24.6/3.3 per cent daily,” was revealed at the knowledge sharing workshop on the first ever “Time Use Survey” done in Bangladesh. UN Women in collaboration with the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics conducted the survey. Find the full report [here](#).

BALI CARE ECONOMY DIALOGUE



UN Women and the Asia Foundation jointly organized a Global dialogue on care, with the aim to position care work as a priority for economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region. Two officials from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Bangladesh Bureau of statistics joined the global dialogue and presented lessons from the latest Time Use Survey and programme and policy priorities to address care economy in the event. Their reflections emphasized on creating more employment in the care sector for women in both rural and urban areas, engaging private sector to make affordable paid services available for all, and ensure women’s access to care economy. Read more [here](#).

Read an op-ed on care economy co-authored by the Country Representatives of UN Women and the Country Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Bangladesh, published in the Daily Star. [DEVALUING WOMEN’S UNPAID CARE WORK IS COSTING US ALL](#).

VALIDATION WORKSHOP ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING (GRB) STRATEGY

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) and UN Women Bangladesh jointly with the National Institute of Local Government (NILG) conducted a validation workshop on 3 December 2022, in Kurigram Sadar. A draft Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) strategy and guideline for the local government institutions in Kurigram Sadar was shared at the workshop. This guideline will serve as a tool for strengthening gender-responsive budgeting and monitoring at local levels in Bangladesh.

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY (NAP WPS) EXTENDED



Bangladesh's first National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (NAP WPS) has been [extended until 2025](#), as announced by Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina at an International Seminar on WPS organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Bangladesh Armed Forces Division on 29 November 2022. This solidifies the country's commitment to implement the WPS agenda articulated under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). At the seminar, UN Women's Regional Policy Advisor on Governance and Peace & Security, Norul Rashid, provided a regional perspective on the WPS agenda as well as [lauded the historical and consistent leadership of Bangladesh on the WPS issue](#). Read the full [NAP WPS here](#).

ORIENTATION FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS ON NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

This [National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security] can play a vital role in preventing violence against women, combating the adverse effects of climate change and disasters on women, addressing the post-Covid mental and financial challenges of women, and protecting women's peace and security as a whole" – said Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of the Parliament at the orientation session for Parliamentarians co-organized by UN Women and CSO member Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS), on 9 November 2022. A total of 95 participants were present at the event, including representatives from MOFA, the Australian High Commissioner and representative from the Government of Canada, as well as media representatives. An overview of the NAP WPS was presented, along with a discussion on how its implementation is crucial in the current global and national context. Read [CR's speech here](#).



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES (WEPS): NINE NEW SIGNATORIES



Twenty-six enterprises from Cox's Bazar, Jashore, Kurigram, and Thakurgaon have been capacitated 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 26 enterprises, nine have become signatories to WEPS. As a result, around 1662 employees (1575 women) will benefit through gender-responsive business practices from these three signatories to WEPS. Know more about [WEPS](#).

"NARIR PASHE" SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGN

A Social and behavior change campaign [#NarirPashe](#) was launched in 10 Upazillas engaging the local government and entrepreneurs from this region. UNO, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Female Vice Chairman and members discussed about enhancing awareness of local authorities and communities on sociocultural and structural barriers for female entrepreneurs. Strong messages on the need for positive social norms and enabling environment for female entrepreneurs were disseminated through the Street theatre shows titled "Jonakir Alo" at these Upzillas.



GENDER RESPONSIVE WORKSHOP

Gender Responsive Procurement (GRP) Workshop in Bangladesh



The UN in Bangladesh organized a half-day long Gender-Responsive Procurement Workshop on 18th August 2022 to increase the participation of women-owned and women-led businesses and entrepreneurs in the UN supply chain. It is the first step towards reducing the gender gap in UN supply chains. Around one-hundred-fifty representatives from various women-owned organizations and businesses across the country attended the workshop to learn about gender-responsive procurement processes, the United Nations Global Market, and associated business opportunities. Watch the video [here](#).

ROHINGYA RESPONSE

UN SPECIAL ENVOY ON MYANMAR VISITS ROHINGYA CAMPS



The UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Myanmar, Noeleen Heyzer, met with Rohingya women leaders at a UN Women multipurpose women’s center during her mission to the refugee camps at Cox’s Bazar in August. Women leaders shared their appreciation for the government and people of Bangladesh as well as their hope for a dignified return to their country.

“The generosity of Bangladesh and host communities towards Rohingya refugees in their time of need conveys a critical need for greater international and regional commitment to burden share and ensure that the Rohingya do not become forgotten,” Special Envoy Heyzer said. [Read more.](#)



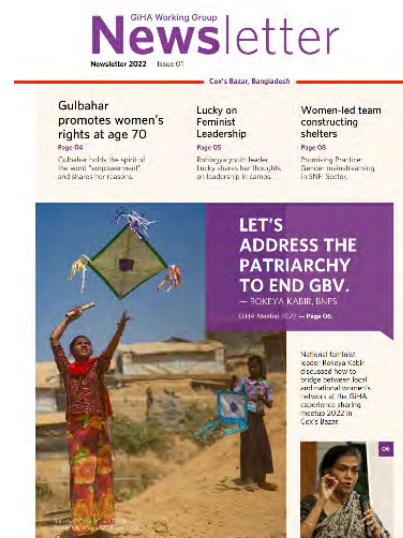
This intrepid group of women did a four-day trek to Cradle Mountain in Tasmania, Australia to raise money for Rohingya women and girls living in Cox’s Bazar refugee camp. Thank you for supporting Rohingya women and taking action for gender equality and women’s empowerment. [UN Women Australia](#)

GENDER-SENSITIVE REPORTING IN MEDIA



“As individuals, we must believe in gender equality so that it is reflected in our work. This workshop enhanced my knowledge and will make my news reporting more gender sensitive,” Rokshana Akter Shomi said, after attending a UN Women workshop on gender-sensitive journalism. UN Women has been working since 2020 to build the capacity of local journalists on gender-sensitive reporting and increase positive narratives in media that promote social cohesion, gender equality, and women’s empowerment in humanitarian response. In partnership with Deutsche Welle (DW) Akademie and supported by the Government of Switzerland, two workshops were organized in Cox’s in September and November.

LATEST GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION



GIHA WG has had a busy year providing cross-sectoral and inter-organizational support to ensure gender equality priorities are integrated into the Rohingya refugee response in Cox’s Bazar. Read the [Newsletter](#) to know about working group’s successes and challenges over the last year.

RESOURCES

GENDER EQUALITY BRIEF



CONTEXT

Established in 1971, Bangladesh is the eighth most populous country in the world with a population of approximately 168 million. Accelerated income growth in the past decades has made Bangladesh one of the world's emerging economies. Its gross national income (GNI) per capita increased by about 752.0 per cent between 1990 and 2021. With a projected annual growth rate of 6.4 per cent in real gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022, it is set to graduate from the United Nations classification of least developed country (LDC) in 2026. Celebrating 50 years of independence in 2021, the country has seen a steady rise in Human Development Index (HDI). It is in the Medium Human Development category and ranks 129 out of 191 countries and territories with an HDI of 0.641.¹

Bangladesh is also among the 193 United Nations Member States working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the commitment to 'leave no one behind' (LNOB). Gender equality features as a standalone strategic priority of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 with Bangladesh, denoting the importance of this development area for both the Government and the UN system.



The country is internationally recognized for its good progress on several gender indicators. Women hold 20.9 per cent of parliamentary seats, while 50.6 per cent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education and female participation in the labour market stands at 34.9 per cent.² However, the rapid economic growth has exacerbated patterns of marginalization, putting vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind on the country's path to development, with a female-to-male HDI ratio of 0.894. The Gender Development Index (GDI) shows low equality in HDI achievements between women and men.³ In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down progress, resulting in a

¹ United Nations Human Development Report 2021, Bangladesh
² UN Women report
³ International Labour Office (ILO) 'Gender Equality: A Roadmap for Bangladesh' (2021)

¹ Human Development Report 2021 (2022) Country, page 28
² Human Development Report 2021 (2022) Table A, page 293
³ Human Development Report 2021 (2022) Table A, page 293

GENDER EQUALITY KNOWLEDGE PRODUCT INVENTORY



UN Women Bangladesh developed a Gender Equality Brief that gives a snapshot of the country's progress on key gender equality issues in the areas of governance; women, peace, and security; ending violence against women; economic empowerment; climate change and disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian response. Read the full brief [here](#).

An inventory of Gender Equality (GE) related knowledge products (KPs) has been developed by the UN in Bangladesh's Gender Equality Theme Group (GETG), co-chaired by UN Women and UNFPA. The inventory is a repository of GEWE products, under the UN Sustainable Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF) 2022-26 period. Find the inventory [here](#).

ROSTER OF GE EXPERTS



A roster of national GE experts has been developed by the UN in Bangladesh's Gender Equality Theme Group (GETG) co-chaired by UN Women and UNFPA. The roster lists national gender equality experts across different thematic areas, based on their expertise. Find the roster [here](#).



UN Women Bangladesh is supported by

