

# Evaluation of support to gender equality in Danish development cooperation (2014-2021)

## Summary and management response

This notes summarises the main findings, conclusions and recommendations from the report “Evaluation of Support to Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation (2014-2021)”, and outlines the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ (MFA’s) management response and follow-up actions (in *italics*). The management response was drafted by the Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility; specifically, Team Equal Opportunities with input from Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate and the Department for Multilateral Cooperation and Policy. The evaluation was commissioned by the department of Evaluation, Quality and Learning, and conducted by a consultancy team from ITAD in 2022 and 2023.

### 1. Evaluation summary

#### 1.1 Background

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to learn from implementation of previous programmes and projects in terms of addressing gender issues, with a view to strengthen Denmark’s integration of gender equality, girls’ and women’s rights in Danish development cooperation. To carry this out, it reviewed the effectiveness, relevance, coherence, impact and sustainability of selected engagements in order to gather evidence on what works for promoting gender equality, as well as reviewing the institutional dimensions of support to gender mainstreaming and gender targeted programming. This was framed by 12 evaluation questions under three areas of inquiry: Politics of prioritisation, evidence of results, and gaps and opportunities. Further, it covered three thematic focus areas: Governance, climate, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Evaluation processes included a literature review and consultations with the MFA, Danish representatives and implementing partners (IPs) from international and multilateral sample organisations – the Green Climate Fund (GCF), MSI Reproductive Choices (MSI, prior to 2020 known as ‘Marie Stopes International’), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) – in three sample countries (Burkina Faso, Kenya and Mali). Fieldwork was completed as planned in Kenya. In Burkina Faso and Mali, the planned fieldwork was not possible, and reliance was put on intensive consultation with partners, using remote communication.

#### 1.2 Danish support to gender equality in Danish development cooperation

Denmark has supported initiatives of relevance to gender equality in developing countries since Danida was established in 1962. Efforts intensified in the 1980s and have evolved over time from

focusing on women-in-development to a broad commitment to gender equality and diversity across rights-based poverty alleviation.

This evaluation extracts lessons learned on the MFAs support to gender equality during a decade where security, migration and planetary crises compete for attention. Gender equality features as a strong priority for Denmark, and consideration of gender aspects is mandatory in MFA grant documents and is integrated into MFA strategic partnerships with civil society partners.

### 1.3 Evaluation findings under the three areas of inquiry

#### **Findings on politics of prioritisation**

Budgetary trends for targeted gender equality support have been established by combining allocations for selected Danish core partners, and by analysing the information on the Danish gender spend as documented based on the OECD-DAC gender marker mechanism. Regarding the allocations for selected core partners, evidence shows “significant levels of long-term and predictable funding” – not least for SRHR. The evaluation finds considerable levels of support for United Nations (UN) partners and Danish civil society organisations (CSOs). Danish funding for the UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), MSI, the Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA), Women Deliver and AmplifyChange amounted to DKK 1.4 billion in 2021 (when official development assistance (ODA) totalled DKK 18 billion). This represents a significant increase from a total level for these eight partners of under DKK 800 million in 2015 and 2016. These high levels of support are found to be justified by continued high levels of gender inequality and by coordinated and mounting pressure on gender norms and SRHR across the world.

However, the full picture of combined allocations for targeted and mainstreamed support is not captured accurately, caused by the way budgetary trends for the overall gender spending are established. The method applied is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Gender Marker, and mandatory rating is done at the opening of new bilateral and earmarked multilateral grants. However, this data is not fully reliable, due to lack of understanding of the marker methodology and other issues. Nevertheless, current data reports a gender spend below the average of OECD-DAC member states which clashes with an image of “Danish international leadership on rights”, to quote the headline of the section of current development policy outlining ambitions on gender equality. Denmark is at number 20, with gender spending at 43% of ODA, while Canada, Iceland and Sweden are at the top, with registrations of between 84% and 92%.

Interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with MFA staff dedicated to the experience in using the gender marker indicate that MFA attention to gender marking is minimal and its output poorly understood. The gender marker is applied at bilateral grant level, but core multilateral support is unlikely to be captured, as multilaterals leave 80% of ODA unregistered, according to the OECD. In summary, gender marker data is found to be highly variable and open to

interpretation. At the same time, interest around comparisons is so strong that it would merit more attention in the MFA around the marking process itself and how data are used.

The analysis in this evaluation shows a significant increase in Danish earmarking of multilateral support for the UNFPA and UNICEF. For example, in the case of the UNFPA (the biggest recipient of SRHR support), the evaluation identified a significant shift since 2014, when only 11% was earmarked. In 2021, 60% of the Danish funds was registered as earmarked.

Factors behind the identified funding trends and priorities have been explored, combining analysis of financial data, a staff survey and key informant interviews with MFA staff, leading to the identification of five principal factors:

- a. Gender budget allocations change with the tide as funding levels can be seen to increase and decrease with the levels of total Danish ODA. This is evidenced by the reductions in overall development funding from 2014 to 2016.
- b. More specifically, funding levels are driven by high strategic priority to gender equality, found to be consistent throughout the evaluation period, with policy ambitions on global leadership with a degree of obligation to deliver on funding and results.
- c. In a context of limited formal requirements, the evaluation also points to a risk of thematic fatigue, with gender-results driven by committed individuals relying on previous experience and senior management support.
- d. A degree of continuity of prioritisation of gender equality is suggested by high levels of long-term and predictable contributions to key partners. This is mirrored at country level, where the evaluation finds local partner appreciation of predictable Danish funding.
- e. Strength of political and senior management commitment to gender equality in practice stands as a striking outcome from evaluation interviews and staff survey enquiries into how a leading role may be achieved in a politically driven organisation such as the MFA.

## **Findings on evidence of results**

### *Relevance of gender equality support*

The evaluation finds evidence of highly relevant gender support in the case country contexts, where targeted support and gender mainstreaming in bilateral programmes respond to country contexts of well-documented gender inequity and inequality. Relevance was also evident as shared objectives and mutual trust in the case studies of the UNFPA, UNICEF and MSI, where Danish support was found to be justified by increasing global pushback on SRHR. However, mainstreaming results were found to be negligible in the case of the GCF, noted by the evaluation as a missed opportunity for mitigation efforts and for mainstreaming gender in climate action measures. More broadly, green transition and climate are found by the evaluation to be high-profile engagement areas with potential for future gender programming.

### *Findings on outcome and effectiveness of global dialogue instruments*

Evaluation findings demonstrate Danish support to policy dialogue events. Results are most evident in targeted support at micro level, and challenges remain with regard to the critical priority

of mainstreaming of gender equality – not least in climate mitigation, where not only political attention but also programming potential is seen as considerable and on an upward trend. In the case of the UNFPA, policy alignment is found to have been particularly close, with evidence of alliances on sensitive elements of SRHR such as abortion, comprehensive sexuality education and sexual minority rights, and collaboration on major advocacy events, culminating with the co-hosting in 2019 of the UNFPA’s flagship event ICPD+25 by the governments of Kenya and Denmark. The evaluation finds this event to illustrate the potential of applying the coherence principles of Doing Development Differently and joining up decades of developmental engagement with Kenya and the UNFPA in a way that was found, during data collection in October 2022, to continue to provide a credible advocacy platform for Danish dialogue on SRHR commitments with Kenya and countries of the region on a development policy priority.

Although general strengths and weaknesses of earmarked funding for the multilateral system and INGOs are recognised, this evaluation finds elements of earmarked funding of Danish priorities, such as contributing to the overall effectiveness of an organisation (e.g. humanitarian focus at the UNFPA) or ensuring support to priorities, e.g. embedding Leave No One Behind (LNOB) into MSI.

#### *Findings on effectiveness in the thematic areas of SRHR, governance and climate*

The best-documented results have been found in governance and SRHR, where more than half of the project results assessed fall into the category of ‘gender responsive’. The experience of gender integration is more comprehensive than in the case of green transition and climate. At the same time, the potential for large-scale impact and transformational change was found to be at least as strong in green transition and climate. Gender mainstreaming has contributed positively to the achievement of wider programmatic objectives, as evidenced by project cases in Kenya and Mali. Gender analysis by the project Fonds d’Appui à la Création d’Entreprises par les Jeunes (FACEJ) led to a broader definition of what constitutes the private sector, and targets of 40% of credit to female entrepreneurs have produced transformative results in a challenging security context in Mali. Engaging with civil society, boasting a significant track record and continuity of engagement were found by the evaluation to be particularly important in fragile and conflict-affected countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso.

Green transition and climate change is the area where the evaluation has found the greatest potential for improvement. Especially in the case of the GCF, this area has high relevance but a largely untapped potential when it comes to gender mainstreaming in policy dialogue and programming. Another programming area with untapped potential to explore is Strategic Sector Cooperation: the evaluation finds case examples of a gender-unaware point of departure in programme design yet significant results on the ground. The economic empowerment produced by access to credit exemplifies how participants can transform as agents of change in their own lives – a new role with its own new challenges, as demonstrated by the case of female cross-

border traders supported by Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA) who sometimes struggle to hold onto their self-made profits and rights to decision making at household level.

Challenges in governance and SRHR programming are often noted when it comes to scaling up results achieved at micro level. Cases in point are campaigns against female genital mutilation (FGM) and service provision for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), where resources are often limited to challenge and change the deep-rooted roles and norms, and where the risk of urban bias and limited outreach to vulnerable populations in remote areas are difficult to mitigate for IPs.

#### *Findings on impact and sustainability of outcomes*

Local ownership was identified as the key driver for impact and sustainability, especially when civil society has a role in decision making. Good practice examples for investing in civil society include the Gender Violence and Recovery Centre (GVRC) and Act Change Transform (ACT!) advocating for gender balance in countering violent extremism in Kenya; the Common Gender Fund in Burkina Faso, strengthening gender mainstreaming through better coordination by bilateral and multilateral partners; and the PATRIP Foundation in Mali, working with local partners, trusted even in areas under the influence of radical groups.

The evaluation finds that projects that apply the gender transformative approach of e.g. engaging men in gender initiatives appear better positioned to lead to gender transformative results, as shown in cases of FGM and undesired pregnancies at schools in Burkina Faso and of women joining community peace structures in Kenya or gaining support from husbands to engage in potentially transformative female entrepreneurship in Mali.

#### **Findings on gaps and opportunities**

MFA management of gender equality knowledge has seen significant changes over the evaluation period (2014-2021), in line with the way in which aid delivery has evolved. In 2014 the MFA had a department for Technical Advisory Services, comprising teams of experts who were instrumental in managing roughly equal shares of multilateral grants, often provided as core support, and a dozen bilateral priority countries, with a handful of Danish sector programmes. Today some bilateral programming remains in place but there is a much stronger emphasis on multilateral engagement and policy dialogue. This changing context has implications for the expertise required at the MFA (e.g. the Team Equal Opportunities) and the type of leadership Denmark can realistically aspire to take.

In self-assessments of knowledge levels, the consensus view by survey respondents is that gender equality expertise is relevant for most MFA staff and that knowledge levels are sufficient to support objectives in their current job function.

Gender Focal Point expertise was found to have evolved from being a network across the MFA and embassies in 2014 to a situation, in 2021, of improvement at embassies but marked by weak momentum. However, a best practice example with potential was found in the appointment of a

Focal Point at the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate for gender and climate as well as Indigenous peoples' rights, and a Focal Point for civil society, youth and human rights. In addition, at the embassy in Bamako the Focal Point role was shared by a posted staff member and a local staff member, which the evaluation found to be a model of successfully marrying local expertise with Danish understanding in an organic and synergetic way.

The staff survey, along with interviews and FGDs, showed considerable experience and strong commitment to gender programming.

## 2. Recommendations

While acknowledging Denmark's gender equality efforts and progress made throughout the evaluation period, the evaluation team proposes recommendations for improvement. Overarching recommendations are that Denmark's development cooperation focus first and foremost on undertaking current activities in a more strategic manner towards mainstreaming gender equality in policy dialogues, programming and reporting.

The evaluation team is sympathetic to the fact that managers and advisors have large portfolios and multiple demands in terms of the results they are asked to deliver. However, it is the assessment of the evaluation team that the evidence points to multiple areas in which gender mainstreaming is necessary to ensure the delivery of gender equality results. Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation team has identified four more specific recommendations.

Each of the four recommendations aims to address different levels of engagement, with more detailed suggestions for possible measures. Recommendation 1 aims to recommend measures to better position Denmark with its gender equality expertise in the global arena and suggests taking on a leading role in mainstreaming gender in climate programming. Recommendation 2 speaks to the gender marker reporting on Denmark's development activities within the target of gender equality as a policy objective. Recommendation 3 suggests measures to ensure a consistent gender focus within the crucial humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP) approach. These measures can build on milestones already achieved, with emphasis on improvement and for the importance of working in partnership to successfully achieve sustainable results. Recommendation 4 internal changes in the MFA, namely to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout ordinary systems, processes and responsibility structures, cross-cutting and bottom up.

**Recommendation 1:** It is recommended to clarify statutes and to update and integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting area in all areas of guiding documents, frameworks, policy dialogue and programming, with special attention to integration of gender in green and climate-related support.

**Rationale:** The evaluation noted that the Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation (2014) was found useful but was marred by references to an outdated policy context and unclear status, and embassies were interested in updated guidance on current priorities, including green and climate-related priorities. The evaluation also found that there was a sense that prioritisation of gender equality is being put under pressure from very high prioritisation of green transition and climate action. The case of the GCF shows that mainstreaming gender into climate action is a missed opportunity and that it is crucial to work with and within priorities.

Decades of experience in gender equality and SRHR, combined with high levels of staff commitment and a strong reputation in green transition, provide Denmark with an opportunity to gain a leading role in gendering climate action. Backed by necessary financial and human resources, Denmark has the potential to team up with long-standing partners to recognise the nexus between climate and gender equality and spearhead a more gender transformative approach to climate action.

Examples of case studies in this evaluation also show that incorporating gender analysis in programmes does influence planning and programming in the best sustainable way and that a good analysis leads to a good indicator.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- The *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation* (2014) should be declared obsolete; its definitions and human rights principles can be integrated in a newly developed Gender Transformative Approach Note. This Approach Note can guide MFA staff in implementing *The World We Share* (2021) and inform gender equality mainstreaming and climate action priorities of the development policy strategy to be initiated in 2024. It should be kept in mind that this Approach Note should include recommendations for evidence-based approaches to ensure transformative results, especially within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
- The MFA (namely The Team Equal Opportunities together with the Focal Point for gender, climate and Indigenous Peoples' (IPs) rights at the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate) should conduct a learning exercise (e.g. in the form of a baseline study) with relevant multilateral partnership focal points to learn from their experience. Multilateral role models in that regard, that recognise Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (as well as climate action) as cross-cutting areas throughout their strategic documents, are for instance UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the World Food Programme (WFP). Results of this exercise can then inform the development of the new Approach Note and the revision of policies and guiding documents, which may i.e. be used to inform Denmark's engagement with multilateral partners in trust fund boards and similar governing bodies.

- Danish Aid Management Guidelines (AMG) should be revised to require that new grants include a minimum of one gender indicator at outcome levels in the results framework.
- In regard to planning and programming, a consistent use of gender analysis should be promoted.

**Recommendation 2:** It is recommended that the OECD Gender Marker be applied in a coherent manner and its data used to inform future decision making and programming to promote gender equality and to mitigate the challenges of inaccuracy and low awareness, caused by the way how budgetary trends are established within the OECD-DAC system.

**Rationale:** While reports on gender spending place Denmark below the average of OECD-DAC member states – Denmark is at number 20, while Canada, Iceland and Sweden are at the top – the evaluation finds that the full picture of combined allocations for targeted and mainstreamed support is not accurately captured. The method applied is the OECD Gender Marker, and mandatory rating is supposed to be done at the opening of new bilateral and earmarked multilateral grants, but interviews with MFA staff and with embassy representatives dedicated to the experience in using the gender marker indicate that MFA attention to gender marking is minimal and its output poorly understood.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- The template for presentation of new grants and organisation strategies to the Programme Committee of bilateral programmes and projects should be revised to include, on the cover page, OECD Gender Marker information on the degree of gender integration.
- The Team Equal Opportunities should organise an annual stocktaking of gender spending as measured by the OECD Gender Marker, complemented by quality assurance (QA) of three registrations of targeted and three of significant gender integration, and the results should be communicated to MFA departments, embassies, and representations.

**Recommendation 3:** It is recommended that Denmark sustain current gender engagements a) with emphasis on (a) strengthening both local ownership and capacity by reinforcing support for local civil society with a commitment to gender equality with funding and technical support, and (b) supporting a continued focus on gender equality in the donor community by systematically putting gender equality on the table in the meetings with other donors.

**Rationale:** The analysis of the three country case studies (two, Burkina Faso and Mali, are fragile and conflict-affected states) provides evidence in all three thematic areas for local ownership being a key driver for impact and sustainability, especially when civil society has a role in decision making regarding decisions that affect the lives of local



people and environments and hold governments and policymakers publicly accountable. The case studies show how Danish support to CSOs can contribute to a global policy dialogue on gender equality issues including SRHR and influence national laws and policies, and that working with local partners means addressing intersectionality and working where others cannot.

Examples in case studies also show that working with partners and supporting networks, rather than working solo and creating silos, not only reinforces local ownership but also brings together diverse perspectives, resources and expertise and offers forums for inter-state cooperation through arrangements and more formal and binding agreements that lead a transformative change.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- Support for local ownership should be reinforced by engaging and partnering with local project partners and civil society, with a commitment to gender equality through funding and technical support. This area of work can be informed and safeguarded by the consistent use of gender analysis (included in programming).
- The MFA should engage with (donor) networks and systematically put gender equality on the table in the meetings with other donors.
- It should be ensured that SRHR remains a strategic priority and that significant levels of long-term predictable funding are sustained for partners in the strategic priority area of SRHR.

**Recommendation 4:** It is recommended that the job description for Gender Focal Points be upgraded to ensure gender mainstreaming by advocating, advising and supporting MFA staff and partners in developing evidence based and transformative programmes and monitoring and reporting on progress.

**Rationale:** The Gender Focal Point expertise has evolved from being a network across the MFA and embassies in 2014 to a situation of improvement at embassies in 2021 but marked by a weak momentum. However, best practice examples were found in the appointment of a Focal Point at the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK) for gender and climate as well as IP rights and a Focal Point for civil society, youth and human rights; and at the embassy in Bamako, the Focal Point role was shared by a posted staff member and a local staff member. The latter was found to be a success model for merging local expertise with Danish understanding in an organic and synergetic way.

The evaluation also found that MFA management systems do not currently include dedicated attention to gender equality in standardised performance assessment. Unless gender programming is an explicit part of a person's job description (for the members of Team Equal Opportunities at the MFA or Gender Focal Points), gender performance is not a mandatory part of staff assessment.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- A clear mandate for the Gender Focal Point position should be defined and the job description and reporting lines should be clear and included in the performance assessment. Additionally, the Gender Focal Point should report to, and should receive support from, senior management.
- The requirements from one to two individuals per unit should be expanded: (a) in the case of MFA departments, to include a head or deputy head of department and a staff member; and (b) in the case of embassies, to include a posted and a locally recruited staff member.
- MFA staff (at all levels) should receive gender training that is integrated, mainstreamed and included in all types of training courses throughout (e.g. HR training courses including diplomatic courses, AMG training course).

### 3. Management response

#### 3.1 General remarks

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) welcomes the outcome of the ‘Evaluation of support to gender equality in Danish development cooperation (2014-2021)’. At a time where gender equality and women and girls’ rights are under immense pressure, it is key that gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, is maintained as a stronghold area in Danish development cooperation. The evaluation provides a highly useful overview of the efforts undertaken in the area of gender equality in the given period and pinpoints relevant challenges, which need to be addressed if this position is to be maintained. The evaluation report presents concrete suggestions to this end and the MFA welcomes the concrete measures identified to strengthen the institutionalisation of gender equality in the work of the MFA.

#### 3.2 Response to specific recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** clarify statutes and update and integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting area in all areas of guiding documents, frameworks, policy dialogue and programming, with special attention to integration of gender in green and climate-related support.

*The MFA agrees with the recommendation to clarify that the strategic framework for gender equality from 2014 no longer is valid and will update relevant guiding documents including aid management guidelines in order to ensure better clarity on MFAs expectations for how to integrate gender equality in policy dialogue as well as programming. An approach paper will be developed and will be accompanied by concrete tools, which can support MFA staff in their endeavours to mainstream gender equality including undertaking thorough gender analysis in connection with programme development, which will increase the likelihood of programmes leading to gender transformative impacts. As an input to the new guidance, the MFA will conduct an exercise with relevant UN partners and experts to inform Denmark’s future strategic engagement with the UN-system (a.o. trust fund boards and similar governing bodies) in the area of gender equality, leveraging the UN-systems internal strategic management processes in relation to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. As the evaluation*

*demonstrates, the MFA has many good efforts to build upon and the revised guidance material will therefore take strong departure in existing materials.*

*The MFA furthermore agrees that there is an untapped potential in better integrating gender equality in green and climate-related support and will take steps to improve this through a number of concrete initiatives including strengthening the MFAs knowledge foundation, advocacy and support to initiatives working in this area e.g. in the area of collecting, analysing and processing data on climate change and gender equality. As regards Denmark's engagement in the large climate funds, gender equality has already been introduced as one of four priorities in Denmark's engagement with the Green Climate Fund and efforts will be made to engage on the gender equality agenda, particularly through the boards of the Green Climate Fund as well as other relevant funds.*

*In an effort to strengthen integration of gender equality into programmes the evaluation has suggested to revise the aid management guidelines to include a mandatory indicator at outcome level. Rather than having such indicators as a default the guidelines will in future request that **if** an indicator is **not** included, this must be justified with reference to the gender analysis. This will allow for flexibility while at the same time ensuring that the relevance of a gender indicator is seriously reflected upon with.*

**Recommendation 2:** It is recommended that the OECD Gender Marker be applied in a coherent manner and its data used to inform future decision making and programming to promote gender equality and to mitigate the challenges of inaccuracy and low awareness, caused by the way how budgetary trends are established within the OECD-DAC system.

*The MFA agrees with the recommendation to strengthen the quality and use of the gender marker through the suggested measures. This will be done in close collaboration with the office responsible for OECD-DAC reporting. The MFA acknowledges that in order to succeed in more correct reporting, awareness must be strengthened as to how programmes are marked. The new edition of the PMI-system will be used to more easily integrate user-friendly information that can facilitate the gender marking.*

**Recommendation 3:** It is recommended that Denmark sustains current gender engagements a) with emphasis on (a) strengthening both local ownership and capacity by reinforcing support for local civil society with a commitment to gender equality with funding and technical support, and (b) supporting a continued focus on gender equality in the donor community by systematically putting gender equality on the table in the meetings with other donors.

*As the evaluation demonstrates, Denmark has a longstanding political commitment to promote gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The MFA agrees that these remain critical for Danish development cooperation and Denmark will continue to be a strong advocate for these issues. Denmark is strongly committed to the localisation agenda. Although the MFA rarely provides support directly to local organisations, the MFA has a clear focus on how support through Danish CSOs, INGOs and the UN is directed towards local actors.*

*Denmark will to continue to actively engage in dialogue with likeminded and, importantly, less likeminded on how to best ensure progress in these areas. The MFA will continue to reflect upon and consider new avenues to make new headway in turning challenges into opportunities vis à vis the polycrisis and geopolitical changes that the world*

*is facing. This will be reflected in the new guidance in an effort to support policy dialogue particularly at country level.*

**Recommendation 4:** Upgrade job descriptions for Gender Focal Points to ensure gender mainstreaming by advocating, advising and supporting MFA staff and partners in developing evidence based and transformative programmes and monitoring and reporting on progress.

*The MFA agrees that Gender Focal Points (GFPs) can play a critical role in mainstreaming of gender by strengthening the capacity support MFA colleagues in undertaking gender analysis and integrate gender equality in policies and programmes. However, the MFA also recognizes that the updated job description of GFPs must be accompanied by other measures such as ensuring that the role of GFPs are given more weight and accountability and are provided with sufficient information and training. The MFA will look into how best this can be taken forward. Also, the MFA shall consider to expand the GFP network to have a GFP in all departments rather than only in some, as is currently the situation, as well as provide the option for embassies to have two representatives (a local and posted staff member) as this will strengthen the continuity of the network.*